

Apply for naturalization for former Germans abroad

If you live abroad, were German before and would like to become so again, you can apply for re-naturalization under certain conditions.

Competent Department

- [Bundesverwaltungsamt \(BVA\), ST - Staatsangehörigkeit](#)

Basic information

The Federal Office of Administration (BVA) is responsible, among other things, as the citizenship authority for persons abroad for issues related to citizenship.

If you have lost your German citizenship and are living abroad, you can apply for re-acquisition of German citizenship (re-naturalization).

Provided you meet the requirements for re-naturalization, you will be issued a naturalization certificate. You will then again have German citizenship.

You can also appoint an authorized person, for example a lawyer, for your application. You must enclose a power of attorney for this purpose.

You or your authorized person can submit your application for re-naturalization in writing or by appointment in person at your competent German mission abroad or in writing to the BVA.

Requirements

Applications for re-naturalization of former Germans can be submitted by:

- Persons who formerly had German citizenship and
- whose habitual residence (domicile) is abroad.

Further requirements:

- Identity and citizenship have been clarified
- You are capable of acting, i.e. at least 16 years old or legally represented.
- You are exempt from punishment and
- do not pursue or support any anti-constitutional or extremist endeavors

- you are committed to the free democratic basic order (so-called declaration of loyalty).

Naturalization is a discretionary decision. It is examined whether persons abroad can be naturalized by way of exception.

Essential discretionary criteria:

- public interest in naturalization
- ties to Germany
- Sufficient German language skills (level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference)
- Ability to support yourself: You must be able to support yourself and your family in your country of residence without state assistance. This should also be the case if you move to Germany.
- In principle, you must give up or lose your previous nationality
- exceptions are possible.

Note: In individual cases, a naturalization test may be required.

What documents do I need?

- Proof of parentage and identity

by for example:

- foreign identity documents, for example:
 - passport
 - identity card
 - alien's identity card
 - birth certificate of the applicant
 - marriage certificate
- Proof of previous possession of German citizenship, for example:
 - German identity documents (for example: passport, children's identity card, identity card, naturalization certificates, citizenship cards/home registration certificates, excerpt from the German register of residents)
- Proof of loss of German citizenship, for example:
 - Foreign naturalization certificates
 - Proof of acquisition/possession of further citizenships
- Other helpful documents (if applicable):
 - Name change certificates/certificates
 - Documents on custody (for applications of children under 16 years of age)
 - Certificates of graduation from German schools
- Evidence of close ties to Germany

All circumstances that prove close ties to Germany are favorable for the discretionary decision, for example:

- long-standing close contact with relatives and friends in Germany,
- longer and/or regular stays in Germany,
- property ownership in Germany,
- school graduation or vocational training in Germany,
- membership in German cultural associations,

- work for German authorities, companies or organizations.
- Evidence on other relevant circumstances

Other circumstances will be considered in the decision:

- Ability to support yourself: you must be able to support yourself and your family in your country of residence without government assistance. This also includes sufficient insurance against illness, need for care, occupational disability or incapacity to work and for old age.
- Circumstances of the loss of German citizenship
- Notes on the documents

Please attach the documents and evidence as officially or notarially certified copies, unless otherwise stated.

Documents and evidence in foreign languages must be accompanied by a translation by a sworn translator.

Procedure

You or your authorized person can apply for re-naturalization in writing or by appointment in person at your responsible German mission abroad or in writing at the Federal Office of Administration (BVA).

Written application:

- You can receive all the necessary information about the application and required documents or papers in advance by e-mail, telephone or in a personal meeting on site at your competent German mission abroad (appointment).
- You can download the application form directly from the BVA website.
- Fill out the application form completely and sign it.
- Submit the signed application by mail or in person together with the required documents to your responsible German mission abroad.
- Contacting the German mission abroad is not obligatory. You can also submit the application with all documents directly to the BVA. However, contacting and submitting the application via the German mission abroad is recommended, as the mission must issue a statement on your application.
- The BVA will check your application and inform you if further documents and information are required for the processing of the application.

Conclusion of the procedure (in writing):

- After the decision, you will receive a request for payment of the procedure fee. If your application is approved, the BVA will send your naturalization certificate to your competent German mission abroad. They will inform you about the further procedure for the delivery of the naturalization certificate.
- If the Federal Office of Administration (BVA) rejects your application, you will usually also receive a rejection notice via your competent German mission abroad.

Legal bases

- [§ 13 Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz \(StAG\)](#)

What deadlines must be paid attention to?

none

How long does it take to process

For processing the application: usually 12 to 18 months. Depending on the individual case, extensive investigations must be carried out.

What are the costs?

255,00 EUR Naturalization certificate for adults

51,00 EUR Naturalization certificate for minor child (up to the age of 18)

Refusal notice for adults (rejection of the application): EUR 25.00 to EUR 255.00

Rejection notice for minor child (rejection of application): EUR 25.00 to EUR 51.00

Notice:

Please keep in mind that you may incur additional costs for obtaining documents, translations and certifications.