

# **Greek Citizenship Code**

## **Chapter A**

### **ACQUISITION OF GREEK CITIZENSHIP**

#### **I. De Iure, By Birth**

##### Article 1

1. A child of a Greek father or a Greek mother acquires Greek Citizenship by birth.
2. Greek Citizenship is acquired upon the birth of a child in Greece in the event that:
  - a) one of the parents of the child was born in Greece and has been permanently domiciled in the Country since his or her birth or
  - b) the child does neither acquire foreign citizenship by birth nor can acquire such citizenship by a relevant declaration by his or her parents to the relevant foreign authorities, in case the law of the state that his or her parents are citizens of, requires the submission of such declaration or
  - c) the child is of unknown citizenship, in the event that the failure to ascertain any foreign citizenship to be acquired by birth is not due to his or her parent's refusal to cooperate.

#### **I a. By Declaration and Application, Due to Birth or School Attendance in Greece**

##### Article 1A

1. A child of foreign nationals who was born and continues to live in Greece and whose both parents have permanently and lawfully resided in the Country for at least five continuous years, acquires Greek Citizenship upon his or her birth in the event that his or her parents submit a common relevant declaration and application for registration of the child at the City Registry of his or her city of permanent domicile within three years after his or her birth. In case of posterior submission of the declaration and application, citizenship is acquired upon submission. If the child was born before the completion of five years of lawful residence in the Country by both parents, the joint declaration and application for registration is submitted only after the completion of five years of continuous lawful residence by both parents, the child acquires Greek Citizenship upon submission.

2 A child of foreign nationals that has successfully completed the attendance of at least six school grades at a Greek school in Greece and lawfully permanently resides in the Country acquires Greek Citizenship upon completion of the six-year period of school attendance by common declaration and application for registration at the City Registry of the city of his or her permanent residence to be submitted by his or her parents within three years after the completion of that period. In case of posterior submission of the declaration and application and until the child reaches the age of

majority, the citizenship is acquired upon submission of the relevant declaration and application.

3 Greek Citizenship is acquired by children of foreign nationals by declaration by their parents according to the provisions of the previous sections of the present article only in the event that both of their parents lawfully reside in Greece on the basis of relevant valid legal title.

4. The declaration and application provided under the previous sections of the present article in the case of a child of a single-parent family or of a child of a person eligible for international protection (of a recognised immigrant, of a person enjoying subsidiary protection status or of a stateless person) may be submitted by the remaining parent or by him or her to whom the parental responsibility of the minor has been allocated or who exercises it exclusively, in fact, in the event that he or she also meets the rest of the relevant conditions. In cases of unaccompanied minors, to whom international protection has been granted, the declaration and application are submitted by the tutor or the personal representative of the minor who has been appointed in accordance with article 30, section 1 of the Presidential Decree 906/2008 (Government Gazette 152 A) A.

5. Prior to the realisation of the registration at the City Registry the city immediately sends copies of the adduced supporting documents to be compared with data kept by the responsible state services that provide the relevant confirmation. Upon confirmation of the relevant data, the city, within fifteen days, sends the application and the supporting documents to the responsible authorities of the relevant Prefecture. The Secretary General of the Prefecture, within two months after the receipt of the file, issues a decision that is published in the Government Gazette, to order the relevant city to register the child of the applicants at its City Registry. The registration at the City Register is performed within six months after the submission of the declaration and application.

6. In the event that the declaration and application for registration at the City Register, that are provided under sections 1 and 2 of the present article, had not been submitted by both parents until the child reached the age of majority, the child acquires Greek Citizenship by declaration and application for registration at the City Registry that he or she has the right to submit to the city where he or she resides lawfully and permanently on the basis of relevant valid legal title, within a binding time limit of three years after he or she reached the age of 18 years. The application is rejected if criminal responsibility occurs under article 5, section 1, clause b, or for reasons of public or national security, under article 5B. The inquiry into the fulfilment of negative conditions provided for in the above provision is performed through analogical application of the procedure provided for in article 7, section 2 and within a time limit of six months. The relevant procedure and time limits are suspended in accordance with the provision of article 31, section 4. The decision of the Secretary General of the Prefecture is issued within one year after the submission of the declaration and application. In this case Greek Citizenship is acquired upon submission of the declaration and application.

7. Under the present law, bulletins, certificates of supporting documents submission or other documents that allow the provisional residence of their holder until the

assessment of his or her claim by the responsible administrative or judicial authority or until the completion of a pending administrative procedure that pertains to them do not constitute titles of lawful residence. The possession of a valid conclusive title of lawful residence at the time of submission of the declaration and application for registration by the parents or the child himself / herself, after he or she reached the age of majority, in accordance with the provisions of the present article, is checked by the responsible authority.

8. For the submission of the declarations and applications for registration at the City Registry provided for in the present article a sum of 100 Euros is charged, which is collected by the relevant city and is exclusively dispensed for the operation of the state services that are responsible for the completion of the declarations and applications and the production of the relevant documents.

## **II. By Recognition**

### Article 2

A foreign national born out of wedlock who has been legally recognised by a Greek citizen voluntarily or by full judicial recognition, becomes a Greek citizen upon recognition, if at the time of recognition he or she is a minor.

## **III. By Adoption**

### Article 3

A person who has been adopted as a minor by a Greek citizen becomes a Greek citizen upon the day of his or her adoption.

## **IV. By Enlistment in the Armed Forces**

### Article 4

1. Foreign nationals of Greek origin, admitted to military academies as officers or non-commissioned officers of the armed services or enlisted in the armed forces as volunteers, in accordance with current regulations, lawfully acquire Greek Citizenship upon their admittance to the academies or upon their enlistment.

2. Foreign nationals of Greek origin, who enlist as volunteers in time of mobilisation or war, in accordance with the current regulations, may acquire Greek Citizenship by application to the Secretary General of the Prefecture, and without any further formalities.

3. Those among the above-mentioned who receive promotion to officers, whether in the standing Armed Forces or in the reserves, lawfully acquire Greek Citizenship without any further formalities.

4. The military oath taken by the foreign nationals of Greek origin provided for in sections 1, 2 and 3, substitutes for the oath of the Greek citizen.

5. The children of foreign nationals of Greek origin, who acquire Greek Citizenship, in accordance with the previous sections, become Greek citizens at the same time their parents acquire Greek citizenship provided that at the time of their parents' application to the Secretary General of the Prefecture they are minors and unmarried.

## **V. By Naturalisation**

### Article 5

#### Typical Conditions of Naturalisation

1. A foreign national who wishes to become a Greek citizen by naturalisation should

a) have reached the age of majority by the time of the submission of the declaration of naturalisation.

b) have not been irrevocably sentenced to deprivation of liberty for a term of not less than either one year or six months and regardless of the time the Court's convicting decision was issued for having committed with malice aforethought within the last decade before the submission of the declaration of naturalisation crimes involving disloyalty to the Constitution, treason, homicide or severe bodily injuries, trade and trafficking of narcotics, money-laundering, international financial crimes, crimes involving means of high technology, monetary crimes, crimes involving trafficking of children, child prostitution and child pornography ( Law 3625/2007, Government Gazette 290 A), setting up or participating in a criminal organisation as defined in [article 187](#) of the Criminal Code and crimes under [article 187 A](#) of the Criminal Code, resisting authority, kidnapping a minor, crimes against sexual freedom, crimes involving sexual exploitation, theft, robbery, fraud, embezzlement, extortion, usury, crimes provided for by the law regarding intermediaries, forgery, crimes involving false statements, defamation, smuggling, crimes involving weapons, antiquities, or the consignment of illegal immigrants or the facilitation of their transportation or consignment or of their accommodation in the aim of concealing them.

c) have neither been undergoing deportation nor have other pending issues regarding his or her lawful stay in the Country.

d) have lawfully resided in Greece for seven continuous years before the submission of the application for naturalisation. The time that the foreign national spent in Greece in his or her capacity as diplomatic servant or administrative official of a foreign country is not counted in the time of lawful stay. For European Union Member State citizenship holders, for spouses of Greek citizens with a child, for those who have parental responsibility for a Greek citizen, under the condition that the minor did not acquire the Greek citizenship according to article 1A, section 2, for recognised political refugees and stateless persons, it suffices that they have lawfully resided in Greece for at least three continuous years. For the spouses of Greek diplomatic servants, the time they stayed abroad due to the official duties of their Greek spouses is counted in the above-mentioned completion time, under the condition that they have completed, in whatever time, one year of residence in Greece. The requirement of seven-year residence does not apply to the foreign nationals of Greek origin and to those who have been born and continuously domiciled in Greece.

e) hold one of the following residence titles:

aa) permit of long residence according to the provisions of the presidential decree 150/2006 (Government Gazette 160 A),

ab) certificate or other residence title issued to citizens of Member States of the European Union on the basis of the provisions of the presidential decree 106/2007 (Government Gazette 135 A),

ac) card or other residence title issued to the family members of Greek citizens or of citizens of a Member State of the European Union or to the parents of an underaged Greek citizen according to the provisions of article 61, 63 and 94 of Law 3386/2005,

ad) card of recognised political refugees or the status of supplementary protection or of family membership in a family that holds such a card or cards that have been issued according to the provisions of the now-abrogated presidential decree 61/1999 (Government Gazette 63 A) or of the presidential decrees 90/2008 (Government Gazette 138 A), 96/2008 (Government Gazette 152 A), 167/2008 (Government Gazette 223 A) and 81/2009 (Government Gazette 99 A), as amended,

ae) travel documents or any special card that have been issued by Greek authorities according to the provisions of the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons that has been ratified through Law 139/1975 (Government Gazette 176A),

af) card or any other residence title issued to foreign nationals of Greek origin apart from the Special Identity Card of Foreign Nationals of Greek Origin.

2. The residence titles that are mentioned under subsection -e- of the previous section can be amended, replaced or repealed by presidential decrees enacted following a proposal by the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance; it is by such a presidential decree that new types of residence titles can be added to the above-mentioned list of titles.

## Article 5A

### Substantive Conditions of Naturalisation

1. Apart from the conditions of the previous article the foreign national who wishes to become a Greek citizen through naturalisation should

a) have adequate knowledge of the Greek language so that he or she can fulfil the obligations stemming from Greek citizenship

b) have been smoothly integrated into the economic and social life of the Country. For the ascertainment of the smooth integration of the applicant into Greek society the following details are of particular importance: his or her familiarity with Greek history and Greek culture, his or her professional or any other economic activity, any public or charity activity he or she is involved in, his or her attendance at Greek educational institutions, his or her participation in social groupings or collective entities that count Greek citizens among their members, any family relationship that he or she has to a Greek citizen, even if it is an in-law relationship, the consistent fulfilment of his or her tax obligations and his or her obligations towards social security institutions, his or her full ownership of immovable property to be used as residence and his or her property condition.

c) be able to take active part in the political life of the Country with respect for the fundamental principles that govern it. For his or her capacity to participate in the political life the following details are of particular importance: his or her adequate familiarity with the institutions of the political regime of the Hellenic Republic

and the political life of the Country as well as a basic knowledge of Greek political history, particularly in the modern era. For the assessment of the embracement of the Greek political identity special emphasis is put on the participation in collective entities, political groups or societies in which Greek citizens also participate as well as on the participation in election for first-degree local authorities.

2. The Naturalisation Committee that has been established under article 12 gives an opinion for the fulfilment of the conditions that are provided for in the previous section.

3. The opinion given by the competent Naturalisation Committee on the ascertainment of the fulfilment of the various substantive conditions under section 1 is also based on a test that can be organised by the Committee. The test conditions and any other issue related to the organisation and the content of the test are regulated through a common decision by the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

#### Article 5B

##### Security Reasons

The foreign national who wishes to become a Greek citizen should not give rise to public and national security issues. The competent authorities of the Ministry of Citizen Protection give an opinion on the possible occurrence of such issues regarding the applicant following the procedure under article 7.

#### Article 6

##### Naturalisation Documents

1. A foreign national who wishes to become a Greek citizen through naturalisation submits a statement to the city of his or her place of permanent residence and an application for naturalisation to the authorities of the Prefecture to which the city belongs.

2. The naturalisation statement is submitted to the Mayor in the presence of two Greek citizens acting as witnesses. The statement is written in a special register. A copy of the statement and a document on the application for naturalisation mentioning all the conditions for the acquisition of Greek Citizenship through naturalisation are issued to the applicant.

3. The application for naturalisation is addressed to the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and is followed by

- a. a copy of the naturalisation statement
- b. a copy of a passport, of a travel document or of any other identity document
- c. one of the residence titles mentioned under article 5, subsection (e)
- d. birth certificate or other equivalent certificate made according to the law of the Country of his or her first citizenship. If the foreign national has the right to international protection as a political refugee or enjoys the status of supplementary protection or is a stateless person and cannot present any birth certificate, it suffices to present the act of recognition of his or her status as a political refugee or of his or her

status of supplementary protection or any official certificate issued to stateless persons, respectively. If the foreign national was born in Greece, then it suffices to present the birth certificate. If the foreign national is unable to be in possession of a passport for objective reasons in the sense of article 84, section 1, subsection c of Law 3386 /2005, it suffices to present the residence permit that is issued in such cases according to the above-mentioned provision.

e. payslip or a copy of the income tax statement of the last fiscal year

f. social security number

g. a sum of seven hundred (700) Euros. In case of resubmission of the application for naturalisation the respective sum due is two hundred (200) Euros. Foreign nationals of Greek origin, citizens of Member States of the European Union as well as recognised political refugees and stateless persons should submit together with their application for naturalisation a sum of one hundred (100) Euros.

## Article 7

### Naturalisation Procedure

1. The authority of the Prefecture that is responsible for citizenship issues checks on the completeness of the application file and on the fulfilment of the typical conditions laid down in article 5. If the conditions are not met, the General Secretary of the Prefecture rejects the application.

2. In the event that the conditions laid down in article 5 are met, the competent authority of the Prefecture seeks the criminal record of the applicant and his or her non-deportation statement and through the police station of the place of residence of the applicant asks the competent security authorities of the Ministry of Citizen Protection whether there are any public or national security issues about the applicant justifying the rejection of his or her application. The security authorities should respond within four months, but, in any case, they can also forward their opinion directly to the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance at any stage of the procedure. The omission of the security authorities to send the opinion in good time does not inhibit the Minister from deciding on the issue.

3. If the deadline laid down in the above section has passed before response was given, the application for naturalisation is forwarded to the Naturalisation Committee to be discussed notwithstanding whether the security authorities have given an opinion. At the same time the competent authorities of the Prefecture invite the foreign national for interview with the Naturalisation Committee at a particular time and place. Through the same invitation the foreign national is asked to present to the Naturalisation Committee proofs for establishing that he or she speaks the Greek language as well as any other proofs that he or she considers to be useful for establishing that he or she meets the substantive conditions of the naturalisation.

4. The invitation for interview to the applicant should be proved by a relevant document. His or her absence from the interview is excused only in case of his or her objective incapacity to attend. In the event of unjustified absence the Minister rejects the application for naturalisation.

5. The Committee can organise a test according to the special conditions of the common Ministers' decision that is provided for in article 5A, section 3.

6. The Naturalisation Committee compiles a detailed document including the questions it asked and the respective replies of the persons who participated in the interview. Then the proposal of the Naturalisation Committee followed by the above-mentioned document and the case file is forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and is announced to the applicant who has the right to put in writing his or her objections about its content and send them to the Citizenship Council within a binding time limit of fifteen days. Detailed judgements and actual facts and proofs about issues of public or national security that are included in the body of the proposal are not announced to the interested party.

7. In the case that the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance has doubts about the correctness of the evaluation that is included in the proposal of the Naturalisation Committee, the Minister can send the case to the Citizenship Council that is provided for under Article 28 to give an opinion on it.

8. Foreign nationals of Greek origin who are in possession of residence title for foreign nationals of Greek origin are not invited for interview at the relevant Naturalisation Committee; the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance decides without the Committee's prior opinion except in cases that the Minister himself/herself forwards the relevant file to the Committee for the organisation of an interview and for Committee's opinion. A case is forwarded to the Committee by the Minister, particularly when there are doubts about whether the person seeking naturalisation as foreign national of Greek origin meets the substantive conditions of naturalisation.

#### Article 8

##### Naturalisation Decision – Justification

1. Naturalisation is granted by a decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance which is published in the Government Gazette.
2. The decision on the application for naturalisation is justified according to the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure.
3. The submission of a new application for naturalisation is permitted one year after the rejection of the previous application.

#### Article 9

##### Oath

1. Greek citizenship can be acquired following the oath of the foreign national which has to be taken within a year from the publication of the naturalisation decision in the Government Gazette. The naturalisation decision is revoked if the oath is not taken within the one-year time frame.
2. The oath to be taken is as follows: 'I swear to keep faith in the country, abide by the Constitution and the laws and fulfill conscientiously my duties as a Greek citizen.'

3. The oath is given before the General Secretary of the Prefecture. The oath can also be given before another authority, only if so instructed by the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance. The competent authority produces an official document on the oath-taking.

4. The oath of the present article is also taken by anyone who acquires the Greek Citizenship by declaration after he or she reaches the age of majority according to article 1A of the present Code, within one year after the declaration.

#### Article 10

##### Naturalisation of Foreign Nationals of Greek Origin who live abroad

1. The application for naturalisation of foreign nationals of Greek origin living abroad should be submitted to the Greek Consul of the area of residence of the applicant. The Greek Consul, in turn, forwards the application to the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance together with a report including all data that are necessary to establish that the applicant enjoys the status of foreign national of Greek origin. The following documents are submitted together with the application:

- a) A naturalisation statement that is given before the Greek Consul, in the presence of two Greek citizens acting as witnesses.
- b) Photocopy of passport or of any other travel document.
- c) Birth certificate, or in case that it cannot be provided, baptismal certificate.
- d) Criminal record issued by the foreign authorities.

2. The competent authority of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance after the examination of the file of the foreign national of Greek origin and following the opinion of the Ministry of Citizen Protection on matters concerning the public order and security, recommends to the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance to either accept or reject the application for naturalisation.

3. The provisions of articles 8 and 9 apply also to the naturalisations of this article.

#### Article 11

##### Acquisition of Greek citizenship by children of naturalised individuals

The children of a foreign national become Greek citizens, with no other formality, if at the time of the naturalisation of the foreign national they are minors and unmarried.

#### Article 12

##### Naturalisation Committee

1. A Naturalisation Committee is formed in each Prefecture. Each Committee consists of:

- a. The director of the relevant General Directorate of the Prefecture as the President.
- b. A member of the academic staff of an Institution of Higher Education based within the borders of the relevant Prefecture who specialises in Sociology, Psychology or relevant research areas. The member and his or her deputy are proposed by the competent administrative body of the respective Institution of Higher Education.

c. A civil servant of the Citizenship Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance. From 1 January 2011 this post is allocated to a representative of the body of second degree local administration whose Prefecture the city, where the naturalisation application has been submitted, belongs to. The representative and his or her deputy are designated by a two-thirds majority of the elected Council of the above-mentioned body. In case that the second-degree local authorities omit to designate their representative within three months after the end of the tenure of the prior composition, his or her post in the Committee is allocated for full tenure to a civil servant of the Citizenship Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

d. The head of the competent Directorate of the Prefecture and

e. A member that is designated together with his or her deputy by the National Commission for Human Rights according to its internal regulations.

2. The Committee is formed through decision of the General Secretary of the respective Prefecture. The same decision appoints the deputy President and the deputy members of the Committee, who are designated in the same way, as well as a civil servant of an administrative branch of the competent Directorate of the Prefecture who undertakes the duties of the secretary of the Committee and his or her deputy. The civil servant who handles the case participates in the Committee as advisor with no right to vote.

3. The tenure of the members of the Naturalisation Committee is two years.

4. A decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and the Minister of Finance determines the payment amount of the Committee members, the secretary and the advisor.

### Article 13

#### Honorary Naturalisation

A foreign national who has offered special services to Greece or if his or her naturalisation may serve the country's interest can be naturalised as a Greek citizen without the conditions of article 5, section 2 and of Articles 6, 7 and 8 by a Presidential decree, following the justified proposal of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

## **VI Special Circumstances for Acquiring Citizenship**

### Article 14

1. A child born before 8 May 1984 to a mother who was Greek at the time of the child's birth or at the time of the marriage to which this child was born can become a Greek citizen if he or she expresses his or her wish to the General Secretary of the Prefecture or to the Greek Consular authorities of the area of domicile or residence.

2. A child born to a Greek father and an alien mother before the enforcement of Law 1250/1982 (16/7/1982) can become a Greek citizen as long as he or she is considered legitimate in accordance with the provisions of article 7, section 3 of the above-

mentioned law, if he or she expresses his or her wish to the General Secretary of the Prefecture or to the Greek Consular authorities of the area of domicile or residence.

3. The acquisition of Greek citizenship under the conditions of the previous sections is confirmed by the decision of the General Secretary of the Prefecture.

4. The children of those acquiring Greek citizenship according to this article become Greek citizens without any other formalities if at the time of submission of the application the children are minors and unmarried.

#### Article 15

1. Foreign nationals of Greek origin residing in countries of the former Soviet Union may acquire Greek citizenship after submitting an application to the respective Greek Consulate if:

a) They are adults and

b) Greek citizenship cannot be established as defined by the terms and conditions of the Ankara and Lausanne Treaties.

2. Foreign nationals of Greek origin may acquire Greek citizenship, provided there are no 'restrictive' conditions, as mentioned in article 5, section 1, subsection b of the present law, according to a decision issued by the General Secretary of the Prefecture, which should also be published in the Government Gazette. A three-member committee, composed by the Greek Consul as president and two members opines on the status of the foreign national of Greek origin. The members of the committee are appointed by a decision of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Their payment is arranged by the same decision. The members of the committee should be Greek citizens. To establish the status of foreign national of Greek origin the above-mentioned committee interviews the interested party and evaluates any evidence presented by him or her to suggest that he or she enjoys that status.

3. The application along with the evidence submitted and the committee's opinion, mentioned in the previous paragraph regarding the status of the applicant as a foreign national of Greek origin, are sent by the respective Consulate to the local General Secretary of the Prefecture for the issuance of Greek citizenship. Before the issuance of said decision, a commentary note is issued by special committees which are formed by joint decision of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance, published in the Government Gazette. The same joint ministerial decision establishes the number of the committees, the payment of their members and secretary, their territorial competence and the way they operate. Following a proposal of the co-responsible Ministries, the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance names the members of the special committees. The most representative organisation of foreign citizens of Greek origin of the Prefecture appoints one member in each special committee. In case of difficulty in designating the most representative organisation, a representative proposed by the Board of the Council of Greeks Abroad becomes a member of the Committee. The special committees' role is to provide an additional opinion on the status of the foreign citizens of Greek origin who wish to obtain Greek citizenship, based on the

evidence forwarded by the Greek Consulate. The committees form their opinion by evaluating the interview given to the three-member committee of the previous section.

4. In order to acquire Greek citizenship foreign nationals of Greek origin should take an oath in the presence of a Greek Consul or the General Secretary of the Prefecture within one year after the publication of the decision of the General Secretary of the Prefecture in the Government Gazette. The oath is as follows: 'I swear to keep faith in the country, abide by the Constitution and the laws and fulfil conscientiously my duties as a Greek citizen'. The competent authority produces an official document on the oath-taking. Minors and unmarried children of said person become Greek citizens immediately after the oath and they all register with the records of males and city registries or municipal rolls, of the parent's preference, based on the information given by the above-mentioned decision of the General Secretary of the Prefecture. Any information not covered by the above-mentioned decision is supplemented with the submission of any other suitable proof.

## **Chapter B**

### **LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP**

#### Article 16

##### I. Loss of Greek Citizenship Due to Acquisition of Foreign Citizenship

1. The Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance may grant permission to an individual who wishes to renounce Greek citizenship, if a) he or she voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign state or b) took over a position in the public sector of a foreign state and by taking that position he or she would have to acquire the citizenship of that state. In exceptional cases permission is granted after the acquisition of the other citizenship; therefore, Greek citizenship is renounced following the granting of permission.

2. An individual who has acquired foreign citizenship can renounce Greek citizenship provided that the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance accepts an application for the renunciation of Greek citizenship. In this case, renunciation of Greek citizenship is effective from the date of the acceptance of the application.

3. The granting of the permission mentioned in paragraph 1 and the acceptance of the application mentioned in section 2 are done following the opinion of the Citizenship Council. Neither the permission will be granted nor will the application be accepted, if the applicant has not completed or delays his military obligations or is prosecuted for felony or misdemeanour.

#### Article 17

##### II. Loss of Greek Citizenship Due to Revocation

1. Greek citizenship can be revoked in the following cases:

a) If the individual takes over a position in the public sector of a foreign country and the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance invites him or her to

abstain from that office, as opposed to the country's interests, within a defined period of time, but he or she abides by it, and

b) If during his or her stay in a foreign country, the individual acted for the interests of the foreign country, unyielding to his or her status as a Greek citizen and contrary to the interests of Greece.

2. The revocation mentioned in the previous section is announced with the decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance following a justified concurrent opinion of the Citizenship Council. The loss of citizenship comes after the publication of this decision in the Government Gazette.

3. One's loss of citizenship due to revocation according to this article is personal and does not affect the citizenship of his or her spouse and children.

#### Article 18

##### III. Loss of Greek Citizenship Due to Declaration of Renunciation

Renunciation of Greek citizenship is permitted provided that the interested party is an adult, declares that he or she has no connection with the country and he or she resides abroad. For the renunciation a written declaration has to be submitted before the Greek Consul at the Greek Consulate of his or her place of residence together with an application to the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance. The application is approved with a decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance following an opinion of the Citizenship Council and it is published in the Government Gazette. Loss of citizenship is taken as from the day of the approval of the application.

#### Article 19

##### IV. Loss of Greek Citizenship for Children of Foreign Nationals who Acquired It by Declaration or Naturalisation of their Parents

1. Children of foreign nationals who became Greek citizens before reaching the age of majority by a common declaration of their parents according to the provisions of article A1, sections 1 and 2 or by naturalisation of their parent according to article 11 may renounce Greek Citizenship by submitting a relevant declaration and application to the Mayor of the city that they are registered at or, in case they reside abroad, to the Greek consulate authorities of their place of permanent domicile within one year after they reach the age of majority. A copy of the declaration and the application is forwarded without further consideration to the respective Prefecture and the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

2. For the renunciation of Greek Citizenship a decision of accepting the application is issued by the General Secretary of the Prefecture within one month after the receipt of the relevant file. The decision is published in the Government Gazette.

3. The application is rejected, in the event that through acceptance of the application the applicant would become stateless.

#### Article 20

##### V. Loss of Greek Citizenship Due to Adoption by a Foreign National

A Greek citizen who was adopted before reaching the age of majority by a foreign national may, after the application of the adoptee, if bearing the citizenship of the adoptee, renounce his or her Greek citizenship. This can only occur with the approval of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance, who evaluates the special circumstances following an opinion of the Citizenship Council. The application can not be accepted if the adopted person has not completed or delays his military obligations or is prosecuted for felony or misdemeanour.

#### Article 21

#### VI. Loss of Citizenship Through Declaration Due to Marriage to a Greek Citizen

A foreign national who acquired Greek citizenship through marriage to a Greek citizen and maintains foreign citizenship, renounces Greek citizenship if she declares her relevant intention to the General Secretary of the Prefecture or to the Greek Consulate in her place of domicile or residence. For the loss of Greek Citizenship the General Secretary of the local Prefecture issues a recognition decision.

### **Chapter C**

#### **REACQUISITION OF GREEK CITIZENSHIP**

#### Article 22

A Greek citizen who has lost her Greek Citizenship due to her marriage to a foreign national reacquires it, provided she declares her relevant intention to the General Secretary of the Prefecture or to the Greek Consulate in her place of domicile or residence.

#### Article 23

A child born by a Greek mother that lost his or her Greek Citizenship because of legitimation or recognition by a foreign father reacquires his or her Greek Citizenship, provided he or she declares his or her relevant intention to the General Secretary of the Prefecture or to the Greek Consulate in his or her place of domicile or residence. Children of those who acquire Greek Citizenship according to this article become Greek citizens if on the day of the declaration they are minors and unmarried.

#### Article 24

The reacquisition of Greek Citizenship according to the previous articles is determined through a decision of the General Secretary of the local Prefecture.

### **Chapter D**

#### **COMPETENCE IN CITIZENSHIP ISSUES AND PROOF OF GREEK CITIZENSHIP**

## Article 25

1. All citizenship issues fall under the competence of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

2. The acquisition of Greek Citizenship by individuals seeking to have their citizenship arranged in accordance with the present code, the pre-existing relevant provisions and international agreements and treaties, is determined through a decision of the General Secretary of the local Prefecture,

3. Through a presidential decree that is issued on the proposal of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and the Finance Minister and an opinion of the General Secretary of the Prefecture, citizenship directorates and citizenship departments can be created in each Prefecture and in each district of the Prefecture respectively. Citizenship directorates and citizenship departments count as authorities of the Prefecture. The same decree designates their seat, the structure of their organic units, the competence allocation among them, the number of their members, the qualifications of their personnel, as well as the branches from which the heads of their units are selected and regulates any relevant issue. Particularly in the Prefecture of Attica and the Prefecture of Central Macedonia the citizenship directorates to be created can be up to three and two respectively; their territorial competence is regulated through the same presidential decree.

4. Every year the Prefectures send to the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance statistical data referring to the acquisition and loss of citizenship on any basis that falls within their area of competence. These data are collected till the end of March of the next year; they are published on the website of the Ministry and include:

- a. date of birth,
- b. gender,
- c. family status,
- d. place of residence,
- e. period of residence in Greece,
- f. legal basis of acquisition
- g. previous citizenship.

## Article 26

### Jurisdiction Over Disputed Citizenship Cases

The Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance is exclusively responsible to rule on any controversies over citizenship following a justified concurring opinion of the Citizenship Council. The decision is summarised in the Government Gazette and the individual concerned is notified.

## Article 27

### Greek Citizenship Certificates

1. Mayors and Presidents of Communities issue Greek Citizenship Certificates to resident citizens according to the municipal or city registry where the legal grounds of the acquisition of citizenship are mentioned.

2. The above-mentioned certificates verify Greek Citizenship until proven otherwise.

#### Article 28

##### Citizenship Council

1. The Citizenship Council

a. decides:

aa. objections that are submitted by applicants against the proposal of the Naturalisation Committee or

ab. on a case that is sent to it by the Minister for an opinion on the proposal of the Naturalisation Committee,

b. gives opinions on citizenship issues

2. The Citizenship Council is formed through decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance and comprises the following members:

a. an emeritus member of the Council of State as President,

b. the General Secretary of Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance,

c. a member of the Legal Council of the State,

d. a professor or an assistant professor of Private International Law as well as a professor or an assistant professor of Public International Law or of Constitutional Law at a Greek Institution of Higher Education,

e. the head of the Citizenship Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

The members of the Council who are absent are supplanted by their assigned or lawful deputies.

3. The head of the competent Department of the Citizenship Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance, who is replaced by his or her lawful deputy when he or she is absent, participates in the Council without right to vote as advisor.

4. The provisions of Articles 13-15 of Law 2690/1999 (Government Gazette 45 A) apply to and regulate the operation of the Citizenship Council.

## Chapter E

### TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

#### Article 29

##### Foreign National

The term ‘foreign national’, when used in law, refers also to stateless persons, if the law does not entail the contrary.

#### Article 30

Marriage does not entail the acquisition or loss of Greek Citizenship.

## Article 31 Time Frames

1. For naturalisation the following special time frames, starting from the submission of the application, are issued:
  - a. six months from the submission of the application for naturalisation to the Prefecture to the invitation of the applicant for interview before the Naturalisation Committee. Within that period the competent authority of the Prefecture should look for the supporting documents that are mentioned in article 7, section 2, subsection a as well as for the opinion of the competent security authorities of the Ministry of Citizen Protection. If the application for naturalisation is not complete, the time frame starts from the time of completion of the relevant file or from the resubmission of the application in full. Any delay in the forwarding of the sought supporting documents does not suspend the examination of the file.
  - b. four months from the invitation of the applicant for interview to the submission of the opinion of the Committee to the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.
  - c. two months for the relevant ministerial decision to be made and published in the Government Gazette.
2. As for the application for determination of citizenship the time frame is eighteen months from the submission of the application to the time that the decision is made.
3. If the procedure cannot be completed within the above-mentioned time frames, the competent authority notifies the applicant, in writing, of the reasons for the delay. The relevant document is also forwarded to the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance who may order the prioritisation of the procedure within the prescribed time frame.
4. The above-mentioned time frames as well as the whole naturalisation procedure are suspended through criminal trials for crimes punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term exceeding one year as well as for other crimes of which condemnation constitutes obstacle to naturalisation. The submission of objections to the Citizenship Council by the applicant and the forwarding of the case to the Citizenship Council by the Minister also have suspensive effect.

## Article 32

1. Presidential decrees regulate
  - a) issues relevant to proofs about the reasons for the revocation of Greek Citizenship according to Article 17 and the relevant procedure.
  - b) any details that are necessary for the application of the present Code.
2. Old decrees continue to be valid and apply till the decrees mentioned in the above paragraph come into force, as long as their content does not contravene the provisions of the present Code.
3. The supporting documents that should be attached to the declaration and application for registration to the City Registry that is provided for in article 1A of the present Code as well as any other relevant issue about the application of its provisions

are regulated by decision of the Minister of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance.

### Article 33 Naturalisation

Applications for naturalisation that are still pending when this Code comes into force and have been filed together with the necessary supporting documents are examined according to the old provisions.

### Article 34 Revoked Provisions

The Legislative Decree 3370/1955 ‘On the ratification of the Greek Citizenship Code’ (Government Gazette 258/A), as amended and completed, and any other provision of the current legislation that does either contradict the provisions of the present Code or applies to issues regulated by the present Code are revoked.

### Article 35 Provisions Remaining In Effect

The following provisions remain in effect: a) article 40 of Law 1832/1989 ‘Amendment and completion of legislation for the local municipalities, the decentralisation and other provisions’ (Government Gazette 54/A), b) article 1, section 11 of Law 2790/2000 ‘Protection of returning foreign nationals of Greek origin from the former Soviet Union and other provisions’ (Government Gazette 24/A), c) article 59, section 1, subsection b and article 76, section 6 of Law 2910/2001 ‘Entry and residence of foreign nationals in Greece, Acquisition of the Greek citizenship by naturalisation and other provisions’ (Government Gazette 91/A), and d) article 8, section 5 of Law 3146/2003 ‘Regulation and exercise of the right to vote of citizens of other Cities and other provisions’ (Government Gazette 125/A).

---

### Note on translation

Translation by:  
Haris Psarras  
PhD Student  
School of Law  
University of Edinburgh  
Old College  
South Bridge  
Edinburgh EH8 9YL  
UK  
charalampos.psarras@ed.ac.uk

Commissioned by:  
EUDO-Citizenship Observatory  
[www.eudo-citizenship.eu](http://www.eudo-citizenship.eu)