

Co-determination & naturalisation

Would you like to have a say in Switzerland? Would you like to play an active role in society? In many forms, this is also possible without a Swiss passport. You will receive full political rights upon naturalization.

Co-determination and active shaping

In the Canton of St.Gallen, foreigners are not allowed to vote or elect a person.

But you have the right to submit petitions to the authorities. Petitions may contain suggestions, complaints, or requests. In addition, it is possible to participate in commissions and working groups of the municipality of residence.

In addition to political participation, you can actively shape life in your environment by working in an association or other organization. Get involved where your interests lie!

Here are some examples of where you can get involved:

- Integration projects
- Genossenschaften (🔗 Cooperative for the promotion or safeguarding of certain economic interests of the members. All members have a common practical or ideological goal and every vote counts equally.)
- Clubs
- Family Centers
- Cultural Organizations
- Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Municipal commissions and working groups

Naturalisation

Naturalisation is the last step on the way to integration into life in Switzerland. If you are naturalized, you can vote and be elected.

Switzerland recognises **dual** citizenship. If you apply for Swiss citizenship, you do not lose your previous citizenship, unless your country of origin does not allow dual citizenship.

Naturalization procedure

There is the **ordinary** naturalization procedure and the **facilitated** naturalization procedure. The latter is mainly intended for people who have Swiss family members.

Ordinary naturalization

Who can submit an application?

- Holders of a permanent residence permit (C permit).
- Persons who live in a registered partnership with a Swiss citizen.

When can an application be submitted?

Federal law requires at least 10 years of residence in Switzerland. Of these, you must have lived in Switzerland for 3 years during the last 5 years before submitting the application.

The length of time someone between the ages of 8 and 18 has lived in Switzerland counts twice, but the actual stay must be at least 6 years.

Furthermore, the applicant must have lived continuously in the canton of St.Gallen and in the political municipality for the last 5 years.

Under what conditions?

Citizenship is only granted to persons who:

- participate in economic life or acquire education
- promote the integration of family members
- know the local living conditions well (show interest in public events, know about the geographical, historical, political and social conditions)
- respect the values of the Federal Constitution and expressly commit themselves to them
- do not jeopardise Switzerland's internal and external security
- have a good knowledge of German, at least the reference level B1 (oral and written)
- live in orderly financial circumstances

How much does ordinary naturalization cost?

The costs vary considerably depending on the municipality and canton. On average, the cost looks something like this:

Municipality: between 500 and 1000 francs per person

Canton: up to 2000 francs per person

Federal level:

- Couple with or without minor children: 150 francs
- Individual with or without minor children: 100 francs
- Minor individual: 50 francs

There may be additional costs for the required documents (confirmation of residence, extract from criminal records, [Betreibungsregisterauszug](#) (?), [This document shows whether you have ever had or still have debts](#)), etc.).

What do you need to do?

You can obtain an application form from the naturalisation council of the municipality of residence. You must then submit the required documents in full to the naturalization authority of your municipality.

The Naturalisation Council examines the application with regard to the formal and substantive requirements for naturalisation. If you meet all the conditions, you will be granted municipal and local citizenship.

There are naturalisation authorities that will take a written or oral test with you in which you will test your knowledge of Switzerland.

A naturalization procedure can take very different lengths of time, ask at the municipal office.

Facilitated naturalization

Who can submit an application?

- the spouse of a Swiss citizen
- the child of a Swiss citizen
- a person under the age of 25 from a foreign family living in 3. Generation living in Switzerland
- a minor stateless child
- a person who has lost his or her Swiss citizenship (e.g. by marrying a foreign person)

When can an application be submitted?

The length of stay in Switzerland varies from case to case. The federal authority is responsible for the decision.

Under what conditions?

To do this, they must be successfully integrated, which means:

- You observe public safety and order (e.g. you have no tax arrears, no debt collections, no loss certificates or no criminal records)
- They respect the values of the Swiss Federal Constitution
- in everyday life, you will be able to communicate in a national language, both written and spoken
- You participate in economic life or the acquisition of education (e.g. you have not received any social assistance in the last 3 years before the application is submitted or you have reimbursed the social assistance received in full)
- promote and support the integration of your family members

How much does facilitated naturalization cost?

The cost varies depending on age:

- CHF 250 for minors under 12 years of age
- CHF 650 for minors aged 12 and over
- 900 francs for adults.

The total amount must be paid in advance and will not be refunded if the application is rejected.

What do you need to do?

The application must be submitted to the [Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM](#) (© State Secretariat for Migration) on the official form. You can request the form by [e-mail \(ch@sem.admin.ch\)](mailto:ch@sem.admin.ch) and you must provide your exact postal address to which the form should be sent.

A process of facilitated naturalization takes an average of 1.5 years.

[Information on naturalisation in the Canton of St.Gallen](#)

[Information on naturalisation from the State Secretariat for Migration SEM](#)

Contact points

Find the right contact point, advice or authority in your area: [Contact points](#)

