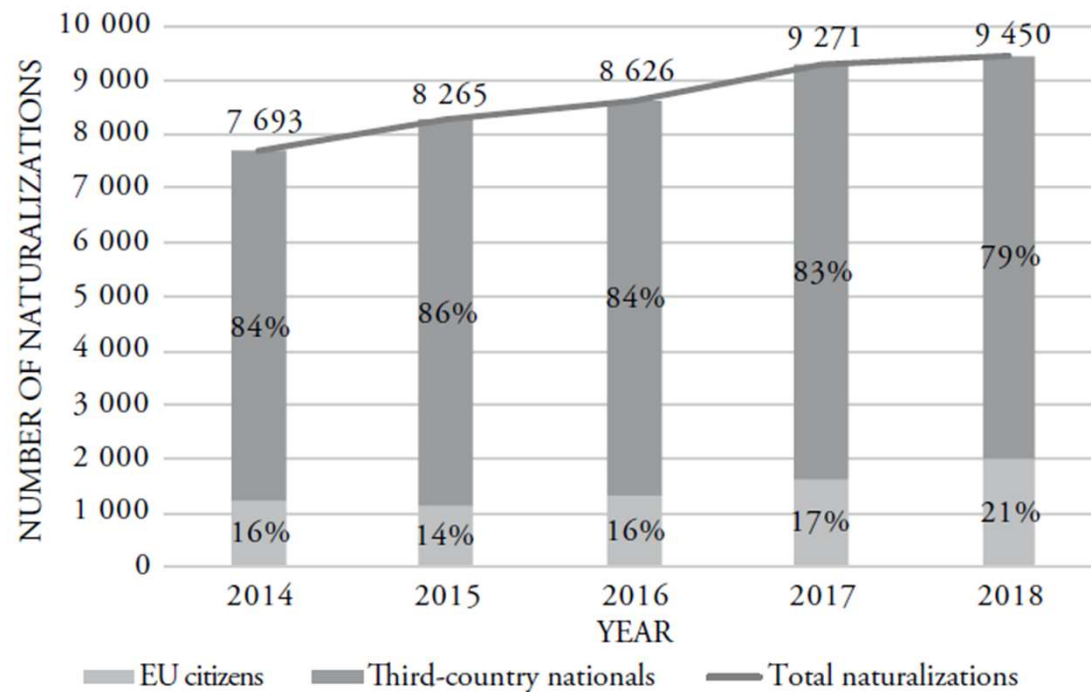


Pathways to Citizenship for Foreigners in Austria

Martin Stiller
November 26, 2020

Statistics on naturalizations

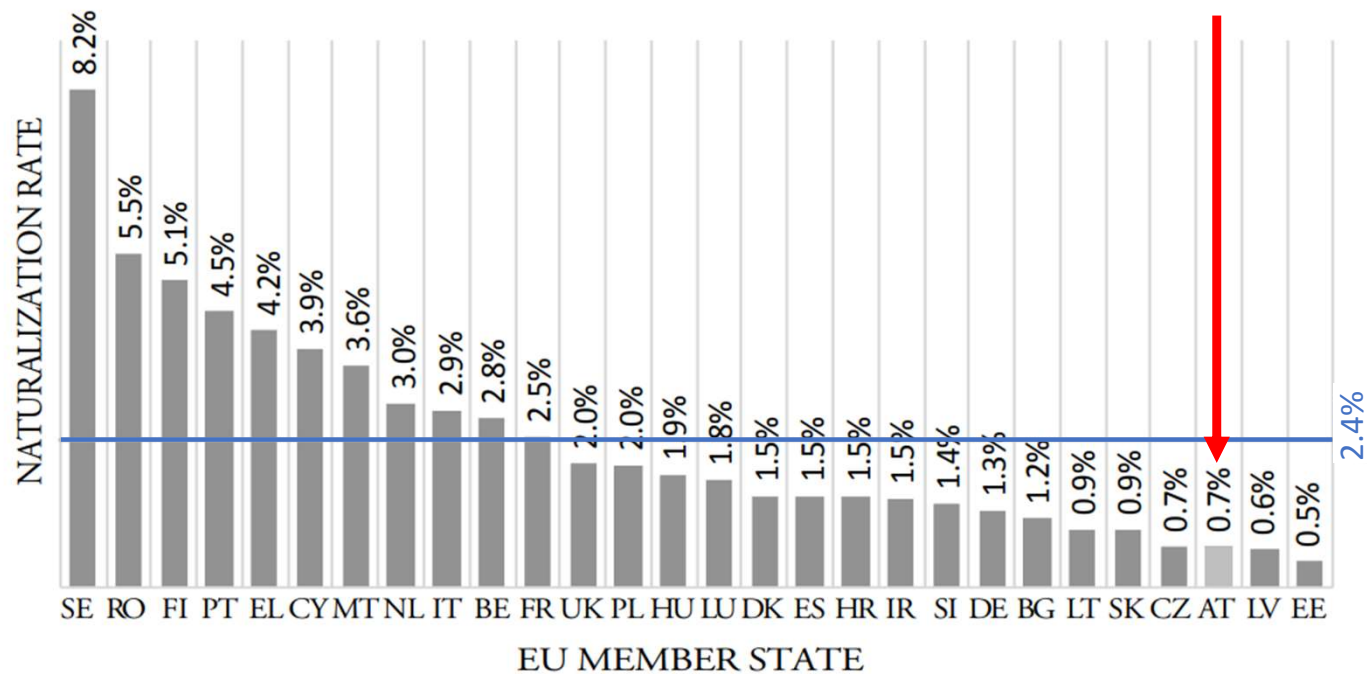
Naturalizations in Austria between 2014 and 2018, disaggregated by nationality (absolute)



Source: Statistics Austria, 2019a, exported on 2 October 2019, representation by author.

Statistics on naturalizations

Naturalization rate in EU Member States in 2017



Source: Eurostat 2019a, exported on 17 October 2019, representation by author.

Statistics on naturalizations

- Increasing naturalization numbers
- Low naturalization rate
- Why?

Statutory background

Austria's Citizenship Act

- Establishes restrictive naturalization regime
- Provides a large number of different reasons for naturalization
- Applies somewhat different rules and requirements to different scenarios

Requirements for naturalization

Among others:



Proficiency in German



Basic knowledge of the democratic system and related historical aspects



Means of subsistence



Minimum stay in Austria (lawful, uninterrupted)



Payment of federal and provincial fees

Proficiency in German



- Naturalization is the end point and goal of successful integration
- Supreme Administrative Court: legislators had established proficiency in German as a “milestone” for integration
- Since 2011: naturalization requires language proficiency level B1

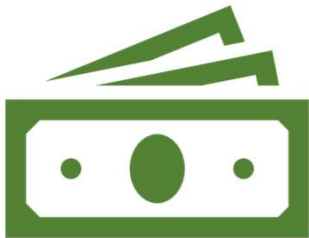
Proficiency in German



- Deviations:
 - **no** language requirement for naturalizations in the special interests of the Republic of Austria
 - **B2-level German proficiency**, therefore shortening the minimum residence requirement
- Improvement assumed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior
- No evaluation whether language skills actually improved

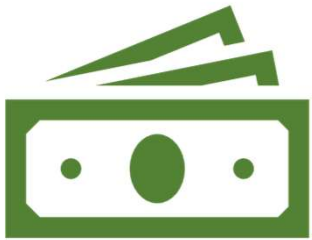
Means of subsistence

- Naturalization requires “adequately secure” means of subsistence
 - Own fixed and regular income that allows the person to lead a life without requiring social assistance
- For applications submitted in 2019: monthly amount of about EUR 900
- **Not required** for naturalization in the special interests of the Republic of Austria

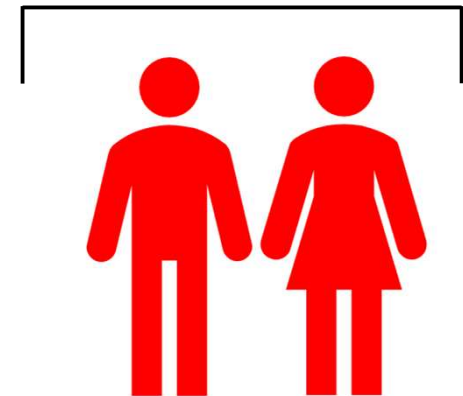


Means of subsistence

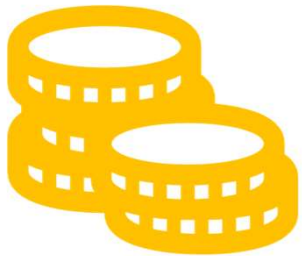
- 2017: single person applying for citizenship needed a minimum annual net amount of approximately EUR 13 200 to meet the statutory requirement for an adequate secure means of subsistence.



over 30 per cent



Payment of federal and provincial fees



- Fees and charges in Austria are among the highest anywhere in Europe
- For adults the following fees apply:

Application fee
EUR 125.60

Federal fee
EUR 867.40

Provincial fee
EUR 52 up to EUR 1,357

Duration of the procedure

- Specified periods for decision making



- Minors below the age of 14 who are to be adopted by an Austrian citizen: six weeks from the date of application

Duration of the procedure

- Specified periods for decision making
 - Minors below the age of 14 who are to be adopted by an Austrian citizen: six weeks from the date of application
 - Other cases: decision without undue delay and by no later than six months after receipt of applications



Dual citizenship

- In general: no naturalization of individuals holding one or more foreign nationalities
- Exceptions seem possible in certain cases

Austrian citizenship and...



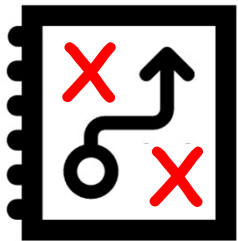
no political will



possibility was considered

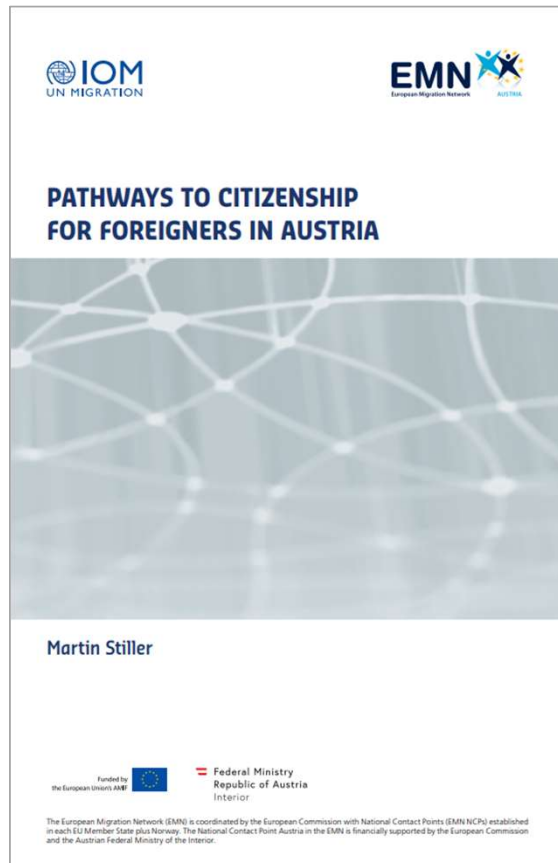


actively promoted



- Naturalization is seen as the end point of successful integration
 1. Show progress in integration
 2. Citizenship is granted (“a sort of reward”)
- Essential political rights (voting) are connected to citizenship
- “Deficiency in representation” is political challenge to democracy

Further reading



- Pathways to Citizenship for Foreigners in Austria
- Available at www.emn.at

Thank you for your attention!

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in the European Migration Network**

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The European Migration Network (EMN) is coordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points (EMN NCPs) established in each EU Member State plus Norway. The National Contact Point Austria in the EMN is financially supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.