



The Polish Citizenship Confirmation procedure is one of three ways of securing Polish Citizenship – which is also European citizenship. The other two are by Presidential grant and by residency. As the grant has, especially today, a very low success rate, and residency is most often brushed aside due to the many requirements linked to it, the confirmation approach is the most efficient way to secure a Polish-European citizenship. The only requirement is establishing Polish ancestry in accordance with the law.

Polish Citizenship by descent is a birth right – one just has to be aware of the possible loss of citizenship due to various legal regulations being in force in the 20th century. Navigating these regulations can be quite a challenge, as you saw from this flow chart.

This is why most applicants choose the assistance of a Polish-based firm that assist with building the dossier for application. They employ specialists who not only know each of the citizenship laws (1920, 1951, 1962 and 2012) from memory, but also are familiar with all recent judicial decisions that could have a serious impact on the final decision made by the clerk working for the government. Such knowledge is developed in the course of dealing with hundreds of applications, each with different documents and family histories.

### **Who Can Apply for Polish Citizenship?**

The theory behind Polish citizenship is that it is automatically inherited by children from their parents – the so-called Rule of Blood (*Ius Sanguinis*). This means that your family could still hold Polish citizenship after many generations without living in or visiting Poland, knowing the Polish language, or even confirming the citizenship previously.

Polish citizenship was introduced on the 20th of January 1920, as Poland only regained independence in November of 1918. Before that, there was neither a Polish state nor Polish citizenship. If you are interested in this method of confirmation of citizenship, it is necessary to make sure your ancestors either emigrated after January of 1920 or while abroad reported to the Polish Consulate to claim their newly established Polish citizenship. Failure in these regards almost certainly nullifies the citizenship link.

So, anyone with Polish roots can investigate and apply for citizenship, but first it is necessary to determine if the line of citizenship might have been broken at some point. Establishing the timeline and family line back to Poland, and do so in accordance with the rules by which to claim citizenship, requires genealogical investigation to obtain the appropriate records and documents by which to prove continuity.

### **Polish Citizenship Confirmation Documents**

Presenting proof of ancestors being Polish citizens is the most important step. This requires an original document issued by the Polish central or local government that either states citizenship or confirms residency. It could be old and expired – even better if it is! It just has to prove one of your ancestors held citizenship in the past or lived permanently in Poland which up to 1945 was almost always equal to having citizenship. If such documentation cannot be found in the family archives, we are here to help. Many state archives in Poland still possess the right documents to prove citizenship status: population censuses, domicile records, tax and military records, voter lists, indexes and questionnaires related to old Polish passports and IDs.

As pre-war Poland reached far into present-day Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania, sometimes there is a need to approach archives there. Most of the records were not transferred between Eastern Bloc countries when the borders changed in 1945. For Lwów, Stanisławów, Nowogródek and Wilno records, which were populous cities of the Second Polish Republic, one must look outside the modern Polish borders, while still proving Polish Citizenship and not Ukrainian, Belarusian or Lithuanian citizenship.

### **Final Steps of Confirming Citizenship**

If the loss of citizenship did not happen and the main proof is ready, the journey forward becomes much less intimidating. Citizenship application, consisting of gathered documentation and filled-in government forms,

is brought forward. At the same time, birth and marriage (for married applicants) records are registered in Poland because each name change and marital status change has to be registered. The process is quite time consuming, mostly on the part of the Polish government, and in current conditions can take six months; but once the review is completed the Polish Citizenship Certificate is issued. It is final proof that one is a citizen of Poland, and consequently, of the EU.

With this document, the remaining steps become a formality, as no one can deny you a Polish passport. The certificate, along with registered vital records and filled-in PESEL and passport forms, can be exchanged for the passport at any Polish consulate. If you are using professional help, your proxy can fill those forms for you; you only need to sign them. You can choose the consulate that is closest to you; just remember you must collect the passport at the same consulate 4 to 5 weeks later. It also has to be the Consulate General and not an Honorary Consulate, which deals only with matters connected to the Culture and Heritage of Poland. Having the Polish/EU passport in your hands is a moment for celebration. You can now enjoy all the privileges reserved for European citizens!

### **A Final Note: Presidential Grant**

If you do not fit the requirements of the Polish Citizenship by descent – Confirmation of Polish Citizenship – you can always aim at the presidential grant. The president of Poland has special powers allowing him to grant citizenship to any person. The decision is completely arbitrary, so the applicant does not necessarily even have to have Polish ancestry or meet requirements put forward by other methods. It is generally advised to present a strong connection to the Polish state or nation in the forms of letters of recommendation, proof of working with or for Polish NGOs, affidavits from notable Polish public figures etc. Knowledge of the Polish language is definitely a strong point too. It is best understood as a Public Relations case – the better your connection to “Polishness”, the better your chances. Regardless, it takes about 2 years to be processed by the presidential chancery and you cannot ask for follow-ups or updates. If rejected, you cannot ask for the legal basis, as this is a presidential power and the application can be rejected without providing a reason.