

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002092/24
to the Commission
Christine Anderson (ESN)
(16 October 2024)**

Subject: Granting citizenship and ‘golden passports’ in the EU

The recently revealed attempts to fast-track the naturalisation of the Turkish journalist Can Dündar, a process which the Green party in the German parliament ⁽¹⁾ have been found to have manipulated, raises serious questions about the integrity of naturalisation procedures in the EU. While the sovereignty of Member States to determine their own naturalisation rules is highly important, the potential effects of dubious naturalisation practices on the Union as a whole are a matter of concern.

1. What information does the Commission have on similar cases of manipulative political influence on naturalisation procedures in other Member States?
2. To what extent does the Commission see the free movement of people granted via ‘golden passports’ or politically motivated naturalisations to individuals as a risk that could jeopardise the security of the Union?
3. How does the Commission intend to support the Member States in ensuring integrity in naturalisation procedures without impinging upon their national sovereignty?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Reynders on behalf of the European Commission
(29 November 2024)**

According to settled case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU, it is for each Member State, having due regard to international law, to lay down the conditions for the acquisition and loss of its nationality ⁽¹⁾. In situations covered by EU law, Member States’ rules in the sphere of nationality must, however, have due regard also to EU law ⁽²⁾. The conditions and procedures for obtaining citizenship of the Member States are thus regulated by the national law of each Member State, subject to due respect for EU law.

When exercising their prerogative to grant citizenship, it is the Member States’ responsibility to ensure that all requirements for naturalisation are actually met and that the applicable security and criminality checks have been carried out.

The Commission considers that the operation of investor citizenship schemes, that is, the systematic granting of EU citizenship in return for pre-determined payments or investments without a genuine link to the naturalising Member State, is contrary to EU law on EU citizenship and the principle of sincere cooperation.

The Commission has taken action against all Member States operating or having operated investor citizenship schemes. In particular, the Commission launched, in October 2020, infringement proceedings against Cyprus and Malta ⁽³⁾. On 21 March 2023, the Commission referred Malta — the only Member State that continues to operate an investor citizenship scheme — to the Court of Justice regarding its investor citizenship scheme ⁽⁴⁾. The Court case ⁽⁵⁾ against Malta is still pending before the Court of Justice.

Based on the current case-law of the Court of Justice in the area of nationality, the Commission does not generally collect information on naturalisations granted by the Member States.

¹ <https://www.nius.de/politik/news/wie-claudia-roth-und-die-gruenen-einen-deutschen-pass-fuer-einen-journalisten-beschaffen-wollten-der-fuer-correctiv-arbeitet/812de464-c801-411f-8e96-195725141dae>

⁽¹⁾ See judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Cases *Micheletti and Others v Delegación del Gobierno en Cantabria*, C-369/90, ECLI:EU:C:1992:295; *Kaur*, C-192/99, ECLI:EU:C:2001:106, para. 19; *Rottmann*, C-135/08, ECLI:EU:C:2010:104, para. 39; *Tjebbes and Others*, C-221/17, ECLI:EU:C:2019:189, para. 30; *V.M.A.*, C-490/20, ECLI:EU:C:2021:1008, para. 38; *Wiener Landesregierung*, C-118/20, ECLI:EU:C:2022:34, para. 37.

⁽²⁾ C-135/08, *Rottmann*, para. 41 and 45; C-221/17, *Tjebbes and Others*, para. 32; *V.M.A.*, C-490/20, ECLI:EU:C:2021:1008, para. 38; C-118/20, *Wiener Landesregierung*, para. 37.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1925

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/pt/ip_22_5422; Case C-181/23, *Commission v Malta*.

⁽⁵⁾ Case C-181/23 <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?language=en&jur=C%2CT%2CF&num=C-181/23&parties=&dates=error&docnodecision=docnodecision&allcommjo=allcommjo&affint=affint&affclose=affclose&alldocrec=alldocrec&docdecision=docdecision&docor=docor&docav=docav&docsom=docsom&docinf=docinf&alldocnrec=alldocnrec&docnoor=docnoor&docppoag=docppoag&radtypeord=on&newform=newform&docj=docj&docop=docop&docnoj=docnoj&typeord=ALL&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100&Submit=Rechercher>