

## IMMIGRANT NATURALIZATION IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

### Policy Changes, Practical Obstacles and Research Challenges

The Danish Institute for Human Rights invites you to a research symposium on naturalization

**Date:** Tuesday 19 June 2018

**Time:** 12:00 – 17:30 hrs.

**Place:** Danish Institute for Human Rights

**Location:** Wilders Plads 8 K, 1403 Copenhagen K - Nordskov, 3. floor

In the wake of the European refugee crisis and the influx of migrants into European countries, migrant integration is at the top of the political agenda. The acquisition of citizenship through naturalization, in this context, is often an important event in the process of settling in a new country. Obtaining a passport, and hence the citizenship of a host country, provides for migrants a secure residence status, rights, and participation opportunities. Besides, it may encourage a sense of belonging.

Yet, politicians and voters have different views on whether citizenship should be regarded as a reward for a successfully completed integration or, by contrast, as an incentive to reach this goal. As a result, the conditions under which citizenship can be acquired vary significantly between countries and have, moreover, changed often over time within individual countries. For example, whereas Sweden liberalized the access to citizenship already in 2001 by accepting dual citizenship, Denmark only accepted dual citizenship in 2015 and the Netherlands is currently considering following these Nordic examples. In terms of residence requirements, in both the Netherlands and Sweden immigrants are eligible for ordinary naturalization after five years, whereas this citizenship can only be acquired after nine years in Denmark. In all three countries, different rules exist for family members, stateless persons and, in Denmark and Sweden, also for Nordic citizens. Moreover, whereas in Sweden – apart from the absence of a criminal record – citizenship is virtually unconditional upon other requirements, both Denmark and the Netherlands have instituted language and civic integration requirements since the early 2000s. Finally, income requirements, fees and administrative discretion may impose additional obstacles in the road to becoming a citizenship and acquiring the rights attached to that status.

In this research symposium, we discuss how these varying and changing requirements affect immigrant naturalization in these three countries: Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. We discuss available evidence about the (changing) number of naturalizations since the late 1990s, reflect on insights about practical obstacles to citizenship from a migrant perspective and consider the opportunities and constraints of researching these important questions based on population register data which are uniquely available in these three countries.

## PROGRAMME

**12:00 – 13:00 hrs.** Registration with coffee and light lunch

**13:00 – 13:15 hrs.** Welcome

Eva Ersbøll, senior researcher, Danish Institute for Human Rights

**13:15 – 14:30 hrs.** Immigrant naturalization in Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, 1997-2016: the differentiated effects of institutional change

Maarten Vink, professor, Maastricht University / Malmö University  
Followed by plenary discussion

**14:30 – 15:30 hrs.** Obstacles to citizenship: practitioners' perspectives

Christian Friis Bach, Secretary General, the Danish Refugee Council  
Followed by plenary discussion

**15:30 – 16:00 hrs.** Coffee break

**16:00 – 17:30 hrs.** Researching immigrant naturalization with register-data: opportunities and challenges

Pieter Bevelander, professor, Malmö University  
Anna Tegunimataka, associated senior lecturer, Lund University  
Floris Peters, postdoctoral researcher, Maastricht University

**17:30 hrs.** Conclusion

Eva Ersbøll, Danish Institute for Human Rights

## REGISTRATION

Please register for the symposium by writing an email to [emre@humanrights.dk](mailto:emre@humanrights.dk).

Deadline: June 12. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

## CONTACT

If you have any questions, please contact student assistant Emilie Refsgaard, Tlf (+45) 91325778 or [emre@humanrights.dk](mailto:emre@humanrights.dk)

*This research symposium is co-organized by the Danish Institute Human Rights, the Guest Professorship in Memory of Willy Brandt at the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM) at Malmö University and the research project 'Migrant Life Course and Legal Status Transitions' (MiLifeStatus) at Maastricht University, funded by the European Research Council (grant no.*

