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QNI Quality of
Nationality
Index

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EXPERT COMMENTARY

EU Citizenship

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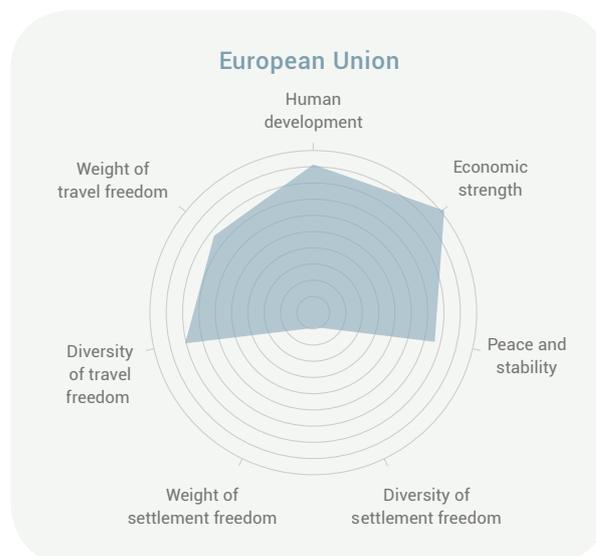
EU Citizenship



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Although the EU is not a state, it boasts a citizenship like many others, established more than 20 years ago by the Treaty of Maastricht. This citizenship allows the Union to distinguish between 'European citizens' and foreigners, termed 'third-country nationals' in contemporary Euro-speak. By law, every national of each of the EU's (still) 28 Member States is a citizen of the Union. EU citizens enjoy an array of crucially important rights, including residence, work and non-discrimination in the territory of all the members of the Union, as well as some political rights, including participation in European Parliament elections and municipal elections in any of the Member States where they chose to reside.



As the biggest economy in the world, boasting very high levels of Human Development, the EU can legitimately be expected to be home to the best nationalities in the world – and it is. EU citizenship has steadily occupied one of the leading places among the nationalities of Very High Quality in the QNI ranking, consistently placed right alongside US citizenship and above those of Australia, Canada and Japan. Only citizenships of the European Economic Area – countries not included in the EU but enjoying full access to the EU territory for settlement and work without any prior authorizations – score higher than the US and EU citizenships. Indeed, were the individual EU nationalities excluded from the QNI (since these are component parts of EU citizenship, just as the citizenships of, say, Utah and Vermont are parts of the normative package of US citizenship¹), EU citizenship would then end up in the top 10 of the world, right below Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein and the US, steadily occupying the sixth place in the world.



QNI Ranking of Top 10 Nationalities with all the Individual EU Member States Excluded

2015			2016		
1.	Norway	81.7	1.	Iceland	81.3
2.	Iceland	81.6	2.	Norway	81.0
3.	Switzerland	80.7	3.	Switzerland	79.6
4.	Liechtenstein	80.0	4.	Liechtenstein	78.8
5.	US	63.5	5.	US	68.8
6.	EU	62.7	6.	EU	63.0
7.	Japan	56.2	7.	Japan	56.7
8.	New Zealand	53.4	8.	New Zealand	54.4
9.	Canada	52.7	9.	Australia	54.2
10.	Australia	52.5	10.	Canada	53.9

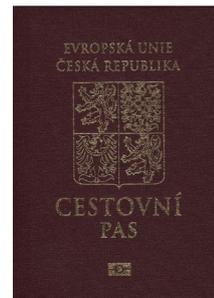
¹ The score of the citizenship of the EU has been updated significantly in this edition to ensure that this citizenship does not benefit from the intra-EU travel and settlement rights, thus putting it on par with any other federation in the world.

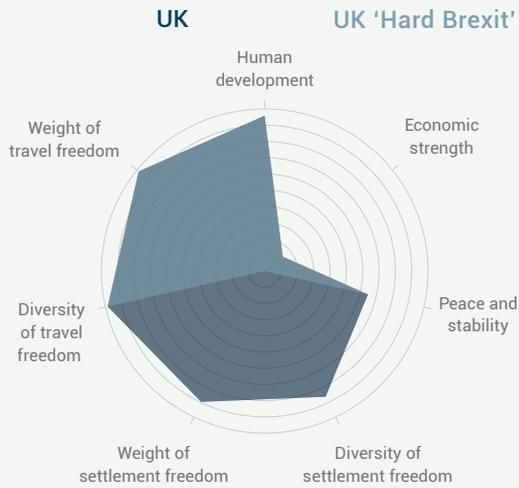


Europeans, except Croats, travel on standardized EU-model burgundy-colored passports, which display all the essential information in the 24 official languages of the EU and contain an inscription 'The European Union' in the respective language right above the name of the Union Member State that issued the passport.

Unlike other international organizations around the world which mandate their members to issue passports which look similar, such as CARICOM, the EU ones are actually a sign of a robust legal status hiding behind the burgundy design. While the internal EU rights of the holders of such passports are very far-reaching, as mentioned above, the status of EU citizenship is also of crucial significance externally. Of importance here is not only the right that EU citizens enjoy within the EU, but also outside the EU, where citizens have the right to receive protection and services from the consulates of any EU Member State in countries where their own Union Member State of nationality is not represented. For instance, if a Maltese national loses a passport in Gabon, the UK consulate will issue a replacement document to enable return to the EU. It goes without saying that this right is of huge importance, in particular, for EU citizens coming from the small Member States, which cannot boast large networks of diplomatic and consular offices worldwide. The EU citizenship right to receive protection abroad will thus be of much greater importance for a Maltese or Lithuanian EU national, than for a German or a Pole.

The importance of the status goes much further. The majority of EU Member States agreed that the Union, not the individual states, will be responsible for the visa regime and visa-free arrangements applicable to foreigners coming to the EU. This has far-reaching implications: the Union is absolutely prohibited by its own law from tolerating any discrimination between its own citizens traveling on documents issued by different Member States – in the context of visa-free entry, to all the countries in the world enjoying visa-free access to Europe. The law is crystal clear: any country whose citizens enjoy visa-free travel to the EU which treats EU passports issued by different Member States differently will see the visa-free regime granted to it revoked. In other words, if Canada allows Germans in visa-free but asks a Czech or a Romanian to apply for a visa, the EU is obliged by its own law to introduce visas for all Canadians traveling anywhere in the EU, in an effort to deal with such discrimination. Only one country in the world refused to cooperate with the EU on this point: the US, while Canada and Australia – to provide just two examples – changed their visa regimes to preserve visa-free access to the EU for their nationals. The dispute with the US, which currently discriminates against EU passports issued by Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania, not allowing the holders of these documents to enter the US territory via the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation, is ongoing. The worst case scenario here, as the European Parliament concluded in early 2017, is the introduction of entry visas for US citizens for travel to any EU Member State – a move which will undoubtedly affect the quality of both EU and US citizenships sharply to their detriment, but is virtually unavoidable as long as the US discriminates between EU citizens who acquired the status by virtue of a nationality connection with different EU Member States.





are at the forefront of failing to perform, such as the Syrian, Libyan and Ukrainian nationalities. This is a sobering facts-based warning for the UK's Prime Minister, Theresa May, which is no doubt known to the populists in power in the UK very well. The UK is about to establish a world record in terms of profoundly undermining the quality of its nationality without going through any violent conflict, falling from the elite group of Extremely High



Quality nationalities to the High Quality group, changing its neighbors in the ranking from the likes of Switzerland and Germany to the likes of China and the Russian Federation. The moral is simple: EU citizenship is an extremely valuable resource and getting rid of it – crippling citizens' horizon of opportunities – should not be taken lightly.

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The concept of residence and citizenship planning was created by Henley & Partners in the 1990s. As globalization has expanded, residence and citizenship have become topics of significant interest among the increasing number of internationally mobile entrepreneurs and investors whom we proudly serve every day.

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