

Setting minimum EU requirements for citizenship

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening virtually on 11-12 June 2021:

Noting that:

- several member states (Malta, Bulgaria, Cyprus) have set Citizenship by investments' schemes (CBI), also referred to as "golden passport" schemes, which basically sell national (and European) citizenship linking their acquisition to economic criteria;
- the Commission considers that the granting by these member states of their nationality – and thereby EU citizenship – in exchange for a pre-determined payment or investment and without a genuine link with the Member States concerned, is not compatible with the principle of sincere cooperation enshrined in Article 4(3) TEU. This also undermines the integrity of the status of EU citizenship provided for in Article 20 TFEU;
- the European Parliament has called on member states in a resolution adopted on 10 July 2020 to phase out all existing CBI as soon as possible and the President of the Commission has stated in her State of the Union Address of 16 September 2020 that European values are not for sale;
- the above-mentioned schemes also create discrimination between economic migrants and asylum seekers and wealthy third-countries nationals, and trades EU citizenship as a commodity without proper checks, namely on money laundering, tax evasion and corruption as well as security and transparency. This leads to negative consequences in other member states, erodes mutual trust and undermines common values.
- discrimination applies to requests of national citizenship too;
- based on its legal tradition and differing criteria, the conditions for obtaining (and forfeiting) national citizenship are regulated by the national law of each member state, subject to due respect for EU law.

Considering that:

- true EU citizenship needs to become reality in a Union where free movement of people and free movement of workers already equalise *de facto* all EU nationalities;
- migration, and subsequently the citizenship issue, is one of the most divisive policy topics in the EU Member States;
- nationality of a Member State is the only precondition for EU citizenship and access to rights conferred by the Treaties.

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Believes that:

- with regard to the significant distinctions from the naturalisation legislation of EU member states an à-la-carte system of citizenship has been created causing dispute between EU Member States. Without common rules and criteria to all the EU Member States, migrants will actually continue to get access to the EU at the country which provides the most favourable national system to apply for citizenship.

Calls on the ALDE Party to:

- support a set of common European minimum requirements for providing national citizenship within the EU among all the Member States;
- work inside the European Parliament on a non-legislative resolution to a set of common European minimum requirements for citizenship among the EU Member States;
- call on the ongoing COFOE to involve civil society and stimulate an open debate on the need to set common European minimum requirements for citizenship among the EU Member States.

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