

Latvian Citizenship by Descent

Latvia has always been a rather attractive country for foreigners wishing to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent or a residence permit (residence permit). This is due to lower costs for obtaining citizenship and maintaining a residence permit compared to other countries, as well as a clear procedure and practically no requirements for minimum presence in the country to maintain a residence permit (3 working days).

Recently, more and more clients have been approaching us with questions about how to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent.

According to Latvian legislation, Latvian citizenship by descent can be obtained by a person who was a citizen of Latvia on June 17, 1940, as well as a descendant of such a person.

Moreover, if a person who was a citizen of Latvia on June 17, 1940, or a his/her descendant provides a declaration that during the period from June 17, 1940, to May 4, 1990, he/she has left Latvia to escape the occupation regime of Germany or the USSR (for example, emigrated from the Soviet Union) or was deported and for these reasons did not return to Latvia for permanent residence until May 4, 1990, then such person and his/her descendants retain the right to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent while retaining their current citizenship.

Additionally, eligibility for Latvian passport by descent exists if any of the ancestors were Latvian nationals (but in this case, it is necessary to pass a Latvian language exam at the A2 level - the next level after the elementary A1 level) or for residence permit for 5 years (in this case, no Latvian language exam is required).

For individuals who do not have ancestors who were Latvian citizens on June 17, 1940, or who do not have Latvian ancestors, there is an opportunity to obtain a residence permit, including:

1. Based on employment (with a minimum gross salary of at least 1537 euros).
2. Based on opening a start-up company.

A start-up company is a company with high growth potential, whose main business is related to the development, production, or development of scalable business models and innovative products. An innovative product is a product or service with high added value, including technological, which promotes the development of a certain new product or service or significant improvement of an existing product or service.

3. Based on company incorporation.
4. Residence permit when purchasing real estate (the cost of real estate should not be less than 250,000 euros).
5. Residence permit for retirees.

Latvia offers a 5-year residence permit for individuals who have reached retirement age from countries whose citizens can enter Latvia without visas (for example: USA, Israel, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and more than 50 other countries, not including the EU), if they have sufficient means for living and have reached the retirement age established in the Republic of Latvia, which is currently 64 years and 9 months). "Sufficient means" in this case means double the average pension for the previous year (according to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia). The average Latvian pension in 2023 was 513.72 euros, so the pension for a Latvian residence permit should not be less than 1027.44 euros per month.

The availability of financial means in this case is confirmed by documents on the amount of the foreigner's pension. If the foreigner receives pensions from different countries, they are summed up.

In all cases, family members, including the spouse of the foreigner, minor children (including children under guardianship), and persons under guardianship, can obtain a residence permit for the same period as the main applicant. If you have any questions or need further consultation on how to obtain Latvian passport by descent, please contact NJORD Law Firm's partner, attorney-at-law Dmitri Nikolaenko (+371 67 313 315, dn@njordlaw.lv).



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