

# Latvian Citizenship by Descent for Israeli

For citizens of Israel whose ancestors were citizens of Latvia, there is an opportunity to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent for Israeli. Latvia may attract Israeli citizens with its moderate climate compared to the hot Israeli summers and lower cost of living.

Considering the current complex situation in Israel, more and more of its citizens, including those with Latvian roots, are addressing us with questions about how to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent for Israeli or a residence permit.

According to Latvian citizenship law, a person who was a citizen of Latvia on June 17, 1940, and his/her descendants can obtain Latvian citizenship by descent for Israeli.

If a person who was a citizen of Latvia on June 17, 1940, or his/her descendant submits a statement that they left Latvia during the period from June 17, 1940, to May 4, 1990, to escape the Soviet or Nazi regimes (including emigrating from the USSR) or was deported and did not return to Latvia for permanent residence until May 4, 1990, then such individuals and their descendants can obtain Latvian citizenship by descent. In this case, dual citizenship – of Latvia and Israel – is allowed.

It should be noted that in certain cases, the presence of dual Latvian and Israeli citizenship is not currently permitted by Latvia. However, negotiations are underway between the countries to conclude an agreement on the permissibility of dual citizenship. According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, work began in 2021, but unfortunately, there is still no official response from Israel regarding readiness to conclude an agreement.

Descendants of Latvians (who must pass a Latvian language test at the A2 level – slightly higher than elementary A1) can also obtain Latvian citizenship by descent. In this case, a residence permit for 5 years (without a language exam) can also be obtained.

For individuals who cannot qualify for Latvian citizenship by descent for Israeli (individuals who are not descendants of Latvian citizens as of June 17, 1940, or descendants of Latvians), there are options to apply for a residence permit on various grounds:

1. Employment (with a minimum gross salary before taxes of 1537 euros, which may be lower in some sectors).
2. Purchase of real estate worth at least 250,000 euros.
3. Opening a start-up company.
4. Opening a regular company.
5. Residence permit for retirees.

Israeli citizens who have reached the age of 64 years and 9 months (from 2025 – 65 years) have the right to obtain a Latvian residence permit for 5 years. For this, the pension received by the Israeli citizen must be equal to two average Latvian pensions for the previous year. Since the average pension in Latvia for 2023 was 513.72 EUR, accordingly, the monthly pension received by the Israeli citizen for the Latvian residence permit in 2024 should not be less than 1027.44 EUR. If the pension is received from different states, their amounts are summed up.

Regardless of the grounds, family members, including spouses and minor children, including those under guardianship, receive a residence permit for the same period as the main applicant.

If you have questions about how to obtain Latvian citizenship by descent for Israeli, you can contact NJORD Law Firm's partner, attorney-at-law Dmitri Nikolaenko (+371 67 313 315, dn@njordlaw.lv).



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