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Federal Commission on Migration FCM

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Interactive maps and tables provide an insight into how naturalisation works

The cantons and municipalities have an important say as to who should be ordinarily naturalised in Switzerland. Up to now, detailed figures about those naturalisations have not been published. The Federal Commission on Migration FCM and the University of Geneva (UNIGE) have worked closely together to close this gap: Information about local naturalisation practices is provided by means of interactive maps and tables.

Naturalisation gives foreign nationals the same legal rights as Swiss citizens and also makes them officially «Swiss». However, the ordinary naturalisation procedure in particular is a complicated issue: the municipalities, cantons and the Federal Government work together to decide if people should get a Swiss passport. They assess whether the applicants are familiar with the Swiss way of life and whether they are well integrated. In this judgement, considerable discretion is conferred upon the deciding instances.

Up to now, there are no detailed figures available on the ordinary naturalisation in practice. The University of Geneva and the Federal Commission on Migration FCM, working in close cooperation, have now developed a tool to compare local variations on ordinary naturalisation. Politicians, persons in charge of integration and interested members of the general public can access the data and compare different municipalities or cantons.

For example, interested parties can use the interactive maps and tables to discover that Geneva ordinarily naturalised a larger part of its foreign resident population between 1992 and 1996 than Zurich and that this trend was reversed between 2011 and 2017. They can also find out that the canton of Valais recorded a significant increase in ordinary naturalisations in the period between 2011 to 2017, and that the size of a municipality can be a crucial factor in determining how many foreign residents are actually naturalised.

Links to the FCM and University of Geneva websites:

German: <https://www.ekm.admin.ch/ekm/de/home/staatsbuergerschaft-citoyennete/staatsbuergerschaft/einbuengerung/ordentlich/kantone-gemeinden.html>

German: <https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/ideso/recherche/naturalisation-d>

French: <https://www.ekm.admin.ch/ekm/fr/home/staatsbuergerschaft-citoyennete/staatsbuergerschaft/einbuengerung/ordentlich/kantone-gemeinden.html>

French: <https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/ideso/recherche/naturalisation-f>

Analysis of the data between 1992 to 2010:

Philippe Wanner and Ilka Steiner (2012): Naturalisation in Switzerland: Developments in 1992–2010. Federal Commission on Migration (FCM). ((https://www.ekm.admin.ch/dam/data/ekm/dokumentation/materialien/mat_einbuerg_d.pdf))

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