

## **New Pathways, New Hurdles?**

# **The Reform of Citizenship Law and Potential Consequences for Authorities and Vulnerable Groups**

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### **Summary**

On June 27, the act to modernize citizenship will come into effect. Along with significant liberalizations in naturalization, it also introduces stricter requirements. For example, the requirement for securing a livelihood will be enforced more strictly, and exceptions will be largely abolished. In light of these changes, the scientific staff of the SVR has examined the practical implications for both affected individuals and authorities.

Under the new law, individuals who are unable to independently support themselves due to disability, inability to work, or caregiving responsibilities will no longer have an entitlement to naturalization. Instead, they will only have the option of discretionary naturalization, which will involve a hardship assessment. This is expected to pose challenges to accessing political participation rights, and authorities are likely to face increased administrative burdens.

To gauge public opinion in Germany regarding exceptions and restrictions related to the naturalization of vulnerable groups, an online survey was conducted. The study reveals a divided public opinion. Approximately four in ten respondents support exceptions to the livelihood security criterion for trainees, students, caregivers, and people with disabilities. However, a quarter of respondents fundamentally reject exceptions for those unable to work, single parents, and immigrants of retirement age.