

Eligibility: Who may apply

Who can apply for Spanish citizenship as a result of the Citizenship Law for Sephardi Jews?

You may apply if you prove your Sephardic origin and a special connection with Spain, even if you do not have legal residence in Spain.

Can a non-Jewish person apply?

Yes, he or she may apply. The Law is open to Jewish and non-Jewish people of Sephardic origin, provided that they can prove their Sephardic origin and a special connection with Spain.

I know my ancestors were Jewish, but I am not. Can I apply for Spanish citizenship according with the new Law?

Yes, you may apply. The practice of a religion by the applicant is not an issue, but you have to provide evidence of your Sephardic background and of your special connection with Spain.

When

What is the time frame to submit my application?

Applicants must submit their applications within 3 years from October 1, 2015, effective date of the Law. Deadline date may be extended for an additional year if so agreed by the Spanish Council of Ministers.

How long time will it take for the Spanish Administration to decide on my application?

The General Directorate for Registers and Notaries (DGRN) shall decide within twelve (12) months from the date that your case is referred to its offices, together with the reports sent by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Presidency. This actually means that a decision on your case could take up to fifteen (15) months from the filing date of your application.

How

Do I need a lawyer or an agent?

No, you do not. Applicants may apply in person. However, some recommend that applicants should have legal advise.

How do I start the procedure?

First of all, you need to compile all the necessary documents and then have access to the website of the Ministry of Justice in Spain, where you or your advisor will be able to submit your application.

Which are the steps that I need to follow in order to submit my application?

The procedure will be electronic, pursuant to Article 2 of the Law.

The processing of your application will go through five different stages or steps:

First: Submission of the application and attached documents through the website that the Ministry of Justice will operate for this purpose.

Second: The Ministry of Justice shall send your application to the DGRN, which will provide you with a reference number for your file and the Notary Public before whom you need to appear in Spain, according to the Notary preference indicated in your application.

Third: The Notary Public will receive your application and documents attached, and will study your case to determine if you meet the requirements of the Law. The Notary will coordinate with you or your advisor a date to meet in

order to sign an affidavit. The original documents that you filed online with your application will be attached to the aforesaid affidavit. The Notary will send an electronic copy of the affidavit signed by the Notary and the applicant to the DGRN.

Fourth: The DGRN will request a report from the Ministry of Interior and another one from the Ministry of Presidency and will make a reasoned decision on your application. If the DGRN grants you the Spanish citizenship an electronic copy of the decision will be sent to you (or your advisor) as well as to the Consulate of Spain in the country where you live.

Fifth: You will be requested to show up before the applicable Spanish Consulate in your country of residence within one (1) year from the notice date of your decision. You will request from the Consulate of Spain registration of your Spanish citizenship. To that effect, you will provide a new clearance of no criminal record, and will swear or promise allegiance to the King and obedience to the Spanish Constitution and laws. You will receive your new Spanish Passport in a few weeks.

What happens if I do not timely appear before the Consulate of Spain in order to request registration of my Spanish citizenship and to receive my passport?

The procedure will be considered as expired and your rights to acquire your Spanish citizenship will be waived. If this happens, you would have to file a new application and start over the process again in order to acquire your Spanish citizenship.

Fee

How much is the fee that the Spanish Government will charge in order to process my file?

The Spanish Administration shall charge a processing fee of 100 Euros to take your case. This fee will be charged when filing your application, regardless of whatever decision is made on your case.

The Ministry of Justice will manage the fee, and will establish how to satisfy payment of the processing fee.

Documents necessary

What documents are necessary to meet the requirements of the Law?

The Law requires that you provide evidence of your Sephardic origin and of your special connection with Spain.

Which documents may prove my Sephardic background?

In order to prove your Sephardic background, you may attach to your application some of the following documents:

- a) Certificate or letter issued by the President of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain (FCJE).
- b) Certificate or letter issued by the President of the Sephardic Congregation or Temple of the city of residence or city of birth of the applicant.
- c) Certificate or letter signed by a competent rabbinical authority, legally recognized in the country of origin or country of residence of the applicant.

In cases b) and c), you may request an additional certificate from the FCJE proving that the President and/or Rabbi issuing your certificates are authorities capable of doing so in your Sephardic community. Alternatively, when you do not provide this certificate issued by the FCJE, you may attach to your application the following documents:

- Copy of the original Articles of Association of the foreign religious entity.
- Certificate of the foreign entity including the names of the people appointed as legal representatives.
- Certificate, or document, proving that the foreign entity is legally recognized in the country of origin or country of residence of the applicant.

- And, a certificate issued by the legal representative of such entity showing the signatory Rabbi actually and currently holds such position according to the requirements established by the religious entity.

The FCJE will charge a processing fee of 50 Euros for every certificate issued in favor of the applicant. If applicant requests a certificate from the FCJE to attest his or her Sephardic origin, and an additional certificate to prove that the President and/or Rabbi from his or her Sephardic Temple or congregation are recognized authorities in the country of origin or country of residence of the applicant, then the processing fee for the issuance of the two certificates will be 100 Euros.

The documents shall be submitted in Spanish language, or translated into Spanish by a sworn translator. Additionally, please note that all foreign documents must be attested by a certified Notary Public in the country of origin or country of residence of the applicant. In addition, all foreign documents must be apostilled or, when applicable, legalized. Otherwise, foreign documents will not be valid in Spain.

Are there any other documents that may prove my Sephardic origin?

Yes. You may attach to your application the following:

- Letter signed by the President or Rabbi of your Sephardic congregation or Temple in your country of origin or country of residence, proving that you speak fluent Judeo Spanish (Ladino) or “Haketia” as your family language. This letter may be signed by any other Sephardic entity, such as any Sephardic Educational Center.
- The “ketubah” (Jewish marriage certificate), provided that it states that marriage took place in accordance with Castilian traditions.
- A reasoned report issued by a competent entity showing that your last name come from a Sephardic lineage.
- Any other document that may clearly show your Sephardic origin.

Special connection with Spain

What documents may evidence my special connection with Spain?

In order to prove your special connection with Spain, you may attach to your application some of the following documents:

- a) Certificates issued by officially recognized public or private educational institutions that may prove that you studied Spanish History or Culture.
- b) Evidence of knowledge of Ladino or “Haketia” languages.
- c) Any evidence proving that you or your first-degree ascendants were included in the list of Sephardic families protected by the Spanish government, as referred to in the Spanish Decree-Law of December 29, 1948 –related to Egyptian and Greek families–, or in the list of those who gained naturalization by means of the Spanish Royal Decree of December 20, 1924.
- d) Your kinship with somebody included in any of the lists of families protected, as mentioned in paragraph c) above.
- e) Proof of your engagement in charitable, cultural or economic activities in favor of Spanish or Spain-based people or organizations, or within Spanish territory. For example, certificates proving that you took part in conferences or activities regarding Spanish culture, certificates proving that you studied in Spain, any evidence of your business with a Spanish person or company, evidence that you purchased assets in Spain, among others.
- f) Evidence showing that you developed charitable, cultural or economic activities in favor of organizations aimed at promoting the study, preservation and spreading of the Sephardic culture.

g) Any other circumstances clearly evidencing that you have a special connection with Spain. For example, if you can prove your kinship to a Spanish parent or son, your title of a property in Spain, etc.

Additional requirements

Are there any other additional requirements? Do I have to attach any additional documents to my application?

Yes. In addition to documents evidencing your Sephardic origin and your special connection with Spain, you are required to submit the following documents:

- Birth certificate.
- Clearance of no criminal record issued by your country of birth and, if applicable, by the country/ies of residence of the applicant for the last five years.

Said documents must be translated into Spanish language by a sworn translator and apostilled or legalized.

- DELE Certificate issued by the Cervantes Institute, showing that you passed an exam to prove basic knowledge of Spanish (at least A2 level or higher).
- Certificate issued by the Cervantes Institute, showing that you passed a civics exam to prove basic knowledge the knowledge about the Spanish Constitution and Spanish social and cultural life.

Both tests will be designed and managed by the **Instituto Cervantes**.

Applicants who come from countries or territories where Spanish is the official language will be exempt from taking the Spanish language exam, but not from the exam on constitutional, social and cultural aspects of Spanish life.

Instituto Cervantes – Tests

How can I be informed about the Spanish language exams and the knowledge exam on constitutional, social and cultural aspects of Spanish life that I must pass in order to fulfill the requirements established by Law?

You may ask at any office or accredited center of the **Instituto Cervantes** around the world.

Must all applicants take the Spanish language and citizenship –knowledge of Spanish constitution– exams?

No. Applicants under eighteen (18) years of age and those without full legal capacity are not required to take and pass the two exams.

Additionally, any applicants who are nationals of countries or territories where Spanish language is official, shall be exempt from taking the Spanish language test, but not from passing the test on constitutional, social and cultural aspects of Spanish life.

How much will the crash courses and exams cost at the Cervantes Institute?

The information related to Spanish language courses and DELE exams of basic knowledge of Spanish –European A2 level or higher– is now available on the **website of the Instituto Cervantes**.

Birth certificate and Criminal records

How old may the birth certificates and clearance of no criminal records be in order to be valid in Spain?

Any birth certificates and clearance of no criminal records that you submitted with your application should be no more than three (3) months old prior to the application. The starting date for counting the three-month period will be the date of issuance of the document by the competent authorities, but not the sealing date of the Apostille or legalization.

Should my application consist of some or all of the documents proving my Sephardic origin and my special connection with Spain?

The Law clearly states that the Spanish Administration will carry out a joint assessment of any documents submitted. Therefore, you are highly recommended to attach to your application as many documents as possible to show that you meet the requirements established by Law.

Sephardic last names

How do I know if my last name is of Sephardic origin?

The best thing you can do is making a consultation to an expert or academic entities with experience in the area. There are some organizations in many different countries, which are professionals in that field. Enquiries may also be addressed to Genealogy departments at universities or academic institutions, either in the country of origin or in the country of residence of the applicant.

My last name is included in the list of Sephardic surnames available on the Internet. Is that enough?

Any list of alleged Sephardic surnames published on any website is not a valid supporting evidence.

Should you believe that your surname is of Sephardic origin, we recommend that you gather and assemble any supporting documents and refer to any experienced Jewish genealogical entity that may reasonably prove that your family name descends from those who were unjustly expelled from Spain since 1492.

Can a DNA test prove mi Sephardic origin?

A DNE test is not recommended as supporting evidence of your alleged Sephardic origin.

Citizenship via residence in Spain

I am residing in Spain and I have a Sephardic origin. I want to apply for Spanish citizenship. What should I do?

If you are a Sephardic Jew and you have been legally residing in Spain for two (2) or more years, you can apply for Spanish citizenship via residence. You may also apply for Spanish citizenship in accordance with the new Law on granting the Spanish nationality to Sephardim.

Click on the following [link](#) to check the requirements of nationality via legal residence.

Is it necessary that I submit any supporting evidence that I have a Sephardic origin when applying for Spanish citizenship via residence?

Yes. An applicant is required to provide the same [documentation](#) to apply for Spanish citizenship via legal residence of two (2) years.

Can I apply from Spain for Spanish citizenship according to the new Law if I am Sephardi?

Yes, you may apply from Spain. You have to meet the same requirements established by Law as for those residing abroad.