



How to obtain Permanent Residency and Citizenship by Investing in Europe

Advantages of Residency and Citizenship in Europe

Mobility is one of the top advantages of investing in European residency and citizenship. Whether to live, work, or travel, a European residency or citizenship in one country can open access to the rest of the continent and even beyond European borders including visa-free access to Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, and New Zealand.

Investing in a “Golden Visa” scheme is a quick and affordable way to obtain full European residency and begin the path to permanent residency and, often, a fast-track route to citizenship. Obtaining European residency will allow easy entry and exit to the country of residence, ease of travel within Europe (in most cases, this includes visa-free access to the Schengen Area), and access to favourable business and tax environments.

Citizenship-by-investment is the fastest and simplest way for an investor to legally obtain citizenship as well as second passport that can dramatically change an investor’s travel opportunities. In particular, obtaining an EU passport allows the holder to reside anywhere in the EU and take advantage of the high standard of living that is offered in Europe including exceptional education, healthcare, and safe environment. Europe is also a prime destination to create new investment opportunities in a competitive business climate, whether to conduct overseas business from a new vantage point or to capitalize on the rising profitable real estate market.

How and Where to Get Residency and Citizenship by Investment in Europe

HLG currently offers a number of European residency and citizenship options, including some of Europe’s top programs from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, and Portugal.

Bulgaria Investor Program for Residence

Bulgaria’s Investor Program for Residence offers a permanent residency permit for an investment of BGN 1,000,000 (approximately €512,000) in a fully guaranteed government bond portfolio for 5 years with no further payment required. At the end of the term, the full amount will be returned to the investor without interest. The applicant can apply for citizenship after holding permanent residence for 5 years.

Portugal Golden Residence Permit Program

HLG offers the Portugal’s Golden Residence Permit Program through property investment. A Portugal five-year residence permit allows the holders to access visa-free travel within the Schengen Area and includes family members. An investor must acquire property valued at minimum €500,000 or €350,000 for properties that are more than 30 years old or located in qualifying urban regeneration areas. Investors may apply for permanent residency after 5 years upon meeting the legal requirements, including proof of basic Portuguese proficiency. An application can be made for citizenship after being a legal resident in Portugal for at least 6 years upon meeting the legal requirements, including proof of sufficient Portuguese proficiency.

Cyprus Citizenship by Investment

Cyprus’s Citizenship by Investment program offers investors the opportunity to gain Cypriot and, by extension, European Union citizenship. Cypriot passport holders can live, travel, work, study, and buy land/ property anywhere in the European Union. Family members can also be included in the application, and citizenship can be passed on to future generations by descent. An investor must acquire at least €2 million in a single or portfolio of properties with at least one used as a primary residence. Processing of the application takes approximately 3 months, with a passport issued within 6 months.

Malta Citizenship by Investment

Similar to Cyprus’s CBI program, Malta’s Individual Investor Program is a citizenship-by-investment program that offers investors the opportunity to gain Maltese and, by extension, European Union citizenship. Family members can also be included in the application, and citizenship can be passed on to future generations by descent. An investor can choose 3 ways to invest: a non-refundable contribution of at least €650,000 to the National Development and Social Fund; a property investment of at least €350,000 in real estate or leasing a property for at least €16,000 which must be held or leased for minimum 5 years respectively; or an investment of at least €150,000 in government-approved financial products that is maintained for a minimum of 5 years. Processing of the application takes approximately 4 months, with a total of 12 months to issue the passport from the date of initial residency.

Other European Residency Options at a Glance

	Residency Rights	Investment Type	Amount	Processing Time
France	4-year renewable residency permit	Entrepreneur	EUR 300,000	45 days
Greece	5-year renewable residency permit	Real Estate	EUR 250,000	2 months
Latvia	5-year renewable residency permit	Real Estate	EUR 250,000	90 days
Spain	5-year renewable residency permit	Real Estate	EUR 500,000	20 days
United Kingdom Tier 1 (Investor)	3-year renewable residency permit	Financial products	GBP 2,000,000	3 weeks
United Kingdom Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)	3-year renewable residency permit	Entrepreneur	GBP 200,000	3 weeks

The Best Option for Your Investment

One of HLG’s most successful programs is the Cyprus citizenship by investment program, which is the most simple and efficient means of obtaining an EU passport.



While both the Cyprus and Malta programs offer an EU passport, Cyprus offers the fastest citizenship program, and therefore the fastest comprehensive route to Europe, with a passport issued within 6 months and no residency requirements. At face value, the Malta passport appears as an attractive option as it provides visa-free access to the US; however, this is an expensive premium to pay and also a time-consuming process (it will take at minimum 12 months for a Maltese passport to be issued) to travel to the U.S., especially given the fact that most travelers will not intend to go for more than one year. It is also worth noticing that a Cyprus passport holder will enjoy, sooner or later, a visa waiver to the US as an EU Member especially if the US wants to keep their visa exemption to Europe.

Additionally, the return on investment in Cyprus is quicker than in Malta with most assets being eligible for sale after 3 years rather than 5 years in Malta. With a flourishing tourism economy and strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe, property investments are highly sought after in Cyprus. During the holding period, property can be rented to generate extra rental income then later sold in its thriving real estate market. Corporate and residential taxes in Cyprus are among the lowest in Europe, with no foreign income tax, inheritance tax, or withholding tax on interest earned. Given the advantages of a Cyprus passport, this option truly offers the best value for your investment in terms of both time and money.

For ease of travel in Europe and visa-free to the EU; attractive tax regime; beautiful Mediterranean weather; and high-standard of living, including access to the best education, healthcare, and safety, the Cyprus CBI program is, without a doubt, the best option for your investment to Europe.

For further information about the European programs, or any other investment immigration opportunities, contact your Harvey Law Group representative.

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Harvey Law Group (HLG) is a leading multinational law firm specializing in corporate law and investment immigration with a worldwide reputation for representing high-profile clients and corporations, with over 19 offices worldwide. As the top immigration law firm, HLG offers most comprehensive residency and citizenship programs available to date. HLG was awarded for *Immigration Law Firm of the Year* at the 13th and 17th annual Macallan ALB Hong Kong Law Awards 2014 and 2017.