



Ad-Hoc Query on Citizenship Tests

Requested by FI EMN NCP on 24th February 2011

Compilation produced on 12th of April 2011

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom plus Norway (21 in Total)

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1. Background Information

In conjunction with the recent reform of the Nationality Act in Finland, there was public debate regarding the possible use of a citizenship test/exam before a person obtains Finnish citizenship, and what kind of questions it should include. Against this backdrop, Finland is interested in the practices of other Member States regarding this issue. We would be very grateful to obtain responses from all Member States, even just to state that you do not implement such a test. For those Member States who make use of a citizenship test, in addition to answering the questions below, any web links where more information regarding the issue can be obtained, would also be helpful.

2. Responses¹

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¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

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		Dissemination? ²	Questions:
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have, or do you plan to implement, a citizenship test/exam in your Member State? 2. If you make use of such test, what kind of subjects do the questions cover (e.g. history, society, customs, language skills etc.)? 3. Is the test a prerequisite for obtaining citizenship? Are there any exemptions (e.g. children, elderly persons etc.)? 4. Is the same test used for all applicants? 5. What are your experiences in using this test (usefulness, positive / negative issues)?
	Austria	No	This NCP provided an answer, but requested that it was not distributed further.
	Belgium	Yes	We do not have nor do we plan to implement a citizenship test.
	Bulgaria	No	This NCP provided an answer, but requested that it was not distributed further.
	Cyprus	Yes	
	Czech Republic	No	This NCP provided an answer, but requested that it was not distributed further.
	Denmark	Yes	
	Estonia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The alien who wishes to receive Estonian citizenship must have knowledge of the Estonian language in accordance with the requirements established by law, but also knowledge of the Estonian Constitution and the Citizenship Act. Knowledge of the Estonian language as well as knowledge of the Estonian Constitution and the Citizenship Act is verified by way of examination. 2. Estonian language exam consists of a written and oral section. Based on the regulation, language proficiency is gauged on four levels: A2, B1, B2 and C1. The exam tests four component skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writing; - comprehension of spoken text; - comprehension of written text; - speaking.

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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		<p>Listening and reading comprehension and writing ability is tested in the written part of the examination and the speaking ability is tested orally.</p> <p>To be naturalized as a citizen of the Republic of Estonia, the citizenship applicant must pass at least the B1-level Estonian language proficiency examination.</p> <p>The exam on the Constitution and Citizenship Act of the Republic of Estonia is taken in the form of a written test. The test evaluates the examinee's knowledge of the Constitution and Citizenship Act of the Republic of Estonia in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the general principles of the system of government in Estonia provided in chapters 1 and 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia; - everyone's general fundamental rights, freedoms and duties provided in chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia; - the jurisdiction of Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Government of the Republic and the judicial authority according to the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia; - the conditions and procedures for acquiring, procuring, restoring, and losing Estonian citizenship according to the Citizenship Act of the Republic of Estonia. <p>The exam paper consists of multiple choice questions, 24 questions altogether. In order to pass the exam and get the certificate the candidate has to score minimum of 18 correct answers.</p> <p>The texts of the Constitution and the Citizenship Act of the Republic of Estonia (in Estonian) and a dictionary may be used when taking the exam. Both the texts and the dictionary are available in the examination room.</p> <p>Both exams are arranged by the State Examination and Qualification Centre, which is under the Ministry of Education and Research.</p> <p>3. The tests are a prerequisite for obtaining Estonian citizenship by naturalization.</p> <p>According to the law there are exceptions for certain people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who have been born before 1930; - a minor under 15 years of age; - an invalid; - who has received his education (basic education, general secondary education, vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education, secondary specialized education on the basis of basic education, higher education) in the Estonian language; - who has performed a special service to the State of Estonia. <p>They all may pass an examination under favourable conditions or otherwise they would not pass the exams.</p> <p>A handicapped person with severe or deep disability whose disability doesn't allow him/her to fulfil the requirements does not need to fulfil the requirements of knowledge of Estonian language and the Constitution and Citizenship Act.</p> <p>A handicapped person with medium disability who is not capable of fulfilling the requirements of the knowledge of Estonian language and the Constitution and Citizenship Act because of the seeing, hearing or speaking disability also does not to fulfil the requirements.</p> <p>4. The same test is used for all applicants.</p> <p>5. Estonia's experience has been that testing gives an objective and uniform evaluation to the person's knowledge of the language his or her understanding of Estonia's constitutional order. The positive aspect is that the language test that a person has to take to apply for Estonian citizenship can also be used for proving language skills pertaining to work and vice versa.</p>
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	Finland	Yes	Finland does not as of yet implement a citizenship test.
	France	Yes	<p>1) and 2) According to the decree n° 93-1362 of December 30th 1993 (decree on declarations of nationality, naturalization decisions, reintegration, loss, revocation and suspension of French nationality), in addition to providing the necessary documents, any request of naturalization is the object of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an investigation made by services of police or gendarmerie which concerns the behaviour and the loyalty of the applicant; • an interview with an official designated by the authority to which the applicant must go personally,. This official draws up a report of the interview noticing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the degree of integration of the applicant into the French community; - according to his condition, his level of knowledge of the rights and duties conferred by the French nationality ; - and his knowledge of the French language. <p>This interview should particularly estimate the degree of involvement of the applicant in the essential values of tolerance, secularity, freedom and equality of the French society. The modalities for holding the interview, conditions of establishment of reporting and assessment criteria that underpin reasoned conclusions are defined by the decree of February 22nd 2005 of the Minister in charge of naturalization that you can find attached in French.</p> <p>In addition, the bill under discussion in Parliament plans to formalize the application for citizenship by signing a charter of rights and duties of the French citizen that recalls the fundamental principles and values of the French republic.</p> <p>3) The French Civil Code provides that no one can be naturalized if he/she does not justify his/her integration into the French community, notably through adequate knowledge of French language, depending on his/her condition, language, rights and duties conferred to French nationals. However, this Code provides that the conditions relating to the knowledge of French language does not apply to refugees and stateless persons aged over 70 and residing legally in France for over 15 years. Naturalization is given without further conditions to any children on the parents' request.</p> <p>4) Linguistic assimilation/integration is assessed by the applicant's ability to communicate in French in the everyday life. The degree requirement is adapted to the particular situation of each person and considers his/her intellectual qualifications, social status and age.</p>
	Germany	Yes	<p>1. Yes. The citizenship test was introduced in Germany in 2008.</p> <p>2. According to § 10(1) Line 1 No. 7 of the German Nationality Act, those applying for citizenship must demonstrate knowledge of the legal system, social structure and living conditions in Germany. Generally this knowledge is demonstrated by passing a citizenship test (§ 10(5) German Nationality Act). The test consists of a total of 310 questions. 300 of these are general questions (Part I) based on the curricular framework for the citizenship course "Life in a Democracy", "History and Responsibility" and "Humans and Society". The remaining 10 questions (Part II) are related only to the Federal State in which the applicant resides.</p> <p>3. Taking the citizenship test is required to obtain citizenship.</p>

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			<p>Exceptions: Immigration authorities decide if civic knowledge has been demonstrated. Generally this knowledge is demonstrated through a federal citizenship test. Civic knowledge is also considered demonstrated if the applicant graduated from a German secondary school or comparable/higher German general education school.</p> <p>Commitment and declaration as per § 10(1) Line 1 No. 1 and civic knowledge as per § 10(1) Line 1 No. 7 German Nationality Act are not required when the applicant is unfit as determined by § 80(1) German Residence Act. This regulation pertains to minors under 16 years of age and those who require care.</p> <p>The requirements of sufficient knowledge of the German language as per Paragraph 1 Line 1 No. 6 and knowledge of the legal system, social structure and living conditions in Germany as per Paragraph 1 Line 1 No. 7 are prescinded if the applicant is unable to meet the conditions due to physical or mental disease or defect or due to age. In these instances, proof of even lesser knowledge is also not required.</p> <p>Not all diseases or defects result in exemption from the above mentioned requirements, only those that hinder the applicant's acquisition of the necessary knowledge – in particular the inability to express oneself verbally or in writing as well as congenital or acquired forms of mental disability or age-related impairments. Support for the grounds for exemption must be furnished by the applicant in the form of a medical report when they are not otherwise apparent.</p> <p>4. Yes, the test is the same for everyone. It only varies in composition, since the questions presented are chosen from a catalogue.</p> <p>5. Language skills, as well as knowledge of government, history and culture are fundamental citizenship requirements. Only with these is it possible to orient oneself in society and actively participate in the democratic decision-making process. The German federal citizenship test has proven itself in practice with an average pass rate of 98%. This high pass rate indicates that the demands of the test as intended do not pose an obstacle. The test has continuously been viewed by applicants as a predominantly sensible and important instrument.</p>
	Greece	Yes	The new law about citizenship, Law 3838/2010 "Modern Provisions on Greek Nationality and the political participation of ethnic Greeks and legal immigrant residents and other arrangements" , which came into force in March 2010, establishes the possibility of using a citizenship exam (test) before a person obtains the Greek Citizenship, nevertheless the relative article has not been applied so far.
	Hungary	Yes	<p>1) We apply the citizenship test in Hungary. According to the Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship on application a non-Hungarian citizen may be naturalized if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø the person resided in Hungary continuously over a period of eight years preceding the Ø submission of the application; Ø according to Hungarian law, the person has a clean criminal record, and at the time of the Ø assessment of the application, there are no criminal proceedings in progress against him Ø before a Hungarian court;

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			<p> <input type="checkbox"/> his livelihood and residence are assured in Hungary; <input type="checkbox"/> his naturalization does not violate the interests of the Republic of Hungary; and <input type="checkbox"/> provides proof that he has passed the examination in basic constitutional studies in the Hungarian language or that of being exempted by virtue of this Act. </p> <p>2) The exam consists of two parts. The first part of the exam contain a short draft about the important names and events of the Hungarian history, while the second part briefs about the main institutional about the Hungarian constitutional system (National Assembly, the Constitutional Court, electoral rules). The exam takes place in front of the three –member board; by answering two written and then an oral line (a line contains two points). The script is solved in the same time in 60 minutes. The script could be correct immediately by the board, after this comes after the oral round, where the candidates take an exam one by one (choosing an item, as well as ensure adequate preparation time). <u>The topics of the exam:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hungary in the Carpathian Basin, Europe and international organizations (UN, Council of Europe, NATO, European Union) 2. Hungary's national symbols and holidays (coat of arms, flag, crown, National Anthem, Manifesto, national holidays) 3. Turning points in the history of Hungary (Conquest, Founding of the state, the extinction of the Árpád dynasty, Turkish occupation, Habsburg rule 1848-49, Revolution and freedom, reconciliation, the first and the Second World War, 1956. Revolution per year, the 1990th year's political system) 4. The art, music and science are outstanding representatives of Hungarian 5. The dominant figures of Hungarian literature 6. Fundamental institutions of the Constitution (National Assembly, the President, the Government, the Constitutional Court and the judiciary) 7. The structure of government (central, provincial, local bodies, municipal administration) 8. Basic civil rights and obligations (liberties, economic, social and cultural rights, civic responsibilities and the protection of civil
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			<p>rights)</p> <p>9. The Hungarian citizenship (formation, acquisition, termination and certification)</p> <p>3) Petitioners shall take the examination in the administrative office responsible for the place of the petitioner's residence before the committee appointed by the director of the office. The following shall be exempt from taking the examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Persons who are legally incompetent or with diminished capacity; Ø Persons who earned a diploma in the Hungarian language in a Hungarian institution of higher education; Ø Persons over 65 years of age at the time of filing the petition; Ø Persons who are able to verify not having the capacity to take the exam, due to their lasting and irreversibly deteriorated health. <p>4) Yes, we apply same test for all applications.</p> <p>5) The applications have to know the Hungarian language, the history, the culture, as well the operation of the state, which are the basic requirements to become a Hungarian citizen.</p>
	Ireland	Yes	
	Italy	Yes	Our national provisions on acquisition of citizenship do not foresee any formal test, nevertheless the procedure involves an interview with the applicant.
	Latvia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, citizenship tests are used in Latvia. 2. There are 2 tests: Latvian language skills examination and examination of basic principles of national constitution, national anthem and history knowledge. All language skills examination exercises have a practical value in new citizens' life to help them integrate in society and everyday life (for example, attending shops, posts, libraries, health centres). Knowledge examination consists of knowing national anthem words, significant facts of history of Latvia (historical periods, prominent personalities etc.), knowing of basic principles of national constitution (the order of establishing legislature, executive and judiciary power, its main principles of activity, structure, authority, the order of electing and discharge of state president, presidents' duties, authority, citizen main duties and rights). 3. Yes, the test is prerequisite and yes, there are exemptions. Children up to 15 do not have to pass an examination. Special order is established for persons older than 65 - they takes only a part in oral of the examination. Special order is established for disabled

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			<p>persons, too. 1.group disabled persons do not have to pass any exam. Persons who have obtained elementary, secondary and higher education in Latvian as well as persons, who have studied in minority schools and have obtained positive result in unitary Latvian language and literature exam, both do not have to pass a language exam.</p> <p>4. Tests are developed unitary in Naturalization Boards' office in Riga and the same tests are used in whole Latvia. The structure and content of exam do not change, and are close to the practical language use in everyday life. That provides objective evaluation of persons' language skills. To each language examination the new package of exercises are prepared. Exercises for people older than 65 are easier.</p> <p>5. The examination of language skills is important part of naturalization process. Language skills examination consists of 4 parts: reading, listening, writing and speaking. For applicants reading and listening parts are easier to pass. The problems are with writing and speaking parts, because applicant should show his/her skills in language usage, not just in understanding it. In oral part of the examination commission interviews the applicant on topics of everyday life. The one small part of applicants (constantly elder ones) have problems with filling in forms of reading and listening parts, because they do not have enough experience in filling such forms. Thus, special attention should be paid to the applicants' understanding of what is requested. Applicants are able to choose in which form – written or oral – they would like to pass the examination of basic principles of national constitution, national anthem and history knowledge. With the aim to help applicants prepare to that part of examination, a booklet is developed containing information about the order of examination, describe process, content as well as evaluation criterions. All questions (107 in total) used in the written and oral parts of examination also are included in booklet. From all 107 questions only 18 are used in exam. In the last 14 years no one has chosen to pass that examination in oral and 80% of the exam passed in written is positive. Answers of the tests could not be interpreted that's why evaluation of tests is objective and it is really positive moment of test usage.</p> <p>Negative aspect of the test usage is that it is not possible to understand applicants' own point of view, as well as tests do not allow any interpretation of historical events and the role of personalities in it.</p> <p>All language skills and knowledge examinations are standardized to all applicants - sex, age, ethnical origin and native language the Citizenship Law does not prescribe any differences.</p>
	Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. Yes, 2 exams are applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the examination in the state language • the examination in the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. <p>2. The state <u>language</u> examination covers all four language skills - speaking, writing, reading and listening. An applicant has to be able to communicate in a limited number of the most familiar situations in which language is used in everyday life. The examination assess an applicant's ability to use vocabulary according to these topics: personal introduction, house and home, nature and landscape of the region, daily activities, leisure, travel, relations, health and hygiene, education and science, shopping, food and drink, services. The examination matches level A2 (Waystage), further information: http://www.alte.org/members/lithuanian/a2.php.</p>

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			<p>The examination in the <u>basic principles of the Constitution</u> of the Republic of Lithuania covers all chapters of the Constitution. The examination contains 20 multiple-choice questions. In order to pass the examination an applicant has to correctly answer at least 14 questions. The examination is held in Lithuanian.</p> <p>3. Yes, except persons who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are 65 years of age or over; • have been established 0-55% capacity for work; • have reached pensionable age; • have been rated as having high- or medium-level special needs according to the procedure laid down by legal acts; • ill with grave chronic mental illnesses. <p>4. Yes. If an applicant requests, he/she might take the state language examination in higher level (B1 Threshold, B2 Vantage).</p> <p>5. The examination in the state language and the examination of the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania are organized since 1993. In the period from 2004 June till 2010 December 3753 people held the examination of the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 3151 from them have passed the examination (84 %).</p>
	Luxembourg	Yes	<p>According to the law on Luxembourgish Nationality of 23 October 2008, individuals are not required to pass a citizenship test before obtaining Luxembourgish citizenship. However, they must have passed a language test of spoken Luxembourgish and attended at least three civic education courses before submitting a request for naturalization. Exempted are those persons who have attended a public school in Luxembourg for at least seven years or a private school which follows the curricula of public schools, or who have resided legally and continuously in Luxembourg since at least 1984.</p> <p>Candidates for naturalization must proof that they have a language proficiency of spoken Luxembourgish that corresponds to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for oral understanding and A2 for oral expression. Tests are organized by the National Language Institute in the capital city of Luxembourg. Upon request, the registration fees for the test (75 EUR) can be reimbursed by the Ministry of Justice. The attendance of a Luxembourgish language course at one of the many public or private language schools is optional. If taken with a view to acquire the Luxembourgish nationality, the course fees can, upon request and up to a certain limit, be reimbursed by the Ministry of Justice.</p> <p>Each civic education course takes two hours and is offered at no cost for the participants on weekday evenings or Saturday mornings in the languages required (i.e., Luxembourgish, French, German, English or Portuguese). There is no test at the end of the course, but a certificate of participation is issued to the attendees. The two compulsory courses are ‘The public institutions in Luxembourg’ and ‘The fundamental rights of citizens and the public life’. The third course can be chosen from the following subjects: the history of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg; Luxembourg in the 20th century; the history of the European Unification: Luxembourg in the process of the Unification from 1945 to 2006; the municipal institutions in Luxembourg; political economy: the economic structures of the Grand-</p>

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			Duchy; professional life: labor law in Luxembourg; social cohesion: the principle and system of social security in Luxembourg; the press: the media in Luxembourg; the press and communication.
	Malta	Yes	Malta does not have a citizenship test/exam and there are no plans yet to implement such a test. When applying for citizenship by naturalization, applicants are required to state whether they have knowledge of the English/Maltese language.
	Netherlands	Yes	
	Poland	Yes	
	Portugal	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The law establishes that a citizen wishing to apply for Portuguese citizenship through naturalisation has to take a knowledge test. 2. The test covers the applicant's proficiency in Portuguese, particularly as regards comprehension and writing skills. 3. The test is a prerequisite for obtaining citizenship. Applicants for Portuguese citizenship who are originals from Portuguese-speaking countries are exempted to take the test; they are only required to present a diploma confirming the applicant's qualifications obtained in an official Portuguese-speaking school. In special circumstances, the Ministry of Justice may waive this requirement. 4. No. With regard to pre-school children the test is replaced by a medical statement and/or a statement from the educator declaring that the child interacts in Portuguese. To be noted that people with serious health problems, or disabilities of diverse degrees, can - in exceptional circumstances - require an oral test suitable to their capacity on demonstrating their proficiency in Portuguese. 5. This test is considered to be essential, not only as a connecting factor in the host country but also as factor for integration in the national Portuguese community.
	Romania	Yes	
	Slovak Republic	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Slovak Republic uses, in the process of Slovak citizenship acquisition by naturalization, a language test that contains also information on geography, history and developments in the SR. See also point 2. 2. Foreign nationals must demonstrate a command of the Slovak language in a personal interview (questions concerning the applicant, his/her person and his/her relatives, general questions on geography, history and developments in the SR), by reading an unfamiliar text from a newspaper or magazine article, by summarizing in writing the content of this article in front of a commission comprised of three persons (nominated by the head of the district authority where he/she applies for citizenship, ambassador or consul). 3. The test is a prerequisite for obtaining a citizenship; however, there is one exemption. Command of the Slovak language is not examined if, at the time of the submission of the application, the person has not reached the age of 14. 4. As for the form of the citizenship tests, the Slovak Republic uses the same framework already described in the answer 2. Questions and newspaper articles are chosen on a case by case basis but taking into account applicant's individuality. 5. The Slovak Republic considers the method of citizenship tests very operational, simple and also advantageous with regard to the economic costs.

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			<p>For more information please visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.unhcr-budapest.org/slovakia/images/stories/news/docs/05_Integration/alica_en.pdf • Ministry of interior of the Slovak Republic: www.minv.sk (English version of the website is currently under reconstruction) <p>Migration information centre: www.mic.iom.sk</p>
	Slovenia	Yes	In Slovenia we do not implement such test.
	Spain	Yes	
	Sweden	Yes	1. In Sweden we do not have any type of tests or exams in order to obtain citizenship.
	United Kingdom	Yes	<p>1. Applicants for indefinite leave to remain or citizenship are required to demonstrate their knowledge of English and of life in the UK. They can do this either by passing the Life in the UK test in English or by taking an English language qualification after following a course which uses teaching materials covering aspects of citizenship.</p> <p>2. The Life in the UK test covers aspects of British society and everyday life, central and local government, and employment. The Life in the UK handbook, used to prepare for the test, also covers history and aspects of British law but these are not tested.</p> <p>3. The test is generally taken before applying for indefinite leave to remain. Some applicants may be exempt at that stage, for example refugees, and will take it at Citizenship stage. There are general exemptions at both stages for those under 18, over 65 or who have a disability or health need which makes it unreasonable to expect them to take the test.</p> <p>4. The Life in the UK test is computer based and asks 24 questions from a bank of about 300.</p> <p>5. The Life in the UK test enables applicants to demonstrate that they have the required level of English which is an important aid to integration. We are currently reviewing the handbook and test questions. The majority of applicants are positive about the test.</p>
	Norway	Yes	<p>1. Norway is not in use of a citizenship test. A proposal to implement a citizenship test was sent out on consultation the 25th of June 2009 (http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ad/dok/hoeringer/hoeringsdok/2009/horing---endringer-i-introduksjonsloven-horingsnotat.html?id=568149). The Government suggested that the test should be a requirement for obtaining citizenship.</p> <p>The proposal is still under consideration by the Ministry of children, equality and social inclusion.</p>
