

# ANCESTRY-BASED CITIZENSHIP: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

FROM PERMANENT  
RESIDENCE  
TO CITIZENSHIP



VLKOVÁ  
ADVOKÁTSKA KANCELÁRIA

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## Guide overview

Obtaining permanent residence on grounds worthy of special consideration, followed by the subsequent procedure for granting Slovak citizenship through ancestry, ranks among the most administratively and legally demanding processes applicants encounter in practice. Although the procedure may appear to consist of several clearly defined steps, the legal framework governing the residence of foreigners and citizenship is detailed, formally strict, and requires full compliance with all statutory conditions. Any incorrect or incomplete step—particularly when proving the line of descent from a Slovak ancestor, securing accommodation, submitting documents, or observing deadlines—may lead to unnecessary delays, suspension of the proceedings, or repeated submission of documents.

This practical guide focuses on each phase of the process: from obtaining permanent residence, through filing the citizenship application and taking the oath of allegiance, to registration in the Special Registry and

obtaining Slovak identity documents. It highlights the most common mistakes in practice, explains statutory requirements, and offers clear recommendations on how to proceed efficiently, lawfully, and with minimal risk. It also pays special attention to practical issues applicants most frequently encounter—document validity, certified translations, higher authentication of documents, appointment scheduling, accommodation, and handling documents abroad.

Every case is individual, and applicants' circumstances may differ significantly. This guide therefore provides primarily a basic orientation in the subject matter and does not replace individual legal advice. If you need assistance preparing documents, verifying your ancestral line, submitting an application, or handling any step of the process, we have extensive experience with this type of agenda and can assist with the entire procedure or only selected parts, depending on your needs and preferences.

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## 1. What are the general conditions for granting citizenship of the Slovak Republic?

The granting of Slovak citizenship is not automatic; rather, it is a decision made by the state, which assesses on a case-by-case basis whether the conditions set forth by law have been met. Generally, the applicant must have had continuous permanent residence in Slovakia for at least eight years, have a clean record, and there must be no relevant proceedings pending against them (e.g., criminal prosecution, administrative proceedings for deportation, proceedings for revocation of asylum, proceedings for the execution of a European arrest warrant, and others), must fulfill their legal obligations (public insurance, social insurance, taxes, and contributions, etc.), and must be proficient in the Slovak language and possess general knowledge of the Slovak Republic, although the law allows for certain exceptions here as well.

## 2. Who is eligible for Slovak citizenship by descent?

When granting citizenship through ancestry, the law establishes a significantly simplified procedure. This applies if the applicant does not hold Slovak citizenship but can prove that at least one of their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents was a Czechoslovak citizen born on the territory of Slovakia. In such cases, these applicants fall into a special category to which some of the strictest conditions do not apply.

Most importantly, an applicant for citizenship through ancestry does not have to meet the requirement of eight years of permanent residence in Slovakia, nor does the applicant have to demonstrate proficiency in the Slovak language or knowledge of the Slovak Republic. It is precisely the combination of these two exceptions that makes this method of acquiring citizenship significantly more accessible compared to the standard procedure.

However, this does not mean that it is an automatic entitlement. Even in this case, the applicant must meet the basic requirements of the law, in particular having a clean criminal record, not having any pending relevant

proceedings, and not posing a threat to public order or the security of the Slovak Republic. At the same time, the applicant is required to properly fulfill their legal obligations under the Slovak legal system.

In practice, therefore, the decisive factor is usually proving one's origin—that is, documenting the family lineage and providing evidence that the ancestor was a Czechoslovak citizen born on the territory of Slovakia. Securing these documents is often the most common and most challenging part of the entire process.

### What does this mean in practice?

Citizenship by descent offers significant advantages:

- ✓ There is no requirement to meet the 8-year residency requirement in Slovakia.
- ✓ There is no need to prove proficiency in the Slovak language.

👉 These are the two most significant exceptions that greatly simplify this process.

## 3. What documents are required, and what formal requirements must they meet?

When applying for Slovak citizenship by descent, it is essential to prove the family line back to an ancestor who was a Czechoslovak citizen born in Slovakia. The scope of documents required corresponds to this.

The foundation consists primarily of civil registry documents spanning generations, namely the birth certificates of grandparents, great-grandparents, parents, and the applicant themselves. In connection with this, marriage certificates or divorce decrees are also submitted to confirm the continuity of the family line.

In addition, it is very important to prove the citizenship or historical status of the ancestor. For this purpose, documents such as certificates of Czechoslovak citizenship, naturalization documents, archival materials from the Slovak National Archives, or travel documents from the Czechoslovak era (passports, ship's manifests, and others) are used.

The application also includes documents pertaining to the applicant themselves, particularly their birth certificate, proof of identity (ID card and passport), and, if applicable, a marriage certificate or divorce decree, as well as a structured resume, employment contract, and a bank statement confirming income. Don't forget to include valid health insurance.

A separate category consists of documents proving good character and compliance with legal requirements, such as criminal record extracts from countries where the applicant has lived for a specified period or of which they are a citizen, as well as various affidavits required by law.

Finally, securing residency in Slovakia is also part of the process, which is demonstrated by a notification of the granting of permanent residency for 5 years on grounds worthy of special consideration.

From a practical standpoint, it is also very important to consider the formal requirements. Documents issued abroad must generally be apostilled or superlegalized and officially translated into the Slovak language, whereas documents issued in Slovakia do not require these formalities. It is recommended to retain the original documents and submit officially certified copies for the purposes of the proceedings to avoid the risk of losing the original documents and to ensure that the applicant has the original available in case another authority or institution requests it in the future.

#### **What does this mean in practice?**

The range of documents is quite broad, but the logic is simple:

👉 to prove family lineage + to prove the status of an ancestor + to prove the applicant's personal and legal circumstances.

In practice, the most challenging part is often obtaining older registry and archival documents, which we are happy to assist you with.

#### **4. Where can you obtain the necessary documents about your ancestors?**

Possible sources:

- Slovak civil registry records – birth, marriage, and death certificates, if the ancestors were born or lived in the territory of present-day Slovakia.
- Special Registry Office in Bratislava – for records of births, marriages, or deaths of Slovaks abroad.
- State Archives of the Slovak Republic – older civil registers, church records, residency rights, censuses, military records.
- Foreign registries and archives – if ancestors lived outside the territory of the Slovak Republic (Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria-Hungary, USA, Canada, South America, etc.).
- Church records – especially for older records prior to 1895.
- Digitized sources – FamilySearch, MyHeritage, Ancestry, digitized archival collections.
- Foreign authorities – if you need to obtain documents regarding naturalization, emigration, passports, ship manifests, or military records.

#### **5. How and where can you apply for Slovak citizenship?**

An application for Slovak citizenship must be submitted in person. The law does not allow for submission by mail, electronically, or through an authorized representative; therefore, you must plan to visit the relevant office in person.

##### **Where can the application be submitted?**

👉 Within Slovakia:

The application is submitted to the district office—Department of General Internal Administration (Citizenship Division). The applicant may choose any district office, regardless of their place of residence.

👉 Abroad:

The application may be submitted at a diplomatic mission of the Slovak Republic (embassy or consulate). This procedure is particularly suitable for applicants who have been living outside the territory of the Slovak Republic for a long time.

## How does the application process work?

When the application is submitted, the office:

- verifies the applicant's identity,
- checks the completeness and formal requirements of the submitted documents,
- require the submission of originals or officially certified copies,
- may request additional documents if necessary to prove origin or meet legal requirements.

The applicant fills out the official form—the application for citizenship—and the questionnaire and submits all required attachments. These documents are available at the office or on the website of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic.

It is advisable to have both the form and the questionnaire filled out in advance to avoid errors and delays. All documents must be completed in the Slovak language, which can be challenging for foreigners. For this reason, it is recommended to seek the assistance of an attorney, who will ensure the documents are filled out correctly, verify that all requirements are met, and ensure all documentation is ready before visiting the office.

After submitting a complete application, the office will initiate the proceedings and inform the applicant of the next steps.

Practical recommendations:

- All consular offices and district offices operate on an appointment-based system, and waiting times may be longer.
- When submitting an application, it is advisable to have certified copies of documents ready so that the originals remain available for any further proceedings.

## 6. Is permanent residence in Slovakia required?

### Permanent residence for 5 years on grounds worthy of special consideration

In order for an applicant to apply for Slovak citizenship based on ancestry, they must have been granted permanent residence in the Slovak Republic for 5 years for reasons worthy

of special consideration. This is a special type of permanent residence granted specifically in situations where the applicant proves their lineage to a Slovak ancestor and is preparing for the citizenship proceedings. Proving a direct line of descent (e.g., parent – grandparent – great-grandparent) is therefore an essential part of the application for this type of residence.

Applications for this type of residence permit must be submitted in person at any Foreign Police Department. When submitting the application, you must:

- book an appointment in advance (you cannot submit an application without an appointment),
- pay the administrative fee via e-stamp,
- fill out the application for a 5-year permanent residence permit,
- submit all required documents proving your origin, and
- bring photographs and have your photo taken for the ID card.

The Foreign Police Department decides on the application within 90 days of its submission. In straightforward cases (complete documentation, clear lineage to an ancestor, no need for additional information), the decision is typically issued within 30–60 days.

### Is there an obligation to secure accommodation?

In order for a residence card to be issued to the applicant, they must have secured accommodation within the territory of the Slovak Republic. Without proof of accommodation, a residence permit card cannot be issued. The applicant does not necessarily need this document physically; for the granting of citizenship through ancestry, it is fully sufficient that residence has been granted. However, most clients prefer this solution, as it allows them immediate free movement within the Schengen Area.

Accommodation can be proven by:

- ownership of real estate,
- a lease agreement,
- a written consent from the property owner allowing the foreigner to stay (the signature must be notarized).

Information regarding secured accommodation is then entered directly on the foreign national's residence card.

We can fully assist you with securing accommodation.

#### **Assignment of a birth number**

After being granted permanent residence for 5 years on grounds of special consideration, the applicant is assigned a personal identification number. The personal identification number is required for further procedures, in particular:

- completing the application for citizenship and filling out the applicant questionnaire,
- registration in a special registry,
- issuance of an ID card after citizenship is granted, and
- issuance of a passport.

#### **7. Where and how can the certificate of citizenship be collected?**

The decision on the granting of Slovak citizenship is not sent by mail. The applicant must pick it up in person and may choose in advance at which Slovak diplomatic mission to receive the decision, regardless of where the application was originally filed.

##### **Where can the certificate of citizenship be collected?**

When submitting the application (or subsequently during the proceedings), the applicant specifies where they wish to collect the decision:

- at the district office in the regional capital, or
- at any diplomatic mission of the Slovak Republic abroad of their choice.

This choice is binding, and the office will ensure that the decision is delivered to the selected office accordingly.

##### **How does the collection of the certificate of citizenship take place?**

- The applicant must appear in person and prove their identity.
- Part of the process of receiving the decision is taking the oath of citizenship, which is a necessary condition for acquiring citizenship.

- Once the oath is taken, the decision becomes legally binding and the applicant becomes a citizen of the Slovak Republic.

#### **8. What happens after receiving the certificate of citizenship?**

After taking the oath of citizenship, the applicant may proceed with the following steps:

- Entry into the special registry
  - Which is carried out by the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (Special Registry in Bratislava).
  - It is necessary to submit the certificate of citizenship and other documents.
- Issuance of an ID card
  - is requested at the district office – Documents Department.
- Issuance of a passport
  - is requested at the same Document Department.

#### **9. How and where to obtain an ID card and passport after being granted citizenship?**

##### **Option to obtain an ID card abroad**

Slovak diplomatic missions may accept applications for an ID card, but:

- not all diplomatic missions provide this service,
- waiting times are significantly longer,
- ID cards are still produced in Slovakia, so delivery is also delayed.

However, for clients abroad, this is a viable option if they do not wish to travel to Slovakia.

##### **Passport applications may be submitted:**

- in Slovakia – at a district office, documents department,
  - at any Slovak diplomatic mission abroad.
- This is a common and frequently used option, especially if the applicant lives outside Slovakia.

#### **10. What are the most common issues related to obtaining citizenship through ancestry?**

The most common complications arise from incomplete or incorrect documentation regarding the lineage to a Slovak ancestor, missing translations or certifications, and ambiguities in the family lineage. Clients often do not have the documents required for citizenship ready—particularly proof of health insurance, an employment contract in Slovak, a translated resume, or their certificate of good conduct is about to expire, which must always be current (no more than 6 months old), thereby prolonging the entire process. Problems also arise from incorrectly or incompletely filled-out forms and questionnaires, especially if they are filled out hastily on the spot rather than in advance in Slovak.

Complications with housing are also common—missing or unverified consent from the landlord, an unclear lease agreement, or short-term housing that is insufficient for granting residency. The process is also prolonged when the applicant fails to book an appointment with the Foreigners' Police or the District Office in a timely manner or does not respond promptly to requests to submit additional documents. Problems arise when picking up the citizenship decision, particularly if the applicant does not specify in advance which embassy or consulate ( ) they wish to collect the decision from. When processing documents abroad, one must expect longer processing times and limited services at some diplomatic missions.

## **11. How long does the entire process take and how much does it cost?**

### **Duration:**

The entire process—from obtaining permanent residence on grounds worthy of special consideration to the issuance of Slovak documents—is time-consuming and consists of several separate procedures. The duration depends on the readiness of the documents, the workload of the authorities, and whether missing documents need to be supplemented.

Permanent residence on grounds of special consideration typically takes 30 to 90 days, though the process is prolonged especially if documents regarding origin or accommodation are missing, or if translations and certifications need to be provided. Once residency is granted,

an application for citizenship follows; the statutory deadline is 24 months, but in practice, a decision is often issued sooner, especially if the lineage to the ancestor is clear and the documents are complete. After citizenship is granted and the oath is taken, registration in a special registry follows, which can take several weeks to months, and only then is it possible to obtain an ID card and a passport.

In practice, therefore, the entire process—from the initial submission of the residence application to obtaining a Slovak ID card—takes approximately 1.5 to 3 years, depending on the client's preparedness and the processing speed of the various government agencies.

### **Costs:**

The financial costs consist mainly of administrative fees and document preparation. The application for permanent residence is subject to an e-stamp fee, as is the application for citizenship. Additional costs arise from official translations, certifications, obtaining archival documents, or legal assistance. Obtaining an ID card and passport involves standard administrative fees, which vary depending on whether the documents are processed in Slovakia or at a diplomatic mission abroad.

## **12. When to Consult a Lawyer**

It is advisable to consult a lawyer especially when the applicant is unsure of the accuracy or completeness of the documents, when there are uncertainties regarding the family lineage, or when the applicant needs to ensure that the entire process proceeds without unnecessary delays. In practice, legal assistance proves crucial, particularly when proving lineage to a Slovak ancestor, obtaining archival documents, preparing translations and certifications, or resolving errors in birth and marriage certificates. A lawyer can also prepare the applicant to file an application for permanent residence, review forms, point out common mistakes, and ensure that all documents are in the correct format.

Assistance is also appropriate in situations where the applicant lacks housing, health insurance, an employment contract in Slovak, a translated resume, or when their certificate of

good conduct is about to expire—one of the most common causes of delays. An attorney can also resolve issues with scheduling appointments at the Foreigners' Police, communicate with authorities, and respond to requests for additional documents to prevent delays in the proceedings. They also assist in choosing the location to receive the citizenship decision, in registering in the special registry, and in processing documents both in Slovakia and abroad.

Legal assistance is therefore always advisable when the applicant wishes to minimize the risk of errors, shorten the duration of the proceedings, and ensure that all steps are taken correctly and in accordance with the law.

**We have extensive experience with this type of proceeding and can assist you with every step of the process or just a selected part, depending on your individual needs and preferences.**

**If you are interested in our legal services, please do not hesitate to contact us.**



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