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After the Approval: What Happens to Your New Luxembourg Citizenship

Most of what gets written about citizenship by descent stops at the word approved. The application is submitted, the file works its way through the ministry, and then the story ends, as if a decree in the mail is the finish line. It isn't. Approval is where a second, quieter process starts, and it is just as easy to get wrong as the application itself.

Luxembourg is a useful case to walk through, because its post-approval steps are specific enough to show what this phase actually involves anywhere.

The decree comes first, then the paperwork that makes it real

Once the Ministry of Justice grants naturalisation or reclamation, the decision is communicated by post, along with an information sheet explaining how to obtain Luxembourg identity documents. Processing after the decision date typically takes about a week before that notification goes out. Naturalisation itself is meant to be decided within eight months of a complete file being submitted, though an incomplete file simply sits until the missing piece arrives, and that clock does not start over in your favor. It just doesn't start at all.

Receiving the decree is not the same as holding proof of citizenship you can use. That is a separate step, and it is the one people are least prepared for.

The certificate of nationality, and when you actually need one

Luxembourg's certificate of nationality, the Heimatschein, is not something everyone needs immediately, but it matters in specific situations: if Luxembourg authorities ever question your status, if a foreign authority requires formal proof of it, or if you are living abroad and do not yet hold a valid Luxembourg passport or ID card. It is also commonly requested during a family member's own naturalisation or reclamation file, when that file needs to establish the Luxembourg nationality of a parent, grandparent, spouse, or child.

The certificate comes from the Nationality Office at the Ministry of Justice, and it is issued on the strength of documentary proof, not simply the decree itself. If your case runs through a family line, this is often the document that ends up anchoring someone else's application later, which is worth remembering if you are the first in the family to formalize the connection.

Getting an actual passport

The decree makes you a citizen. It does not put a passport in your hand. That requires a separate application, typically through the Bierger-Center or the relevant Luxembourg consulate if you live abroad, and it comes with its own fee schedule: a standard ten-year passport runs around €50, with a fast-track option available at a higher cost for anyone who cannot wait out the standard processing window. Passport validity itself is tiered by age, running shorter for young children and stepping up as an applicant gets older.

Until that passport, or at minimum a Luxembourg ID card, is in hand, the practical value of the citizenship is limited. You are a citizen on paper at the ministry, but not yet a citizen who can travel on the document, register locally, or exercise the rights that came with the decree.

Dual citizenship is not automatically at risk, but check the other side

Luxembourg has permitted dual citizenship since January 1, 2009, so gaining Luxembourg nationality does not require giving up an existing one. What it does not do is guarantee that your other country of citizenship feels the same way. Some countries restrict or complicate dual nationality on their own end, and that is worth confirming before, not after, the Luxembourg process concludes, particularly if the new citizenship affects tax residency, military obligations, or an existing passport's validity elsewhere.

Why this stage deserves its own attention

The approval is the legal outcome. Everything after it, the certificate, the ID documents, the passport, the confirmation that your other citizenship is unaffected, is the administrative outcome, and it is where a case either gets properly closed out or quietly left half finished. Treating it as a footnote is how people end up holding a decree they can't yet use, months after the part everyone was celebrating.