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French Nationality Ranked Highest in the World

France's quality of nationality is the best in the world, according to the 3rd edition of the [Henley & Partners – Kochenov Quality of Nationality Index](#) (QNI), which was launched in London today. The French nationality earned a score of 81.7% out of a possible 100%, fractionally ahead of Germany, which was knocked off the top spot for the first time in seven years, with a score of 81.6%. While the difference between France's and Germany's results is relatively small, France's comparative advantage lies in its greater Settlement Freedom (attributable mainly to the country's former colonial empire).

Iceland and Denmark take 3rd and 4th place, respectively, on this year's Index, which is the only one of its kind that objectively measures and ranks all the world's nationalities as legal statuses through which to develop your talents and business. The UK drops down a position to 13th place, again failing to secure a spot in the top 10, while the US increases its position by two ranks, claiming 27th place, with the country's relatively poor standing on the Index primarily due to its low Settlement Freedom compared to EU member states. China climbs two places to rank 59th, and Russia maintains its position at 63rd place on the Index. This year, the UAE has for the first time ever overtaken Israel on the QNI, now ranking 46th, with Israel in 48th position. The Emirati nationality has climbed 13 positions over the past five years, making a significant leap forward when its holders received visa-free travel access to the Schengen Area in 2016.

[Prof. Dr. Dimitry Kochenov](#), a leading constitutional and citizenship law professor and co-creator of the Index, says the key premise of the QNI is that it is possible to compare the relative worth of nationalities as opposed to simply that of states. "In today's globalized world, the legal status of millions of nationals extends their opportunities and desires far beyond their countries of origin: the confines of the state are simply not the limit of their ambitions and expectations. Using a sophisticated combination of quantifiable data derived from leading international institutions and experts, including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Air Transport Association, the QNI measures the *internal value* of nationality, which refers to the quality of life and opportunities for personal growth within our country of origin, as well as the *external value* of nationality, which identifies the diversity and quality of opportunities that our nationality allows us to pursue outside our country of origin."

According to Prof. Kochenov, the QNI's combined methodology produces a clear and objective account of what our nationalities can do for us within the borders of our home country and of where they can take us abroad. The Index's findings have important and far-reaching implications: "Firstly, the QNI proves that one cannot possibly be correct in stating that all nationalities and passports are equally good. Some nationalities are radically better than others: being born French gives one a huge advantage over the liability brought about by a Somalian nationality, for example. With the QNI, illustrating this discrepancy becomes simple.

"Secondly, the QNI proves that it is not true that the most prosperous and economically important countries endow their citizens with the best nationalities: while China is an economic giant, its

nationality has a very modest objective value, and while Liechtenstein has a micro-economy compared to that of China, its nationality is world-leading. Some nationalities are great, while others are quite simply terrible. Now, we can see which is which.”

Brexit and the implications for UK and European nationality

The 3rd edition of the QNI continues to interrogate the quality of British nationality against the looming specter of Brexit. A ‘hard Brexit’ would see the UK losing its settlement and work rights in 30 of the world’s leading states, overwhelmingly impairing the quality of its nationality. But it could also increase tension and competition between the UK and the rest of Europe and potentially destabilize the nationalities of EU member states that had hitherto enjoyed close ties to the UK.

“The latest results from the QNI seem to anticipate this lose–lose scenario,” says Kochenov. “Both the value of European nationality overall and the value of UK nationality in particular are in gradual decline, especially in relation to faster-growing economies such as China, the UAE, and the US, whose nationalities continue to increase in value each year. Having said that, however, Europe remains the undisputed global leader in terms of nationality quality, and emerging economies would need an entire century of unchecked success to unseat it from this position. Accordingly, any loss will be felt much more acutely by an increasingly isolated Britain in the case of a hard Brexit.”

Notable movements on the QNI

Year-on-year, Georgia and Ukraine are the biggest climbers globally, rising 20 and 19 positions, respectively. The ascent of both nations can largely be attributed to the visa-waivers they signed with the Schengen Area in 2017, which significantly increased their Travel Freedom scores. On the other end of the spectrum, the Iraqi nationality fell 15 positions — one of the biggest declines on the QNI. The nationality fell in value after visa restrictions were introduced by a large number of countries.

Examining the results of the QNI over the past five years of measurement reveals some interesting shifts. Overall, Colombia has been the highest climber since 2013, rising 50 positions and improving its value by 14.6%. By contrast, the Qatari nationality has dropped massively as a result of regional diplomatic conflicts. In fact, despite a relatively strong starting point (56th place in 2013), the Qatari nationality has dropped more significantly over time than war-torn and unstable Libya, Syria, and Iraq. Its free-fall to 87th place in 2017 represents a 31-position decrease in total since 2013.

The broad spectrum of global nationality

[Dr. Christian H. Kälin](#), co-creator of the QNI and Group Chairman of [Henley & Partners](#), says the Index is highly relevant to individuals interested in understanding the circumstances associated with their nationality, as well as to governments looking to improve the local, regional, and global reach of the nationalities they provide.

“It is clear that our nationalities have a direct impact on our opportunities and on our freedom to travel, do business, and live longer, healthier, and more rewarding lives,” Kälin says. “The reality that the QNI describes is, in many respects, regrettable: in the majority of circumstances, our

nationality plays an important role in establishing a highly irrational ceiling for our opportunities and aspirations. An exception to the rule is the expansive freedom of movement and settlement enjoyed by nationals of France, the Netherlands, and Finland, among others. These are the most globally integrated citizenships in the world, turning the national borders of roughly one quarter of the world's states into myths for their holders and liberating their citizens from imaginary geographical limitations. For the many individuals who do not automatically enjoy such boundless levels of access and mobility, residence and citizenship programs provide an alternative path to freedom. The appeal of this option is growing each year.”

Kälin adds that governments are increasingly embracing residence- and citizenship-by-investment as a means of stimulating economic development and growth. In addition, more and more wealthy and talented individuals are seeking to diversify their citizenship portfolios to give themselves and their families greater international opportunity and security. “Alternative citizenship represents the most direct route to global mobility, connectivity, and access. The QNI is the most indispensable reference tool and resource when selecting the most valuable second or third nationality to acquire.”

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Notes to editors

About the *Henley & Partners – Kochenov Quality of Nationality Index (QNI)*

The QNI provides a comprehensive ranking of the quality of nationalities worldwide. To ensure a high level of reliability, a wide variety of strictly quantifiable data is used to gauge the opportunities and limitations that our nationalities impose on us. For that purpose, the QNI measures both the *internal value* of nationality, which refers to the quality of life and opportunities for personal growth within our country of origin, and the *external value* of nationality, which identifies the diversity and quality of opportunities that our nationality allows us to pursue outside our country of origin.

All the sources used are objectively verifiable and build on data collected by leading international institutions and experts with impeccable reputations. The QNI will be of interest to anyone who is curious about how their nationality performs in comparison to other nationalities and about the local, regional, and global opportunities and limitations associated with their nationality. The Index is of particular significance to financially independent individuals who wish to acquire the benefits of alternative citizenship: these individuals can use the QNI as a reference tool when selecting the most valuable second or third nationality for themselves and their families.

Key findings of the 3rd edition

- The French nationality stands at the top of the QNI General Ranking, with a score of 81.7%, while the Somalian nationality lies at the bottom, with 13.4%.
- The global mean this year was 39.28%, an incremental decrease from last year's average of 39.32%.
- In 13th place, the UK narrowly misses the top 10 but still makes it into the Extremely High Quality tier, with a score of 78.2%.
- The US has again only managed to secure a spot in the Very High Quality tier, but it did increase its position by two ranks, claiming 27th place and scoring 69.4%.

- 26 nationalities fall in the Extremely High Quality tier (75.00% and above); 23 nationalities fall in the Very High Quality tier (between 50.00% and 74.99%); 50 nationalities fall in the High Quality tier (between 35.00% and 49.99%); 96 nationalities fall in the Medium Quality tier (between 20.00% and 34.99%); and 14 nationalities fall in the Low Quality tier (below 19.99%).
- Malta and Latvia moved down from Extremely High Quality to Very High Quality; Andorra moved down from High Quality to Very High Quality; Ukraine and Georgia moved up from Medium Quality to High Quality; Qatar moved down from High Quality to Medium Quality; and Djibouti moved up from Low Quality to Medium Quality.

Top risers 2016–2017

- The Georgian nationality experienced a spectacular rise of 20 positions, from 104th position on last year's General Ranking to 84th position this year. Its improved ranking was mainly caused by a significant increase in visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel destinations, linked to its 2017 visa-waiver with the Schengen Area.
- The Ukrainian nationality experienced a similar dramatic rise, from 99th position in 2016 to 80th position in 2017, also as a result of visa-liberalization with the Schengen Area. Consequently, the Ukrainian nationality recovers towards the positions it occupied on the 2013 and 2014 QNI General Rankings (75th place with 32.8% in 2013, and 79th place with 32.3% in 2014), although the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine continues to compromise the nationality's Peace and Stability score.
- In the Seychelles, Human Development increased slightly, and the country gained five additional visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel destinations. As a result, the Seychelles nationality's value increased by 2.6%. Gaining six positions, it entered the top 50 of the 2017 General Ranking in 49th position.
- In 2016, the Emirati nationality made a significant leap forward when its holders received visa-free travel access to the Schengen Area. The nationality of the United Arab Emirates continued this trend in 2017 with an additional 10 visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel destinations, now boasting 130 such destinations in total and overtaking the Israeli nationality as the best nationality in the region. As a result, it pushes further into the world's top 50, moving from 49th place in 2016 to 46th place in 2017.

Biggest fallers 2016–2017

- The Qatari nationality suffered substantially from the country's diplomatic conflict with Saudi Arabia and its allies. The Gulf states de facto suspended the application of the Gulf Cooperation Council legal framework to Qatar last year, which reduced the value of the Qatari nationality from 37.7% (70th place) to 34.1% (87th place) — a remarkable free-fall.
- The Iraqi nationality dropped 15 places, from 150th position (18.6%) to 165th position (15.1%). With Peace and Stability remaining equally poor last year, a large number of countries introduced travel restrictions for Iraqis, which caused the nationality's Diversity of Travel Freedom to drop from 27 to only nine visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel destinations.
- The nationality of the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) fell in value from 21.3% in 2016 to 20.5% in 2017. The nationality's 11-position drop is linked to a decrease in Peace and

Stability as well as a decrease in visa-free and visa-on-arrival travel destinations. Overall, the Congolese nationality drops from 143rd position in last year's edition to 154th position this year.

- The Kuwaiti nationality experienced a modest loss in value in 2017, which did, however, result in a 10-position drop on the General Ranking, partly because other nationalities simply performed better. With its external value remaining roughly equal, the level of Human Development in Kuwait decreased slightly, and the level of Peace and Stability decreased measurably. The Kuwaiti nationality fell from 72nd place (37.0%) to 82nd place (35.7%), further reinforcing its downward trend over the past five years.

Risers and fallers 2013–2017

The value of the Colombian nationality has improved spectacularly over the past five years, during which period it has jumped from 111th place (26.1%) to 61st place (40.7%). While Human Development increased slightly, and Peace and Stability decreased somewhat, Colombian nationals have experienced a major improvement in Travel Freedom. In 2013, they had visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel access to 59 destinations, compared to 112 destinations in 2017, including the countries in the Schengen Area (as of 3 December 2015). The success story of the Colombian nationality over all the years of QNI measurement turns Colombia into the poster child of how to ensure constant improvement in the quality of nationality.

As Libya has further destabilized over the past five years, its nationality has lost value on all the parameters of the QNI. Human Development, Economic Strength, and Peace and Stability have deteriorated substantially. While the global trend has definitely been increased visa liberalization, Libyan nationals went from having 39 visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel destinations in 2013 to having 38 such destinations in 2017. All in all, the nationality dropped in value from 22.4% in 2013 to 21.1% in 2017, only just staying in the Medium Quality tier.

The nationality of Syria continues to suffer from the country's ongoing civil war. With Syria's economy destroyed, and Peace and Stability at an all-time low in 2017, Human Development has also decreased dramatically. Diversity of Travel Freedom also decreased from 37 to only 31 visa-free or visa-on-arrival destinations. Overall, the nationality's value has dropped from 19.8% to 16.8%, moving it from 138th place in 2013 to 162nd place in 2017.

Infographics, graphs, and expert commentary

QNI infographics, radar graphs, and expert commentary essays are available for download on the Henley & Partners website (<https://www.henleyglobal.com/quality-of-nationality/>) as well as on the QNI website (<https://www.nationalityindex.com/>).

About the creators of the QNI

Prof. Dr. Dimitry Kochenov holds a Chair in EU Constitutional Law at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and chairs the Investment Migration Council, Geneva, Switzerland. He has held numerous fellowships and visiting professorships worldwide, including at Princeton University (Crane Fellowship in Law and Public Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School and Visiting Professorship at the Center for Human Values), NYU School of Law (Emile Noël

Fellowship), Boston College Law School (Senior Clough Fellowship), Basel Institute for European Global Studies, and Osaka Graduate School of Law and Politics, as well as a Visiting Chair in Private Law (Citizenship) at the University of Turin, Italy. He publishes widely on different aspects of comparative and European citizenship law and migration regulation, and he consults for governments and international organizations on EU constitutional law and citizenship issues. Prof. Kochenov's latest edited volumes include *EU Citizenship and Federalism: The Role of Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *The Enforcement of EU Law and Values* (Oxford University Press, 2017, with András Jakab, University of Salzburg).

Dr. Christian H. Kälin, TEP, IMCM, Chairman of Henley & Partners, is considered one of the world's foremost experts in investor immigration and citizenship by investment, a field he pioneered. Holding master's and PhD degrees in law from the University of Zurich, he is a sought-after speaker and advises governments and international organizations. He is the author, co-author or editor of many publications, including standard works such as the *Global Residence and Citizenship Handbook*, *Ius Doni: The Acquisition of Citizenship by Investment*, and the *Switzerland Business & Investment Handbook*.

About Henley & Partners

Henley & Partners is the global leader in residence and citizenship planning. Each year, hundreds of wealthy individuals and their advisors rely on our expertise and experience in this area. The firm's highly qualified professionals work together as one team in over 30 offices worldwide.

The concept of residence and citizenship planning was created by Henley & Partners in the 1990s. As globalization has expanded, residence and citizenship have become topics of significant interest among the increasing number of internationally mobile entrepreneurs and investors whom we proudly serve every day.

The firm also runs a leading government advisory practice that has raised more than USD 7 billion in foreign direct investment. The firm has been involved in strategic consulting and in the design, set-up, and operation of the world's most successful residence and citizenship programs.

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