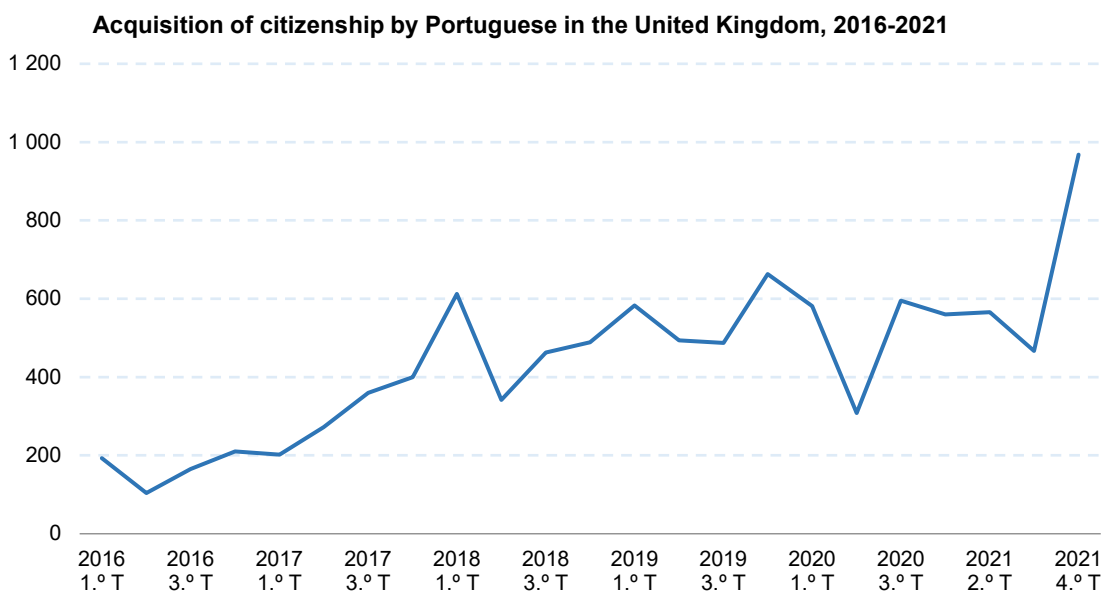# Acquisition of British nationality by Portuguese in the UK reaches a record high in 2021

2023-01-03

In 2021, 2,561 Portuguese citizens opted for British nationality, according to data from Gov UK. This United Kingdom body counted a total of 159,969 acquisitions of nationality by foreigners, with the Portuguese representing 1.6% of that total. +

Since 2016, the year in which Brexit was voted, the number of Portuguese choosing British nationality has almost doubled, from 672 in 2016 to 1,234 in 2017. Although there are several quarterly fluctuations in 2018 and 2019, the total Portuguese acquisitions in these years were the highest figures recorded since 2000 in the UK. In 2020, with the Brexit process already completed and Covid-19 having an impact on administrative processes, there is a large decrease (even more marked in the total of acquisitions). In 2021, with a greater normalisation of the pandemic situation, the number of acquisitions of nationality by the Portuguese increases again, reaching the maximum value since the series under analysis. This growth seems to be explained, above all, by the fears induced by Brexit and the reduction of rights associated with the status of foreigner that may result from it. The increase in the number of acquisitions of British nationality catapulted the United Kingdom into first place, replacing France and Switzerland, with regard to the acquisition of the nationality of the country of destination.

Acquisition of citizenship by Portuguese in the United Kingdom, 2016-2021

Source Graph by Observatório da Emigração [Emigration Observatory], data by Gov UK, Immigration statistics data tables, year ending September 2022.

Link   https://www.gov.uk/

[by Inês Vidigal]

Cite as   Vidigal, Inês (2023), "Acquisition of British nationality by Portuguese in the UK reaches a record high in 2021", *Observatório da Emigração*. http://observatorioemigracao.pt/np4EN/8901.html