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Residency & Citizenship

Italian Citizenship *by Descent*

The definitive guide to claiming your Italian and European Union citizenship under the new rules of Law 74/2025. Who qualifies, which route to take, and how to win your case.

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"Your country of birth should never define where, or how, you choose to live."

WELCOME

Your surname may be worth *a passport*

Millions of families around the world, above all in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, the United States, and Australia, descend from Italian emigrants. For more than a century, Italian law recognised nearly all of them as citizens by blood. In 2025, that changed.

Law 74/2025 rewrote the rules of citizenship by descent. Some doors closed. Others, and this is what most coverage misses, remain firmly open: transitional protections, judicial routes, a two year fast track to naturalisation for descendants, and a reacquisition window that runs to the end of 2027.

I am Matías Aguayo Grove, an investment migration advisor based in Lisbon, and I hold two citizenships myself, Chilean and Spanish. I work with families across the world on residency and citizenship strategy, and on Italian descent cases I work alongside specialised Italian counsel who handle recognition files through consulates, municipalities, and the courts every single week.

This guide gives you the current framework in plain language, so that when we speak, we can go straight to what matters: your family line and your best route.

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WHY ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP MATTERS

Passport strength

Visa free access to over 185 destinations

European Union rights

Live, work, study, and retire in 27 countries

Dual citizenship

Permitted by Italy since 1992

Nature of the right

Recognition of a status, not a purchase

Transmission

Can pass to your children under current rules



THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

What Law 74/2025 *actually* changed

Until 2025, Italy applied *iure sanguinis* with no generational limit: one Italian ancestor, however distant, could anchor a claim if the line was unbroken. Law 74/2025, which converted the so called Tajani Decree and entered into force on 24 May 2025, replaced that system with a much narrower one, built around a new Article 3 bis of the citizenship law.

The core principle now reads in reverse: a person born abroad who also holds another citizenship is presumed never to have acquired Italian citizenship, unless they fall within specific exceptions. The Ministry of the Interior confirmed how authorities must apply the rules in Circular 26185 of 28 May 2025, and Italy's Constitutional Court upheld the reform in ruling 63/2026, published in April 2026. This is settled law, and any serious strategy starts from that fact.

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

27 March 2025	Cutoff: applications and booked appointments before this date follow the old rules
24 May 2025	Law 74/2025 enters into force
28 May 2025	Interior Ministry Circular 26185 sets operating instructions
April 2026	Constitutional Court ruling 63/2026 upholds the reform
31 December 2027	Deadline for the citizenship reacquisition window

The two generation principle

Automatic recognition now runs through your parent and grandparents only. In broad terms, you qualify if a parent or grandparent is, or was, exclusively an Italian citizen, or if your Italian citizen parent lived in Italy for at least two continuous years before your birth. The word *exclusively* does real work here: an ancestor who also held another citizenship at the relevant moment generally does not anchor a claim under the new rules.

ELIGIBILITY

Who still qualifies in 2026

Treat this as a first filter. Each item below carries technical conditions underneath, and family histories are full of surprises in both directions.

✔ **An exclusively Italian parent or grandparent**

A parent or grandparent who holds only Italian citizenship today, or held only Italian citizenship at your birth, or at their death if it occurred before your birth.

✔ **A parent with two years of residence in Italy**

Your parent or adoptive parent, already an Italian citizen, lived in Italy for at least two continuous years before your birth or adoption.

✔ **A file opened before the cutoff**

Applications submitted before 27 March 2025, or appointments booked and communicated by that date, are assessed under the previous framework with no generational limit.

✔ **A pending court case**

Judicial recognition actions filed before the cutoff continue under the old rules, and their outcome can matter for the wider family.

✔ **An unbroken chain of transmission**

No renunciation and no naturalisation at a moment that severs the line between your Italian ancestor and you.

✔ **Evidence to the official standard**

Certified records, non naturalisation certificates, apostilles, and sworn translations, assembled from every relevant country.

The 1948 rule. Before 1 January 1948, Italian women could not transmit citizenship to their children. Claims that pass through a female ancestor before that date must go through the Italian courts rather than a consulate or municipality. Courts recognise these lines routinely when the case is properly built, and under the current framework the new generational tests must also be met.

STRATEGY

Three routes, three very *different journeys*

The same qualifying family line can be filed three different ways, and the choice shapes your cost, timeline, and lifestyle for the next one to three years.

Route	How it works	Best for
Consulate	You apply at the Italian consulate serving your place of residence. Government fee of €600 per adult. Appointment availability varies enormously between countries, from months to years.	Families who plan to remain in their home country during the process.
Municipality	You relocate to Italy, register your residence in a comune, and file there. A dedicated residence permit lets you live in Italy while the citizenship file is processed. Often the fastest overall timeline.	Applicants ready to move to Italy now and start their European life immediately.
Court	An Italian lawyer files a judicial recognition action on your behalf. Mandatory for 1948 maternal line cases, and available where consular access is blocked or unreasonably delayed. No relocation required.	1948 cases, complex lines, and applicants facing impossible consular queues.

The doors the reform left open

A Naturalisation in two years

If a parent or grandparent was Italian by birth, you can naturalise after just two years of legal residence in Italy, reduced from the standard ten. For many families whose descent claim closed in 2025, this is now the most realistic path to the passport.

B Reacquisition until end 2027

Former Italian citizens who lost citizenship before 15 August 1992, typically by naturalising abroad, and who were born in Italy or lived there two continuous years, can reclaim it by declaration until 31 December 2027.

C Children born after 24 May 2025

Children of Italian citizens born abroad can acquire citizenship by declaration within 36 months of birth, currently exempt from the government contribution.



EXECUTION

From family story to *Italian passport*

- 1 Eligibility review**

We map your family line against the Law 74/2025 tests and the transitional rules. You get a straight answer: whether you have a case, through whom, and by which route.
- 2 Build the evidence**

Birth, marriage, and death records, non naturalisation certificates, apostilles, and certified translations, gathered from every relevant jurisdiction.
- 3 File the right way**

Consulate, comune, or court, chosen for your family and timeline. If you relocate, we coordinate the residence registration and the permit that covers you while you wait.
- 4 Recognition and beyond**

Registration of your Italian civil records, passport issuance, and, if you want it, planning for banking, tax residence, and where in Europe you settle next.

THE DOCUMENT FILE, TYPICALLY

Civil records	Birth, marriage, and death certificates for each person in the line
Naturalisation evidence	Certificates of naturalisation, or of non naturalisation, for the emigrant ancestor
Legalisation	Apostilles on foreign documents
Translations	Certified Italian translations of all foreign records
Government fee	€600 per adult applicant, all routes

QUESTIONS

Straight answers to the *big questions*

Is citizenship by descent still worth pursuing after the reform?

For those who qualify, more than ever. The value of an EU passport has not changed; the number of people who can claim one has. If your parent or grandparent anchors a claim, you now hold something scarcer than before.

My qualifying ancestor is a great grandparent. Is it over?

Not automatically. The real question becomes whether your grandparent, the child of that emigrant, ever held exclusively Italian citizenship, and whether any transitional protection applies to your family. If descent is truly closed, the two year residence track keeps the passport within reach.

Do I lose my current citizenship?

No. Italy allows dual citizenship, and has since 1992. The exclusivity test in the new law is about your ancestor's history, not about you giving anything up.

How long will it take?

Realistically: several months of document work, then a route dependent wait. Municipal filings from inside Italy are often fastest; consular queues vary by country; court timelines depend on the tribunal. We set a realistic timeline for your specific case before you commit to anything.

Can I do this myself?

Some people do. But the 2025 framework punishes errors harshly: a misread naturalisation date, a missing certificate, or the wrong route can cost years. Since the reform, the margin for improvisation is gone. Professional case design pays for itself in time saved and outcomes secured.

The next step is a conversation, not a commitment. Bring your family story; I will bring the law. In thirty minutes you will know whether you have a case and what it takes to win it.

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Ready to claim what is *already yours*?

Every Italian descent case is decided by details: a date on a naturalisation record, a grandmother's birth year, a comune's archive. Let us find out, properly, what your family line holds.

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This guide reflects the Italian legal framework as of July 2026, including Law 74/2025, Interior Ministry Circular 26185 of 28 May 2025, and Constitutional Court ruling 63/2026. It is general information, not legal advice. Eligibility depends on the specific facts and documents of each family line and is confirmed only through a formal case review. Official information is published by the Italian Ministry of the Interior (interno.gov.it) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (esteri.it). © 2026 Matías Aguayo Grove. All rights reserved.