

SPORT NATIONALITY

This document briefly explains the FEI's sport nationality rules and the requirements for sport nationality changes. For additional information, please contact catherine.bollon@fei.org.

The rules

The FEI sport nationality rules are set out in Article 119, [FEI General Regulations \(GRs\)](#). Discipline-specific considerations may also exist in the relevant sports rules.

Key principles

Adult athletes (= aged above 18) must hold the corresponding nationality in order to compete for a country.

This rule applies for all levels of international competition.

The only exceptions to this principle are listed in article 119.4 and 119.5, GRs.

Minor athletes (= aged under 18) may compete for their country of residence (NB: participation in CIOs and FEI Championships will require the agreement of the NF of nationality). Once the athlete reaches 18 years the rules for Adults apply.

Requirements for sport nationality changes

Sport nationality changes must be approved by the FEI in order to be valid. Applications for sport nationality changes can only be made by National Federations, using the form available on the FEI's website (for Minors the form is not necessary to apply).

1. Adult athletes

"Waiting period" and residency requirements

Athletes who change their sport nationality and want to participate in FEI Championships (except FEI Championships for Young Horses), and the team competitions at CIOs, must satisfy additional requirements:

a) "Waiting period": a two years gap between the last FEI Championship or CIO team participation for the previous country and the first participation in these categories under the new sport nationality; and,

b) "Residency": proof of legal residency in the new country for two (2) uninterrupted years or for a total of five (5) non-consecutive years.

The residency requirement does not apply in some cases (birth in the country, nationality acquired by means related to family heritage; former national whose loss of nationality was neither voluntary nor due to criminal acts; athlete had to renounce his former nationality as a condition of acquiring a new one).

For athletes legally married to a national of the new country of nationality the residency requirement is reduced to one (1) year of uninterrupted legal residence, or three (3) years of non-consecutive periods of legal residence.

Sport nationality change and Olympic/Paralympic Games participation

Participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games is also subject to the Olympic and Paralympic Regulations, and in particular to any waiting period imposed by these regulations in the event of a sport nationality change.

Participation in Regional and Continental Games is also subject to the regulations of the relevant governing body.

Additional eligibility requirements may be imposed by the applicable FEI Regulations for the Olympic Games.

2. Minor Athletes

The rules for sport nationality changes are more flexible for Minor athletes than for Adults. Minors who hold two or more nationalities can choose each calendar year which of their countries they want to compete for during that year. They may subsequently change their NF, but only once per calendar year (and subject to the agreement of both NFs and the FEI if the Athlete has already participated in an international Event for the other NF since the beginning of that year).

The “Host-NF” concept

Athletes who spend more than six months of a year in one foreign country can have their lower level event entries managed by the NF of such country (the “host NF”) if this is more convenient. This option is subject to the agreement of the NF of sport nationality and of the FEI. The athletes will in all circumstances compete for their country of sport nationality.