

CITIZENSHIP IN THE RECENT JURISPRUDENCE OF THE POLISH SUPREME ADMINISTRATIVE COURT (NSA)

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Abstract

The paper examines the recent jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court of Poland (NSA) on the acquisition of citizenship, with particular attention to the Court's public-law interpretation of parenthood. The NSA treats citizenship as a status derived exclusively from statutory provisions, increasingly detached from constitutional and family-law definitions of parentage. Drawing on key judgments from 2018 and 2022, the analysis identifies the emerging conflict between public-law and private-law norms, especially in cases involving surrogacy and same-sex parenthood recognized abroad. The paper concludes by evaluating whether this approach aligns with constitutional standards, the principle of legality, and prevailing European human-rights requirements.

Keywords

citizenship, case law, Polish Supreme Administrative Court, Poland, administrative law

1. Introduction

The European Convention on Nationality clearly establishes that every person has the right to a nationality and that states should refrain from actions that may result in statelessness². However, nationality is not synonymous with citizenship. While the acquisition and loss of citizenship fall within the competence of domestic law, international standards emphasize that the arbitrary deprivation of nationality (and as a consequence citizenship) violates fundamental human rights³. Nevertheless, some states permit the withdrawal of citizenship even if it renders an individual stateless. This raises critical questions: is citizenship an inalienable right, or merely a privilege whose scope and security depend on the discretion of the state? Furthermore, how should citizenship be understood in the interplay between individual rights and state authority?

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² See: Forlati, S. (2013). Nationality as a human right. In *The Changing Role of Nationality in International Law*. Routledge. pp. 18-36.

³ See: Spiro, P. J. (2011). A new international law of citizenship. *American Journal of International Law*, 105(4), pp. 694-746.

These questions gain particular significance in the context of the Polish legal system, where citizenship serves as the most important bond between the individual and the state, determining a wide range of public-law rights and obligations⁴.

Acquisition of citizenship by birth is governed by clear statutory provisions: currently Article 14(1) of the Act on Polish Citizenship of 2 April 2009, and, for earlier cases, Article 6(1) of the Act of 15 February 1962 – but recent jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court (*Naczelny Sąd Administracyjny*, NSA) of Poland demonstrates that interpretation of these provisions continues to evolve. Despite their similar wording, both regulations rely on the concept of “parent” or “parents,” which has become the focal point of judicial analysis, especially in cases involving complex family structures⁵.

In recent years, the NSA has played an increasingly active role in clarifying how statutory provisions on citizenship should be applied. Depending on the child’s date of birth, the Court applies either the 1962 Act or the 2009 Act; yet its interpretive approach generally remains consistent: the acquisition of citizenship is primarily a matter of public law. The Court has repeatedly emphasized that norms of family and private law – including those concerning the confirmation of biological parentage – do not directly determine whether a child acquires Polish citizenship by birth⁶. Public-law concepts, the Court insists, should not be interpreted solely through the framework of private-law institutions.

This interpretive stance was articulated most clearly in a set of landmark judgments issued on 30 October 2018 and was reaffirmed in subsequent rulings, including the NSA judgment of 16 February 2022. Together, these decisions generally form a coherent jurisprudential line.

The paper examines the examples from the case law to determine how the NSA understands the concept of citizenship. The analysis focuses on the substantive legal issues arising from the Court’s reasoning, without addressing broader procedural, evidentiary, or legal-philosophical questions. Its central objective is to assess whether the Court’s strictly public-law approach aligns with the structure and purpose of Polish citizenship legislation and, more

⁴ Ura, P. (2014). Obywatelstwo w świetle prawa administracyjnego. *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego-Seria Prawnicza*, (15), p. 181.

⁵ See: Wyrembak, J. (2022). Obywatelstwo polskie rodzica jako przesłanka nabycia obywatelstwa polskiego przez urodzenie (w aspekcie najnowszego orzecznictwa NSA). *Kwartalnik Prawa Międzynarodowego*, 2(II), pp. 181-201.

⁶ For a recent example, see NSA judgment II OSK 3362/17 (10 September 2020), in which the Court confirmed Polish citizenship for a child born abroad to a Polish father and an unknown surrogate mother.

broadly, what it reveals about the nature of citizenship as a right or a privilege within the Polish legal system⁷.

2. What Is Citizenship?

From the perspective of this paper, it is crucial to explain what citizenship is. Legally⁸, citizenship denotes a specific bond between an individual and the state, acquired either by birth or through naturalization, regardless of whether it occurs via declaration, choice, marriage, or other procedures permitted under domestic law⁹. This bond establishes a framework of rights and obligations: the individual acquires certain entitlements and duties toward the state, while the state, in turn, undertakes corresponding responsibilities and obligations toward the individual¹⁰.

It is worth noting that citizenship is often mistakenly equated with nationality. Although the two concepts share certain similarities, they are not identical. Nationality has a broader scope: it refers to membership in a particular nation and does not depend on the possession of legal citizenship¹¹. Instead, it is shaped by cultural, historical, linguistic, or emotional ties, reflecting a sense of belonging that extends beyond formal legal status¹². In short – while citizenship primarily defines legal and political relations between the individual and the state, nationality expresses identity and affiliation on a social and cultural level¹³.

The institution of citizenship has a long history dating back to antiquity. It first developed in the context of the Greek *polis*, where it functioned as an exclusive status reserved for a relatively small portion of the population¹⁴. In its earliest form, citizenship was limited to free men born within the *polis*, thereby excluding women, slaves, and resident foreigners from political participation¹⁵.

⁷ Hut, P., & Warszawski, U. (2020). Współczesne problemy obywatelstwa. *Social Policy Issues*, 27, p. 183.

⁸ There is no doubt that citizenship can be also understood as a social construct, closely tied to a community's shared sense of identity and belonging. In some societies, it is the active exercise of political rights associated with citizenship that serves as a key element integrating members of the civic community. This aspect of citizenship is particularly prominent in Anglo-Saxon contexts, most notably within American society.

⁹ Art. 2(1)(d) of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection, and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers (OJ L 199/23, 31.7.2007).

¹⁰ Compare: Gilbert, M. (2006). *A theory of political obligation: Membership, commitment, and the bonds of society*. OUP Oxford.

¹¹ Spiro, P. J. (2011). A new international law of citizenship. *American Journal of International Law*, 105(4), pp. 694-695.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Kornacka-Skwara, E. (2011). Tożsamość narodowa w świetle przemian kulturowych. *Pedagogika. Studia i Rozprawy*, (20), pp. 116-117.

¹⁴ Roughly 10–15% of the total population.

¹⁵ Fisher, N. (2006). Citizens, foreigners and slaves in Greek society. *A companion to the classical Greek world*, p. 327.

Over time, distinctions between citizens and other inhabitants of the *polis* began to diminish. In later periods, citizenship was even extended to certain categories of foreigners, which gradually reduced its exclusivity and transformed it into a more common status. Thus, from a rare, privileged position citizenship shifted into a legal and social institution covering broader segments of society¹⁶.

The determination of issues related to citizenship – how it is acquired and, potentially, lost – falls primarily within the exclusive competence of individual states. However, this principle is not absolute. The right to possess citizenship is recognized as a fundamental human right¹⁷. It means that every individual has the right to citizenship, and no one may be arbitrarily deprived of it or denied the right to change it, which naturally limits the discretionary powers of states in this area¹⁸. Furthermore, due to the international dimension of citizenship, it is necessary to harmonize key aspects of that matter through multilateral international agreements¹⁹. These instruments aim to minimize or eliminate situations in which loss of citizenship leaves an individual stateless.

3. *Ius Sanguinis* and *Ius Solis*

Domestic legislation determines who is entitled to citizenship, the mechanisms through which it is acquired, the circumstances under which it may be lost, and the rights and obligations that follow from this status²⁰. States adopt a variety of approaches, in particular with respect to the modes of acquisition. One of the fundamental pathways through which citizenship is obtained is by birth - referred to as original acquisition (*ex lege*), which operates automatically by force of law. Within this framework, two principal doctrines have developed²¹.

The first is the principle of descent (*ius sanguinis*)²², under which a child acquires the citizenship of one or both parents. This principle is widely applied across many countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Polish law similarly follows this model, as reflected in Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and Article 14(1) of the Act on Polish

¹⁶ Ura, P. (2014). Obywatelstwo w świetle prawa administracyjnego. *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego-Seria Prawnicza*, (15), p. 182.

¹⁷ Połatyńska, J. (2009). Prawo do obywatelstwa jako prawo człowieka. *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Iuridica*, (69), p. 74-75.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Such as the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the European Convention on Nationality.

²⁰ Compare: Vink, M. P., & De Groot, G. R. (2013). Citizenship attribution in Western Europe: International framework and domestic trends. In *Migration and Citizenship Attribution* (pp. 1-22). Routledge.

²¹ Compare: Mendieta, E. (2025). *Ius Sanguinis* vs. *Ius Soli*: On the Grounds of Justice. In *The Latinx Philosophy Reader* (pp. 460-477). Routledge.

²² See: Mignot, J.-F. (2019). *By soil and blood: Citizenship laws in the world*. La Vie des Idées.

Citizenship²³. In most jurisdictions, the citizenship of one parent is sufficient for a child to acquire citizenship; however, in certain states, such as Bhutan, both parents must be citizens for the child to acquire citizenship²⁴.

The second principle is that of birthright citizenship (*ius soli*)²⁵, whereby a child automatically acquires the citizenship of the country in which they are born. This approach is widely adopted across the Americas and underpins the citizenship laws of states such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The United States also follows this principle, although recent measures – notably the 2025 executive order issued by President Donald Trump – attempted to restrict automatic citizenship for children born to undocumented immigrants²⁶. Legal scholars, nevertheless, argue that such reforms would likely encounter substantial judicial challenges, as any modification of birthright citizenship would necessitate either a constitutional amendment or a binding decision from the U.S. Supreme Court²⁷.

4. Polish Citizenship Law: Statutory Provisions

Poland primarily adheres to the *ius sanguinis* principle. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases, the *ius soli* principle is applied as a subsidiary rule—specifically, when a child is born on Polish territory to unknown parents, parents without citizenship, or parents whose nationality cannot be determined. Many states combine both principles to reduce the risk of statelessness, balancing the legal certainty of descent-based citizenship with safeguards for children born under exceptional circumstances²⁸.

In addition to acquisition by birth, citizenship can also be obtained through several secondary mechanisms. Naturalization allows foreigners to acquire citizenship after fulfilling statutory requirements, such as a period of residence, knowledge of the national language, and understanding of the country's culture and history²⁹. Reintegration permits the restoration of citizenship previously lost due to circumstances like marriage to a foreign national, although

²³ Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, Art. 34; Act of 2 April 2009 on Polish Citizenship (Dz. U. 2025 r. poz. 1611), Art. 14(1).

²⁴ See Citizenship Act of Bhutan 1985, Sections 2 and 4.

²⁵ Mignot, J. F. (2019). By soil and blood: Citizenship laws in the world. *La vie des idées*.

²⁶ U.S. President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14160 on 20 January 2025, aiming to end automatic birthright citizenship in the United States for children born to parents without lawful permanent resident status.

²⁷ See: Plankey-Videla, N., & Campbell, M. E. (2025). Becoming a Citizen in the Age of Trump: Citizenship as Social Rights for Latines in Texas. *Social Sciences*, 14(7).

²⁸ For example when a child is born aboard an aircraft or a ship. In such cases, the child's citizenship is determined by the law of the country in which the vessel is registered, as well as by the nationality of the parents.

²⁹ See: Yang, P. Q. (1994). Explaining immigrant naturalization. *International migration review*, 28(3), pp. 449-477.

this option is not recognized in Poland³⁰. Repatriation enables individuals who find themselves outside their country of origin to regain citizenship upon returning³¹. Additionally, citizenship may be granted at the discretion of state authorities; in Poland, this power is reserved exclusively for the President³².

5. Jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court (NSA)

The jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court (NSA) has extensively addressed the issue of acquiring Polish citizenship. It demonstrates a consistent public-law orientation, in which the primary focus is on the formal relationship between the state and the individual, rather than on private-law considerations related to family relationships, parentage, or the method of birth³³. It is especially evident in the Court's judgments of 30 October 2018 (II OSK 1868/16 and II OSK 1871/16)³⁴ and 16 February 2022 (II OSK 128/19)³⁵. Collectively, the recent judgments of the NSA reflect the Court's interpretation that the acquisition of citizenship in Poland is fundamentally a matter of public law, governed primarily by statutory provisions, rather than by private or family law norms or by foreign legal concepts³⁶.

5.1 Public-Law Character of Citizenship

In the 2018 judgments, the NSA stressed that citizenship constitutes a public-law relationship between the state and the individual³⁷. The Court held that this relationship creates the legal status of the individual as a citizen, and as such, is exclusively governed by public-law rules. In this context, family law norms that establish biological parentage or define parent-child relationships under the Family and Guardianship Code are considered irrelevant to the determination of citizenship³⁸.

³⁰ According to Article 5 of the Act on Polish Citizenship, "the marriage of a Polish citizen to a non-Polish citizen does not result in any change in the citizenship of either spouse." This provision clarifies that marital status alone has no effect on the legal nationality of the parties involved, ensuring that citizenship is determined independently of marriage.

³¹ See: Chiang, F. F., van Esch, E., Birtch, T. A., & Shaffer, M. A. (2018). Repatriation: what do we know and where do we go from here. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(1), pp. 188-226.

³² See: Kozłowski, K. (2019). Uprawnienie Prezydenta RP do wyrażania zgody na zrzeczenie się obywatelstwa polskiego. *Przegląd Prawa Publicznego*, (4), pp. 89-104.

³³ See: Michałkiewicz-Kądziela, E. (2021). Problem rozbieżności orzecznich Sądu Najwyższego i Naczelnego Sądu Administracyjnego w zakresie transkrypcji zagranicznych aktów urodzenia dzieci par jedнопłciowych na tle Konstytucji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 2 kwietnia 1997 r. *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, (2 (60), pp. 203-221.

³⁴ Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), judgments of 30 October 2018, II OSK 1868/16 and II OSK 1871/16.

³⁵ Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), judgment of 16 February 2022, II OSK 128/19.

³⁶ Wyrembak, J. (2022). Obywatelstwo polskie rodzica jako przesłanka nabycia obywatelstwa polskiego przez urodzenie (w aspekcie najnowszej orzecznictwa NSA). *Kwartalnik Prawa Międzynarodowego*, 2(II), p. 202.

³⁷ Ibidem. pp. 207-208.

³⁸ Ibidem. p. 209.

Similarly, the public order clause, as expressed in Art. 7 of the Act of 4 February 2011, on Private International Law, which prohibits the application of foreign law that would contravene fundamental principles of the Polish legal order, was deemed inapplicable where one parent is Polish and the other is unknown or unrecognized under domestic law³⁹. According to the NSA, no conflict of legal systems arises in such cases, and therefore, foreign law cannot justify a refusal to recognize citizenship⁴⁰.

The Court also addressed the issue of surrogate motherhood contracts, noting that while such contracts are invalid under Polish law due to their conflict with principles of social coexistence and the prohibition on treating a person as an object, this does not affect the acquisition of citizenship. Even if a child is born through surrogacy abroad, the Polish citizenship of one parent suffices for the child to acquire Polish citizenship⁴¹.

The judgment of 16 February 2022, reinforced the Court's public-law approach⁴². The NSA emphasized that Polish citizenship is acquired by "operation of law," based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*: a minor automatically acquires Polish citizenship if at least one parent is a Polish citizen, regardless of the other parent's nationality, the method of conception, or whether the child was born to a surrogate or same-sex parents. The Court made clear that the legal recognition of same-sex parenthood or foreign surrogate arrangements does not alter domestic legal requirements⁴³. According to it, the public order clause cannot be invoked to deny citizenship when the statutory conditions are fulfilled and no conflict exists between foreign law and fundamental Polish legal principles⁴⁴.

5.2 Public-Law vs. Private-Law Considerations

Despite the apparent clarity of the NSA's public-law reasoning, the cited jurisprudence, according to some legal theorists and practitioners – such as the conservative judge Jarosław Wyrembak⁴⁵ – may generate significant tension with the constitutional and statutory framework governing family law in Poland⁴⁶.

Regardless of the controversies surrounding this view and the judge's known ideological stance, the concern is difficult to dismiss entirely. Article 18 of the Polish Constitution

³⁹ Ibidem. p. 214.

⁴⁰ Ibidem. p. 215.

⁴¹ Ibidem. p. 216.

⁴² Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), judgment of 16 February 2022, II OSK 128/19.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Often referred to as a "double" judge in the context of controversial appointments to the Constitutional Tribunal.

⁴⁶ Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), judgment of 16 February 2022, II OSK 128/19.

guarantees protection to marriage – defined as a union of a woman and a man. Many interpret this provision as endorsing a mother–father model of the family⁴⁷. Similarly, the Family and Guardianship Code regulates parent-child relationships, explicitly specifying the roles of mother and father and, according to some theorists, excluding same-sex couples from parental recognition (or, according to an alternative view, providing them only with limited protection)⁴⁸. By treating “parents” as a potentially broader category influenced by foreign law, the NSA arguably broadens these domestic legal definitions.

Conversely, European law, particularly the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, emphasizes the protection of family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and increasingly recognizes diverse family structures, including same-sex couples and children born through assisted reproductive technologies⁴⁹. The tension between domestic definitions and evolving European standards highlights the challenges faced by national courts in reconciling constitutional family law provisions with broader human-rights obligations under European law.

Against this backdrop, and setting aside the broader debate regarding the primacy of the Constitution over European law, the Court’s repeated assertions that a child’s legal status including the right to acquire citizenship is independent of being born through surrogacy or the recognition of same-sex parents under foreign law effectively decouple public-law rules on citizenship from the private-law determination of parentage. At the same time, this reasoning invites careful reflection on the Court’s alignment with the principle of legality enshrined in Articles 2 and 7 of the Polish Constitution, which require all public authorities to act strictly within the limits of the law⁵⁰.

5.3 The Role of Foreign Law and the Public Order Clause

An especially contentious aspect of NSA jurisprudence concerns the treatment of foreign law. In the 2018 and 2022 judgments, the Court dismissed the relevance of foreign laws that recognized same-sex parenthood or surrogate motherhood, arguing that these foreign concepts do not create obligations under Polish law, nonetheless, the Court simultaneously

⁴⁷ See: Nazar, M. (1997). Niektóre zagadnienia małżeństwa i rodziny w świetle unormowań Konstytucji RP z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r. In *Rejent*, 7, pp. 100-125.

⁴⁸ See: Kosek, M. (2014). Ochrona rodziny w przepisach Kodeksu rodzinnego i opiekuńczego dotyczących zawarcia małżeństwa. *Acta Iuris Stetinensis*, (06 (2)), pp. 573-584.

⁴⁹ See: Dundic, P. M. (2023). European Court of Human Rights, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Recognition of Same-Sex Marriages Concluded Abroad. *Zbornik Radova*, 57, pp. 1093-1119.

⁵⁰ See: Brzezinski, M. F., & Garlicki, L. (1995). Polish constitutional law. In *Legal Reform in Post-Communist Europe*. Brill Nijhoff. pp. 21-50.

treated parental recognition abroad as evidence in determining citizenship, without clarifying the normative basis for this approach under Polish law. The rejection of the public order clause in these cases, despite the presence of foreign legal concepts incompatible with Polish law, suggests a problematic selective application of public-law principles.

Moreover, the NSA invoked the concept of the child's inherent and inalienable dignity as a basis for acquiring citizenship, independent of parental status⁵¹. Although the intentions behind this recognition are laudable, and the constitutional acknowledgment of human dignity is foundational, Polish statutory law conditions citizenship on the parent's nationality. Thus, deriving a legal right to citizenship from dignity rather than statutory parentage circumvents the clear provisions of both the Constitution and citizenship law, introducing interpretive uncertainty.

5.4 Implications of the NSA's Approach

The recent NSA jurisprudence has significant implications not only for the interpretation of legal citizenship but also for the relationship between public and private law in the Polish context. On one hand, it reinforces the automatic and formalistic nature of citizenship acquisition by emphasizing the primacy of the public-law relationship between the state and the individual. On the other hand, it generates tension with the family law framework, potentially allowing foreign legal concepts to influence domestic recognition of parentage without reconciling them with constitutional and statutory definitions. Moreover, the Court's approach raises broader questions about the coherence of the legal system, the limits of judicial discretion, and the role of public-law reasoning in areas traditionally governed by private law⁵².

Furthermore, the NSA's rulings demonstrate a potential conceptual ambiguity in the use of terms such as "parent," "father," and "mother." While these terms are central to both family law and citizenship law, the Court treats them as categories of public law, yet does not provide a clear normative basis for their meaning independent of private law. This ambiguity may undermine the predictability and uniformity of administrative decisions regarding citizenship, notably in cases involving surrogacy or same-sex parentage abroad.

Conclusion

The jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court of Poland (NSA) reveals a strong emphasis on a public-law approach to the acquisition of Polish citizenship, treating it

⁵¹ Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), judgment of 16 February 2022, II OSK 128/19.

⁵² See: Weinrib, E. J. (2011). Private law and public right. *University of Toronto Law Journal*, 61(2), pp. 191-211.

primarily as a legal status conferred by operation of law, rather than as a concept intertwined with the private-law definitions of parentage established in the Constitution and the Family and Guardianship Code. While the NSA consistently frames citizenship as a matter of formal legal relations between the state and the individual, this approach results in the marginalization of domestic norms. The question remains whether these norms align with European standards; nonetheless, the subordination of private-law principles to an ostensibly neutral public-law framework means that the Court effectively – and, arguably, intentionally – disregards the legal order clause, which safeguards the coherence and fundamental values of the Polish legal system against the direct transposition of foreign legal concepts.

The analyzed judgments of 2018 and 2022 illustrate the practical consequences of this reasoning. In these cases, the NSA relied on foreign law and the concept of dignity to interpret terms such as parenthood and paternity, thereby disregarding the clear statutory and constitutional requirements for establishing a child's parentage under Polish law. According to some theorists, this approach not only undermines the authority of domestic legislation but also risks destabilizing the consistency of jurisprudence by creating exceptions that conflict with established legal norms.

Moreover, the NSA's selective reliance on foreign law in matters of citizenship raises deeper questions about the limits of judicial discretion in interpreting public-law institutions. While citizenship is inherently a public-law concept, it is closely linked to the recognition of parentage, a private-law institution governed by detailed statutory rules. By abstracting citizenship from its familial context and disregarding the necessity of identifying the child's mother and father as defined by Polish law, the NSA creates a conceptual friction that introduces legal uncertainty for both individuals and administrative authorities.

Ultimately, the jurisprudence analyzed here underscores the necessity of maintaining a careful balance between public-law formalism and the substantive principles of private law. Departures from this balance – whether through an excessive reliance on foreign legal constructs or the marginalization of established domestic norms of parentage – risk undermining the coherence, predictability, and legitimacy of Polish administrative law.

Crucially, the analysis also demonstrates that states bear a positive obligation to ensure an adequate legal framework enabling all individuals, including those in non-traditional family structures such as same-sex unions, to exercise their legal rights effectively. In practical terms, this may require legislative intervention to recognize foreign family arrangements, thereby aligning domestic law with both constitutional principles and evolving European human-rights standards. The NSA's approach in the examined judgments therefore serves as a cautionary

illustration of the imperative that judicial reasoning remain firmly grounded in the Constitution, statutory provisions, and the foundational principles of the domestic legal order, ensuring that the conferral of citizenship accords with both the letter and the spirit of the law.

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