

# Special Regime for Sephardic Jews

in order to obtain  
Portuguese Citizenship  
and EU Passport



*"...for some Jews, the Portuguese passport will  
represent the return to the lost homeland,  
... for others it is an opportunity to gain free  
access to the European Union!"*



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# Law

The Decree-Law 30-A/2015 was approved on 27 February. This Decree-Law amends the Portuguese Regulation on Citizenship (Regulamento da Nacionalidade Portuguesa). It establishes the requirements for the descendants of Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin to obtain Portuguese citizenship and lists the documents that must be submitted together with the Portuguese citizenship application.

Sephardic Jews from all over the world are now entitled to apply for Portuguese nationality, with all the associated benefits of having an EU passport.

- Step 1** — Certificate issued by the Portuguese Jewish Community;
- Step 2** — Application for Portuguese Nationality;
- Step 3** — Obtaining a Portuguese Passport.



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# Require- Requirements

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This Article establishes the requirements for the acquisition of citizenship by naturalisation and lists the documents that must be presented with the application for Portuguese nationality: <sup>1</sup>

- 1.** Adult or emancipated foreigners (family members' citizenship may be applied for after);
- 2.** That have not been convicted of a crime punishable, according to Portuguese Criminal Law, with imprisonment for a minimum of three years;
- 3.** State and demonstrate in the application the circumstances that establish the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is not necessary either to speak Portuguese or to reside in Portugal, or speak Portuguese language as required by the normal route into citizenship by naturalization.





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# Documents that must be filed with the application

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The application of the certificate issued by the Commission of the Jewish Community of Lisbon should be done by the applicant himself or by a legal representative duly authorized.

An application form must be filed together with the following documents:

1. Power of attorney granting specific powers to our lawyers, who will provide the respective Portuguese text;
2. Birth certificate or similar document that contains date of birth, place of birth and names of the parents of the applicant, issued within the previous six months and translated and certified by the Portuguese Consulate of the country of origin of the document in question;



**3. Authenticated criminal record certificate issued by:**

- a.** the Authorities of the state of birth;
- b.** Country of nationality (if different);
- c.** Country of residency (actual and previous).

Criminal Record from the applicant's country of birth and country of which he/she is a citizen, as well as from those countries where the applicant has resided, issued within the previous ninety days, certified by the Portuguese Consulate of the country of origin of the documents in question.

Translation into Portuguese of the above mentioned criminal records certified by the Portuguese Consulate of the country of origin of the document in question.

**4. Documents that prove the direct progeny or family relationship in the collateral line of a common parent from a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin and a tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin:**

- i.** This document, as a rule, must be a certificate from a Jewish community with the status of a religious legal person, legally based in Portugal, certifying the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, based on the surname, genealogy and family memory.



Such certificate is issued by a Jewish community established in Portugal as a religious legal entity.

The aforementioned certificate will certify the belonging tradition to a Portuguese origin Sephardic Jewish community, expressed namely through the applicant's family name, the family language, genealogy and family memory.

The connection to Portugal proof is of an objective nature. The applicant will have the right to obtain the certificate provided he/she can prove his/her direct or collateral descent and an emotional connection.

The issued certificate shall mention the applicant's full name, date and place of birth, parent's name, and nationality, place of residence, and direct descent as well as indication of collateral common ancestry relation to the Portuguese origin Sephardic Jewish community, duly presented with all evidence and proof elements.

Documents that  
must filed with  
the application





ii. In the absence of this certificate, the proof can be given by:

(a) an authenticated document, issued by the Jewish community to which the applicant belongs, certifying that the applicant uses Portuguese expressions in spoken rites or that he/she speaks Ladino in the community,

or,

(b) documentary records that prove the ties of the applicant's family to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, such as synagogue and Jewish cemeteries records, residency certificates, family names, objects, property deeds and wills and documents that allow applicants to prove a Portuguese Sephardic ancestral origin. <sup>2</sup>

# Documents that must be filed with

<sup>2</sup> Other examples of documented evidence: family records, family tree, Community archives of births, marriages and deaths (such as those in Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Curacao, St. Thomas and Sofia), cemeteries and lists of tombs (like those found in Surinam, Thessaloniki, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Curacao, Bayonne, Paris and Vienna), brit milah records, general Government archives that show arrivals from Portugal, lists of ships and passengers arriving from Portugal.



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## NOTES

All documents in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish, will be accepted for review.

The documents must be authenticated when issued by foreign authorities.



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# Means of proof

## Evidence of Jewish-Portuguese descent

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Evidence of Jewish-Portuguese descent, through family names, language, direct or collateral descendants, or other elements may be direct or circumstantial nature.

The Evidence can be:

- **a)** circumstantial evidence;
- **b)** documentary evidence;
- **c)** testimonial;
- **d)** expert evidence.

Means of proof  
Evidence of Jewish-  
Portuguese descent



**a)** Circumstantial evidence can be provided by any kind of proof, provided that when taken together or individually, in combination with the direct evidence, be convincing as to the validity of the claim of ties to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin applicant.

**b)** Documented evidence (direct evidence) - can be provided through: family records, genealogy, community files relating to births, marriages and deaths, cemeteries and lists of graves, records of Brit Milah or Bar Mitzvah (respectively circumcision rituals and religious majority), government files show that arrivals from Portugal, lists of ships and passengers arriving from Portugal.

**c)** Oral testimony, or the testimony of witnesses who can testify the oral tradition of a family. Testimonial evidence must be submitted in writing in the form of written statements signed by witnesses and certified by notary.

The testimonies, translated into Portuguese, to be sent to the Jewish Community of Lisbon, together with certified copies of passports or identity cards of the witnesses.

Witnesses must be credible and compelling their testimony.

Means of proof  
Evidence of Jewish-  
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**d)** The expert evidence, namely the opinion of a specialist in Portuguese Jewish diaspora.

The expert evidence must be submitted in writing. Expert's reports in the Portuguese Diaspora must be made in writing and signed by its expert, authenticated by a notary and accompanied by a biographical note of it.

## PLEASE NOTE

Although the Jewish Community Certification Commission Lisbon to ascertain the veracity of the documents submitted to be evaluated in conjunction with other evidence obtained during the preliminary investigation of course, we call the attention of candidates for the fact that they can come to be held criminally responsible in case of false testimony of presentation and / or presentation of false or forged documents.





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## Service fee-Committee of the Jewish Community

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Payment of the service fee for the opening and analysis of the process - The fee for the opening and analysis of the process in the Committee of the Jewish Community is € 500.00 (five hundred euros), non-refundable in case of non-approval.

Service fee-  
Committee of the  
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# Committee of the Jewish Community

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The average time it takes from the moment a request for Portuguese Nationality is submitted to the Portuguese Government and Portuguese Nationality is granted is approximately 8 months and it is not necessary for the candidate to come to Portugal in person to obtain Portuguese citizenship.

The negative opinion will result in a non-positive unanimity as to the validity of the claim by the applicant for a descent relationship of a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.

Regardless of the direct or indirect nature of the existence of the evidence submitted, the Commission's conviction will always be formed on the basis of evidence provided by the applicant, considered critically together with all relevant facts gathered during the discovery process.



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