

Legal Insight

# Attribution of Portuguese Nationality to Sephardic Jews

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By Organic Law No. 1/2013, of July 29<sup>th</sup>, which amended the Nationality Law, the possibility of acquiring Portuguese nationality by naturalization was introduced for descendants of Sephardic Jews, which was regulated in 2015, through Decree-Law No. 30-A/2015, of February 27<sup>th</sup>.

In this legislative context, the acquisition of nationality for descendants of Sephardic Jews required, as a rule, the presentation of a certificate issued by a Jewish Community based in Portugal (Lisbon or Porto), attesting to the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.

In the absence of this certificate, authenticated documents issued by the Jewish community to which the applicant belonged, attesting to that descent, were accepted

in its place. Given the frequent difficulty in presenting the latter documents, obtaining a certificate issued by a Jewish community residing in Portugal was the most common way to acquire Portuguese nationality.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, the Portuguese Nationality Regulation was republished, changing, among others, amend this procedure for acquiring Portuguese, also stipulating the proof of the connection to national territory of the Applicant through one of the following forms:

1. Presentation of a certificate or other document proving the ownership, transmitted mortis causa, of real rights over real estate located in Portugal, other personal rights of enjoyment or shareholdings in commercial or cooperative companies based in Portugal; or
2. From regular trips throughout the applicant's life to Portugal;

when such facts demonstrate an effective and lasting connection to Portugal.

This change will come into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 and will not apply to ongoing processes.



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