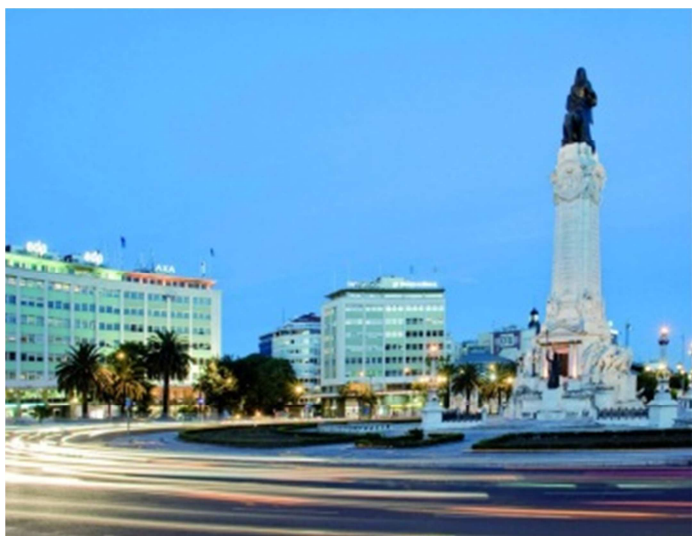


# Portuguese Citizenship granted to Sephardic Jews



## TAX & BUSINESS



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### INTRODUCTION

Acknowledging that Sephardic Jews were subject to unfair persecution, resulting in either forced conversion or deportation, during the Middle Ages (namely the Inquisition period), the Portuguese Government has now approved a Decree-law regulating the concession of Portuguese citizenship to the descendants of such communities.

This Act grants the right to return to Portuguese territory, to people who share special bonds with Portugal, namely the usage of traditional Portuguese family names or language.

As an example of such ties, it is estimated that around 150.000 people speak the Ladino, a language spoken by the Sephardics, formerly expelled from the Iberian Peninsula.

Thus, with the Decree-law n.º 30-A/2015, the descendants of such Sephardic Jews may, from now on, apply for the granting of Portuguese citizenship, with all its co-relative rights and obligations.

### TO WHOM IT APPLIES

In order to qualify for the granting of Portuguese citizenship, the petitioner must meet the following criteria:

- Being of majority age or emancipated, under Portuguese law;
- Not having been convicted, with a sentence transited in *rem judicatum*, for a crime liable to a prison sentence of three years or more, in accordance with Portuguese law.

Additionally, the interested party must indicate and demonstrate the circumstances that determine the belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin. Among others, the following elements may be relevant:

- Family name(s);
- Language;
- Direct ancestry;
- Family relationship in a collateral line of a common parent from the Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.

### THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Along with the application, the petitioner must present the following documents:

- Birth certificate;
- Certificate of criminal record issued by the competent authority in the country of the nationality of the applicant, or in the country in which the applicant has

resided, which must be authenticated, when issued by foreign authorities;

- Certificate from a Jewish community with collective religious person status, under Portuguese Law, that certifies the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, materialised, namely, in the family name of the applicant, native language, ancestry, and family memory.

The Certificate referred above shall contain the full name, the date of birth, the country of birth, the parentage, the nationality, the applicant's residence, as well as the designation of the direct progeny, or family relationship concerning collateral relatives of a Sephardic community with Portuguese origin, accompanied by all the elements of proof.

In the absence of the mentioned certificate of the Jewish community, the following means of proof are also admitted:

- Certified Document, issued by the relevant Jewish community, which certifies that the use of Portuguese expressions, by the applicant, in Jewish rituals or, as his/her spoken language within that community;
- Certified Documental Records, such as registries in synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, as well as residence permits, properties titles, wills and other evidences of the family connection of the applicant, through direct progeny or family relationship





SOCIEDADE DE ADVOGADOS, RL  
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& ASSOCIADOS

concerning collateral relatives of a  
Sephardic community with Portuguese  
origin and the tradition of belonging to  
a Sephardic community of Portuguese  
origin.

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