

CITIZENSHIP NETWORK

Global Mobility & Legal Residency Intelligence

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Critical Alert: Portugal Officially Revises Nationality Law (May 2026)

On May 3, 2026, the President of Portugal officially announced pivotal revisions to the nation's Citizenship Law. As these changes are set to be published and enacted immediately, the landscape for foreign residents and private clients has shifted overnight. At **Citizenship Network**, we are mobilizing our legal resources to assist those affected by this sudden legislative acceleration.

The updated framework is not merely a technical adjustment; it represents a significant tightening of the path to a Portuguese passport. Whether you are an existing residency holder or an investor considering Portugal for your family's future, understanding the nuances of this May 2026 decree is paramount to maintaining your eligibility.

Urgent Action Required: The new law is expected to enter into force the day following its official publication. For many, this leaves a window of only a few days to file applications under the current, more lenient regulations.

New Eligibility Timelines: 7 to 10 Years

The core of the revision extends the mandatory period of legal residency required before a citizenship application can be lodged. Moving away from the previous 5-year standard, the new requirements are as follows:

- **CPLP Nationals:** Citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries must now complete **7 years** of legal residency.

- **All Other Nationals:** Applicants from all other jurisdictions are now subject to a **10-year** residency requirement.

The "Card Issuance" Rule: A Major Calculation Shift

Perhaps the most challenging change introduced in this amendment is the revocation of the "application-to-issuance" time credit. Previously, the time spent waiting for a residency permit to be processed often counted toward the total residency years. **Citizenship Network** experts highlight that under the 2026 law, the clock **strictly begins only upon the physical issuance of the first residency permit card.**

Final Call for Golden Visa Holders

Notably, the legislation does not include any transitional "grandfathering" provisions for Golden Visa holders. If you are currently eligible under the 5-year rule but have not yet submitted your citizenship request, you must act before the law is published in the coming days. Following publication, the 10-year requirement will apply to all future submissions without exception.

Requirements for Immediate "Last-Call" Submissions:

- **A2 Language Certificate:** Proof of Portuguese language proficiency from an accredited institution.
- **5-Year Proof:** Documentation showing legal residency (counted from the initial investment/fee payment date for Golden Visa applicants).
- **Apostilled Documents:** Birth certificates and criminal records from your country of origin and any country of residence (over 3 months) must be apostilled and ready.

As the regulatory environment becomes more complex, having a partner like **Citizenship Network** ensures that your global mobility strategy remains robust. If you have questions regarding your specific situation or need immediate assistance with a "last-call" application, please contact us today.

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