

Building Projects Over Strong Relationships



**LEGAL ALERT: Amendments to
the New Immigration Law
(October 2025)**

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The new Immigration Law, was enacted on October 16, 2025, following review by the Constitutional Court, and introduces substantial changes to the legal framework governing the entry, residence, family reunification, and issuance of work visas for foreign nationals in Portugal.

The amendments reflect a more restrictive migration policy aimed at reducing spontaneous immigration, prioritizing the entry of highly qualified professionals, and strengthening administrative control over immigration procedures.

Key Amendments

1. Job Seeker Visa

This visa will now be restricted to highly qualified professionals. The Government will publish the list of eligible professions in a separate decree.

This new framework aims to channel labour migration through selective programs and bilateral agreements, replacing the former open-access regime.

2. CPLP Citizens

It is no longer possible for nationals of CPLP (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) member states to enter Portugal prior to obtaining the visa.

Henceforth, all applicants must hold a valid residence visa prior to entry in order to apply for the respective temporary residence permit.

3. Abolition of the “Expression of Interest” Mechanism

The informal regularisation mechanism known as the “expression of interest” has been abolished.

Consequently, this route to obtaining residence authorisation has been eliminated, and applicants must now follow the formal legal channels provided for by law.

4. Family reunification: new regime and exceptions

The new law tightens the rules governing family reunification, establishing a general minimum period of two years of lawful residence by the main permit holder before an application may be submitted, while allowing for certain waivers and exceptions.

Exceptions include:

- Families with minor or dependent children, who may apply immediately;
- Family members of highly qualified professionals, golden visa investors, and EU Blue Card holders, who are exempt from the general waiting period;
- Spouses or partners without children may apply after 15 months, provided they can prove cohabitation of at least 18 months prior to entry into Portugal;
- The general waiting period may be waived or reduced in exceptional and duly justified cases, by decision of the competent member of Government, considering the nature and strength of family ties, and the effectiveness of integration in Portugal, considering the principles of human dignity and proportionality.

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The Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) will now have nine months to issue a decision on residence permit applications, extendable only in exceptional circumstances.

The Government's policy aims to curb spontaneous immigration and establish a regulated and planned system of admission.

Applications for renewal must be accompanied by proof of sufficient means of subsistence (excluding pensions or social benefits) and evidence of suitable accommodation. The October 2025 reform marks a structural change in Portuguese migration policy, replacing informal regularization mechanisms with more rigorous and selective criteria. The focus is now on professional qualifications, proof of pre-existing family ties, and enhanced administrative control.

To find out how these changes may impact your residency, family reunification, or work visa application, please get in touch with our team.

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