Orientation Guide: How to get Portuguese citizenship

By **Yael Factor** - February 1, 2015

Following the news about the eligibility of Jews expelled from Portugal to get a Portuguese citizenship, we wanted to find out: how much will a passport cost? Will it be possible to pass it from father to son? And would you need to know Portuguese in order to get the foreign passport? With our expert, lawyer Adam Yadid, we prepared for you a nice and easy orientation guide:

Feb 1, 2015, 9:30AM

Yael Factor

Illustration

Illustration *AP*
Q&A on the way to a European citizenship:

The Portuguese government adopted an amendment to the law, that would grant citizenship to Jews who will prove that they are descendents of Spanish –Jews who suffered persecution and deportation 500 years ago. Since this is not a simple process, but it involved many Israelis, we asked lawyer Adam Yadid, from the "David Yadid Law and Notary" firm to explain how you can know whether you are eligible for the yearned for EU passport.

Who is eligible for Portuguese citizenship?

The law will grant eligibility to anyone who proves that his ancestors came from countries to which the Jews expelled from Spain immigrated, meaning, almost anyone in Israel who is called "Mizrachi". The easiest to prove are those with Portuguese last names, and after them, Jews that came from Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. Following this group – the Magreb Jews – Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. Dutch Jews and Sepharadi communities in Romania, Hungary and even Hamburg, Germany, could prove their origin.

Who do you hand the initial request to?

The Portuguese Internal Affairs Ministry .

Do you need to know the language?

Today it is mandatory to master the Portuguese language, at a very basic level. There have been no changes made in the new addition to the law, and the matter is to be clarified by March.

How long does it take?

From similar procedure it should take about 18 months.

How much does the process cost?

Between 1,500 to 2,500 Euro for a family portfolio, and additional 1,000 Euro for each additional descendent.

Portuguese Parliament

Portuguese Parliament *Archives/Reuters*
What are the condition?

There are three accumulative conditions:

* A proven connection to the expelled Jews from Portugal – still not clear what will be the level of proof. Many of the expelled were first expelled from Spain, and five years later, from Portugal. For this reason, many of the expelled from Spain are also expelled from Portugal.

* Basic knowledge of the Portuguese language.

* Have a connection to the Portuguese Jewish tradition

What does the law give?

There are more than 700,000 Israelis who have foreign passports. The Portuguese citizenship is a European citizenship. The means – all of the right of the 27 states of the EU, including: a permit to stay in all the EU states, social rights in all the EU states, and free education in academic institutions, according to the different criteria in some of the EU states.

An owner of a European citizenship can get a passport, that allows an automatic visa to the USA, and entry permit to countries which are impossible to enter with an Israeli passport, as well as voting rights. In addition, a Portuguese (and a European) citizen, is eligible for funding from European banks, as well as having advantages in buying businesses and real estate in Portugal.

How long is the citizenship/passport valid for?

This is a lifetime citizenship . The passport is valid for a few years. As long as the passport's validity is being extended, it is possible to hand it down to the son, grandson, etc.

Is the citizenship valid for the children?

There is no limit on passing the passport to the next generations, as long as the passport's validity is being extended, it is possible to hand it down to the son, grandson, etc.

What do you do if you have more than one passport?

The law will allow to hold Portuguese citizenship and passport along other citizenships and passports.

Will I have to go to Portugal as part of the procedure?

As opposed to the Spanish law, it seems that in the Portuguese case the answer is NO.

Yael Factor