



PRIME  
LEGAL

# Portugal's New Nationality Law

What changed, what it means for you, and  
what to do next

*April 2026*



# *The Legislative Process and what was done*

- This legislative process to change the citizenship law started in 2025 by initiative of the new Government elected.
- It was supported by one of the opposition political parties (Chega).
- PS, the second opposition political party is still against it.
- Monthly meetings between the legal community and the parliamentary groups took place.
- Suggestions of different wordings were presented.
- Statistics and numbers about the relevance of immigration programs to Portugal were presented, as well as the impact in concrete cases in terms of waiting years and costs.





# *Why this matters?*

- Many international clients chose Portugal based on a clear path to citizenship after **5 years**.
- The new law changes that expectation significantly.
- Understanding these changes early helps you make informed decisions and avoid delays.



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# *The biggest change*

- The **minimum residency period** increased from 5 years to **10 years**.
- For some nationalities (EU and Portuguese-speaking countries), it may be reduced to **7 years**.
- For most international investors, the timeline has effectively doubled.





# *How time will be counted*

**Currently:** your time started when you submitted your residence application.

**With the New Law:** your time only starts when your first residence card is issued.



## *What this means in real life*

- A process that was expected to take **5-7 years** may now take **double**.
- This affects planning decisions such as relocation, investment, **long-term residency and access to European rights**.
- It also changes expectations around when **citizenship** can realistically be obtained.



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# *New requirements explained simply*

- You may need to demonstrate **knowledge of Portuguese culture and history** through an additional test.
- A **civic test** about rights and duties will be introduced.
- You must formally declare adherence to **democratic principles**.
- Applicants under international sanctions will not be eligible.



## ***Important: what was NOT included***

- There is no transition period.
- There is no grandfather of residency applicants already in process (for future steps).
- The new rules are expected to apply immediately once the law enters into force.



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# *Golden Visa: stays the same but extended*

- The Golden Visa program itself **has not changed**.
- You can still maintain **residency** with limited stay requirements (7 days /year).
- **Your investment structure remains valid under current rules.**
- The additional period of 5 years is secured under a Permanent Residency card valid for 5 years



## ***GPR: A key strategic point***

- After **5 years of residency**, you may still apply for Golden Permanent Residency (GPR).
- At that stage, you may be able to release your investment.
- You can then wait for **citizenship** without keeping capital tied up.
- GPR maintains the same flexibility, same rights, no tax impact, and reduced staying requirements (7 days / year).
- Minors and Adults can access it directly after 5 years of Golden Visa – no need to maintain dependency requirements for adult children



# *What happens next*

- The law is now **awaiting** final steps before entering into force.
- In the next 5 days the voted wording shall be send to the President of the Republic.
- The President may approve, veto, or request a constitutional review.
- In the shortest scenario, the law is expected to come into force around **May 2026**.



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## ***Possible outcomes***

- The law may be approved directly and enter into force quickly.
- A political veto is possible but likely to be overridden by **Parliament.**
- A **constitutional review** could delay the process slightly. If some rules are declared no constitutional, the law will be sent back to the Parliament.

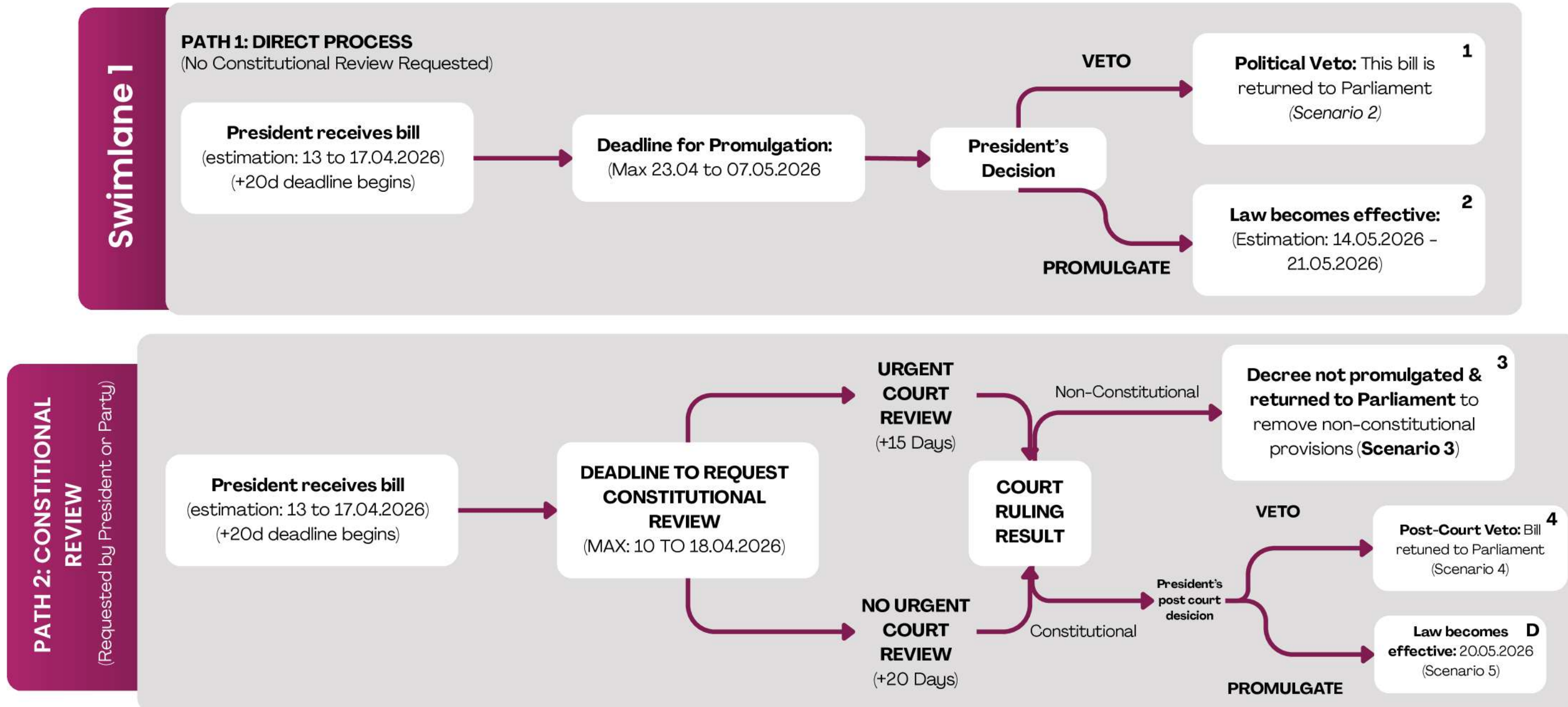
# Potential Scenarios: Portuguese Nationality Law



## START: BILL APPROVED

Final and global approval of revised version of decree  
17/VII by Parliament | 01-04-2026

**FINAL PARLIAMENT APPROVAL** (Revised Decree 17/VII) | (Space) | +8d | **FORMAL FINALIZATION PROCEDURES** in Parliament



# *Is there any hope?*

## *Small but existent*



- PS party is considering to send the approved wording to the Constitutional Court for appreciation.
- The Constitutional Court may rule (again) regarding the lack of grandfather clause / transitional period differently (new judges are being nominated).
- The citizenship law is subject to a regulation. The Regulation is a subordinate normative act issued to implement, detail, or operationalize a law. It is not on the same level as an Act of Parliament. Portuguese constitutional practice treats regulations as secondary legislation, which must fit within the framework set by higher-ranking legal rules.
- Parliamentary “corridor talks” say that there is room to accommodate a discussion about some kind of protection of ongoing residency cases.



# *If you already applied for citizenship*

- Applications already submitted are protected.
- They will be assessed under the rules in force at the time of submission.
- This provides important legal certainty for ongoing cases.



# *If you are close to 5 years*

- You may still have a short window to apply under the current rules according to the recent ruling of the Constitutional Court.
- Submitting as soon as possible might be critical.
- Early submission may be considered strategically.



# *What said the Constitutional Court before?*



The Constitutional Court understood that, although the non-inclusion of a safeguarding clause was excessively burdensome for the rights and expectations of the applicants, it was not unconstitutional insofar as it fell within the discretion inherent in the immigration policies to be defined by the Government, because, in the case at issue, Article 15(3) of the current Nationality Law already provided for the possibility of filing nationality applications where the residence permits had not yet been approved, on the assumption that they would come to be approved, and that, for the purposes of their assessment, the relevant moment should be considered to be that of the approval and not that of the submission of the application.



## *Other strategies of reaction*



- **Litigation:** when the new law is in force, there will be legal basis to discuss if expectations are being illegally breach.
- **Alternative paths:** Discuss with your lawyer the specific plan you had to explore alternatives in and out of Portugal.



# *Our role in this process*

- We continue to monitor all legal developments closely.
- Each situation should be assessed individually, based on your timeline and goals.
- Our focus is to provide clarity, reduce uncertainty, and guide you through each step.





We hope our proposal is in line with your expectations.  
Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further clarification regarding this or any other matter.  
From our side, we would be delighted to work with you.

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