

Portugal Pathways Warns of 'Ticking Bureaucratic Bomb' as 350,000 Visa Applications Backlog Grows in Portugal

LISBON, PORTUGAL, November 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Portugal Pathways](#), a leading immigration and investment advisory firm, has warned of a "ticking bureaucratic bomb" as the Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) struggles to process a backlog of 350,000 visa applications.

The backlog has been caused by a combination of factors, including the recent merger of the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) and the High Commissioner of Migration, as well as staff shortages and IT problems at AIMA.



AIMA struggles to process a backlog of 350,000 visa applications

The delay in processing visa applications is having a significant impact on people who are looking to move to Portugal, including those who are fleeing war-torn countries, as well as those who are attracted to the country's popular Non-Habitual Residency (NHR) tax scheme.

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Spokesperson, Portugal Pathways

The NHR tax scheme is due to be closed to new entrants on December 31, 2023, and there is concern that many people who have already applied for NHR tax status will not have their visa applications processed in time.

Portugal Pathways is calling on the Portuguese government to invest in AIMA so that it can process visa applications more efficiently. The firm is also asking the government to provide leniency for those who are already in the process of applying for visas and NHR tax status.

“People’s futures should not be derailed due to a bureaucratic backlog,” said a spokesperson for Portugal Pathways. “We are calling on the government to show some understanding for those who have done everything asked of them but now suddenly face rapidly approaching deadlines that they weren’t expecting.”

Gerald, originally from Israel, has spent the last year in Portugal overseeing the building of a new property that he intended to call home. However, in recent weeks he has been told by advisors that his plans to take advantage of the NHR tax scheme could be derailed by the fact that his visa application will not be completed in time due to delays in processing his D7 visa.

“I have invested a huge amount of money into the country and this property,” said Gerald. “But until it is completed, I cannot get an address, which means I can’t get my visa application completed. This, in turn, is impacting on my ability to complete my NHR tax status application in time for the end of December deadline.”

Gerald is now facing the very real possibility of being unable to take advantage of the NHR tax scheme and being forced to pull out of the purchase of his property, costing him hundreds of thousands of euros and uprooting his family.

“Portugal is a wonderful country with a lot to offer,” said a spokesperson for Portugal Pathways.

“However, the current visa backlog is a major deterrent for people who are looking to move to the country. We are calling on the government to take action to address this issue so that Portugal can remain a welcoming and attractive destination for foreign nationals.”

Portugal Pathways and its professional supply chain partners will continue to advocate for people moving to Portugal, but they cannot guarantee that visa and NHR tax status applications will be processed by the deadlines. The Portuguese government is the only entity that can improve the situation.

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