

Coates Global Says Investors Challenge Portuguese Nationality Law Changes

More than 500 Golden Visa holders are reportedly preparing legal action over Portugal's nationality law changes

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, May 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Coates Global](#) has published a new investor immigration update following reports that more than 500 Portugal Golden Visa holders are preparing collective legal action over recent changes to Portugal's nationality law.

According to recent reports, Golden Visa investors are preparing to challenge the Portuguese State over reforms that may extend the naturalisation timeline and change how residence time is counted for citizenship purposes. The reported challenge is expected to focus on legal certainty, legitimate expectations, and the position of investors who already committed funds under the previous framework.



Portugal's President promulgated Decree of the Assembly of the Republic No. 48/XVII on 3 May 2026, amending Portugal's Nationality Law. Legal and industry commentary states that the reform may increase the standard naturalisation period to ten years for many foreign nationals and seven years for EU and CPLP nationals, with the residence period counted from the issue of the residence permit rather than the date of application.

Coates Global says the reported legal action is potentially important for existing Golden Visa investors, particularly those who made qualifying investments, submitted applications, paid

professional costs, or made family and relocation plans under the previous five-year citizenship expectation.

“Existing Golden Visa investors may have strong arguments where they relied on the previous framework in good faith,” said Coates Global. “Portugal has the right to update its nationality laws, but investors who already committed substantial funds should not be unfairly penalised by retrospective disruption or administrative delay.”

The Portuguese Presidency’s own statement is notable. When promulgating the decree, the Presidency referred to the importance of ensuring that pending cases are not effectively affected by the legislative change, and to the importance of ensuring that legally fixed nationality periods are not affected by State delay. This language may be significant for investors who have waited through long processing times.

Coates Global says the legal action should be viewed as encouraging news for existing investors, but not as a guaranteed outcome. Each investor’s position may depend on key facts, including when the investment was made, when the Golden Visa application was submitted, whether biometrics were completed, when the residence card was issued, and whether the investor was already close to eligibility under the previous framework.

The firm also stresses that the nationality law changes do not mean Portugal has lost its position as a leading residence-by-investment destination. [Portugal’s Golden Visa](#), formally known as the Autorização de Residência para Investimento or ARI, remains a recognised residence route for qualifying investors. AIMA, Portugal’s immigration authority, states that ARI holders may live and work in Portugal, travel within the Schengen Area, benefit from family reunification, and later apply for permanent residence or Portuguese nationality where the relevant requirements are met.

“Portugal should not be assessed only through the question of whether citizenship is available after five years or ten years,” Coates Global added. “The programme still provides lawful residence in an EU Member State, visa-free Schengen travel during the residence period, family inclusion, permanent residence potential, and a possible route to one of Europe’s strongest passports in the longer term.”

Coates Global says Portugal may remain one of the most attractive credible options in the market even under a longer naturalisation framework. Direct citizenship-by-investment programmes within the European Union have faced increasing political and legal pressure, while many residence-based routes in stable jurisdictions require longer residence periods, greater physical presence, or less flexible conditions.

The firm notes that permanent residence may also become a more important milestone for Golden Visa investors. Under the EU long-term residence framework, non-EU nationals who have lived legally in an EU Member State for at least five years may obtain long-term resident status if

they meet the relevant conditions. The European Commission describes this status as granting rights similar to those enjoyed by EU citizens and as making it easier for qualifying non-EU long-term residents to move to other EU countries for work or study, although this is not the same as full EU citizenship free movement.

For existing investors, [Coates Global recommends](#) reviewing the complete application timeline and preserving all evidence of reliance on the previous framework. Relevant evidence may include investment records, application receipts, AIMA or SEF correspondence, residence card records, legal advice, fund documents, and proof of any State-related delay.

For new investors, Coates Global says the message is not that Portugal should be avoided. Instead, investors should approach Portugal with clear expectations. The programme should be understood as a strong EU residence route with substantial long-term citizenship potential, rather than as a guaranteed short route to citizenship.

About Coates Global

Coates Global is a London-based global immigration consultancy advising individuals, families, entrepreneurs and investors on residency and citizenship planning. The firm assists clients with Golden Visa programmes, residency-by-investment applications, citizenship strategy, international relocation planning and wider global mobility options.

Coates Global advises on the immigration and procedural aspects of residency and citizenship programmes. Where required, clients are referred to appropriately qualified local lawyers, tax advisers, financial advisers and regulated professionals.

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