

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF REFUGEES

Article 65 of Asylum Law 27/2008 states that: "Beneficiaries of refugee status and of subsidiary protection enjoy the rights and are subjected to the duties of resident aliens in Portugal, in so much as these are not contrary to this Law, to the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its New York Protocol of 1967, and they should conform, among other, to the obligation of respecting all laws, regulations and measures aimed at maintaining public order."

Useful contacts:

Conselho Português para os Refugiados (CPR)

The Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR) is a Non-Governmental Organization, created in 1991, that supports asylum seekers and refugees from reception until they are integrated in the Portuguese society. CPR provides free legal and social counselling, as well as Portuguese language classes to all asylum seekers and refugees. CPR also offers an employment and professional training service. Current Asylum Law 27/2008, of 30 June, foresees CPR intervention' as the NGO that provides independent legal counselling to asylum seekers and refugees in all stages of the asylum procedure - article 49 (4). CPR is the only national NGO that is exclusively dedicated to asylum seekers and refugees' population in Portugal.

Address:

Conselho Português para os Refugiados - CPR (Headquarters and CPR's Reception Centre for Refugees Children)
Quinta do Pombeiro, Casa Senhorial Norte,
Azinhaga do Pombeiro, s/n
1900-793 LISBOA
Tel. + 351 21 8314372
Fax: +351 21 8375072

Conselho Português para os Refugiados - CPR
Reception Centre for Refugees (CAR)
R. Senhora da Conceição, Bairro dos Telefones,
2685-854 BOBADELA – LOURES
Tel. + 351 21 9943431
Fax: +351 21 9948719
www.cpr.pt

Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF)

The Portuguese Immigration Service has the mission of implementing the Portuguese policies for immigration and asylum in agreement with the provisions of the Constitution and the Law, and the Government's guidelines.

Address:

Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF)
Avenida do Casal de Cabanas
Urbanização Cabanas Golf Nº 1
2734-506 Barcarena, Oeiras
Tel: 214 236 200 / 965 903 600
Fax: 214 236 640
www.sef.pt

Divisão de Refugiados (Refugee Division)
Rua Passos Manuel, 40, 1069-069 Lisboa
(With appointment)
gar@sef.pt

Ministry of Social Security

The Ministry of Social Security defines, promotes and implements social security's policies of solidarity, fighting poverty and social exclusion, support the families, children and youth at risk, the elderly, the inclusion of people with disabilities, to promote voluntary work, among other activities.

Address:

ISS, IP/CDist de Lisboa/Serviço Informativo do Areiro
Av. Afonso Costa, nº 6/8
1949-020 Lisboa
Tel: 213 523 331 (working days between 08:00 and 20:00)
(With appointment)

ISS, IP/CDist de Lisboa/Serviço Local de Acção Social de Loures
Av. de São José, n.º 33 - 2.º Dto e Frente
2685-109 Sacavém
Tel: 219 497 000
(With appointment)
www2.seg-social.pt



WELCOME TO PORTUGAL

Bem-vindo a Portugal

Bienvenue au Portugal

مرحبا بكم في البرتغال

CULTURAL ORIENTATION LEAFLET FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES IN PORTUGAL

Portuguese Refugee
Council



In cooperation with the
Portuguese Immigration
Service (SEF)



With the support of



Cultural Orientation Leaflet for Resettled Refugees in Portugal¹

SUMMARY

Anyone moving to a country where culture, tradition, and practices are different from their own can be expected to undergo an adjustment period of variable duration and difficulty. Refugees, who come to Portugal, in many cases, have little, if any, knowledge of the social and economic situation of this country.

Many refugees may have unrealistic and perhaps inaccurate expectations of life in the new country. If not corrected, these expectations will cause stress to the newcomers upon their arrival.

PORTUGAL AND RESETTLEMENT

Some refugees cannot go home or are unwilling to do so because they will face continued persecution. Many are also in danger or have specific needs that cannot be addressed in the country where they have sought protection. The resettlement country provides the refugee with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals.

Portugal has a Resettlement Program since 2006. It foresees the resettlement of at least 30 UNHCR's mandate refugees per year. Since the beginning of the program, 137 persons from 12 different countries were resettled in Portugal.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PORTUGAL

Portugal, officially named the Portuguese Republic, is a continental country, located in the southwest tip of Europe, in the western part of the Iberian Peninsula. It has a total area of 92.391 km² (e.g.: 25 times smaller than DR Congo and 4 times bigger than Rwanda) and it is the most western country of Europe, delimited north and east by Spain and south and west by the Atlantic Ocean. Portugal is a constitutional parliamentary democracy and a member of the European Union since 1986. Portugal is also a member of United Nations (UN), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and the Council of Europe. Portugal signed the 1951 Refugee Convention on 1st October 1960 and the 1967 NY Protocol on the 17th April 1975, without reservation. The capital of Portugal is Lisboa, the most populated city, with more than 500 000 residents. It is estimated that the Portuguese population is 10,561,614 inhabitants, according to the latest Census. In 2010, there were 445,262 foreigners living in Portugal, representing little less than 5% of the population. The most representative immigrant communities come from Brazil, Cape Verde, Ukraine, Angola and Guinea Bissau. Foreign communities living in Portugal are diversified, including citizens of over 150 countries. As for refugees, it is estimated that some 300 refugees and 450 beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are living in Portugal.



ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Portuguese currency is the Euro (EUR) since 2002. Economic growth in Portugal was above the EU average for much of the 1990s, but has strongly fallen back in the last years. Portugal's critical financial situation has weakened our welfare system. The current crisis is affecting the most vulnerable population, asylum seekers and refugees included.



EMPLOYMENT IN PORTUGAL

Currently, the national unemployment rate is of 15.3%, the third highest rate in the EU, which means that more than 750 thousand persons are unemployed. Salaries are quite low when comparing to other EU countries. The average monthly salary in Portugal is around 650 Euros and the minimum wage is 485 Euros. Salaries vary significantly between economic sectors and professions. Having in mind these limitations, it is advised a proactive approach in relation to job search.

ACCESS TO JOBS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In accordance to Articles 70 and 71 of Asylum Law 27/2008, refugees are granted access to professional training and work. As a rule, however, refugees encounter difficulties in finding employment, namely due to the lack of recognition of their previous work experience and limited Portuguese language skills. Hence, it is important and mandatory for refugees, to attend Portuguese language courses immediately after their arrival. Such courses are promoted by non governmental organizations such as the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR), but also by public services such as schools and *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional - IEFP* (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

Depending on the individual case, refugees are referred to CPR's employment service in the Refugee Reception Centre. A range of services are offered such as equivalence of educational diplomas procedures, individual counselling in professional training, job search techniques and support establishing links with potential employers according to the profile, skills and interests of the refugee.

In Portugal, there are no state vocational training programmes specifically directed to refugees, but they can apply to the programmes offered by the IEFP, as long as they acquire a good command of Portuguese language.

Vocational training is of extreme importance because it can be used to adapt refugees to particular labour market situation allowing for the acquisition of national certificated qualifications.

At this stage some refugees are offered professional training even though demanding and bureaucratic equivalence procedures might hamper their access to the national training system offered by the Employment and Professional Training Institute (IEFP). Refusing a job interview, training or proposal will result in a cut of the social benefits from Social Security.

HOUSING

Having present previous resettlement experiences, resettled refugees are lodged in private housing, with the support from CPR. Upon arrival, resettled refugees will be given a rented house or a room (according to household), as well as the support presented in the table below.

After 4 to 5 months, period of support granted by CPR, resettled refugees will then be assisted by the Portuguese welfare system, in similar terms.

¹ The present leaflet builds upon the previous "Cultural Orientation Programme for Resettled Refugees in Portugal" financed by the European Refugee Fund (ERF). This leaflet is promoted by the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR), in cooperation with the Portuguese Immigration Service (SEF)/ Ministry of Interior - Ministério da Administração Interna (MAI).

	CPR	Social Security (Welfare)
House Rent	- Single persons bedrooms: 200€ maximum (utilities included); - Apartment (families): 500€ maximum	- Up to 500€ (depending on the number of persons per family).
Utilities	- For family apartments: water up to 10€/person + electricity up to 25€/person + gas up to 14€/person (upon receipts).	- Water up to 10€/person + electricity up to 25€/person + gas up to 14€/person (pending on receipts).
Food	- Adult 100€/month; accompanied minor 50€/month; - Unaccompanied minor (16-18 years) 25€/week; - Unaccompanied minor (<16 years) 20€/week.	- Principal adult 189.52€ / month; per each other adults 132.66€/month; per minor 94.76€/month.
Health Care	- Medical appointments, <i>Centro de Saúde</i> (36€); - Medical tests; - Medication pending on prescription.	- Medication only for continues medication (pending on prescription, medical report and budget).
Transports	- Tickets (to essential trips while waiting for transport card) + photos for transport card 4.50€ + transport card 12€; transport card (seal) 48.70€	- Pending on receipt.
Telephone	None	Up to 20€/person (pending on receipts)
Education	According to the needs	None
Others	According to the needs	None

Resettled refugees may also use CAR's training classrooms, public library, access to Internet in the centre, use the bank of old clothes, and may benefit from the kindergarten and the sports field. Assistance is also provided to all resettled refugees at CAR including legal and social counselling, Portuguese language classes, cultural information and other activities.

Resettled unaccompanied minors will be lodged in CPR's new reception centre for refugee children, located in Lisbon, where they will have lodgement (including food, clothing, health care, among other supports), social and legal assistance, access to education, Portuguese language classes and leisure activities.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

National Health Service

Article 64 of the Portuguese Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right to Health, which is assured by the State through the National Health System (*Serviço Nacional de Saúde - SNS*). In accordance to Article 73 of Asylum Law 27/2008, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled access to the SNS under the same conditions of Portuguese citizens. There are costs, user fees (*taxas moderadoras*), associated with the use of this service. This amount varies, according to the services used.

Upon arrival, resettled refugees are referred to the National Health System for inscription, medical appointments, and medical exams.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

In accordance to Article 70 of Asylum Law 27/2008, refugees are entitled to education under the same conditions of national citizens. In Portugal, compulsory education starts at the age of 6. Every person has to complete a minimum of 12 years in school (Secondary Education). Access of refugee children to education at basic/primary level is fully guaranteed. Upon arrival kindergarten children (4 months to 5 years old) are given access to CPR's nursery school, located at the Refugee Reception Centre of CPR.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

In accordance to Article 72 of Asylum Law 27/2008, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled access to the Social Welfare System. As of December 2011, and this can be subject to changes, financial assistance provided to resettled refugees accommodated by CPR amounts to 100€/month (please see previous table). Additionally, food items, hygiene items and clothes from CPR's clothes deposit are regularly put at their disposal, according to their availability.

Following the initial 4 to 5 months period of support granted by CPR, in the scope of the Resettled European Refugee Fund, in private rented houses, the financial assistance is granted by social security services and covers accommodation expenses, food and other day-to-day expenses, transportation, and some health related expenses, within a pre set financial restraint and limited in time. At this stage occasional delays in the provision of social security financial assistance might occur. This is a nationwide problem that affects all Social Security beneficiaries, including refugees, but also Portuguese nationals. For that reason, self-sufficiency by means of Portuguese language skills and access to employment should be considered of extreme priority by both refugees and service providers at all times.

Refugees are expected by social security services to become self-sufficient and as such financial support will be temporary. Refugees are gradually referred to the general Social Security regime applicable to all foreigner citizens.

DOCUMENTATION

Resettled refugees are issued a residence permit upon arrival, issued by the Portuguese Aliens and Borders Service (SEF). This residence permit entitles refugees to work and access to all services. The issuance of this permit can take up to 3 months. Social Security support can only start after the residence permit is issued.



FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In accordance to Article 68 of Asylum Law 27/2008, refugees are entitled upon request to the extension of their status to family members located in Portugal or overseas. For the purposes of family reunification, family members shall include the spouse, minor children, including adopted children, dependent minor brothers, father or mother. In the case of the refugee being under 18 years old, asylum might be extended to the father or mother. Refugees are required to pay for all costs associated with the transfer of their family members to Portugal, namely travel costs. Refugees will also be responsible for the support of their relatives after arrival, namely accommodation, food, among other expenses. CPR's legal department will provide support in the organisation of family reunification procedures.

EXPECT THAT

- Portuguese Language classes at the Reception Centre are mandatory;
- It is essential for refugees to have a proactive attitude towards integration in Portugal;
- Refugees will have to adapt to the Portuguese Labour Market, therefore they should be open to new and different professional areas;
- Social Security support will be limited in time and the social allowance is revaluated every three months;
- A successful integration depends not just from the host society, but from the refugee as well.