

## International Migrants Day

2017

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### 225.4 Thousand foreign citizens have acquired portuguese citizenship between 2008 and 2016

Between 2008 and 2016, the total number of Portuguese citizenship acquisitions amounted to 225,428, which represents an annual average of approximately 25 thousand. The highest annual value was registered in 2016, with 29,351 acquisitions of Portuguese citizenship, 30% higher than in 2015.

The number of women who acquired Portuguese citizenship amounted to 115,534 and that of men to 109,894, which resulted in a sex ratio of 95 males to every 100 females.

The nationals from Brazil (60 335) and from Cape Verde (37 417) accounted for most of the Portuguese citizenship acquisitions, in the period 2008-2016, with a total relative weight of 43%.

The average age of foreign citizens that acquired Portuguese citizenship is different depending on the place of residence: residents in Portugal present an average age of 33 years, while for residents abroad this average is higher (48 years).

Naturalization was the main type of Portuguese citizenship acquisition, accounting for 41% of cases for residents abroad and 73% for residents in Portugal.

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On 4 December 2000, the General Assembly, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, proclaimed 18 December International Migrants Day.

Statistics Portugal presents some results concerning the number of **Portuguese citizenship acquisitions**<sup>1</sup> between 2008 and 2016, by foreigners residing in Portugal and abroad.

Access to citizenship by foreigners residing in the host country is generally understood as a crucial step in their integration process, since it usually involves knowledge of the country's language, its culture and society and some connection to the economic activity of that same country. On the other hand, the acquisition of citizenship by descendants of nationals is considered as an indicator of the strengthening of the connection to the emigrant communities and their descendants, that is, to the Diaspora of a country.

The acquisition of citizenship by foreigners residing in the Member States of the European Union is also an indicator of *active citizenship* in the context of European statistics on the integration of migrants (Zaragoza indicators<sup>2</sup>).

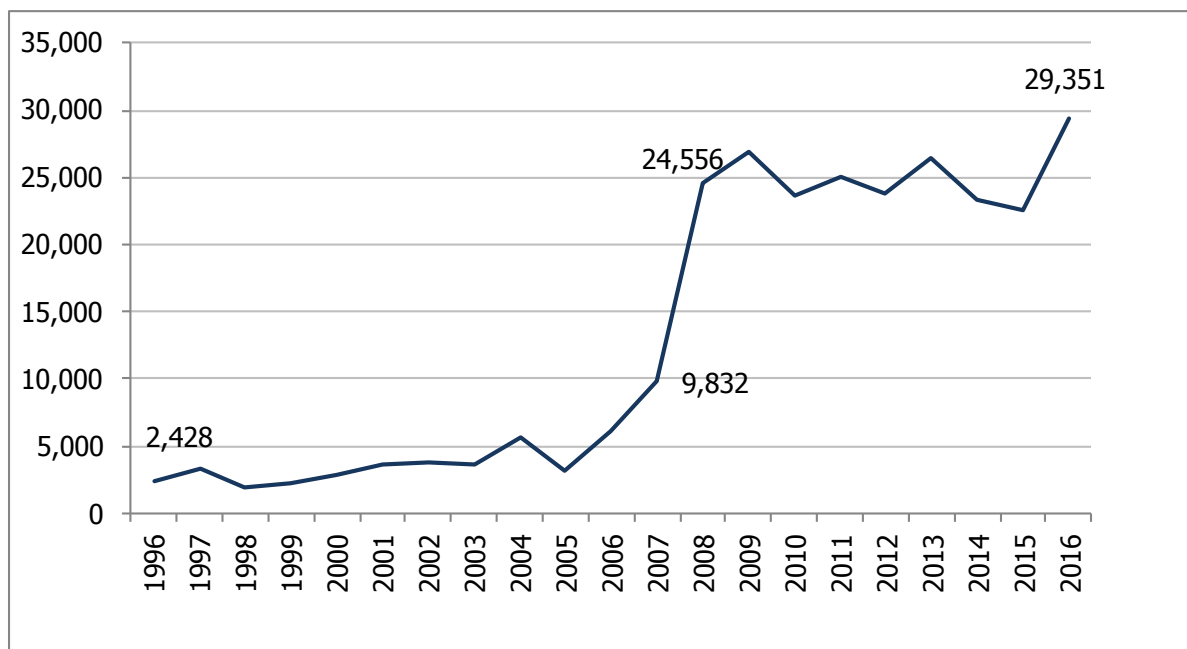
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<sup>1</sup> Access to Portuguese citizenship may result from a process of acquisition (derived citizenship) or attribution (original citizenship). In this press

<sup>2</sup> Zaragoza Declaration, adopted in April 2010 at the European Ministerial Conference on Integration, identified a set of policy areas relevant to the integration of migrants and agreed a set of indicators to monitor immigrants' integration contexts and integration policies' outcomes.

The entry into force of the fourth amendment to the Portuguese Citizenship Act (Law 37/81, of 3 October, consolidated version, as amended by Organic Law 2/2006, of 17 April) as well as of Decree-Law 237/A/2006, of 14 December, which approved the regulation of Portuguese Citizenship, has significantly changed the national legal framework for the acquisition of Portuguese citizenship by foreigners. In fact, this set of amendments, alongside others that took place later has led to a considerable increase in the number of citizenship acquisitions from few thousands per year to more than two tens of thousands from 2008 onwards.

**Figure 1 - Foreign population that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), total, 1996-2016<sup>3</sup>**



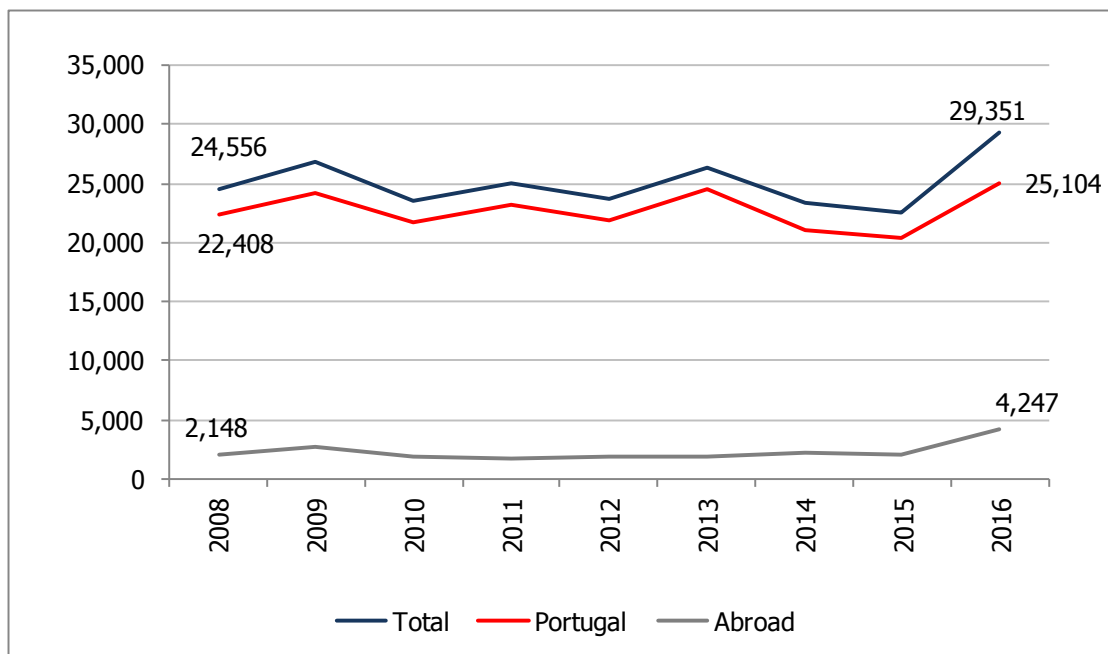
**Between 2008 and 2016, the total number of Portuguese citizenship acquisitions amounted to 225.4 thousand**

Between 2008 and 2016, the **total number of Portuguese citizenship acquisitions** amounted to 225,428, which translates into an annual average of approximately 25 thousand. This result is mainly explained by citizenship acquisitions by foreigners residing in Portugal (204,497), who account for 91% of the total number of acquisitions. The number of foreigners residing abroad and who acquired Portuguese citizenship amounted to 20,931.

The highest annual figures for the period under review were observed in 2016, with 29,351 acquisitions of Portuguese citizenship, an increase of 30% compared to 2015. Also worth highlighting is the increase in the number of acquisitions by foreigners residing abroad, which almost doubled in 2016 (4,247) compared to 2015 (2,145). This growth can be explained by the recent legislative changes that have enhanced the possibility of citizenship acquisition by foreign descendants of nationals and foreign descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Directorate-General for Justice Policy (1996-2007).  
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**Figure 2 - Foreign population that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.) by place of residence, 2008-2016**



As far as gender is concerned, the number of foreign women who acquired Portuguese citizenship (115,534) was higher than the number of men (109,894), which resulted in a sex ratio of 95 males to every 100 females, in the 2008-2016 period. Regarding residents abroad, the sex ratio was about 52. In the case of foreign residents in Portugal, this indicator pointed to an overall gender balance (101 males to every 100 females) in the period under analysis.

In 2016, citizenship acquisitions by women represented 53% of those observed for foreign residents in Portugal and 59%, in the case of foreigners residing abroad, translating into sex ratios of 89 and 70 males to every 100 females, respectively.

**Figure 3 - Foreign population that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.) by place of residence and sex, 2008-2016**

Year	Total			Place of residence					
	Total	M	F	Portugal			Abroad		
				Total	M	F	Total	M	F
2008	24,556	13,051	11,505	22,408	12,494	9,914	2,148	557	1,591
2009	26,892	14,606	12,286	24,182	13,677	10,505	2,710	929	1,781
2010	23,615	11,930	11,685	21,750	11,436	10,314	1,865	494	1,371
2011	25,016	11,935	13,081	23,238	11,409	11,829	1,778	526	1,252
2012	23,722	11,201	12,521	21,819	10,592	11,227	1,903	609	1,294
2013	26,430	12,431	13,999	24,476	11,727	12,749	1,954	704	1,250
2014	23,305	10,593	12,712	21,124	9,828	11,296	2,181	765	1,416
2015	22,541	10,583	11,958	20,396	9,770	10,626	2,145	813	1,332
2016	29,351	13,564	15,787	25,104	11,814	13,290	4,247	1,750	2,497
2008-2016	225,428	109,894	115,534	204,497	102,747	101,750	20,931	7,147	13,784

## National citizens from Brazil and Cape Verde accounted for 43% of total citizenship acquisitions

The nationals from Brazil (60,335) and Cape Verde (37,417) accounted for most of the Portuguese citizenship acquisitions, in the period 2008-2016, both in terms of residents in Portugal and residents abroad, with 27% and 17% respectively. Also noteworthy is the volume of citizenship acquisitions by nationals of Portuguese-speaking African countries (Angola, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique), which accounted for 20% of total acquisitions; of Ukraine, Moldova and Russia, which together accounted for 19% of total acquisitions; and the 4,350 acquisitions by citizens of Romania, the only EU citizenship ranked in the top ten citizenships.

**Figure 4 - Foreign population that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by top ten citizenships, type of acquisition and place of residence, 2008-2016 (cumulative total)**

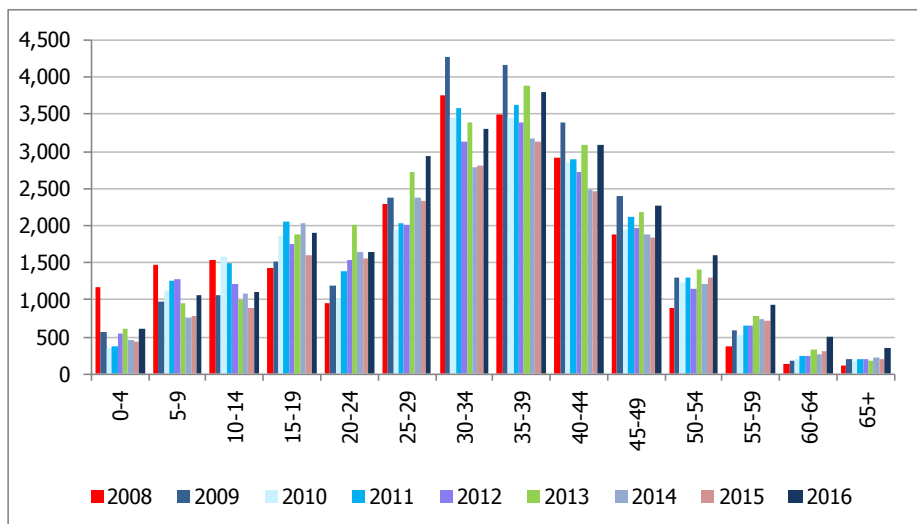
Citizenship	Total	By declaration of will, a foreign person who is a minor or legally incapacitated child of a father or mother that has acquired portuguese citizenship	A foreign person who is married or living in de facto union with a portuguese citizen for more than three years	A foreign person who gained legal capacity and has lost portuguese citizenship	Naturalisation	Other cases
<b>Total 2008-2016</b>	<b>225,428</b>	<b>27,518</b>	<b>33,912</b>	<b>5,669</b>	<b>157,919</b>	<b>410</b>
<b>Portugal</b>						
Total 2008-2016	204,497	26,693	27,739	512	149,302	251
Brazil	45,984	3,364	9,392	124	33,051	53
Cape Verde	35,577	6,642	2,677	9	26,202	47
Ukraine	21,930	2,082	1,640	0	18,202	6
Guinea-Bissau	18,168	3,796	1,736	3	12,621	12
Moldova (Republic of)	17,126	2,665	2,143	0	12,318	0
Angola	16,452	1,584	1,327	25	13,505	11
Sao Tome and Principe	9,637	1,522	597	0	7,491	27
India	6,364	1,302	1,367	1	3,692	2
Romania	4,350	287	490	0	3,565	8
Russian Federation	4,066	338	646	0	3,079	3
<b>Abroad</b>						
Total 2008-2016	20,931	825	6,173	5,157	8,617	159
Brazil	14,351	227	2,971	4,163	6,926	64
Cape Verde	1,894	280	1,003	17	583	11
Angola	1,040	85	723	50	179	3
Venezuela	471	3	147	304	16	1
India	359	20	81	69	188	1
Guinea-Bissau	305	78	173	0	49	5
Mozambique	283	19	206	18	38	2
Turquia	283	0	10	0	273	0
South Africa	197	14	56	109	11	7
Sao Tome and Principe	170	22	86	8	52	2

**Residents in Portugal register an average age (33 years) lower than that of residents' abroad (48 years), in the period 2008-2016**

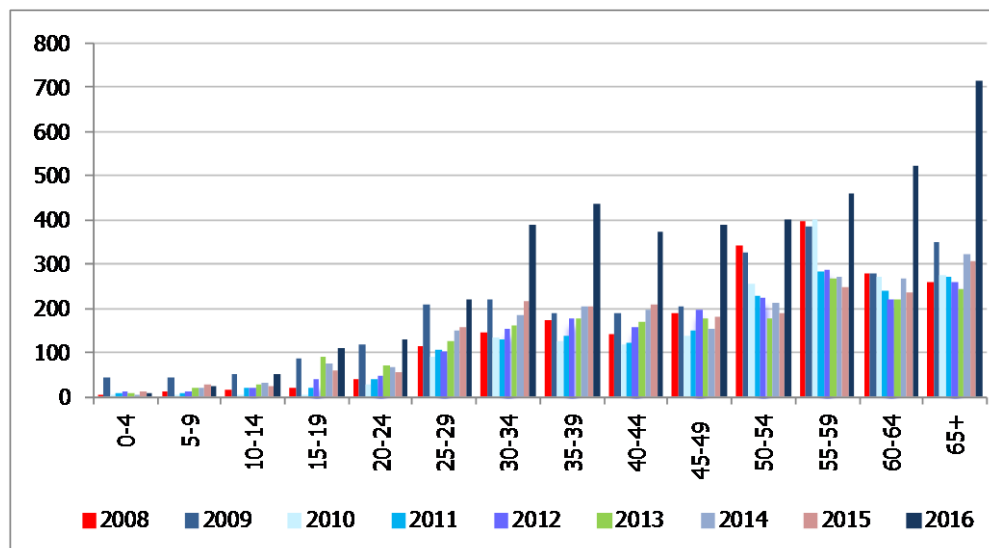
With regard to age distribution (considering, for that effect, the year of citizenship acquisition), between 2008 and 2016, it is possible to observe a distinct pattern depending on the place of residence: residents in Portugal present an average age of 33 years, while for residents abroad this average is higher (48 years).

In 2016, the age distribution pattern was similar: an average age of 34 years for residents in Portugal and of 48 years for residents abroad.

**Figure 5 - Foreign population resident in Portugal that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by age group, 2008-2016**



**Figure 6 - Foreign population resident abroad that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by age group, 2008-2016**

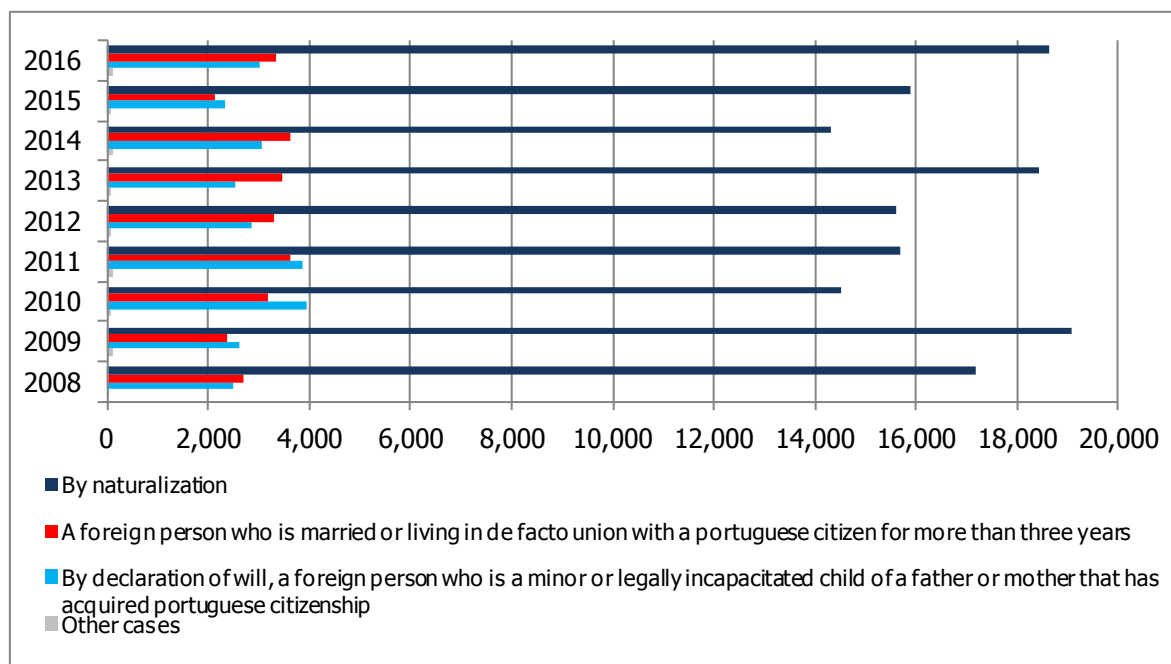


**Foreign citizens resident in Portugal: naturalization was the main type of citizenship acquisition, accounting for 73% of cases between 2008 and 2016**

In the period 2008-2016, naturalization was the main type of citizenship acquisition by foreigners living in Portugal, accounting for 73% of total cases. Also worth highlighting is the acquisition of citizenship by means of marriage or de facto union, which accounted for 14% of cases, alongside minor or legally incapacitated children of individuals that acquired Portuguese citizenship (13%).

In 2016, naturalization continues to register the largest relative weight, accounting for about 74% of total acquisitions. Acquisition of citizenship by marriage or de facto union for more than three years presented the biggest increase in relation to 2015, from 2,128 to 3,343 cases (about 57%).

**Figure 7 - Foreign population resident in Portugal that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by type of acquisition, 2008-2016**



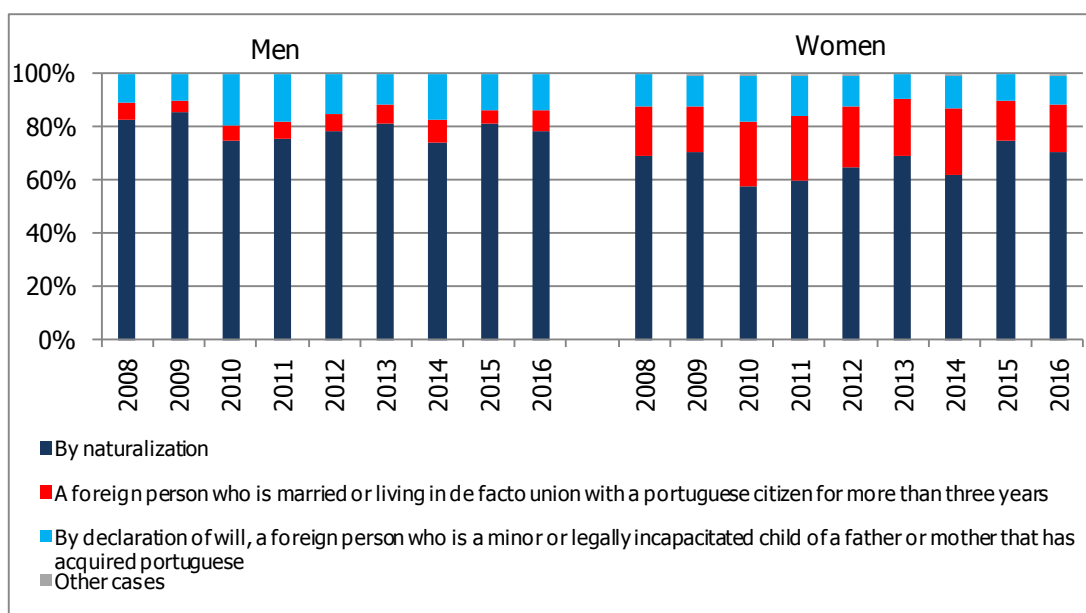
In the period 2008-2016, citizenship acquisition by naturalization covered 149,302 foreigners residing in Portugal, 90% of which for at least six years. This is also true for the year 2016, although less significant (74%).

**Figure 8 - Foreign population resident in Portugal that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by means of naturalization and sex, 2008-2016**

Year	Naturalization											
	Total			A foreign person residing in portuguese territory for at least six years			A child of foreign parents born in portuguese territory, provided that one parent has legally resided in Portugal for at least six years			Other cases		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
2008	17,186	10,320	6,866	13,971	8,659	5,312	2,985	1,539	1,446	230	122	108
2009	19,090	11,665	7,425	17,385	10,787	6,598	1,168	585	583	537	293	244
2010	14,505	8,569	5,936	13,505	8,103	5,402	838	403	435	162	63	99
2011	15,675	8,614	7,061	14,328	7,913	6,415	1,202	627	575	145	74	71
2012	15,594	8,347	7,247	13,704	7,396	6,308	1,702	863	839	188	88	100
2013	18,416	9,568	8,848	16,612	8,672	7,940	1,600	808	792	204	88	116
2014	14,317	7,283	7,034	13,142	6,672	6,470	985	507	478	190	104	86
2015	15,882	7,934	7,948	14,662	7,326	7,336	1,064	534	530	156	74	82
2016	18,637	9,286	9,351	17,040	8,440	8,600	1,421	746	675	176	100	76
<b>2008-2016</b>	<b>149,302</b>	<b>81,586</b>	<b>67,716</b>	<b>134,349</b>	<b>73,968</b>	<b>60,381</b>	<b>12,965</b>	<b>6,612</b>	<b>6,353</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>982</b>

An analysis by sex and type of acquisition shows that, in the period 2008-2016, naturalization was the main type of Portuguese citizenship acquisition, both for men (about 79%) and women (about 67%). However, in the case of citizenship acquisition by means of marriage or de facto union, women show a significantly higher relative weight than men (21% against 6%).

**Figure 9 - Foreign population resident in Portugal that acquired Portuguese citizenship (%), by type of acquisition and sex, 2008-2016**



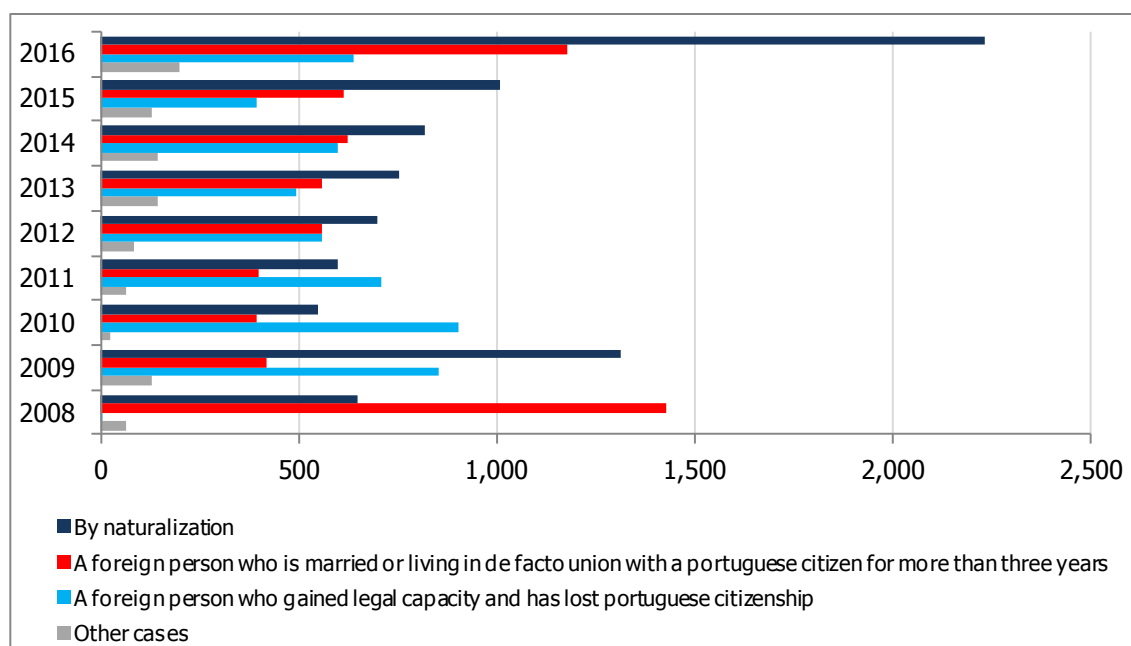


**Between 2008 and 2016, naturalization was also the main type of Portuguese citizenship acquisition for foreigners living abroad, accounting for 41% of cases**

In the period 2008-2016, 20,931 individuals living abroad acquired Portuguese citizenship, of which 7,147 were men and 13,784, women, with naturalization being the main type of acquisition (41%). It should be noted, however, that marriage or de facto union with a Portuguese citizen and citizenship reacquisition (by declaration of will after loss of citizenship) totalize 54% of total types of acquisitions.

As previously mentioned, in 2016 the number of foreigners living abroad that acquired Portuguese citizenship almost doubled (4,247 compared to 2,141 in 2015), mainly as a result of an increase in the number of naturalizations (2,231 in 2016 against 1,006 in 2015) as well as in marriages and de facto unions (1,176 in 2016 compared to 615 in 2015).

**Figure 10 - Foreign population resident abroad that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by type of acquisition, total, 2008-2016**



In the period under analysis, naturalization was the main type of Portuguese citizenship acquisition for 8,617 individuals residing abroad, of which (87%) were descendants of nationals (7,632 persons).

The entry into force of Decree-law nº 30-A/2015, of February 27, enabled the access to Portuguese citizenship by descendants of Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin. In 2016, this type of citizenship acquisition covered 429 foreigners (60% of which were men), accounting for 19% of the total number of citizenship acquisitions by means of naturalization.

It is also worth noting the significant increase (by 84%) of the number of foreign citizens of Portuguese ancestry (1,716 in 2016 compared to 935 in 2015) in result of the entry into force of Organic Law no. 9/2015, of July 29, which enlarges the access to Portuguese citizenship by descendants of national citizens.



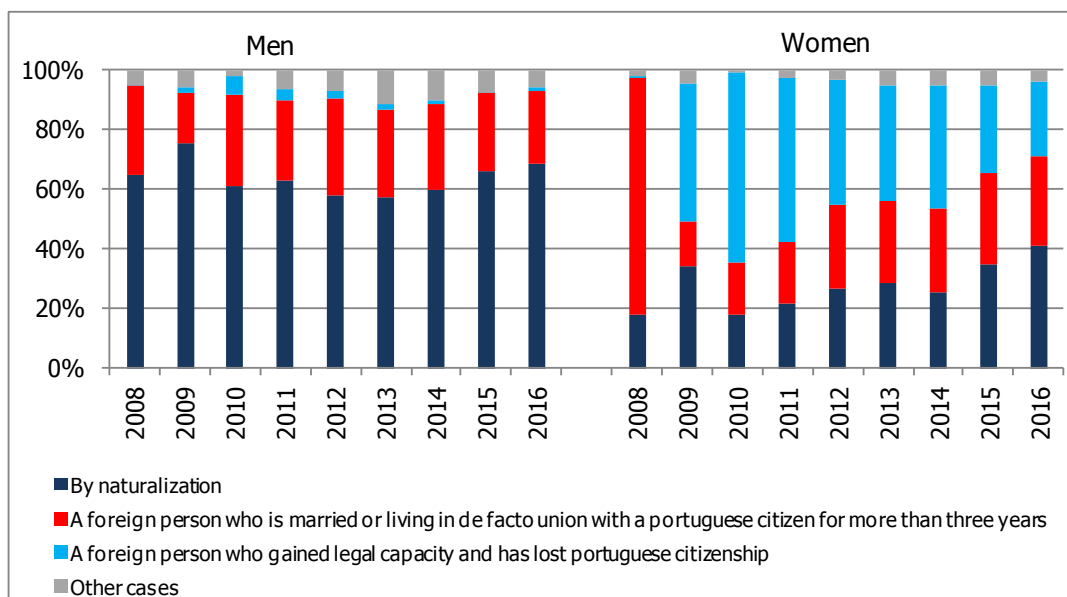
**Figure 11 - Foreign population resident abroad that acquired Portuguese citizenship (No.), by means of naturalization and sex, 2008-2016**

Year	Naturalization											
	Total			A foreign descendant of portuguese citizen			Foreigners who are descendants of portuguese sephardic jews			Other cases		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
2008	649	363	286	627	354	273	//	//	//	22	9	13
2009	1,311	703	608	1,258	674	584	//	//	//	53	29	24
2010	547	302	245	513	281	232	//	//	//	34	21	13
2011	601	332	269	576	320	256	//	//	//	25	12	13
2012	699	353	346	566	282	284	//	//	//	133	71	62
2013	755	402	353	684	368	316	//	//	//	71	34	37
2014	818	457	361	757	428	329	//	//	//	61	29	32
2015	1,006	539	467	935	508	427	//	//	//	71	31	40
2016	2,231	1,205	1,026	1,716	897	819	429	258	171	86	50	36
2008-2016	8,617	4,656	3,961	7,632	4,112	3,520	429	258	171	556	286	270

An analysis by sex and type of acquisition shows that, in the period 2008-2016, of the 7,147 men residing abroad who acquired citizenship, the majority (65%) accomplished it by means of naturalization and 26% by means of marriage or de facto union with a Portuguese citizen.

In the same period, 13,784 women resident abroad have acquired Portuguese citizenship, mostly by declaration of will after loss of Portuguese citizenship (34%) and by means of marriage or de facto union with a Portuguese citizen (31%). Citizenship acquisition by means of naturalization globally exhibited a lower relative importance in the case of women (29%).

**Figure 12 - Foreign population resident abroad that acquired Portuguese citizenship (%), by type of acquisition and sex, 2008-2016**



## TECHNICAL NOTE

The statistical information presented in this press release is produced within the statistical operation "Acquisition and attribution of Portuguese citizenship", which meets the requirements laid down in the European Union Regulation on statistics on migration and international protection (REGULATION (EC) No 862/2007 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 July 2007). In addition, the statistical information produced and transmitted to EUROSTAT also serves as a basis to calculate European indicators regarding the integration of migrants - in particular *active citizenship* - from the list of Zaragoza indicators that were agreed in Zaragoza during April 2010, at the European Ministerial Conference on Integration as a driver for Development and Social cohesion (Zaragoza Declaration).

This statistical operation is based on administrative registers resulting from the acquisition and attribution of Portuguese citizenship, for which the Institute for Registration and Notary Affairs (IRN) is responsible. The information in question is collected by Statistics Portugal in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Justice Policy (DGPJ) and started being transmitted to Eurostat in 2009 (with reference to 2008). Indicators regarding citizenship acquisition by sex, age, citizenship, residence and reason for the acquisition are published by Statistics Portugal, on an annual basis, since 2008, after the stabilization of the data collection and transmission process, involving IRN, Statistics Portugal and DGPJ.

### **Statistical and methodological information, available at the Statistics Portugal portal:**

[Statistical Data](#)

[Demographic Statistics - 2016](#)

[Methodological Document](#)

### **Main legislative references:**

Organic Law no. 2/2006, of April 17, Fourth amendment to Law no. 37/81, of October 3 (Citizenship Law)

Decree-Law no. 237-A / 2006, of December 14, Portuguese Citizenship Regulation

Organic Law No. 1/2013, of July 29

Decree-Law no. 30-A / 2015, of February 27

Organic Law No. 9/2015, Seventh Amendment to Law No. 37/81, of October 3 (Citizenship Law)