

# The Perils Of Using An Immigration Assistance Agent

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Moving to a new country (especially) with a new language & different culture can be a daunting process & it's not at all unusual to at first feel like a 'Stranger In A Strange Land' (to quote Robert Heinlein).

Portugal is a magnificent country to live in but it does have more than it's fair share of confusing & sometimes variable bureaucracy & it's not unusual for immigrants or soon to be immigrants to consider using an agent or agency of some kind to assist them in formalising their residency & other necessary paperwork either from their country of origin to help them get required documents for their residency or citizenship application or claim or here in Portugal to help them formalise their residency or citizenship application or claim & in pretty much all cases this is a big & very unnecessarily expensive mistake.

Some of these 'immigration assistance types' will (I suppose) be open, honest & ethical (none that I know of though!) but most are definitely not & be warned that it's very common for their websites to (perhaps deliberately) give misleading, incorrect and/or incomplete information that tries to convince the reader that they need to pay for the services of such companies & its undeniable that this industry chokka block full of sharks circling in the hope of taking advantage of the naive new immigrants and who will happily charge exorbitant fees for even the most simple of tasks so you need to be aware of what costs are reasonable and what are not.

Let's look at some examples of what is & is not unreasonable;

The process of matriculating a foreign registered car can be done yourself & an honest agent will charge you something in the region of about €500-€750 but some of the sharks out there are charging in excess of €7000 which (IMO) is nothing short of daylight robbery.

Getting your NIF (tax) number, Residencia (CRUE) & Attestado (as a holder of an EU member state passport) can usually (and easily) all be done in less than half a day & the process couldn't be easier so most people do it themselves but some of the aforementioned sharks are charging obscene amounts of money per person to do each of these processes for them. In some cases, companies/individuals are charging upwards of €2000 per person just to get someone a NIF number & this takes about 15 minutes per applicant which for a family of 4 works out at €8000 for 1 hour of work..... In a country where the minimum wage is currently just €850 per calendar month!

NHR = Non Habitual Residency is not a visa of any kind but rather a 10 year tax break on some but not all overseas income & the new immigrant has until 31<sup>st</sup> March of the year AFTER they register or obtain residency & registering for NHR costs absolutely nothing & takes about 10 minutes of online time, a few very basic pieces of information & 3 or 4 clicks of your mouse but some companies are charging upwards of €5000 to do that for you.

For non EU member state passport holders without any familial connections the most

popular residency options are either the various Type D visa options or the Golden Visa options.

A quick search through the files section of this group will show you that all the Type D & Golden Visa applications are relatively easy if you fit the criteria & there are info pieces in the files section of this group that tell you all the processes & criteria for all of those visa variants which enable you to do ALL of those processes entirely on your own & only pay the relevant Government fees but there are some companies and/or individuals out there requiring many tens of thousands of Euros to make the application for you & for the Golden Visa I have seen quotes in excess of €120k (per person) simply to download the relevant forms & process the application.

I also often see people using lawyers to help with various migration issues & from my experience it pretty much always a mistake to do that & recently came across a case where a lawyer was charging an obscene €250 per hour to help a company & staff relocate to Portugal & in more than 20 chargeable hours has not even succeeded in delivering even as much as a single NIF number which could & should have been done in less than a single hour.

Whilst on the subject of lawyers, immigration assistance companies & Golden Visas please be aware that all MUST be viewed with at least a bucketful of salt & a ton of scepticism. Just in the last week I have heard of no less than 5 cases of immigrants who already have full residency here & have been told by either lawyers or immigration assistance types or companies that their residency is no longer valid due to Brexit & they must immediately surrender residency & then pay those lawyers or immigration assistance types or companies to get them Golden Visas & each familial application would have cost the people close to €600,000 to obtain something they didn't even need in the first place. NEVER think these filth are your friends just because they're nice to you. The truth is they see you as a witless cash cow they can milk for all you're worth & I cannot express the absolute disgust I feel for such vermin & that disgust is one of the reasons I offer 'Operation Or How To Navigate The Immigration Minefield' as explained in the 'Notes section further below.

So any & all of such prices are not only highly unreasonable but (IMO) utterly obscene.

You also need to be aware that such 'immigration assistance' shark types sometimes sneak into FB immigrant groups such as this & then send unsolicited PM messages to other members either offering to help or pretending to be satisfied customers & recommending a certain company who are (in reality) themselves or their employers & in many cases innocent new immigrants are being unmercifully ripped off for many thousands (& in some cases) many tens of thousands of Euros for processes that they could have easily achieved themselves at very minimal cost..... So be warned, & if you do receive such unsolicited messages please do feel free to forward them to me so that I can deal with them accordingly.

The moral of these stories is to do your own research absolutely thoroughly before you pay anyone a cent or commit to anything whatsoever & part (but not all) of that process is to ask on the Facebook groups for recommendations & info on what is a reasonable price to pay for the service you want & **provable** recommendations from former clients. (If such a thing exists?)

As admin of this group I very regularly hear of potential migrants being, conned, misled & cheated by such companies & some company or persons names come up

several times a day, every day so it's a huge & utterly corrupt industry & if you do feel you have been taken in by such vermin, PLEASE report them to the authorities (because what they're doing is nothing short of fraud) and also give them suitably bad reviews on all the review sites such as trustpilot.com, hellopeter.com & Facebook reviews as the only way to stop them operating in such a disgraceful manner is to warn others of their nefarious activities & behaviour.

**Note:**

It has recently come to my attention that at least 25 unscrupulous people or companies around the world have stolen my info pieces & are selling them on to unsuspecting potential migrants for anything up to €10k a set which of course doesn't sit well with me & from now on, such people & companies will be prosecuted for data theft where appropriate.

All the information in the files is provided free and I try to walk people through the bureaucratic processes step by step so that they don't have to pay what can be extortionate fees to such unscrupulous individuals & companies.

However, I do from time to time come across members who (by their own admission) are simply too confused by the bureaucracy to read the info pieces for themselves & if you really feel it is beyond you then feel free to contact me to help you with a FB, Skype or Facetime call (which will probably take about an hour or two of your time & 2-3 hours of my time) to discuss your exact situation where we can both take notes & talk you through ALL the processes you need to achieve & what path to residency will suit your particular needs & situation & I then send you all the relevant info pieces that apply to your exact needs & you also get the follow on support service where you can PM me as often as you like, about anything you like, for as long as you like but please note that I obviously can't afford to do that for free so send me a PM with the country you will be calling from & your email address asking for an Operation Payback call & I'll send you the relevant details.

I will have to charge you a token payment of €50 and that will include the free follow on support service where you can PM me with additional questions if you need to for as long as you need & about anything you need & that cost is less than 1% of what many of these so called immigration agents will charge you..... And (more to the point) gives you the CORRECT information you need & it gives me a great deal of satisfaction by knowing I've saved one more person from being cheated by those utterly disgraceful crooks.

Every one person that comes to me for €50 is one less to go to the sharks for anything up to €10k.

Good luck & remember that time spent in the files section of this group is never time wasted & is often money saved.