



## Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows

**Direção-Geral da Saúde**  
Lisbon - Portugal

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### Please note:

*This is a living document. If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading onto the EAN country guides website. Thank you.*

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# 1. Before departure

## 1.1. *Early start and suggested financial cushion*

At the beginning of the fellowship, and especially because you are moving to a new country, you will have a lot of expenses (flight tickets, removal, rent deposit, health insurance, language course etc.). ECDC can take weeks or months to reimburse expenses and depending on the salary calendar of your workplace, you might receive your first salary on the second month of your contract. Furthermore, in Portugal, a portion of your total salary, equivalent to 3-4 monthly salaries, is only payed at the last month of your fellowship, resulting in you receiving around 85% of your salary each month before that. So, it is advantageous to have a couple of thousand euros in your bank account, or take a loan, at the start of the fellowship to help with cash flow. This will make the first few months a bit more stress free.

## 1.2. *Some useful documents*

For the settlement you'll need some documents, that are rarely needed after you're completely settled. These are some of the administrative papers that can prove useful (in original and scanned versions):

- Bank statement with your name, the account number and IBAN-number.
- Copy of your passport / identity card if you're EU citizen
- Proof of health insurance valid in Portugal (European health card)
- Proof of address from your previous residency. In some countries this proof can be requested from the municipality. If that is not available, utility bills, phone service, etc, can suffice.
- A letter from the DGS explaining employment status (make sure to request this before your arrival)

# 2. Things to do on arrival

## 2.1. *Get your NIF*

The first thing to do when you arrive in Portugal is to obtain your portuguese NIF (número de identificação fiscal, also known as número de contribuinte). The NIF is a personal fiscal identification number that will be required, among other things, to do your work contract and rent an apartment, and pretty much every administrative procedure. To obtain this, you may need some of the documents above.

Providing your NIF to any sort of financial transaction is mandatory. It is also common practice to provide it for day-to-day commercial transactions (such as grocery shopping). By including your NIF on each receipt you are guaranteeing that the taxes paid are contributing towards Portugal's financial stability, as the Tax System will be able to trace that purchase and collect taxes accordingly. Furthermore, many daily

expenses are deductible from your annual taxes (IRS) (which is done automatically when declaring your NIF in your daily purchases).

The NIF is free and delivered immediately in any Finanças office under presentation of your European passport/ID and a proof of address (such as utility bills, bank statement with your address, etc.). You should get a NIF as soon as you arrive in Portugal with a proof of address from your home country(or previous residency) ("non resident" NIF). Once you have found your definitive accommodation in Portugal, you should provide your new proof of address (such as renting contract or utility bill) to change the address associated with your NIF (your NIF will automatically convert into a "resident" NIF).

To get a NIF, you can either book an appointment or drop-in at the Finanças office. Booking an appointment may have to be done 3-4 months in advance. Drop-in requires you to wait in line outside the Finanças office 1-2 hours before they open in the morning.

## ***2.2. Registration - Registo de cidadão da União Europeia***

As an EU-citizen, you have the right to live in any EU country if you work there. Portugal requires the registration of any European citizen who resides in the country for more than 3 months. You have up to 120 days from your arrival date to register with your definitive address in Portugal. Note that the certificate of registration can be useful to prove your residency in Portugal and other administrative processes (such as health center registration, etc.).

The certificate can be obtained from the city hall of your place of residency (Camara Municipal or Junta de Freguesia) or any citizen shop in which the city hall has a representation (Loja de cidadão, such as the one Saldanha). The certificate costs €15 and is delivered immediately upon presentation of your European passport/ID and your NIF. A proof of address in Portugal might be asked.

## ***2.3. Register - Atestado de residencia***

Once you have found your definitive accommodation in Portugal, you can request an "Atestado de residencia" from your local neighbourhood (Junta de freguesia). In theory, it can be requested to register at the health center and other administrative procedures, although its usage seems to vary in practice. It is delivered immediately by your Junta de freguesia upon presentation of your passport/ID, and proof of address (such as your renting contract) and costs €10.

## ***2.4. Local Bank account***

It is likely that DGS/your employer will request you to have a Portuguese bank account to receive your salary. There are multiple banks to choose from, including online banks with no or minimal fees.

Minimum requirements to open a bank account are generally: passport/ID, NIF, immediate cash deposit (minimum amount generally around a couple hundreds euros). Some, but not all banks might ask for proof of income/payslips or work contract. If you open a bank account with your previous home address, make sure to change it later with your definitive Portuguese address.

## 3. Accommodation

### 3.1. Areas to live

DGS is located in Alameda, between the airport and old city center. The area is very well connected and accessible by bus and metro.

### 3.2. Useful sites

The renting commission will always be paid by the landlord, not you (more or less 1month rent) so feel free to hire the services of renting agencies:

- [www.era.pt](http://www.era.pt)
- [www.remax.pt](http://www.remax.pt)
- <https://www.century21.pt/>
- Do not hesitate to consult smaller local agencies.

You might decide to also look in sites where landlords will advertise their houses, and you can negotiate directly with them, without intermediary.

- <https://www.idealista.pt/>
- <https://www.olx.pt/>
- <https://www.custojusto.pt/>
- [www.casa.sapo.pt](http://www.casa.sapo.pt)
- [www.imovirtual.com](http://www.imovirtual.com)

There are also many facebook groups that could be useful.

Be aware of scams (very low prices, perfect photos, etc.) and never pay an apartment before visiting it!

### 3.3. Living arrangements

Prices have increased rapidly in the past few years. Inside Lisbon in the area around DGS, prices range from €500-900 for a room in a flatshare, €1000-1500 for a studio apartment (T0), and +€1200 for a one/two room (T1/T2) apartment. It is possible to find cheaper accommodation outside Lisbon or on the southern bank, and use the public transportation network to commute.

Usually, the rent is displayed as core rent, without the costs of utilities (electricity, gas, water, internet/phone/tv). Sometimes, landlords might include specific costs in the rent, so make sure to check which costs are included.

### 3.4. Rental contract

The rental contract (contrato de arrendamento) is drawn up in writing and its duration is agreed between the parties. It specifies the identity of 2 parties, conditions (prices,

dates of payment, etc.), duration, conditions of renewal/termination of contract, and if relevant (furnished flat) an inventory with pictures.

Be aware that as a tenant, you are legally obliged to honour at least 1/3 of the duration of the contract. For instance, if your contract is for 24 months, you have to stay in the apartment for at least 8 months. If you decide to leave the apartment before that period, you still are legally obliged to pay the corresponding rents.

The minimum notice periods for non-renewal/termination of contract are fixed by the law for both the landlord and the tenant, and depend on the total duration of the contract. To oppose the automatic renewal of the contract (that is after the duration of the contract is over):

- contracts between 6 months and less than 1 year: minimum notice of 60 days for the tenant and landlord,
- contracts between 1 year and less than 6 years: minimum notice of 120 days for the landlord and 90 days for the tenant.

At the beginning of the contract it is usual to pay an advance of 3-4 months including the current month, 1-2 months' rent advance to be used your notice period, and a deposit that will be restituted when you leave the apartment. It is not unusual that the rent is paid one month in advance (the date of rent should be explicitly written in the renting agreement, as well as all the initial payments/deposits). All these amounts and dates of payment should be specified in the contract.

To apply to rent a flat you need a copy of your passport/ID, your NIF, and proof of income. In case you do not have your work contract yet, make sure to ask DGS to provide a letter saying you will be working there for the next 2 years.

Many agencies/landlords will also ask for a "fiador" (a guarantor that is legally responsible for the rent in case you don't pay it), but this can often be negotiated by paying some months in advance or increasing the deposit.

## 4. Amenities

### 4.1. Electricity/gas

You can use the [Energy Services Regulatory Authority](#) website to figure out who will provide you with the best deal for your specific flat.

To sign up (online, by phone, in a shop or loja de cidadão) you need your address, NIF, passport/ID, and the specific number on your meter (which you should get from the landlord). In some instances, it is possible to transfer the contract of the previous tenant to your own name (instead of opening a new contract).

## **4.2. Internet and Telephone**

Most companies offer both internet, TV and telephone, and it's usually cheaper if you get both from the same company. You can also get mobile phone services from the same company. You can check:

- [www.meo.pt](http://www.meo.pt)
- [www.nos.pt](http://www.nos.pt)
- [www.vodafone.pt](http://www.vodafone.pt)

If internet is already present in the flat, you can arrange with your landlord to maintain the contract and pay your landlord directly. This might save you some installation cost/commitment period of internet contract, and any interruption of service.

Note that most administrative institutions or companies you will contract will only accept a Portuguese phone number. You might want to consider getting a very cheap prepaid SIM card, for example Lycamobile, but be aware that the internet connection is considerably slower than MEO, NOS and Vodafone etc.

## **4.3. Water**

[EPAL](http://EPAL.pt) supplies Lisbon customers.

# **5. Transportation**

Lisbon and surroundings are well connected by the transportation network (bus, metro, tram, and train).

Non frequent users can use individual, day pass, or pay-as-you-go (Zapping) tickets which can be loaded on a navegante® occasional card (yellow paper card) for €0.50 + price of tickets or pass. The card and top ups can be purchased in any metro station (over the counter & automatic terminals).

Frequent users should buy the individual transportation card navegante® customized that allows to purchase monthly passes with which you can travel unlimitedly within a dedicated zone. The card costs €7 (10 days delivery) or €12 (24h delivery), and monthly passes costs 30 EUR (Lisbon) or 40 EUR (Lisbon + surroundings). The card can be purchased in various metro stations upon presentation of your passport/ID, one ID photo, and a form to be filled in on site. Note that it is also possible to use pay-as-you-go with this card.

For more information: <https://www.metrolisboa.pt/en/buy/>

# **6. Finances**

## **6.1. Taxation**

If you live in Portugal (more than 183 days/year) you must pay tax on your worldwide income here. If you live less than 183 days/year in the country, you are not considered a tax resident and pay tax only on the income earned in Portugal.

Income tax is progressive: the more you earn, the higher your rate.

Your employer deducts income tax and social-security contributions directly from your

salary. You must also file an annual return around March-June. Register in the Finanças portal (receive password by postal mail) to do this online.

## 7. Pension and Insurance

### 7.1. Pension

Pension insurance really depends on what is applicable in your home country. That is usually most beneficial to you. To quote ECDC: "Participating in the state pension is suggested. If you are unable to contribute to a state pension or are disadvantaged by doing so, private pension payments can be reimbursed by ECDC following justification and approval." To prove that you cannot join state pension, you have to cite legislation where it is stated.

In case you are not be able to join your national pension system, you must provide some sort of statement from an independent consultant saying that and suggesting you an alternative (listing your opportunities and explaining your choice might be also sufficient).

The EU has regulations that coordinate social security systems across member states to ensure that people who move within the EU do not lose their social security benefits, including pensions. These rules are designed to help you maintain your pension rights if you have worked in multiple EU countries. You can browse your best option with this document: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/empl\\_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Portugal\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Portugal_en.pdf)

## 8. Health system

### 8.1. Services

In Portugal the Serviço Nacional de Saúde (SNS) [National Health Service], overseen by the Ministry of Health, provides healthcare by means of Health Centres and Public Hospitals with universal health coverage. EU nationals and legal residents in Portugal are also beneficiaries of the SNS under applicable EU legislation. Health Centres provide general practice and family medicine, nursing, immunisation and some diagnostic tests, and referral to specialized services. Hospitals have outpatient (specialist consultants), inpatient and emergency services.

Public healthcare in Portugal is free for all citizens and legal residents, with the exception of unreference emergencies and those that do not result in hospitalization. Those emergencies would cost around €15, depending on the severity.

Note that online services (by phone or email) are also quite developed and common for basic care (such as renewal of prescription drugs) and health centers are usually quite reactive. We strongly advise you to have a Portuguese phone number as many communications (referral, prescription) are done through text message.

A lot of useful information can be found on the new portal of the SNS (National Health Service), as well as a range of on-line services and 'apps' provided by the institutions of the SNS and other institutions of the Ministry of Health. These include in particular:

- search for healthcare providers throughout national territory;
- booking of consultations
- repeat prescriptions

- registration and monitoring of your health information
- consultation of personal clinical files
- simulator and request for exemption from the patient contribution
- information on waiting times for emergencies, consultations and surgery.

The European Health Insurance Card can be used to get healthcare from hospitals until your SNS user's identification is issued.

### **Medicines**

SNS patients are partially (or, in certain very specific cases, fully) subsidized when they purchase medicines prescribed by SNS doctors or private doctors. Prescription medicines are sold exclusively in pharmacies (though the sale of medicines in commercial spaces, such as supermarkets or convenience stores, is permitted, provided they are duly controlled by qualified staff and they are non-prescription medicines). A green cross on a white background identifies pharmacies.

### **SNS24**

The SNS has a phone line (SNS24) for acute, non-emergent health complaints, and other health-related issues including administrative matters. This includes scheduling a primary care appointment at your primary care facility, or asking for referral. The service is free (only your regular communication costs) works 24/7, and can be accessed in English by dialing [808 24 24 24](tel:808242424) and choosing option 9.

#### **8.2. *Registration to the Social security services (NISS number)***

The registration with the Segurança Social [social security services] is since 2023 the responsibility of the fellow in order to receive your salary. The form is [filled out online](#), and after processing the NISS has to be collected in person at the Segurança Social (e.g. at the Loja de Cidadão in Saldanha).

Once you get your personal social security number (NISS), you can then register to the health center of your area of residency.

#### **8.3. *Registration to your local health center (SNS/numero de utente)***

You have to register at your local health center based on the neighborhood you live in. Most likely, you will need to take an appointment in advance. Appointments can take up to 3 months so be sure to start the process as early as possible. Meanwhile, be aware that even if you are not registered, you cannot be refused healthcare.

We advise to check directly with the health center the documents required for the registration. Usually this will include: passport/ID, social security number (NISS), certificado de registo de cidadão da União Europeia and/or atestado de residencia (see Things to do on arrival). The Health Centre will issue an SNS user's number (called numero de utente).

#### **8.4. *Private health insurance (not updated)***

If you have health insurance in your own country, and if you wish to, you may be able to extend it to an international policy.

Other international health insurance agencies include:

- [www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/international/personal/private-medical-](http://www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/international/personal/private-medical-)

- [insurance/?intcamp=1](https://www.bupa-intl.com/)
- [www.bupa-intl.com/](https://www.bupa-intl.com/)

Some national health insurance agencies include:

- [www.ageas.pt](https://www.ageas.pt)
- [www.mapfre.pt](https://www.mapfre.pt)
- [www.fidelidade.pt](https://www.fidelidade.pt)

### **8.5. Travel Health insurance**

You will be insured through ECDC on all travels ordered and arranged by them (i.e. modules, conferences, missions, etc.). Other travel insurances can also be checked in links provided for health insurance.

## **9. Other**

### **9.1. Language classes**

Resources that have been cited by former fellows:

#### **Learning Portuguese: Online language courses**

[www.learningportuguese.co.uk](https://www.learningportuguese.co.uk) is a user-friendly website where you can find tons of exercises for both beginners and advanced users. The website is created by a person whose native language is not Portuguese, so the information is presented in an easy and effective way. An interesting feature is the section with different Portuguese accents, so you can compare pronunciation from different regions of the country.

[fsi-language-courses.org](https://fsi-language-courses.org) has a rich database with more than forty languages. In the Portuguese section, you will find the Portuguese Programmatic Course (Volumes One and Two) and many useful links to websites which will help you practise your recently acquired knowledge and skills.

[Practice Portuguese](https://www.practiceportuguese.com) is an online platform for learning European Portuguese, featuring podcasts, videos, and interactive lessons. It is known for its "Shorties," short audio lessons on everyday topics, and a "Smart Review" tool for vocabulary retention

Once in Portugal, you can also sign up for a course at a language school. Many of them offer the opportunity to try their teaching system by email or you can sign up for a course via the school's website.

#### **Language courses in Lisbon**

There are many language schools to choose from:

- [saudadelanguageschool.com/](https://saudadelanguageschool.com/)
- [www.iclp.letras.ulisboa.pt/en/annual-pfl-course-2024-2025/](https://www.iclp.letras.ulisboa.pt/en/annual-pfl-course-2024-2025/)
- [www.languagelisboa.net](https://www.languagelisboa.net)
- [www.cial.pt](https://www.cial.pt)
- [www.cambridge.pt/cursos-de-português-para-estrangeiros-1.aspx](https://www.cambridge.pt/cursos-de-português-para-estrangeiros-1.aspx)

Check with DGS the deadlines/timeline for using your language course allocation and processes for refund (most likely you will have to advance the fee and submit an invoice in the name of DGS to get refunded).

## 10. Further enquiries

Feel free to contact former fellows if you have enquiries about the site and or the country. Additional information will be happily shared with you.

Name	Cohort	E-mail etc.
Guilherme Duarte	EPIET cohort 2015	<a href="mailto:guilhermegduarte@gmail.com">guilhermegduarte@gmail.com</a>
Berta Grau-Pujol	EPIET cohort 2022	<a href="mailto:bertagrau6@gmail.com">bertagrau6@gmail.com</a>
Sebastian von Schreeb	EPIET cohort 2023	<a href="mailto:sebastianvonschreeb@gmail.com">sebastianvonschreeb@gmail.com</a>