

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Portugal

Introduction

Portugal has a vibrant pro bono tradition, bolstered by two key organisations: Associação Pro Bono (registered in 2015) and Aliança Pro Bono (established 2019). Both act as a sort of marketplace for pro bono legal services through which pro bono opportunities are advertised and allocated to those willing and able to take them on. Associação Pro Bono connects charities in need of pro bono legal advice with more than 1,000 law students and lawyers willing to provide it. Aliança Pro Bono currently has 37 members, including law firms, solo practitioners, and a handful of commercial companies, which both feed pro bono opportunities to the platform and take them on according to their skills and availability.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel. 	<p>In Portugal, only lawyers (<i>advogados</i>) may represent someone else in court or before any other authority or provide advice on Portuguese law (Articles 3 and 6 of Law No. 10/2024 of 19 January 2024; Articles 66-A and 68 of Law No. 145/2015 of 9 September 2015). In turn, the title of “advogado” is reserved to those (i) having completed a four-year law course, as well as an internship of up to 12 months under the supervision of a seasoned <i>advogado</i>, and (ii) registered as such with the Portuguese Bar Association (<i>Ordem dos Advogados</i>).¹</p> <p>The same requirements apply to in-house counsel.</p>

¹ Foreign-qualified lawyers wishing to register as “advogados” with the Portuguese Bar Association are subject to different requirements, which vary according to the country or place where they are registered.

Regulatory landscape for pro bono

2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.	There are no specific rules or laws regulating the provision of pro bono legal services in Portugal. The only rule that may be relevant to it is Article 90(2)(f) of Law No. 145/2015 of 9 September 2015, which provides that <i>advogados</i> must enable public access to justice.
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	No.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	No, but it should be noted that foreign-qualified lawyers cannot act before Portuguese courts or provide legal advice on Portuguese law if they are not registered as <i>advogados</i> with the Portuguese Bar Association.
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Lawyers are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	Aspiring lawyers are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers.
7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?	No.
8. Do lawyers receive any "Continuing Legal Education" (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	No.

Insurance and advertising

9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers? If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or	Whether in-house or not, <i>advogados</i> do not need <i>specific</i> professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide. Such services are covered by the general professional indemnity legal insurance (up to €150,000) subscribed on behalf of each <i>advogado</i> by the Portuguese Bar Association and are also likely to be covered by the
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<p>organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>complementary legal indemnity insurance subscribed by law firms on behalf of their associates and partners (subject to any provision to the contrary).</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>The advertising of pro bono successes and the solicitation of new pro bono clients are subject to the same rules as those applying to paying clients. These rules prohibit lawyers from soliciting new clients, whether directly or indirectly (Article 90(2)h of Law No. 145/2015 of 9 September 2015). They also prohibit lawyers from publicly discussing ongoing professional issues (Article 93(1) of Law No. 145/2015 of 9 September 2015) or from disclosing “facts” they became aware of in their capacity as lawyer (Article 92(1) of Law No. 145/2015 of 9 September 2015). Therefore, the advertising of pro bono successes is possible provided the case is closed and it does not disclose any facts covered by privilege.</p>
<p>Pro bono practice and culture</p>	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>As far as individuals are concerned, the main areas of law that require or present pro bono opportunities are criminal law, consumer law, family law, labour law, and immigration and refugee law.</p> <p>There is also high demand from NGOs, foundations, and associations to assist with corporate and tax law matters on a pro bono basis. In all these areas, there is, to the best of this author’s knowledge, no major or chronic imbalance between the supply of pro bono legal services and the demand for them.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>The main providers of pro bono legal services are lawyers—whether solo practitioners or associates and partners of Portuguese law firms and even employees of the legal departments of commercial companies—organised via the two organisations mentioned in the introduction, i.e., Associação Pro Bono and Aliança Pro Bono. Law students from all universities across the country also play a relevant role, in less complex issues, via Associação Pro Bono.</p> <p>In addition, the Portuguese Bar Association</p>

	<p>organised in the past an annual “Free Legal Consultation Day”, during which lawyers were available at a number of locations to assist the public with legal questions, free of charge.</p> <p>Finally, some public bodies provide free legal consulting assistance to the public concerning specific issues within their remit, such as the Authority for Working Conditions (<i>Autoridade para as Condições do Trabalho</i>), which provides legal advice on labour law-related issues.</p>
<p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p>	<p>Not yet.</p> <p>However, AI and technology tools have the potential to greatly enhance legal pro bono work across Europe by utilizing the framework set by the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). This regulation requires transparency, risk assessments, and human oversight for high-risk AI systems, while prohibiting certain "unacceptable risk" uses. AI and innovative legal technologies can make pro bono work more efficient by automating routine tasks like document drafting, intake, and legal research, allowing lawyers to concentrate on more complex client needs. These technologies could increase access to justice by providing scalable, low-cost tools such as multilingual chatbots and rights checkers, which could help empower vulnerable groups to understand and assert their legal rights.</p>

Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>The most notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in Portugal are the two organisations mentioned above, i.e., Associação Pro Bono² and Aliança Pro Bono.³ The first is reported to solve over 100 pro bono matters per year, whilst the second is growing quickly. Since inception five years ago, Aliança Pro Bono's membership has grown almost fourfold (to 37 members from the 10 founding members) and now includes several large Portuguese law firms. Due to its growing membership and the size of the law firms</p>
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² At the time of writing, this association did not have a working website. But it may be contacted via LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/pro-bono/?originalSubdomain=pt>).

³ See the Aliança Pro Bono's website here: <https://www.aliancaprobono.pt/pt/#Alianca> (last accessed on 16 December 2024).

	<p>participating in this initiative, going forward, it is likely that the highest profile pro bono opportunities will pass through Aliança Pro Bono.</p> <p>By contrast, the pro bono drive of the Portuguese Bar Association and public bodies is limited. The Portuguese Bar Association mostly deals with legal aid, and its main worry in this respect is with the rates offered to lawyers who take on cases funded by legal aid rather than with trying to match the demand for and supply of pro bono legal services.</p>
<p>15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>To be made aware of pro bono opportunities, a foreign lawyer could register either with Associação Pro Bono⁴ or Aliança Pro Bono.⁵</p> <p>However, the number of issues on which foreign lawyers not also registered as advogados may be able to assist are likely to be residual, since they will not be allowed to act before Portuguese courts or provide advice on Portuguese law.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>In 2020, Associação Pro Bono organised a pro bono awards ceremony with support from the President of the Republic.⁶ To the best of our knowledge, no such ceremony has taken place since then.</p> <p>Outside Portugal, the legal directory Chambers Europe now has a “Pro Bono: Outstanding Firm” award.</p>

Acknowledgements

Name of law firm: Delaloe

Name of lawyer: Pacôme Ziegler

Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.

⁴ At the time of writing, this association did not have a working website. But it may be contacted via LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/pro-bono/?originalSubdomain=pt>).

⁵ An application may be submitted online here: <https://www.aliancaprobono.pt/pt/aderir/> (last accessed on 16 December 2024).

⁶ <https://www.vda.pt/pt/media/noticias-e-imprensa/vda-vence-premio-pro-bono/21766/> (last accessed on 16 December 2024).