



ELECTRONIC SERVICE AND NOTIFICATIONS IN THE COURTS

Legal Framework under the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Procedure in the Administrative Courts and Electronic Case Management in 2026

Electronic service of process and electronic notifications have ceased to be merely a technological option and have become a structural component of civil and administrative proceedings in Portugal.

The digitalisation of litigation is now based on a coherent set of rules contained in the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC), the Code of Procedure in the Administrative Courts (CPTA), and specific regulations governing electronic case management (CITIUS/SITAF platforms), which define a legally structured model of electronic procedure supported by dedicated IT systems.

The current framework results from the interplay between:

- The Code of Civil Procedure (CPC);
- The Code of Procedure in the Administrative Courts (CPTA);
- Decree-Law no. 87/2024 of 7 November (Regulating electronic service and notification of natural persons and legal persons, establishing that service and notification of legal persons shall, as a rule, be carried out electronically);
- Decree-Law no. 91/2024 of 22 November (Regulating electronic service and

notifications to citizens and companies within judicial proceedings);

- Ministerial Order no. 10/2025/1 of 14 January (Defining the rules on authentication, security, control, use and operation of the Courts' Digital Services Area);
- Ministerial Order no. 350-A/2025 of 9 October (Regulating electronic case management in the courts and in the Public Prosecution Service);
- And other applicable complementary legislation.

Electronic communication now constitutes the standard form of procedural communication, particularly in respect of legal representatives, legal persons and public entities.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL BASIS FOR ELETRONIC SERVICE AND NOTIFICATIONS?

The starting point lies in the CPC, which continues to set out the general rules on service of process (Articles 228 et seq.) and notifications (Articles 247 et seq.). It has recently been supplemented by Decree-Law no. 87/2024 of 7 November, which regulates electronic service and notification of natural persons, legal persons and public entities, introducing Articles 230-A and 230-B and amending, inter alia, Article 246.

Article 230-A expressly provides for the possibility of serving natural persons electronically, by making the service available in a restricted digital area associated with a registered electronic address, under the terms defined in the legislation regulating the Courts' Digital Services Area.

Article 230-B governs the service of legal persons and equivalent entities, establishing that service may be carried out electronically, either through availability in a restricted digital area or through interoperability between the courts' IT system and the system of the entity being served, with postal service remaining as a subsidiary solution.

The same Decree-Law amended Article 246 of the CPC to make electronic service the rule for legal persons required to register an electronic address for service, providing for a transitional adaptation regime and subsidiary mechanisms in the absence of such registration.

In administrative litigation, the CPTA is applied in conjunction with these rules and with electronic case management within SITAF, making electronic service on public entities the general rule and harmonising the functioning of judicial and administrative courts.

CITIUS, SITAF AND THE NOTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The regime governing electronic case management in judicial, administrative and

tax courts, as well as within the Public Prosecution Service, is currently regulated by Ministerial Order no. 350-A/2025 of 9 October, which replaced the previous framework established by Ministerial Orders no. 280/2013 of 26 August and no. 380/2017 of 19 December.

Article 1 defines electronic case management through IT systems (CITIUS and SITAF), encompassing the submission of pleadings, consultation of case files, performance of procedural acts, and electronic communications and notifications.

Pursuant to the CPC and this Ministerial Order, **notifications to lawyers and solicitors are carried out by electronic data transmission through the system, with legal presumptions regarding the date of notification** (for example, they are deemed to have been made in accordance with Article 248 of the CPC, namely on the third day following their issuance or on the first subsequent working day where that day is not a working day).

Notifications to the parties may be carried out electronically, through a restricted digital area or system interoperability, and only subsidiarily by postal service, in accordance with the framework set out in the CPC and the Ministerial Order.

In administrative litigation, SITAF operates under an equivalent logic: the CPTA is applied consistently with electronic case management, and communications with public entities and legal representatives are

carried out electronically, based on the same presumptions of delivery and rules on time limits.

The complementary regulation also identifies technical requirements and implementation timelines for new interoperability modules, referring operational definitions to governmental orders.

PRACTICAL EFFECTS FOR COMPANIES, CITIZENS AND LITIGANTS

The outcome of this regulatory framework is clear: from a legal standpoint, **electronic communication is established as the default method of procedural communication, particularly with regard to legal persons, public entities and legal representatives.**

Legal persons are now required to register an electronic address for service of process, failing which subsidiary regimes may apply without removing the presumption that communication could have been effected electronically.

Public entities are, as a rule, served and notified exclusively by electronic means, notably within administrative proceedings and under the CPTA and SITAF framework.

Legal representatives are required to use the official IT systems — namely CITIUS in judicial courts and SITAF in administrative and tax courts — for the submission of pleadings, consultation of case files and

receipt of notifications, which are carried out by electronic data transmission, subject to the legal presumptions established in the Code of Civil Procedure.

For citizens and companies litigating in Portugal — particularly in civil and administrative disputes — **understanding this framework is of structural importance.**

The regime set out in the CPC (including Articles 230-A and 230-B), the CPTA, Ministerial Order no. 350-A/2025 of 9 October, and the complementary legislation on electronic service and notifications **defines not only how communication with the courts is made, but also when: it is from**

these presumptions of availability and receipt that deadlines for defence, appeals, complaints and other procedural acts begin to run.

FINAL NOTE

Regular monitoring of restricted digital areas and official electronic systems is no longer merely recommended practice; it now forms part of the essential core of procedural diligence duties incumbent upon the parties and their legal representatives.

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