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# PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION





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## I. CONTEXT OF THE PORTUGUESE COUNCIL PRESIDENCY

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Portugal will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the fourth time since joining the Union in 1986. This time, however, will be unlike all previous ones: the Portuguese will inherit a whole list of unresolved issues from the German EU Council Presidency after one of the most challenging and eventful years in the history of the European Union. The policy agenda in 2020 has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences, leaving many long-standing problems facing the EU with too little attention and policy space to be tackled. Add to this the still unresolved question of the future relationship with the United Kingdom, rising geopolitical tensions with Turkey in the Mediterranean and the increasingly tense global competition between the two superpowers USA and China that directly impacts Europe. The result is a long list of challenges for the Portuguese EU Council Presidency to lead the EU into the first year after the start of the pandemic.

At the same time, 2021 carries many reasons for hope and optimism that the incoming Portuguese Presidency can build upon: The first Europeans have already received the eagerly-awaited vaccination against COVID-19, the German Council Presidency ultimately succeeded in reaching an agreement on the historic "NextGenerationEU" recovery fund and the new multiannual financial framework (MFF), and the election of Joe Biden as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States raised great hopes in European capitals for a revival of the strained transatlantic relationship. This presents ample opportunities for the Portuguese Presidency to conclude the efforts for Europe's recovery from the pandemic and combine it with a forward-looking policy agenda that takes Portugal's own priorities into account.

With key decisions due to be made on Europe's green and digital transformation, the path towards stronger European sovereignty, deals and agreements with the United Kingdom, and the lessons learned from the pandemic for strengthening Europe's resilience, the Portuguese Council Presidency has an opportunity to shape the EU's policy for 2021 and beyond. ■



## II. FACTS & FIGURES

### DEMOGRAPHICS

#### POPULATION<sup>1</sup>



#### LIFE EXPECTANCY<sup>1</sup>

**82.7** YEARS (AVERAGE)

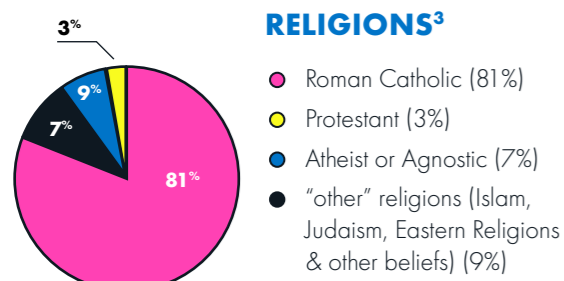


#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Portuguese

#### MINORITY LANGUAGES<sup>2</sup>

Mirandese, Barranquenho, Minderico



### ECONOMY

**51.7€**  
BILLION  
ANNUAL GDP<sup>4</sup> (2019)

**-5.7%** ↓  
GDP GROWTH<sup>4</sup>  
(3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2020)

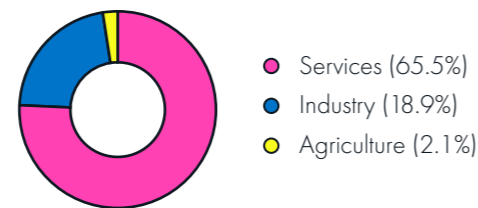
**30,194€**  
GDP PER CAPITA<sup>5</sup>  
(2019)



#### MAIN TRADING PARTNERS<sup>7</sup>:

Spain, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States

#### ECONOMIC SECTORS<sup>8</sup> (2019)



#### MAIN INDUSTRIAL SECTORS:

metallurgy, machinery, electrical and electronics industries, textiles



### POLITICAL SYSTEM



**UNITARY SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL**  
representative democratic republic<sup>10</sup>

The constitution of Portugal designates the **Council of Ministers** (President's cabinet) as the chief policy-making body. It consists of the Prime Minister, ministers of government departments, and some secretaries of state.

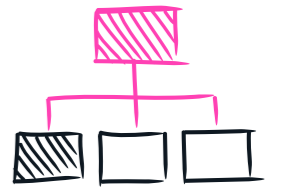
The parliament consists of a **unicameral Assembly of the Republic** with 230 deputies. Its duties include debating and voting upon legislation, authorizing the government to raise revenues, and approving the laws passed by the legislatures of the autonomous regions of Portugal.

#### HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister  
**Antonio Costa**

#### EXECUTIVE HEAD OF STATE

President  
**Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa**



#### KEY POLITICAL PARTIES<sup>11</sup>

- Social Democratic Party (PSD)
- People's Party (CDS)
- Socialists (PS)
- Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU)
- Communist Party (PCP)
- Greens (Os Verdes)
- Left Bloc (BE)

### CULTURE & SCIENCE

Lisbon, Portugal's capital has the oldest **operating bookstore in the world**, dating back to 1732.<sup>12</sup>

70% of the world's **cork exports** come from Portugal, and Portugal has the **world's largest cork tree forest**.

Portugal is **known as the country of tiles**, as the Portuguese love decorating their houses, restaurants and small streets with beautiful tiled patterns.<sup>13</sup>

Portugal is also known to have the **highest number of sunshine hours in Europe**, averaging about 300 sunny days a year.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/portugal-population/>  
<sup>2</sup><https://alphaomegatranslations.com/foreign-language/three-languages-you-didnt-know-were-native-to-portugal/>  
<sup>3</sup><https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-portugal.html>  
<sup>4</sup>[https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine\\_tema&xpid=INE&tema\\_cod=1312](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine_tema&xpid=INE&tema_cod=1312)  
<sup>5</sup><https://data.oecd.org/portugal.htm>  
<sup>6</sup><https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/PRT/Year/LTST/Summary>  
<sup>7</sup><https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/PRT/Year/LTST/Summary>  
<sup>8</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/372187/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-portugal/#:~:text=Share%20of%20economic%20sectors%20in%20the%20GDP%20in%20Portugal%202009%2D2019&text=In%202019%2C%20the%20share%20of%20sector%20contributed%20about%2065.52%20percent.>  
<sup>9</sup><https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/PRT/portugal/unemployment-rate#:~:text=Portugal%20unemployment%20rate%20for%202019,a%201.38%25%20decline%20from%202015.>  
<sup>10</sup><https://www.britannica.com/place/Portugal/Government-and-society>  
<sup>11</sup><https://www.euronews.com/2019/10/05/portugal-elections-who-are-the-main-parties>  
<sup>12</sup><https://artsandculture.google.com/theme/8-fun-facts-you-never-knew-about-portugal/xw1CH2cMcRGWkg?hl=en>  
<sup>13</sup><https://beportugal.com/interesting-facts-about-portugal/>

## III. PRIORITIES FOR THE PRESIDENCY

The Portuguese Council Presidency will aim to strengthen Europe's resilience and its citizens' confidence in the European social model by promoting a Union based on the common values of solidarity, convergence and cohesion. Specifically, Portugal's agenda for the Presidency will focus on five main priorities: **Resilient Europe, Social Europe, Green Europe, Digital Europe and Global Europe.**

### RESILIENT EUROPE

The Portuguese Presidency is determined to conclude the implementation of the new MFF and the "NextGenerationEU" recovery fund to ensure Europe's recovery from the crisis and to provide the basis for sustainable growth and job creation. Resilience should also be increased by defending Europe's strategic autonomy, strengthening the EU's crisis management system and upholding its fundamental values, internally and externally. The Presidency also wants to continue the negotiations on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum and involve citizens and civil society in the Conference on the Future of Europe, as far as the epidemiological situation allows it. ■

### SOCIAL EUROPE

Portugal places particular emphasis on Europe's social model as a key factor for tackling the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. In particular, the Presidency plans to promote the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and aims to hold a Social Summit in Porto, scheduled for May. The Portuguese Presidency wants to put the social dimension at the heart of the EU's priorities in 2021 and points out the crucial importance of promoting policies to foster employment and jobs, equal opportunities, social protection and health in the recovery from the crisis. ■

### GREEN EUROPE

Climate change is also high on the Portuguese agenda. The Council Presidency will prioritize the implementation of the European Green Deal for a sustainable economic recovery and will push to ensure a higher ambition for the EU's 2030 climate action targets. The energy transition in Europe should be fostered, in part, through the European Investment Bank (EIB) designing financial instruments to mobilize significant public and private investments into renewables and clean energy. Two summits are scheduled for February and April in Lisbon to discuss climate change and the role of green hydrogen for the energy transition. ■

### DIGITAL EUROPE

On digital affairs, the Portuguese Council Presidency will focus on the digital transition as a driver of economic recovery and aims to promote European leadership in innovation and the digital economy. Special attention will be paid to the universal development of digital skills and the fostering of new digital solutions and strategies for the green transition in the health, education, research and innovation, and mobility sectors. The Portuguese Presidency places particular emphasis on the social dimension of the digital transformation and aims to put forward a "Charter of Digital Rights" that should preserve

fundamental European values and lay the foundations for "Digital Democracy with a purpose". A "Digital Day" is scheduled for March in Porto and a "Digital Assembly" should be held in Lisbon in June. ■

### GLOBAL EUROPE

The Portuguese Presidency aims to strengthen the EU's commitment to effective multilateralism and its geopolitical role as a leading player on all relevant international agendas. Priority will be given to the EU's future relationship with the UK as well as European leadership in consolidating an open and rules-based international trading system. Portugal is particularly committed to bolstering the relationship between the EU and Africa, the Southern Mediterranean Neighborhood and Latin America. The Presidency is also eager to strengthen European relations with India, and give a new political impetus to the transatlantic relationship by reaching out to the newly elected U.S. administration. ■

## IV. PROGRAM OF THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY

Portuguese Presidency Motto:

**"Time to deliver: a fair,  
green and digital  
recovery"**

### I. PROTECTING CITIZENS AND FREEDOMS

To protect citizens and freedoms in the EU, the Portuguese Presidency will first and foremost strengthen the core values of and the rule of law in the Union, with a high-level conference planned in May. Part of this means continuing the fight for equal opportunities and combatting racism, which the Portuguese will address by following up on the EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025. To give greater legitimacy to the EU and secure the citizenry's trust, the Presidency will advocate for greater levels of active participation by European citizens, especially young people, and counter disinformation through the European Democracy Action Plan. Special priority will also be given to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum with the aim of establishing a common migration management system for the EU. For the future of Schengen, the Presidency wants to put the new mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex) into operation and implement mechanisms like the Entry/Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorization System. To enable a better disaster management and civil protection mechanism, the Portuguese Presidency will establish strategic reserves of essen-

tial supplies and increase the capacity of rescEU. For police and judicial cooperation, the Portuguese will focus heavily on preventing and combatting terrorism, especially on radicalisation and violent extremism of various origins and orientations both on- and offline. Furthermore, Portugal will pursue coordination in the fight against organised and cross-border crime, particularly drug trafficking, human trafficking, crimes against women and children, cybercrime, including child sexual abuse, electronic evidence and hate crime. Finally, Portugal wants to improve the interoperability of European legal and judicial systems, continuing the efforts of the action plan for European e-Justice. A conference on this topic will be held in April. ■

### II. DEVELOPING OUR ECONOMIC BASE: THE EUROPEAN MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

The Presidency's top priority will be the implementation of the multiannual financial framework and NextGenerationEU instrument, including the approval of national plans. Cohesion policy shall receive attention, and a high-level conference shall assess the economic situation of Europe. Work on the European deposit guarantee scheme and the capital markets union shall help deepen the economic and monetary union, while work on crypto assets and operational resilience will put the digital transition of the financial sector in focus. Portugal will discuss the Digital Services Act, support SMEs, and remove unjustified barriers in the single market.

The Portuguese want to use the European industrial strategy to reduce dependence on third countries and lay the ground for 'industrial ecosystems' in Europe. A high-level meeting in March to address consumer protection and recovery in the tourism sector will be a high priority. The European Year of the Rail will be used to focus on decarbonization and economic recovery of the transport sector. On digital topics, research and innovation policies will prioritize green hydrogen and -supercomputing, as well as Artificial Intelligence (AI). Along these lines, a high-level conference on intellectual property and the digital transition is to be held in February. Furthermore, the Presidency will monitor the issue of cybersecurity across all policy areas, with a particular focus on the new NIS Directive and other measures of the new EU Security Strategy. In addition, the creation of a European Data Entry Platform based on submarine cables will contribute to greater European digital autonomy. The Presidency will give weight to achieving an integrated, interconnected, digitized and operational single energy market, and will pay particular attention to the revision of the TEN-E Regulation, with the goal of completing the core TEN-T network by 2030. Lastly, a competitive space sector should emerge by maximizing the use of space data and technologies. ■



### III. BUILDING A GREEN, CARBON-NEUTRAL EUROPE

The Portuguese Presidency will “strive to mobilize the Member States behind the European Green Deal, with the aim of promoting an innovative and resilient carbon-neutral development model” to integrate “climate policy and the goal of carbon neutrality ... into the various sectoral policies” and to promote “decarbonization, energy efficiency, the circular economy, sustainable mobility, and the conservation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity”. For climate action, the central objective of the Presidency is to finalize the negotiations on the European Climate Law, including the emissions reductions targets for 2030 and goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest. They will also work on climate adaptation using nature-based solutions. Next, the Presidency will promote the sharing of national plans to further the Circular Economy Action Plan and review the legislative framework for batteries. Conservation of marine biodiversity is of particular importance to the Presidency, and they will prepare for negotiations on the Global Biodiversity Framework at the Convention on Biological Diversity. Regarding the Forestry Strategy, the Presidency considers this a solid framework for an integrated approach to the sector. Portugal will define a program to protect forests and establish a financial framework for them. Moving onto water policy, Portugal will work to increase investment in treatment and reuse solutions as well as implementation of the Water Framework Directive in a cross-sectoral manner. Finally, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information and Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters is important to the Presidency, and they aim to reach a consensus on aligning EU law with the convention. ■

### IV. BUILDING A FAIR AND SOCIAL EUROPE



The Portuguese Presidency is convinced that “only a stronger, fairer and more inclusive social Europe will respond to the social consequences of the pandemic, ensuring intergenerational balance, the future of young Europeans and the well-being of all.” The Presidency has great ambitions to assure the European Pillar of Social Rights has a concrete meaning in the lives of European citizens. Regarding employment, social policy and health, Portugal will host the EU Social Summit. Furthermore, the Presidency will focus on fostering social cohesion, including the fight against poverty, in particular child poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, as well as on the social economy and social innovation, active ageing, inclusion of people with disabilities and promoting children’s rights. Moreover, the development of the European framework for action on health, aiming at creating a European Health Union by enhancing cooperation between Member States and strengthening European agencies, will be an area of paramount importance. Regarding education, youth, culture, and sport, the Portuguese Presidency will advocate for the importance of inclusive access to education and training, and create conditions for equal opportunities. To this end, the establishment of the European education area (EEA) by 2025 and initiatives under the New Skills Agenda for Europe and the Digital Education Action plan will be central objectives. Moreover, the Presidency intends to pay particular attention to the implementation of the EU recovery plan in the cultural and creative sector by launching the Creative Europe program in June. Finally, the Presidency will identify new trends in “sports for the future” as part of the next EU Work Plan for Sport. ■

### V. PROMOTING EUROPE’S INTERESTS AND VALUES IN THE WORLD

As a primary foreign policy objective, the Portuguese Presidency seeks to establish a leadership role in consolidating an open and rules-based international trading system. In the context of multilateral organizations like the UN, the Portuguese will prioritize protection of human rights through implementing the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. Next, together with the European Investment Bank, the Presidency will organize a high-level EU-Africa forum on the green economy and -investment in April and prioritize the organization of a sixth EU-African Union Summit. In Asia, the Portuguese want to focus on modernization and deepening of EU-India relations by holding an informal meeting with the Indian Prime Minister in May. Moreover, Portugal wants to create the conditions for signing the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, and a modernized EU-Mexico Global Agreement. Following Brexit, the Presidency’s goal is to set up a comprehensive, fair, and balanced partnership with the UK. Relations with the United States are to be revitalized, and the relationship should be geared more towards tangible responses to global challenges. This will be done through increasing cooperation in security and defense matters and defining common goals in relation to the climate agenda. In terms of humanitarian aid, the Portuguese will strengthen EU support for young refugees and forcibly displaced persons in higher education. Finally, the Presidency will pay particular attention to hybrid threats, cyber defenses, maritime security, military mobility, and response to complex emergencies in the framework of EU-NATO cooperation. ■

## V. WHO IS WHO?

**European Council**



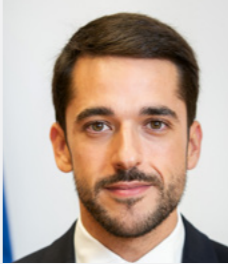
<b>Chair</b>	<b>PT Representative</b>
 <p><b>CHARLES MICHEL</b> <i>President of the European Council</i></p>	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Socialist Party</div>  <p><b>ANTONIO COSTA</b> <i>Prime Minister of Portugal</i></p>

**Political Parties:**  
■ Socialist Party  
■ Independent

**Council Configurations:**

- AGRIFISH:** Agriculture and Fisheries
- COMPET:** Competitiveness
- ECOFIN:** Economic and Financial Affairs
- ENVI:** Environment
- EPSCO:** Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
- EYCS:** Education, Youth, Culture and Sport
- FAC:** Foreign Affairs
- GAC:** General Affairs
- JHA:** Justice and Home Affairs
- TTE:** Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

**FAC**

<b>Chair</b>	<b>PT Representative</b>	<b>Trade</b>
 <p><b>JOSEPH BORELL FONTELLES</b> <i>High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</i></p>	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Independent</div>  <p><b>JOÃO GOMES CRAVINHO</b> <i>Minister of National Defense</i></p>	 <p><b>JOÃO TORRES</b> <i>Secretary of State for Trade, Services and Consumer Protection</i></p>

**COMPET**

<b>Internal Market/ Industry</b>	<b>Space &amp; Research</b>
<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Socialist Party</div>  <p><b>PEDRO SIZA VIEIRA</b> <i>Minister of State for the Economy, and Digital Transition</i></p>	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Independent</div>  <p><b>MANUEL HEITOR</b> <i>Minister for Science, Technology, and Higher Education</i></p>












# >WHO IS WHO?

AGRIFISH		EYCS		
Agriculture	Fisheries	Education	Youth & Sport	Culture
<b>Socialist Party</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>	<b>Independent</b>		<b>Socialist Party</b>
				
<b>MARIA DO CÉU ANTUNES</b> <i>Minister of Agriculture</i>	<b>RICARDO SERRÃO SANTOS</b> <i>Minister of Maritime Affairs</i>	<b>TIAGO BRANDÃO RODRIGUES</b> <i>Education Minister</i>	<b>JOÃO PAULO REBELO</b> <i>Secretary of State for Youth and Sport</i>	<b>GRAÇA FONSECA</b> <i>Minister of Culture</i>

# >WHO IS WHO?

ECOFIN		EPSCO		
Finance	Economic Policy	Social Affairs	Consumer Protection	Health
<b>Independent</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>		<b>Independent</b>
				
<b>JOÃO LEÃO</b> <i>Minister of State for Finance</i>	<b>PEDRO SIZA VIEIRA</b> <i>Minister of State for the Economy, and Digital Transition</i>	<b>ANA MENDES GODINHO</b> <i>Minister of Labor, Solidarity, and Social Security</i>	<b>JOÃO TORRES</b> <i>Secretary of State for Trade, Services, and Consumer Protection (under Ministry of the Economy)</i>	<b>MARTA TEMIDO</b> <i>Minister of Health</i>

TTE				ENVI
Transport	Energy	Telecommunications		Environment
<b>Socialist Party</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>		<b>Independent</b>
				
<b>PEDRO NUNO SANTOS</b> <i>Minister for Infrastructure and Housing</i>	<b>JOÃO PEDRO MATOS FERNANDES</b> <i>Minister for the Environment and Climate Action</i>	<b>JOÃO GALAMBA</b> <i>Deputy Minister and Secretary of State for Energy</i>	<b>PEDRO SIZA VIEIRA</b> <i>Minister of State for the Economy, and Digital Transition</i>	<b>JOÃO PEDRO MATOS FERNANDES</b> <i>Minister for the Environment and Climate Action</i>

GAC	JHA		COREPER
Coordination	Justice	Home Affairs	Ambassador
	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>	
			
<b>ANA PAULA ZACARIAS</b> <i>Secretary of State for European Affairs</i>	<b>FRANCISCA VAN DUNEM</b> <i>Minister of Justice</i>	<b>EDUARDO CABRITA</b> <i>Minister for Home Affairs</i>	<b>PEDRO LOURTIE</b> <i>Deputy Permanent Representative</i>





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## FURTHER INFORMATION

### EURACTIV

**28 OCTOBER 2020**

[Portugal EU presidency to present 'Charter of Digital Rights'](#)

### EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

**3 DECEMBER 2020**

[Portugal's priorities for the Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

### EURONEWS

**1 JANUARY 2021**

[Portugal takes on EU's rotating presidency from Germany](#)

### EURACTIV

**1 DECEMBER 2020**

[Portuguese presidency wants to strengthen trust in EU social model](#)

### EUOBSERVER

**15 DECEMBER 2020**

[Portugal will refocus EU on social rights, PM says](#)

### OFFICIAL WEBSITE

[Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)

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**UNDERSTANDING POLITICS  
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**ANALYSIS, STRATEGY  
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