



# Portugal

**Assessment: Good**

**Trend: ⇄**

Capital: Lisbon

Type of Government: Parliamentary Democracy

Head of Government: Prime Minister Antonio Manuel de Oliveira Guterres (since 28 October 1995)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Antonio Martins da Cruz

Population: 10,066,253

Human Development Index Ranking 2002: 28

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portugal has a **good** record of support for the promotion of democracy abroad throughout the period 1992-2002. Since its transition to democracy, Portugal has become more willing to condemn the overthrow of democratically-elected regimes, to promote free and fair elections, and to provide humanitarian assistance to countries struggling to resolve armed conflicts or establish democratic government. Portugal has used its membership in multilateral associations as the preferred method for executing its foreign policy, and has, in special situations, effectively formed coalitions to promote its interest in expanding democracy, particularly in the PALOP (African countries with Portuguese as the Official Language) and East Timor. However, a continued downward trend in Portugal's contribution to official development assistance combined with its precarious economic future, could undermine the country's ability to promote democracy abroad.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS BACKGROUND

A major factor in understanding Portugal's efforts to promote democracy is its longstanding ties of history, language, and culture to its former colonies: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, East Timor, Mozambique, and São Tome and Principe. Portugal is a significant bilateral donor to most of its former colonies, and uses this assistance more as a tool for political leverage than to promote democracy within the countries. Until recently, Portuguese bilateral development aid was directed almost exclusively to the PALOP countries -- all states with less than stable democratic structures. Respect for civil and political rights had no influence on whether Portugal designated a country eligible to receive aid, according to a London School of Economics study of aid politics of the 21-member Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, a recent review of the records of the DAC shows that the underlying motive of Portuguese aid has been the preservation of Lisbon's influence through ongoing ties to its former colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Portugal's accession to the European Union (EU) in 1986 has gradually contributed to the country incorporating a broader European perspective on issues of foreign and security policy. At the same time, Portugal has used its presidential rotations within the EU to promote summit-level conferences with African countries in an effort to maintain and improve its post-imperial relations with them. Additionally, it has utilized cultural and linguistic coalitions to secure a sphere of influence within Europe and throughout the world. It has, for example, used the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) as a platform from which to project its values, including that of democratic freedom.<sup>3</sup>

Portugal has made a significant contribution to conflict resolution efforts around the world. Its troops have participated in, or are presently engaged in, UN peace missions in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, East



Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Kosovo and Mozambique, among others. According to the 2001 UN assessment of member contributions, Portugal's contingent of military personnel active in peacekeeping operations ranks 11th, ranking first among European countries and second among NATO allies.<sup>4</sup> Portugal is an active participant in the OSCE, the UN, NATO and the Ibero-American Summit process, and recently reaffirmed its commitment to these organizations and the effort to support the construction of a democratic Europe.

### **RESPONSE TO THE OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENTS**

Portugal has a fair record of condemning military coups and the overthrow of democratically-elected governments. Its responses, which have been pursued through bilateral and multilateral channels, have been generally sympathetic towards the ousted regime. Portugal has been hesitant to impose general economic sanctions, however, and has instead consistently championed targeted sanctions against offending leaders.

Portugal's efforts toward democratic reforms in Guinea-Bissau helped to spur the former colony's first multi-party elections, held in 1994. Observers were sent by Portugal, Sweden, the Francophonie, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), and the Organization of African Unity to monitor these elections. In 1998, President Nino Vieira's dismissal of the chief of Guinea-Bissau's armed forces ignited a military overthrow and eleven months of civil war. The conflict was resolved in November, when the Abuja Peace Agreement calling for national unity was signed under the joint mediation of the CPLP and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Portugal played a pivotal and positive role during the conflict. It supported CPLP initiatives and its continued diplomatic presence in the field presented a strong signal to the warring factions of its support for peace. After Senegal's entry into the fighting, there was some speculation that the French and Portuguese governments were also at odds over the conflict, however both sides insisted that efforts would be cooperative and would first and foremost focus on humanitarian aid reaching the citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

Portugal had a lackluster response to the nullification of elections by the self-imposed military government in Burma. While its backing of UN resolutions against human rights violations in

Burma was appropriate, Portugal straddled the fence by pushing for Burmese participation in EU-ASEAN trade deliberations.<sup>5</sup>

The January 2000 coup that occurred in Ecuador was one of the first international challenges to face Portugal as it took over the presidency of the European Union. After the events that resulted in the ousting of President Mahuad, the President of Portugal, on behalf of the European Union, issued a statement condemning the interruption of the democratic process. After the April 2002 coup in Venezuela, Portugal issued a statement of concern for the safety of the 400,000 Portuguese citizens living there and joined the EU statement calling for a quick return to civilian rule and democratic normalization.

### **RESPONSE TO MANIPULATION OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES**

Portugal has a good record of condemning attempts to manipulate electoral processes. Portugal has been especially helpful to its former colonies in supporting their efforts to hold free and fair elections. Portugal has helped by monitoring elections, supporting non-governmental organizations and endorsing the use of targeted sanctions against recalcitrant regimes.

After more than two decades of brutal repression and genocide in which 200,000 East Timorese people died, Portugal's steadfast negotiations with Indonesia regarding autonomy for East Timor came to fruition. After having cut diplomatic relations with Indonesia in December 1975, immediately after the invasion, Portugal ardently defended its former colony's right to self-determination and transition to democracy. It further helped in this effort at the UN negotiating table, by negotiating the details of the entire transition process and by monitoring elections as a member of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) monitoring group. Portugal also supported the creation of the East Timor Observation Mission which, in cooperation with several non-governmental organizations, monitored the transition process and the elections not only at polling stations within East Timor, but also at those set up around the world to accommodate extensive communities of East Timorese living abroad (including in Portugal, Indonesia, Australia, and Canada, among other countries).<sup>6</sup>

In August 1999, 98.5 percent of the East Timorese population turned out to exercise their



democratic right to vote. A majority supported independence, despite widespread intimidation and violence. The violence that followed elections provoked outrage in Portugal. With Portugal united behind the East Timorese cause, President Jorge Sampaio, Prime Minister António Guterres and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jaime Gama were instrumental in drumming up international support for a UN peacekeeping force. Not surprisingly, Portugal's most significant involvement in any UN peacekeeping mission occurred within UNTAET, the UN mission in East Timor.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Portugal supported an EU resolution to apply an arms embargo against Indonesia in September 1999 (though it was lifted in January 2000).<sup>8</sup>

The Portuguese response to the manipulation of the elections in Zimbabwe was largely guided by the positions and actions of the EU. The EU is committed to maintaining its humanitarian assistance to the people of Zimbabwe and to imposing targeted sanctions against the Mugabe government. However, there has been disagreement amongst EU member countries regarding whether to remove EU election observers from the country in order to avoid conferring external legitimacy on the process. Portugal argued in favor of keeping the thirty EU observers in Zimbabwe throughout the electoral process to deter further fraud, but its position did not prevail.

### **PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY**

Portugal has a strong record of supporting measures that promote democracy throughout the world. Portugal's accession to the EU in 1986 enhanced its economic stability, helped to solidify its internal democracy and served as a portal through which the country has been able to demonstrate its commitment to international democracy and respect for human rights. Despite its small size, Portugal has had considerable influence in the development of the EU platform regarding development assistance and democracy promotion abroad. This, in turn, has been pivotal to Lisbon's relationship with new democratic societies. Portugal is also an active member of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, as well as one of the founding members of the International Criminal Court.

Portugal has embraced most of the pro-democratic "demarches" of the EU, from its resolutions on human rights and democracy to common EU positions on cases of gross violations

of human rights or democratic governance. In accordance with Article VI of the Amsterdam Treaty, Portugal willingly joined the EU's threat to boycott Jorg Haider's far-right Freedom Party, which garnered 27 percent of the vote in Austria's October 1999 elections.<sup>9</sup> Haider had gained notoriety by espousing anti-immigrant policies and expressing sympathy with some elements of the Nazi regime. At the time, Prime Minister Guterres stated that if a political party that has expressed xenophobic views comes to power, it is a natural result that the European family will not be able to continue to support that regime. Guterres further stated that Portugal has come to understand that the real defense of its national interests lies in cultivating shared European values, such as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Subsequently, Portugal was one of the first EU countries to support repeal of sanctions against Austria after the removal of Haider as leader of the Freedom Party.

Portugal used its position as chair-in-office of the OSCE (2001-02) to emphasize its concern for strengthening democracy and human rights in Europe. Then Foreign Minister Jaime Gama lauded the announcement of municipal elections in Kosovo. He then insisted that the newly-elected assembly be granted the resources necessary to construct a consolidated governing body as a way to help Kosovo develop its democratic institutions. The OSCE also implemented a program to ensure that all people in Kosovo registered with the UN have the opportunity to vote on election day. In addition, the OSCE was instrumental in pushing for elections in southern Serbia -- an important watershed in the overall process of confidence-building in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Finally, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was expected to deploy 800 observers for the parliamentary elections in Macedonia. This action was supported by the Portuguese, whose Foreign Minister, António Martins da Cruz, proclaimed that the future of democracy and stability in Macedonia are contingent upon elections that are free of violence, intimidation, and inflammatory rhetoric.

In Angola, the Portuguese government played a central role in negotiating the end to several decades of bloody civil war, thereby helping to pave the way for a democratic peace. The signing of the Bicesse Peace Accords in May 1991<sup>10</sup> subsequently led to UN-supervised presidential and legislative elections in September 1992. The results



of the presidential election, which were generally considered free and fair, favored Eduardo dos Santos, the candidate of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). UNITA, the opposition party led by Jonas Savimbi, did not accept the results, and after a period of violent events, the civil war resumed with intensified brutality. After the failed elections, Portugal, exerted its influence in the UN Security Council, and pushed for creation of a team of observers to negotiate a peace accord and press for the respect of democratic values. The Troika of Observers of the Peace Process in Angola was intended to be the key mediating mechanism between the MPLA and UNITA. However, some critics argued that it was flawed because Portugal, together with Russia, was seen as biased in favor of the Angolan government. Nonetheless, the Troika maintained a unified stance behind the UN Special Representative, which helped keep the process on track.<sup>11</sup>

#### **POLICY TOWARDS ENTRENCHED DICTATORSHIPS**

Portugal has a fair record with regard to its relationship with entrenched dictatorships. It has joined EU statements condemning dictators not only within Europe, but throughout the world, though it has avoided imposing overarching sanctions on authoritarian regimes such as China and Cuba, and has, in fact, fostered relations with them through symbolic diplomatic visits and trade agreements. Portuguese officials would contend that maintaining diplomatic relations with these countries is more a sign of historical friendship than an approval of anti-democratic institutions.

Portugal has clearly spoken out in favor of ending the United States' economic embargo on Cuba, and has joined a coalition of other Ibero-

American countries to support the annual UN General Assembly resolution against the embargo.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, while critical of Fidel Castro's dictatorship, these countries have done little to discourage the Cuban leader's anti-democratic policies. At the ninth Ibero-American summit in Cuba in 1999, Portuguese Prime Minister António Guterres phrased the trade-off in the following way: "Our position is very clear. We are always in favor of human rights, but do not believe that the best way to achieve this is with embargoes." In March 2000, then Portuguese Foreign Minister Gama criticized the decision of the U.S. Senate to allow the sale of food and medicine to Cuba for failing to be all-inclusive. He continued, "It's a small step in the right direction. Portugal's position is that the right solution would be an end to the embargo on Cuba."

The economic embargo against Iraq in 1990 constituted one of the most comprehensive sanctions regimes in the history of the UN. As a member of the UN Security Council, Portugal has endorsed targeted sanctions, which are intended to avoid harming innocent civilians. In a 1998 symposium on targeted sanctions, Ambassador António Monteiro, as Chairman of the 661 Committee, concluded that sanctions imposed on Iraq had a conversely bigger impact on the general population.<sup>13</sup> Under the Chairmanship of the Portuguese Ambassador, the Security Council has taken a broader look at the issue of sanctions and how to improve them. The Security Council has expressed a preference for targeted sanctions, and has proposed a reformulation of the guidelines used in determining when and how to apply them. In addition, the Security Council has proposed undertaking periodic assessments and adjustments of sanctions to ensure that they remain effective.

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<sup>1</sup> Neumayer, Eric. "Do Human Rights Matter in Bilateral Aid Allocation?: A quantitative analysis of 21 donor countries." <http://www.ise.ac.uk/Depts/geography/21donors.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> DAC 2001: Review of the Development Co-operation Policies and Programs of Portugal. DCD/DAC/AR (2001) 2/16/PART2.

<sup>3</sup> The CPLP was formed in Lisbon on 17 July 1996. Its members are Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations. *Troop and Other Personnel Contributions to Peacekeeping Operations: 2001*.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. *Commission on Human Rights Archives of the 2001 Session*. UN Resolution L.20 on Human Rights Violations in Burma. 19 April 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Two Portuguese NGOs—the Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People (CDPM) and the ecumenical group *Peace is Possible in East Timor*—decided to set up the East Timor Observatory. The aim of the Observatory is to monitor East Timor's transition process, as well as the negotiating process and its repercussions at the international level, and the developments in the situation inside the territory itself.



<sup>7</sup> Military personnel in East Timor are drawn mainly from Australia, Bangladesh, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, South Korea, as well as Thailand.

<sup>8</sup> For more, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ASIANOW/southeast/9909/13/e.timor.02>.

<sup>9</sup> The Treaty of Amsterdam is the result of the Intergovernmental Conference launched at the Turin European Council on 29 March 1996. It was adopted at the Amsterdam European Council on 16-17 June 1997 and signed on 2 October 1997 by the Foreign Ministers of the fifteen Member States. It entered into force on 1 May 1999. Article VI states that a member-state can be suspended if heads of government decide that it is in 'serious and persistent breach' of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

<sup>10</sup> Besides its dimension and geographic location, Angola is also one of the richest countries in Africa. Gold, diamonds and oil are amongst its natural resources and are a critical factor of the UNITA-MPLA conflict.

<sup>11</sup> Hare, Paul. The Role of the Troika in Angola. Paper presented at the Maputo Conference on "Time for Renewed International Commitment to Peace in Angola: Lesson Learned and Ways Forward." June 2000.

<http://www.dw.angonet.org/Peacebuilding/Activities/MaputoConferenceWorkingGroup.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> In November 2001, for the tenth consecutive year, the UN General Assembly reiterated its call for an end to the economic embargo. 167 countries voted in favor to three against (Israel, Marshall Islands, United States Islands), with three abstentions (Latvia, Micronesia, Nicaragua).

<sup>13</sup> "Symposium on Targeted Sanctions." Speech by Ambassador António Monteiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations. New York, 7 December 1998.