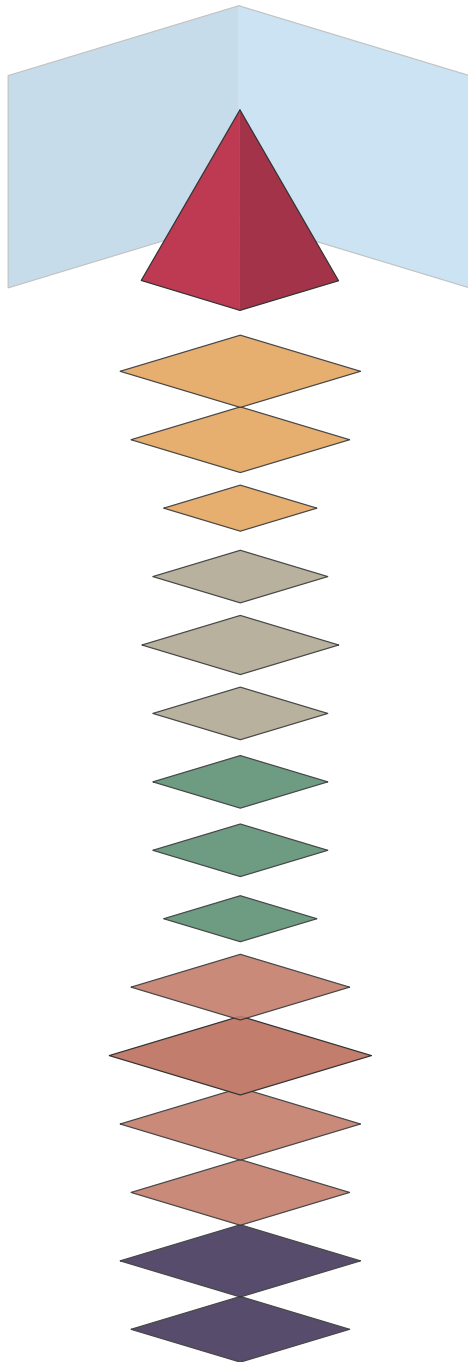




PORTUGAL



4.88

CRIMINALITY SCORE

104th of 193 countries

21st of 44 European countries

5th of 8 Southern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.67

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 5.50

HUMAN SMUGGLING 5.00

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING 3.50

ARMS TRAFFICKING 4.00

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS 4.50

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS 4.00

FLORA CRIMES 4.00

FAUNA CRIMES 4.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 3.50

HEROIN TRADE 5.00

COCAINE TRADE 6.00

CANNABIS TRADE 5.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 5.00

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES 5.50

FINANCIAL CRIMES 5.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.10

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 5.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 6.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 4.50

FOREIGN ACTORS 5.50

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS 4.50



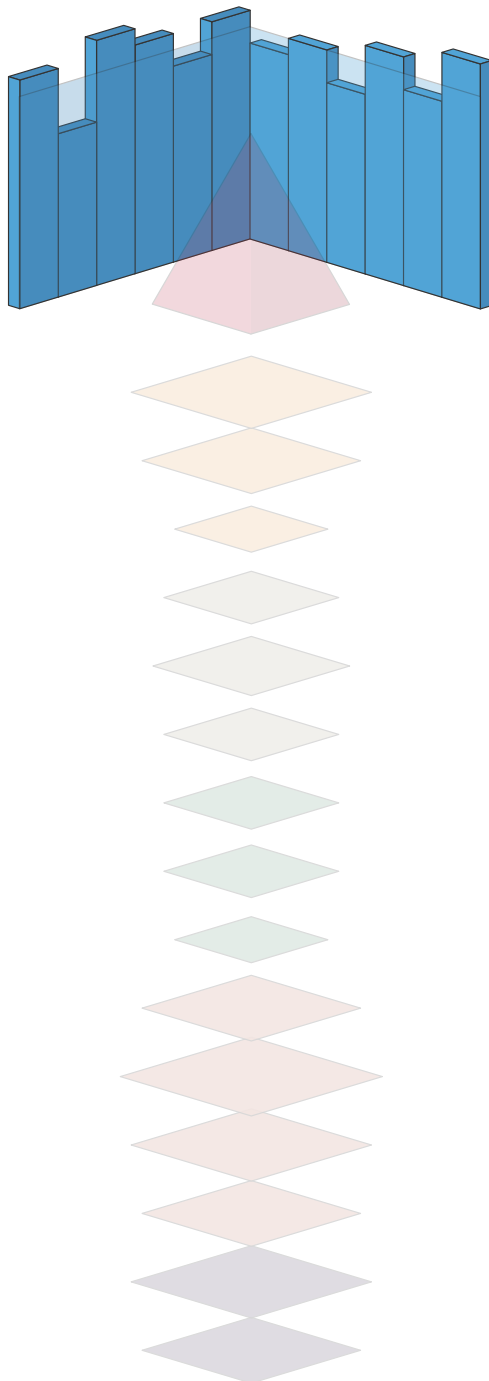
6.50

RESILIENCE SCORE





PORTUGAL



6.50

RESILIENCE SCORE

30th of 193 countries

21st of 44 European countries

2nd of 8 Southern European countries

| | |
|--|------|
| POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE | 7.00 |
| GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY | 5.00 |
| INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | 7.50 |
| NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS | 7.00 |
| JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION | 6.00 |
| LAW ENFORCEMENT | 7.00 |
| TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY | 6.00 |
| ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING | 6.50 |
| ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY | 5.50 |
| VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT | 7.00 |
| PREVENTION | 6.00 |
| NON-STATE ACTORS | 7.50 |



4.88

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.67



CRIMINAL ACTORS 5.10



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Portugal is primarily a destination country for human trafficking, with labour exploitation being the most prevalent form of this crime. However, it also plays a key role as a transit country, particularly on the Latin America route, predominantly from Brazil to Europe. Cases of human trafficking are believed to be significantly under-reported. Most of the minor victims are boys from Romania, who are primarily exploited for adoption, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, begging or sexual exploitation. The majority of adult victims are men from developing countries, particularly African countries. In this context, Portugal usually serves as a transit country for the West Africa route in which victims obtain fraudulent documents before moving on to other European countries where they are frequently subjected to sexual exploitation. The continuance of human trafficking in Portugal is enabled by inadequate victim identification, the ongoing illicit practices of temporary employment and recruitment agencies, and the pervasiveness of false promises made to victims. Transnational criminal networks, particularly those from Eastern Europe, are the main players involved in this activity, and both domestic and foreign actors profit from it.

Human smuggling is also a prevalent criminal market in Portugal. People from countries in Southern Asia, such as India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, and Eastern Europe, such as Romania, Moldova, and Bulgaria, as well as Latin America and West Africa, are increasingly smuggled into the country to be exploited in various sectors, mainly agriculture and hospitality. Criminal actors, including domestic and transnational networks, use sea or air routes as transit platforms. Balkan criminal networks use national airports to convey people irregularly into Portugal. The El Jadida-Faro sea route is used to avoid controls carried out by Moroccan authorities and the Canary Islands are increasingly being targeted along the West African route. A significant rise in document fraud connected to border controls has been detected.

Historically, the extortion and protection racketeering market has been pervasive in the country, especially in the north, usually involving biker gangs. However, recent evidence has been scarce and major events related to this crime are no longer common. Nevertheless, extortion is still occurring in the country and the latest reports indicate the moderate involvement of foreign actors too.

TRADE

Portugal is a transit country for illegal firearms being trafficked into Africa and firearm conversion is a popular mechanism for acquiring illicit weapons in the country. Although there is limited information about the trafficking routes, the dark web has enabled the circulation of illegal weapons, especially those already on the black market. Alarm and signal weapons have reportedly become popular within criminal circles. These weapons are usually imported from Turkey or purchased legally in EU countries, such as Slovakia, before being modified and/or illegally trafficked to other countries.

The trade in counterfeit goods is on the rise in Portugal, with luxury goods, medical equipment, cosmetics, food, and toys being the products most commonly apprehended by law enforcement agents. Portuguese authorities have reported an increasing amount of counterfeit and pirated product being seized in the country and several operations have resulted in the dismantling of clandestine labs and criminal networks involved in the production and trafficking of counterfeit goods. These operations have uncovered fake products bearing international trademark logos as well as 'Made in Portugal' labels. In addition, with regards to the illicit trade of excisable goods, the smuggling of tobacco products is an issue in the country, usually occurring across the border with Spain, and causing significant financial losses for Portugal and the EU.

ENVIRONMENT

Portugal is considered a hub for the illegal trade of timber from ancient forests and is one of the largest importers of protected flora from Brazil. Some Portuguese corporate companies have been linked to the flora crime market and evidence of illegally logged timber from the Democratic Republic of Congo continues to be reported. Nevertheless, this criminal market is still not particularly pervasive in the country. Portugal is also known as a source, transit, and destination country for illegal wildlife trade, particularly bird smuggling from Latin America and glass eel trafficking. With regard to the latter, criminal networks operating from Portugal are mainly involved in the illegal trafficking of glass eels from Europe to Asia. The COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in the process of eel trafficking, with glass eels now being concealed in shipments of other commodities and transported to Asia via air cargo. Elephant products and rhino horn have also been seized at Portugal's airports and the country remains a destination and transit point for trafficked exotic fauna species.

Portugal is also a transit and destination country for the illicit non-renewable resource market. There are indications that criminal groups are involved in trading uncertified

diamonds from south-western Africa to Belgium via Portugal. Recently, former Portuguese military agents operating in the Central African Republic were allegedly involved in the illegal trafficking of diamonds from the country, as part of a large criminal network operating in several countries, including Angola, Guinea-Bissau, UAE, South Africa, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. Reportedly, the diamonds were transported from the Central African Republic to Lisbon on military planes, before being trafficked by land to Antwerp, where they were sold. Apart from this case, the market for non-renewable resource crime continues to have a largely manageable impact on the country.

DRUGS

Portugal remains a significant transit and destination country for heroin trafficking, primarily from South Africa. Transnational networks are the most prevalent of the criminal actors involved in the heroin trade, and small groups of organized criminals distribute drugs within the country. Although the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily altered the drug trafficking dynamic across the country, criminal organizations quickly adapted by shifting towards online marketplaces, digital platforms, social networks, and rapid delivery services. As a result, a slight increase was recorded in this market as well as in the number of users seeking treatment for opiates in the country. Cocaine trafficking from the Caribbean and Latin America, with Brazil as the primary source, is still the prevalent form of drug trafficking in Portugal and the country serves mainly as a transit and destination point. Maritime trafficking is the preferred method of transport, closely followed by air trafficking. The cocaine criminal market is transnational in nature and the drug is either distributed internally or trafficked to other European countries. The use of cocaine, mainly crack cocaine, has increased in Lisbon compared to the previous year. A rise in the presence of international cocaine trafficking rings in Portugal, mainly Brazilian, has also been reported.

Portugal's strategic geographic position makes it both a destination and transit country for cannabis resin from Morocco, as well as a source country for herbal cannabis. This drug is usually transported through maritime trafficking, with Morocco remaining the main country of origin and Spain the primary destination. As a key country along the route, Portugal is seeing its south coastal area being increasingly used by Moroccan traffickers. Authorities in Portugal have also detected speedboats being used by Spanish criminal groups for drug transport between the Moroccan and Spanish coasts. Additionally, cannabis production within Portuguese territory plays a significant role in the criminal market, with Asian criminal groups, mainly Chinese, setting up cannabis plantations with the objective of exporting the product to the Netherlands. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in cannabis use, with consumers resorting to postal services and the internet to trade cannabis.

Portugal is a key transit and destination country for the synthetic drug trade, particularly ecstasy (MDMA). These drugs are mainly trafficked into Portugal from the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, and France. The domestic distribution of methamphetamines is reportedly carried out by mafia-style groups. While most ecstasy traffickers are Portuguese, other nationalities, such as Brazilians and Cape Verdeans, are also involved. Social media is increasingly being used as an alternative to street markets, and this was particularly the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the use of new psychoactive substances containing synthetic cathinones, sold under brand names such as 'Bloom', is a concern.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

During the reporting period, the number of cyber-attacks on organizations in Portugal increased significantly, especially in the education and healthcare sectors. Ransomware attacks were particularly severe, with the national cybercrime office receiving numerous complaints from small- and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, cybercrime groups have targeted media conglomerates, corporate enterprises, and even Parliament, especially during election periods. A big case of cryptocurrency fraud, perpetrated by a Portuguese cyber-criminal, was halted at the beginning of 2022. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the gradual easing of pandemic restrictions introduced new cyber-security threats.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes and related proceedings have increased in Portugal in recent years, with digital environments being an area of growing concern. Criminals are known to open bank accounts through fictitious agents and companies, often transferring funds to international or transitory accounts. Investigations related to tax evasion and fraud concerning European funds are ongoing.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Portugal are primarily engaged in extortion, gambling, drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, and the illegal possession and trafficking of weapons and ammunition. Some groups consist mainly of private security guards associated with the nightlife of major cities, such as Porto, and are connected to murder cases. Other groups have distinct membership cultures, with family ties, specific entry requirements, tattoos, and prescribed clothing bearing group symbols and logos. Some of the most territorial groups operate in the northern region of Portugal. Biker gang activity, mainly related to the so-called Hells Angels, continues to have an impact on the country. Additionally, youth gangs appear to be on the rise.

Loose criminal networks, involved in a range of illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking for

labour and sexual exploitation, and cybercrime, also operate in Portugal. Although these networks themselves tend to be small, their operations can be large, and they have established working relationships with foreign networks, especially from Latin America, responsible for producing and transporting drugs or for recruiting and transporting trafficking victims to Portugal. Criminal groups involved in drug trafficking are believed to be highly organized and flexible in adapting to different methods. Foreign criminal groups identified as operating in Portugal generally come from Brazil, Ukraine, Cape Verde, and China. Brazilian organized crime groups have been present in Portugal for over a decade, with evidence suggesting their involvement in theft, general violence, homicide, and cocaine trafficking. Eastern European criminal groups are more active in the human trafficking market, while so-called 'Chinese overseas police stations' are allegedly present in Portugal and may be used to track and harass dissidents. Italian mafia groups have also been identified in the country.

The private sector has been plagued by corruption and financial misconduct allegations in recent years, with high-profile figures being involved in fraud and bribery cases. The football industry has also been hit by a series of scandals, with top-flight Portuguese clubs being implicated in breach of trust, falsification, aggravated fraud, embezzlement, and fraud. Portugal's so-called 'Golden Visa' scheme is seen as a gateway for corrupt individuals and corporations to enter Europe, and a primary facilitator of money laundering and tax evasion. The Portuguese government itself is under scrutiny, as a significant number of its members are being investigated for illegal activity, including tax evasion, corruption, misuse of power, and financial crimes, leading to concerns over government integrity. Cases of state-facilitated crime, where the state does not engage directly in criminal activity but allows it to occur through inaction, have also been noted.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Portugal is a stable parliamentary democracy with a strong track record of protecting civil liberties and regularly transferring power between rival political parties. However, concerns persist with regards to corruption, legal constraints on journalism, poor prison conditions, and the impact of racial discrimination and xenophobia. The fight against corruption has suffered recent setbacks, due to limited enforcement resources being available to police and other authorities investigating economic and financial crimes. The Portuguese government has made tackling organized crime a priority, with a focus on human trafficking. The number of organized crime cases in Portugal is relatively low, and despite sporadic cases of corruption related to organized crime, the integrity of the government is not under threat. However, corruption does remain a prevalent issue, with political parties, the Parliament, the military, and the judiciary all identified as vulnerable areas. Several investigations targeting former members of government, mainly on charges of fraud and corruption, are ongoing. Despite recent reforms, Portugal has not addressed longstanding concerns over its legal framework, and sanctions for foreign bribery do not appear effective, proportionate, or dissuasive.

Portugal has ratified all relevant international legal instruments related to organized crime and has been compliant with most measures established by these treaties. The legislative and institutional measures adopted by the Portuguese government to combat organized crime have been praised, but corruption is a significant breach when it

comes to the implementation of international instruments. Portugal continues to cooperate with numerous partners at bilateral, European, and international levels to combat crime, including participating in several operations against the illegal trafficking of various goods such as drugs, cultural goods, and tobacco. However, the country still lags behind its European partners when it comes to appointing officers in key agencies, such as Europol and INTERPOL, and leading EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) operational actions.

The national legal framework is in line with international treaties on organized crime, with the Portuguese Criminal Code providing the legal provisions to criminalize various activities, including human trafficking, drug trafficking, and arms trafficking. However, there are legal loopholes that affect the efficiency of existing policies, such as a plurality of entities responsible for combating organized crime and overlapping legal texts. Additionally, human smuggling is only considered a crime if there is profit associated with it, which does not comply with international standards. Moreover, a lack of proper implementation regarding the legal framework on security and cyberspace hinders the effectiveness of these anti-crime measures.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Portugal's justice system has maintained a stable clearance rate and has been able to manage backlogs. However, concerns remain over delays in high-profile corruption

cases, which could lead to impunity. There are also worries regarding the efficiency of the department responsible for prosecuting violent and organized crime. High-security prisons in Portugal have been linked to organized criminal activities in recent years.

Although law enforcement agencies have achieved some success in apprehending individuals involved in organized crime, reports of corruption involving agents of the police body and the border service have emerged. It is also believed that the number of agencies with overlapping functions in investigating organized crime is a key factor contributing to decreased effectiveness in the fight against criminality in the country. To combat the rising threat of cybercrime, Portugal has established an agency that acts as an operational coordinator and national authority on cyber-security matters for state entities, national critical infrastructure, operators of essential services, and digital service providers. However, the number of recent cyber-attacks is beyond its capacity to respond.

Owing to its extensive coastline and status as a Schengen zone country, Portugal is vulnerable to organized crime, especially drug trafficking, which occurs mainly at its southern borders. The country's so-called 'Golden Visa' scheme has also been identified as a potential threat to its territorial integrity, since it does not require permanent residency.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Portugal has legislation in place that criminalizes money laundering, and several entities are responsible for investigating regulatory infractions related to the crime. While the country has received praise for its efforts to tackle money laundering, there have been cases involving high-ranking state officials. Although Portugal is at low risk of money laundering, its performance in preventing the crime has not reported any major improvements. Money laundering service providers and networks continue to pose a challenge as they use ever more sophisticated and innovative schemes.

Portugal's economic regulatory environment contains provisions to prevent criminal activity in business, but they are not always respected. Labour exploitation is the most common transgression in Portugal, and some sectors of the economy, such as private security and agriculture, appear to be under the influence of organized crime groups. Portugal has been considered a tax haven for cryptocurrencies, as profits from digital assets were not subject to taxation until recently. The state budget now allows for the taxation of capital gains generated by crypto assets held for less than 365 days. Additionally, the government is studying a reform to cover other aspects of tax legislation, anti-money laundering legislation, and the regulation and supervision of crypto markets.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victims of drug trafficking in Portugal mainly receive assistance from state-operated integrated response centres, while victims of human trafficking are primarily supported by non-state actors such as NGOs. Although Portugal operates shelters for victims of human trafficking, the number of victims assisted remains low due to limited capacity, particularly for male victims. Specialized multidisciplinary teams coordinate assistance for the victims, including accommodation, psychological and legal assistance, education and training, and repatriation assistance. However, the government has decreased protection efforts for victims of human trafficking.

Portugal has introduced a document of national guidelines aimed at raising awareness of, preventing, and combatting child trafficking. Several initiatives to support and protect victims of trafficking are organized annually by regional networks, and Portuguese officials receive training on this issue. Portugal conducts an annual national campaign to raise awareness about the risk of human trafficking. No preventive strategies have been adopted for flora and fauna crimes, except for inspections by competent authorities.

Members of the media in Portugal generally enjoy freedom of the press without fear of retribution, although they often face poor job security, threats and aggression from the public, and are poorly paid. The COVID-19 pandemic caused some media outlets to shut down, and budget cuts were implemented by several media groups. The government put in place media-specific support measures to mitigate these difficulties, but a discussion is ongoing around how to develop a fairer and more sustained policy to support quality journalism. Portugal presents a medium risk concerning concentration of media ownership, but performs better with regards to the transparency of media ownership and the political independence of the media. Non-state actors in Portugal involved in the fight against organized crime focus on developing preventive initiatives and providing support and assistance to people affected by crime activity, such as human trafficking victims and those addicted to drugs.

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