

# Portugal



Women in decision-making: **0.71/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.71/5**

Violence against women: **3.25/5**

## Highlights

**29%**

women in parliament

**17%**

women senior ministers

**6%**

women on boards and no women presidents of the largest companies

**12.8%**

gender pay gap

**23.5%**

of women over 65 are at risk of poverty

**21**

weeks parental leave at 100% pay

Abortion is available on demand free of charge up to 10 weeks of pregnancy since 2007

## TRENDS:



The last 3 Portuguese governments have prioritised tackling domestic violence with legislative measures and awareness campaigns, including within law enforcement agencies. The number of prosecutions of (male) perpetrators increased from 71 in 2000 to 1,377 in 2011.<sup>1</sup>



Portugal's progress in terms of gender equality slowed drastically in 2011. The number of women ministers decreased from 31% in 2011 to 18% in 2012. Unemployment benefits have been cut by 20% and the female unemployment rate is set to rise sharply as family budget reductions hit demand for services, where the majority of employees are women. Access to social benefits is being restricted and cuts and restructuring of care services is impacting upon women's care burden as well as their rights. Maternity hospitals are being closed; benefits for carers of children with disabilities have been cut by 30%.

The general hardships are also leading to rising levels of violence against women, with an increase of 21% from 2011 to 2012 in the number of women murdered in cases of domestic violence.

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are weakened by the addition of further grounds for discrimination to their competence. Mechanism for the distribution of funding are being similarly broadened while the administrative burden on civil society recipients is increasing, drastically affecting the sustainability of women's associations and the essential services they offer.

## UNDERSTANDING PORTUGAL

Portugal has since 2006 a quota system for the least-represented sex in lists for parliamentary elections. The law requires every third candidate on the list to be from the least-represented sex. However, the final distribution of seats always favours the most-represented sex (i.e. men) as, each time an elected candidate withdraws or moves to another political function, the next person on the list (2/3 male), takes the place.

58.2% of women in Portugal work full-time, as compared to 69.6% of men. Although more women work part-time than men, women's employment rate does not drop significantly (1.9%) when they have children. This points to the strength of the country's parental leave system, which encourages the sharing of leave between parents, and return to work. If both parents take at least 30 days of leave, up to 21 weeks are remunerated at 100% pay. If only the mother takes the leave, full pay is limited to 17 weeks.

According to the Portuguese Ministry of Justice, 90.6% of victims of domestic violence in Portugal are women.<sup>2</sup> In 64% of cases, the violence is continuous and hidden. The issue has been receiving increased attention, with the introduction of legislation in 2007, and attitudes have changed significantly: 88% of Portuguese now regard domestic violence as unacceptable, up from 46% in 1999. Attitudes regarding sexual violence have nevertheless developed in the opposite direction: only 72% of people now consider sexual violence to be "very serious", down from 79%. 26% of people think sexual violence only "fairly serious".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Direção-Geral de Política de Justiça, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Report from Portugal to 29th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Special Eurobarometer 344 - 2010