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Distr.  
GENERAL

CES/PAU/1998/20  
9 November 1998

English only

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United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe\*

Government  
of Hungary

United Nations  
Population Fund

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**Regional Population Meeting**

*Budapest (Hungary), 7-9 December 1998*

NATIONAL REPORT

Submitted by the Government of Portugal

Unedited version prepared by the Government of Portugal for the Regional Population Meeting (Budapest, 7-9 December 1998). The views expressed and the designations employed in the paper are those of the Government of Portugal and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Government of Hungary, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, or the United Nations Population Fund.

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\* The Regional Population Meeting is in the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians.

(1) Perception and policy related to the family, fertility and reproductive health

The available data on marriage and consensual unions in Portugal reveal that the beginning of relationships occurs later in the individuals life cycle and that consensual unions tend to increase among younger generations. While the majority of relationships remains legal, the crude marriage rate decreased from 7.3 to 6.6? between 1991 and 1997.

As for divorces, the growth is clear with their crude rate increasing from 1 to 1.4? in the same period.

While union formation and dissolution are regarded in Portugal as strictly individual matters, the Government follows their evolution carefully in particular with respect to the number of people living alone and of livebirths occurring outside the wedlock (19.5% in 97 against 15.6% in 91) due to their potential social implications and costs.

In this context, the Government recently adopted a programme aimed at persons living alone (or not) who are in a situation of dependence even if temporary.

Measures aimed at single-parent families have also been adopted.

Marriage dissolution procedures were eased so as to facilitate the possible reconstruction of family unions.

The crude birth rate dropped from 11,8 to 11,4? between 1991 and 1997, while Livebirths diminished around 2,9% in the same period. Their evolution was irregular since they decreased up to 1995 and increased slightly afterwards. However, this increase should not be seen as a reversion of the trend but rather as a circumstantial fact to be confirmed - or not - in the future.

The low fertility rate (1.46? in 97 against 1.57? in 91) is a matter of concern to the Government although it is aware of the limitations to its capacity and competence to intervene in such personal matters. The measures adopted in this domain are describes in question 5).

The Government is concerned over the difficulty of conciliating family and employment responsibilities, particularly for women. These family responsibilities have to be considered not only with regard to children, but increasingly, considering improved life span, with regard to the elders of the family. In 1997 the Government approved a Global Plan for Equal Opportunities. Objective 4 of this Plan deals with the "reconciliation of private and professional life". The aim is to encourage public discussion on the matter; to get it onto the agenda of the Permanent Commission of Social Agreement; to improve and increase child-care, handicapped-care and elderly-care services; to develop the social employment market. All of these measures are in the process of being implemented.

With regard to the sharing of parental responsibilities, while measures were adopted aiming at entitling fathers with the right to parental leave, its enjoyment by men is limited due to the predominant social, economic and family structures in which men are still expected to be the main source of income for the family and to stick to their jobs and careers.

The Government considers that the sharing of family responsibilities between women and men can only become a reality should their rights to equal professional treatment be ensured, which was the main objective of the Decree/law 105/97 adopted last year. In this domain, the National Plan for Employment also attaches the utmost importance to equality of opportunities.

## 2) Perception and Policy concerning mortality and health

The mortality rate stabilised in the 90s with the crude rate variations around 10.5%. The fluctuations observed are due to the effect of demographic ageing rather than to any changes in health conditions.

The decrease in infant mortality was sharper in recent years and life expectancy at birth increased from 70.5 for men and 77.5 for women in 1990/91 to 71.4 for men and 78.7 for women in 1996/97.

The main causes of death in Portugal are cerebrovascular diseases (22,1% of all causes), followed by cancer (19,4%) and ischaemic heart disease (8,7%). In terms of groups of pathologies, circulatory system comes first (41,7%), followed by cancer (19,4%), respiratory system (8,0%), digestive system (4,4%) and genito-urinary system (1,4%). All types of accidents, violence, etc. are responsible for 5,4% of the deaths.

As people live longer the elderly represent a group more and more important for the society, the economy and the community itself. The government is aware of and concerned with this fact.

The Health Strategy Plan for the 1998-2000 period, approved by the Ministry of Health, clearly shows the population groups of more concern to which special attention was paid. We can identify therein children under 5, adolescents, women (specially at reproductive age) and the elderly.

Special attention is paid to: the improvement of family planning and of mother and child care activities (better coverage and quality); the special needs of handicapped children and children with chronic diseases; support given to victims of any kind of violence (women and children); accidents.

In the area of health promotion and protection there are some programmes and projects being shared with the Ministry of Education addressed not only to youngsters but also to parents and teachers.

Regarding the elderly, the main goals are to improve their health status and autonomy, by promoting health, preventing diseases and disabilities, developing community capacities to give social and domestic support. Here, again, emphasis is given to the training of professionals.

Concerning diabetes there are several activities being developed to improve the situation. Healthier lives is one of the main goals of the health strategy. A great effort is being made to promote healthy behaviours and attitudes, such as maintaining physical and mental activity, learning how to manage the own stress, adopting good nutrition habits (including the fight against the abuse of alcohol).

Both the health policy and the health strategies are being oriented according to people's needs and expectations. It was decided to develop "Local Health Units" providing both primary and hospital

care oriented to meet the needs of a well defined geographical population.

The law establishing the conditions under which abortion is allowed was modified in two points now stating that it is allowed in the case of serious health problems for the mother in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, in the case of serious health problems of the foetus in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, and in the case of rape in the first 16 weeks of pregnancy .

### 3) Perception and policy related to population ageing, including change in population age structure

The figures show that as in other European countries Portugal's population is going through an ageing process due to the decline in fertility and to the rise of life expectancy.

In fact, the proportion of young people (0-14 years) is on the decrease, this group accounting for 17% of total population in 1997 against 19.4% in 1991. As for the proportion of individuals aged 65 or more it increased from 13.8% in 1991 to 15.1% in 1997.

The Government considers the increasing number of elderly people to be a direct and desired consequence of the improvement of living conditions and in particular of access to health in all different stages of life.

However, this increase brings about delicate challenges. In this context, it is the Government's perception that old people must be seen as active elements of the society rather than burdens. Several measures have been adopted to this end, especially in the fields of social solidarity, family support, social integration and social security reform.

The Programme for Integrated Support for the Elderly, which was jointly adopted by the Ministers for Health and Solidarity and Social Security in 1994 is worth mentioning in this context.

The Government intends to introduce some flexibility in the limit age for retirement, thus promoting persistence in the labour market.

As for the reform of the social security system, the Government submitted to the basic principles for structural reform to Parliament which were adopted after an extensive public debate based upon the White Paper on Social Security. The main objectives:

- \* Reinforcement of social protection as a right of Citizenship

- \* Protection of financial sustainability, so as to ensure that social protection is provided within the limits imposed by our level of social and economic development.

A draft for a new Basic Law on Solidarity and Social Security was submitted to Parliament based on two strategic axes: the efficacy of the system and its financial sustainability.

Besides the general principles of equality, universality, complementarity, participation and information, this draft law highlights three other innovating principles: positive differentiation, solidarity and predominance of public responsibility.

The main innovation brought about by the draft law is the establishment of three major branches of social welfare: social protection of citizenship, family protection and reinforcement of the replacement of professional income losses incurred in legally defined situations such as illness, motherhood, fatherhood and adoption.

#### 4) Perception and policy concerning international migration

The description of international migration trends in Portugal, in the 90s, presents some difficulties due to the insufficiency of the available data. However, a trend for stabilisation of out-migration flows with permanent status seems to be taking place as well as growing temporary out-flows, low emigrant return and persistent flows of immigrants.

As far as emigration is concerned, while the Government has a preference for its decrease, the current levels are not a cause for concern. However, the Government has no policies aiming at the return of national emigrants.

Important Portuguese communities in Europe, America, Africa and Australia lead the Portuguese Government to a permanent action, both in the bilateral and in the multilateral context, aiming at protecting the rights of the Portuguese migrants and their families in the host society. Equal treatment and adequate social integration are the two main objectives.

On the other hand, as Portugal currently hosts a growing number of immigrants, immigration related issues can not be overlooked within the context of population and development. In fact, by the end of 1997, 175.263 foreign citizens were legally resident in Portugal, of which the majority came from Cape Verde (39.789), Brazil (19.920), Angola (16.296), Guinea-Bissau (12.785), United Kingdom (12,342), Spain (9.806), USA (8.364) and Germany (8.345).

While immigration traditionally came mainly from Portuguese speaking countries it currently originates also from Eastern European and Asian countries.

The Portuguese immigration policy focuses heavily on social integration. Since equal opportunities and active participation of immigrants are only possible if they are legally resident, illegal immigration is also a cause for concern.

Over the last few years Portugal has adopted several measures aimed at protecting the rights of foreigners and encouraging the social integration of immigrants and combating social exclusion, such as:

\* Revision of domestic legislation - Portugal has amended two of its most important pieces of legislation governing the entry of foreigners, the Asylum and Refugee Act and the General Foreigners Act, in order to more accurately comply with European Union and Schengen framework regulations (Portugal is also a member of the latter);

- \* Adoption of measures to combat illegal employment with sanctions mainly targeted to employers;
- \* Adoption of measures aimed at integrating and providing support for immigrants and ethnic minorities such as equal opportunities in access to employment, housing, health care, education and information, and the establishment of a High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, of an Interdepartmental Commission for the Integration of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities and of an Advisory Council;
- \* Launching of the Second Extraordinary Legalisation of Immigrants Process - since the Government felt that an essential measure for the complete social integration of immigrants was the legalisation of illegal aliens, it embarked on the second extraordinary legalisation of illegal immigrants which took place in 1996. In this context, 35.082 applications were submitted, 31.117 of which were accepted. Approximately 28.000 residency permits have already been issued. Immigrant Associations have been associated to this process.

Other measures should be mentioned with regard to this issue:

- \* Establishment of co-operation programmes with Portuguese Speaking countries - several co-operation agreements have been concluded between Portugal and Portuguese Speaking countries in the area of home affairs, immigration in particular, including the provision of training, technical support and equipment;
- \* The creation of a Migration Observatory for the Portuguese Speaking African Countries is currently being looked into;
- \* An Agreement has been signed with the International Organisation for Migration aimed at supporting the voluntary return of foreigners who wish to do so but do not have enough money to cover the cost of their return under specific circumstances;
- \* Establishment of an agreement covering the temporary emigration of workers from Cape Verde for employment in Portugal, which establishes rules and principles that make it easier for citizens from Cape Verde to emigrate to Portugal for limited periods of time in order to carry out temporary activities.

##### 5) Perception of the Government related to population growth

The resident population in Portugal was, as of 31 December 1997, estimated in 9.957.270 individuals, which represents an increase of 92.380 when compared to the 9.864.890 individuals registered in 1991.

Between 1991 and 1997, the average annual growth amounted to 0,16%, which meant an almost stabilisation of population growth in Portugal. Projections in this area show that total population will exceed 10 million inhabitants in the year 2000, reaching 10, 134,000 in 2020.

Effective growth rates have suffered fluctuations due to variations in the natural and migratory components. The substantial reduction in natural balances as a result of low fertility rates and reversion of migratory flows since 1993 - with immigration exceeding emigration - are the main aspects to be highlighted in this period.

The natural growth rate decreased from 0,13% in 1991 to 0,08% in 1997, which was mainly due to a reduction of the fertility rate but also to mortality fluctuations occurred in that period.

In order to improve conditions for persons wishing to have children, the Government adopted

measures aimed at supporting families with children, such as the improvement of family subsidies, the development of pre-scholar nets or the improvement of the conditions of access to schooling.

As for the costs of pregnancy/birth leave, social security reforms are being undertaken aiming at, inter alia, increasing social subsidies for low income families such as maternity and paternity benefits, benefits for ill dependent minors as well as compensating wage losses by pregnant women or recent mothers working in potentially health damaging conditions, due to their maternity-linked absence.

#### 6) Perception of the Government regarding the need for policy-related collection of data and research

Portugal has been developing projects in the area of data, research and population and development policy analysis, with the aim of strengthening the statistical systems of the five Portuguese Speaking African countries, led by the National Institute for Statistics.

#### 7) Perception and policies of the Government concerning other aspects of population change

Other population issues related to the mobility of individuals have been followed carefully:

- \* Desertification of the inner regions - the persistence of migratory flows to coastal areas in general, and urban areas in particular, results not only in a deterioration of the quality of life in the areas of destiny but also in the desertification of large areas of the inner country;

- \* Return of emigrants - since Portugal has large communities in different countries, a massive return of emigrants is permanently considered;

- \* Temporary emigration - the growing facility of movement of professionals in the European Union intensified migratory flows of a limited time-span, often seasonal. This type of emigration may have social impact upon traditional emigration both in origin and in destiny regions.