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2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Portugal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Portugal during the year.

There were no credible reports of significant human rights abuses.

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who may have committed human rights abuses.

Section 1.

Respect for the Integrity of the Person

A. ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE AND OTHER UNLAWFUL OR POLITICALLY MOTIVATED KILLINGS

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings, during the year.

B. DISAPPEARANCE

There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

C. TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT, AND OTHER RELATED ABUSES

While the constitution and law prohibited torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, there were credible reports of excessive use of force by police and of mistreatment and other

forms of abuse of prisoners by prison guards. Complaints of physical abuse consisted primarily of slaps, punches, and kicks to the body and head, as well as beatings with batons. The complaints were mainly against the Public Security Police and the Republican National Guard. The Inspectorate General of Internal Administration (IGAI) investigated complaints. Punishment ranged from letters of reprimand, temporary suspension from duty, mandatory retirement with pension cuts, discharge from duty, and prison sentences for those tried and convicted.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Some prisons had inadequate facilities and limited access to health care.

Abusive Physical Conditions: There were minimal problems reported including inadequate facilities, inadequate access to health care, and prisoner-on-prisoner violence.

Administration: Authorities investigated credible allegations of mistreatment and documented the results in a publicly accessible manner.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted monitoring visits by independent human rights observers that included the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the IGAI, university researchers, and news media. Local human rights and media groups were fully independent bodies and had unrestricted access to the prisons.

D. ARBITRARY ARREST OR DETENTION

The constitution and federal law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

Individuals were normally arrested on a judicial warrant, but law enforcement officers and citizens could make an arrest without a warrant when there was probable cause a crime had been or was being committed, or when the person arrested was an escaped convict or suspect.

Authorities respected the requirement that a suspect appear before an investigating judge within 48 hours of arrest. By law, the investigating judge determined whether an arrested person should be detained, released on bail, or released outright. Investigative detention for most crimes was limited to four months. If authorities did not file a criminal charge within that period, they were required to release the detainee. In cases of serious crimes such as murder, armed robbery, terrorism, violent or organized crime, and crimes involving more than one suspect, the

investigating judge could hold a suspect in detention for up to 18 months during the investigation, and up to three years in extraordinary circumstances.

A bail system existed, but authorities generally did not release detainees on their own recognizance. Depending on the severity of the crime, a detainee's release could be subjected to various legal conditions.

Detainees had the right to legal counsel of their choice from the time of arrest. If detained persons could not afford a private lawyer, the government appointed one and assumed legal costs. Independent monitors asserted some detainees only met an ex officio lawyer at the court hearing before a judge.

E. DENIAL OF FAIR PUBLIC TRIAL

The constitution and law provided for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence and impartiality.

Trial Procedures

The constitution and law provided for the right to a fair and public trial, and the judiciary generally enforced this right.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

F. TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

Not applicable.

G. PROPERTY SEIZURE AND RESTITUTION

Not applicable.

H. ARBITRARY OR UNLAWFUL INTERFERENCE WITH PRIVACY, FAMILY, HOME, OR CORRESPONDENCE

The constitution and laws prohibited such actions and there were no reports the government failed to respect these prohibitions.

Section 2.

Respect for Civil Liberties

A. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, INCLUDING FOR MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA

The constitution and law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right. An independent media, an effective judiciary, and a

functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for media members.

Freedom of Expression: The law criminalized the denigration of ethnic or religious minorities, as well as Holocaust denial.

Libel/Slander Laws: By law, defamation, including libel and slander, constituted a criminal offense. Conviction of defamation, defined as alleging a fact or formulating a judgment (or reproducing such) regarding a third person that was offensive to that person's honor or reputation, was punishable by up to six months in prison or a fine.

On September 8, a district court in Porto convicted former European Parliament member Ana Gomes of "aggravated defamation." The legal dispute stemmed from a tweet in which Gomes referred to a Portuguese businessman as a "notorious crook and criminal," prompting legal proceedings against Gomes. The court imposed a fine of €2,800 (\$3,026) on Gomes, along with €8,000 (\$8,648) in damages to be paid to the defendant.

On October 20, a Lisbon court ordered anti-racist activist Mamadou Ba to pay a €2,400 (\$2,594) fine after finding him guilty of defamation. Ba had previously written that a far-right neo-Nazi activist was allegedly instrumental in the death of Alcindo Monteiro, a Cabo Verdean man killed in a racially motivated assault in 1995.

Internet Freedom

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content.

B. FREEDOMS OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

The constitution and law provided for the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights.

C. FREEDOM OF RELIGION

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

D. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY

The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights.

E. PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing

protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Access to Asylum: The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had an established system for providing protection to refugees. Experts raised concerns regarding what they considered to be shortcomings in the government's efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims among asylum seekers.

Durable Solutions: Under the EU's relocation plan for refugees who entered the EU through Greece and Turkey, the government received refugees. It offered naturalization to refugees residing within the country's territory and other durable solutions, such as the right to work, education, access to health care, and housing support.

Temporary Protection: The government provided temporary protection to approximately 57 individuals in 2022 who would not have qualified as refugees.

Section 3.

Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provided citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.

ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Abuses or Irregularities in Recent Elections: National elections were widely reported to be fair and free of abuses and irregularities.

Section 4.

Corruption in Government

The law provided criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were reports of government corruption.

Corruption: There were reports of corruption in the executive and legislative branches of the central government. Media outlets reported corruption involving central and local government officials.

The government opened several investigations into corruption by high-level officials related to bribes and favorable contracts. On August 17, the Public Prosecutor's Office indicted former Director-General of the Directorate-General for National Defense Resources (DGRDN) Alberto Coelho and 72 others for passive corruption, money laundering, embezzlement, and document forgery following an investigation into embezzlement at the Ministry of Defense. The indictment called for Coelho to pay the state more than €86,000 (\$92,966) for bribes and

kickbacks allegedly received for defense contracts. The Public Prosecutor's Office also indicted Paulo Morais Branco, former financial director of the DGRDN, and Francisco Marques, former Defense Ministry Director of Infrastructure and Assets, and ordered them to pay back a combined sum of nearly €700,000 (\$756,700).

On November 7, police and the public prosecutor searched various offices and residences, including those of Prime Minister Antonio Costa, Infrastructure Minister Joao Galamba, and Environment Minister Duarte Cordeiro, as part of a probe into alleged influence peddling and corruption involving lithium extraction in Montalegre and a green hydrogen project at the port of Sines. The police arrested chief of staff to the prime minister Vítor Escária, associate Diogo Lacerda Machado, Sines Mayor Nuno Mascarenhas, and two others. Additionally, Minister of Infrastructure João Galamba, head of the Portuguese Environment Agency, and a former state secretary were indicted. After meeting with the president, the prime minister announced the president had accepted his resignation. The investigation, named "Operation Influencer," began in 2019 and covered alleged misuse of funds, active and passive corruption by political figures, and influence peddling, according to a statement from the public prosecutors' office. A separate probe initiated by the Supreme Court of Justice was opened to investigate the prime minister's connection to the alleged crimes. On November 9 President Rebelo e Sousa announced he would dissolve parliament and call for new elections on March 10, 2024. Prime Minister Costa was head of the caretaker government as of year's end.

For additional information concerning corruption in the country, please see the Department of State's *Investment Climate Statement* for the country and the Department of State's *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, which includes information on financial crimes.

Section 5.

Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Monitoring and Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction to monitor or investigate human rights conditions or cases and publish their findings. Government officials were generally cooperative and responsive to the views of these groups.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The country had an independent human rights ombudsman appointed by parliament who was responsible for defending the human rights, freedom, and legal rights of all citizens. The Ombudsman's Office operated independently with the cooperation of the government.

The ombudsman had adequate resources and published mandatory annual reports, as well as special reports on problems such as women's rights, prisons, health, and the rights of children and senior citizens.

Parliament's First Committee for Constitutional Issues, Rights, Liberties, and Privileges oversaw human rights problems. It could draft and submit bills and petitions to parliament for approval.

Section 6.

Discrimination and Societal Abuses

WOMEN

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law made rape of a person, regardless of gender, including spousal and domestic or intimate partner rape, illegal, with a penalty of three to 10 years' imprisonment if convicted. Other forms of domestic and sexual violence, including so-called corrective rape of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) persons, was illegal. The government generally enforced the law when the survivor chose to press charges. The law provided for criminal penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment for conviction of domestic violence by a spouse or by a person other than the spouse. The judicial system prosecuted persons accused of committing gender-based violence (GBV), including violence towards women.

GBV, including domestic violence, was a problem. The law allowed third parties to file domestic violence reports. The government encouraged survivors of violence to file complaints with appropriate authorities and offered survivors protection against their abusers. The government's Commission for Equality and Women's Rights operated 39 safe houses and 28 emergency shelters for survivors of domestic violence and maintained an around-the-clock telephone service. Safe-house services included food, shelter, health assistance, and legal assistance. The government-sponsored Mission against Domestic Violence trained health professionals and negotiated protocols with local authorities to assist survivors.

The government completed a two-year training program for public administration workers on domestic violence to improve coordination among officials in different areas, such as health, law enforcement, and justice.

On August 14, the state secretary for equality and migrations and the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) launched an awareness campaign against domestic violence under the motto, "There are no excuses for domestic violence."

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): By law FGM/C was a criminal offense punishable by two to 10 years' imprisonment. FGM/C was deemed

a public crime, whereby anyone could report suspected cases regardless of the victim's consent.

The State Secretariat for Citizenship and Equality reported some communities practiced FGM/C on young girls, particularly Bissau-Guinean immigrants.

On August 14, the government implemented the 2023-2026 Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and provided a 33 percent increase in funds to prevent and combat FGM, as well as child, early, and forced marriages.

The CIG, together with the Lisbon airport, carried out an awareness campaign in airports called "There is no turning back," in which billboards in several languages warned about FGM practices young girls could face when returning to their home countries during holiday months.

The National School of Public Health, Nova University of Lisbon, held a postgraduate course on FGM. The initiative was part of the Healthy Practices: End Female Genital Mutilation project, launched in 2018 and coordinated among the High Commission for Migration, the CIG, and the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Administration of Health.

Discrimination: The constitution and law provided the same legal status and rights for women as for men, including under family, religious, personal status, and nationality laws, as well as laws related to labor, property, inheritance, employment, access to credit, and owning or managing businesses or property. The government enforced the law effectively.

Reproductive Rights: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence; postexposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception were available as part of clinical management of rape.

SYSTEMIC RACIAL OR ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

The constitution and laws provided for the protection of members of racial and ethnic minority groups. These included legal protection against discriminatory acts and practices. This protection covered discrimination on the grounds of ancestry, sex, race, age, disability, language, territory of origin, religion, and political or ideological convictions. By law, hate crimes included assault and murder motivated by racial or religious hatred, genocide, racial and religious discrimination and related intolerance, insults on grounds of religion and desecration of cemeteries.

The Romani ethnic minority experienced local governmental and societal discrimination. Many Roma lived in encampments consisting of barracks, shacks, and tents. Many settlements were in areas isolated from the rest of the population and often lacked basic infrastructure, such as access to drinking water, electricity, or waste disposal facilities. Some localities constructed walls around Romani settlements. Media reported alleged police harassment, misconduct, and abuses against Roma.

In some localities the government provided integration and access to services for the Roma, including vaccination campaigns, monitoring of prenatal care, scholarship programs, assistance in finding employment, and a mediation program staffed by ethnic Romani mediators in the Office of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue.

The Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination was mandated to prevent and prohibit racial discrimination and to penalize actions that resulted in the violation of fundamental rights by any person based on race, ethnic origin, color, nationality, ancestry, or territory of origin. Most complaints alleged discrimination occurred on social media or in the service and health sectors.

CHILDREN

Child Abuse: The constitution provided for basic rights of the child, and laws protected children against, among other things, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical and emotional neglect; the government generally enforced the law. Traffickers exploited children from Eastern Europe, including Romani children, for forced begging and forced criminal activity in the country. A child abuse database was accessible to law enforcement and child protection services. The government conducted awareness campaigns against child abuse and sexual exploitation. The government prohibited convicted child abusers from work or volunteer activities involving contact with children.

Group Vita, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) established by the Portuguese Episcopal Conference to address sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, recorded a rise in requests for help after the Pope's visit to the country in August and his comments regarding the need to recognize victims of sexual abuse.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: The minimum age for marriage was 18 for women and men, but both sexes could marry at 16 with the consent of both parents, a guardian, or a court decision. Authorities effectively enforced the law.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Statutory rape was a crime with penalties ranging up to 10 years in prison. The minimum age for legal consensual

sex was 16. The law prohibited child pornography, and authorities enforced the law.

The law prohibited the sale, grooming, or use of children for commercial sexual exploitation, including child sex trafficking. Experts expressed concerns regarding gaps in the government's efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims.

ANTISEMITISM

Estimates placed the Jewish population at 3,000 to 4,000 persons.

During the year, leaders of the Porto Jewish community alleged they were victims of a campaign of antisemitism and intimidation by government authorities due to an ongoing investigation on suspicion of fraudulent activity involving the 2015 law allowing Portuguese citizenship to descendants of Sephardic Jews. On March 11, 2022, the Judicial Police executed search warrants at a Porto synagogue and arrested a prominent rabbi for alleged irregularities in the certification of Sephardic ancestry for citizenship applicants. The government stated the arrest was part of a fraud investigation.

Following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, a synagogue in Porto was defaced with pro-Palestinian graffiti on October 11.

For further information on incidents in the country of antisemitism, whether or not those incidents were motivated by religion, and for reporting on the ability of Jews to exercise freedom of religion or belief, please see the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report>.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE, CRIMINALIZATION, AND OTHER ABUSES BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION, OR SEX CHARACTERISTICS

Criminalization: No laws criminalized consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults, cross-dressing, or other sexual or gender characteristic-related behaviors. Seemingly neutral laws were not disproportionately applied to LGBTQI+ persons to justify arbitrary arrest.

Violence and Harassment: The national chapter of the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) registered 118 complaints of harassment from LGBTQI+ persons in 2022, a decrease of 49 percent compared to the same period in 2021.

The police investigated, prosecuted, and punished those complicit in violence and abuses by state or nonstate actors against LGBTQI+ persons.

Discrimination: The constitution and the law prohibited discrimination by state and nonstate actors based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, including with respect to essential goods and services such as housing, employment, and access to government services such as health care. The law explicitly recognized LGBTQI+ couples and their families and granted them rights equal to the rights of other persons. The government generally enforced such laws effectively.

The ILGA reported a significant number of online hate speech cases and an increase in social discrimination in public places. On September 22 seven persons interrupted the presentation of a children's book about equality and inclusion with sexist and homophobic threats at a Lisbon bookstore. Parliamentary speaker Augusto Santos Silva called the incident "absolutely unacceptable."

Availability of Legal Gender Recognition: Adults could update their gender markers on identity documents through a simple administrative process with no other requirements such as medical interventions or psychological diagnoses. A law on the right of self-determination allowed children ages 16 and 17 to do the same with parental consent and a psychological opinion.

Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices: On April 21, parliament passed several bills to criminalize so-called conversion therapy practices, including talk therapy and the use of drugs or hormones, but they had not entered into force by year's end.

The government banned nonconsensual surgeries on intersex adults and children.

Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly: There were no laws or other restrictions on individuals speaking or media reporting on LGBTQI+ matters, on the ability of LGBTQI+ individuals to assemble in public or private or to form associations, or on the ability of LGBTQI+ organizations to legally register or convene events.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The constitution and law prohibited discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced the law effectively. The law mandated access to public and private buildings, information, and communication for persons with disabilities. Government information and communication on disability concerns were provided in accessible formats. By law persons with disabilities had the right to access education, health services, public

buildings, and transportation on an equal basis with others; however, access was not always available.

The Portuguese Association for the Disabled (APD) reported receiving complaints regarding lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities, such as buildings without ramps, excessively narrow and uneven sidewalks, transportation without elevator access, and public buses lacking wheelchair lifts. Urban public transport buses were equipped with lift platforms for seats, but these were not always operational. During election periods, the APD received complaints concerning polling stations that were inaccessible to persons with disabilities. In January the association Center for Independent Life reported the government missed a deadline to enforce a law allowing persons with 80 percent or more disability to take early retirement without losing benefits.

Children with disabilities attended school through secondary education at the same rate as other children, together with their peers without disabilities.

Section 7.

Worker Rights

A. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The law provided for the right of most workers to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The government generally respected these rights. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination and required reinstatement of workers fired for union activity.

While the law provided for freedom of association and collective bargaining, several restrictions limited these rights. The rights of police officers and members of the armed forces were limited. The Judiciary Police, Foreigners and Borders Service, and prison guards could strike, but the Public Security Police and Republican National Guard could not. If a long strike occurred in a sector deemed essential, such as justice, health, energy, or transportation, the government could order strikers back to work for a specified period. Unions considered the list of essential sectors to be overly broad. Unions reported the effectiveness of strikes was limited by compulsory conciliation and arbitration as prerequisites to strikes, restrictions on the scope of strikes, and restrictions on the types of strike actions permitted.

The law required unions to represent at least 50 percent of workers in a sector for collective bargaining units to be extended beyond the enterprise level. Public sector employee unions had the right to discuss and consult with their employers on conditions of work, but they did not

have the right to negotiate binding contracts. There was a lack of clarity regarding criteria for union representation in the Permanent Commission for Social Partnerships, a tripartite advisory body. The law named specific unions, rather than giving participation rights to the most representative unions.

The government effectively enforced these laws. Resources, including inspections and remediation, were adequate. Penalties for violations ranged from fines to imprisonment and were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were regularly applied against violators. Administrative and judicial procedures were subjected to lengthy delays or appeals.

Authorities generally respected freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Worker organizations generally operated free from government interference. Requirements for enterprise-level bargaining by work councils sometimes prevented local union representatives from bargaining directly on behalf of workers. There were instances of employers undermining strikes using last-minute minimum-service requirements. According to labor union representatives, some workers received threats that union participation would result in negative performance reviews.

B. PROHIBITION OF FORCED OR COMPULSORY LABOR

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

C. PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOR AND MINIMUM AGE FOR EMPLOYMENT

The law prohibited all the worst forms of child labor. The statutory minimum age for employment was 16. The law prohibited the employment of persons younger than 18 at night, for overtime work, or in sectors considered hazardous. The Working Conditions Authority (ACT) in the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment, and Social Security had primary responsibility for enforcement of the minimum age law and enforced it effectively in major industries and the service sector. The government effectively enforced applicable laws, and penalties were commensurate with those for other serious crimes. Penalties were sometimes applied against violators. Resources and inspections were adequate.

Child labor occurred in limited cases. Labor traffickers exploited children of Romani descent through forced begging and forced criminality. Sub-Saharan trafficking networks sometimes used the country as a route into the Schengen area to exploit children in sex trafficking and forced labor. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>

D. DISCRIMINATION (SEE SECTION 6)

E. ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS OF WORK

Wage and Hour Laws: The minimum wage covered full-time workers, rural workers, and domestic employees who were at least 18 years of age, and it was above the poverty income level. The labor code established a maximum of eight hours of daily work and 40 hours of weekly work. Violations of wage, hour, and overtime laws were most common in the farming and fishing sectors. Some workers faced labor market segmentation as employers applied alternative forms of employment such as temporary agency work and independent contractors. These types of employment – including in the agriculture and services sectors – left workers in insecure positions, without access to a reliable ongoing income, and impacted those most vulnerable in society, particularly immigrants.

Occupational Safety and Health: Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards were set by ACT and were appropriate for the main industries in the country. ACT inspectors proactively identified unsafe conditions and responded to workers' OSH complaints. Workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, and authorities effectively protected employees in this situation. There were reports of alleged violations of OSH standards in sectors such as agriculture and services.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement: ACT was responsible for enforcement of wage, hour, and OSH standards in the formal sector. The government effectively enforced the laws, and penalties for violations of laws were commensurate with those for crimes such as fraud or negligence and were sufficient to deter violations and enforce compliance. Penalties were sometimes applied against violators for wage, hour, and OSH violations. Resources, inspections, number of inspectors, and remediation were adequate, according to ACT. In 2020 (the last available full data) there were 417 inspectors for a working population of more than five million. Inspectors had authority to conduct unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions, and they did not face moratoriums on inspections during the year.

Workers had the right to file confidential grievances with ACT regarding hazardous conditions or circumstances they believed endangered their health. Inspectors had the right to conduct inspections at any private or public company at any time without warning, and they could shut down a workplace or a business permanently or temporarily if there was imminent danger to workers' health or safety. Workers were registered with social security services, whose funds covered their mandatory insurance for occupational diseases and work-related accidents. ACT conducted studies on labor accidents, salaries, and working conditions. It could impose administrative penalties and file lawsuits against employers. It had the right to access company records, files, and archives, and it could

provide mediation services to resolve individual or group labor disputes. Labor enforcement tended to be less rigorous in sectors such as construction and agriculture, where there were many small or family businesses and where most immigrant workers were employed, according to NGOs.

Workers in the informal sector and part-time workers were covered by labor laws, although there were reports illegalities were challenging to detect and control, making it difficult for the government to adequately enforce labor laws. According to a study by the School of Economics and Management of the University of Porto, the informal economy represented 34.37 percent of GDP in 2022, corresponding to more than €82 million (\$88.6 million).

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