

EU presidency: Portugal focuses on Europe's recovery and chairs activities in the field of drugs

This month, [Portugal](#) took over the rotating [presidency of the Council of the EU](#) with the motto 'Time to deliver: a fair, green and digital recovery'. Over the next six months, Portugal will lead work at all levels of the Council, building co-operation, agreement and solidarity between EU Member States.

The presidency will focus on three key [priorities](#):

- promoting a European recovery, boosted by the green and digital transitions;
- implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- strengthening the strategic autonomy of a Europe open to the world.

A central theme of the presidency will be strengthening the European social model. The aim will be to ensure that the climate and digital transitions are achieved in an inclusive way, whilst addressing the social dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May, an EU Social Summit will be hosted in Porto focusing on employment, qualifications and social protection. The event will be divided into: a High-Level Conference (7 May) – involving EU institutions, Member States, social partners and civil society – and an Informal Meeting of European Leaders (8 May). The presidency will also support the creation of a European Health Union, which strengthens the capacity to respond to public health crises and to produce and distribute safe vaccines, in Europe and beyond. It will also help ensure that the process of vaccination against COVID-19 takes place simultaneously in all Member States.

In the area of external action, attention will be paid to relations with EU neighbouring countries, to EU relations with Africa and Latin America and to transatlantic relations, including a revised agenda with the new US administration. An Informal Meeting of European Leaders with the Prime Minister of India will also take place to give momentum to stronger political and economic dialogue.

Portuguese presidency and drugs

In the field of drugs, Portugal now chairs the Council's Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG), with six meetings scheduled with the EU Member States and additional dialogues on drugs with relevant international partners (including Brazil, [China](#) and the United States). The HDG will be presided over by Dr João Goulão, Portugal's national drug coordinator and Director-General of the General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies ([SICAD](#)).

The HDG is responsible for leading and managing the Council's work in the drugs domain and carries out legislative and general policy work in the areas of supply reduction and demand reduction. Its main goals are to: develop EU strategies, action plans and other relevant documents in the drugs field; exchange information between Member States and with third countries on national policies; and coordinate measures taken by EU Member States in Europe and beyond.

Continuing the work of the outgoing German Presidency, and based on the new EU drugs strategy for 2021–25, Portugal will have as one of its main objectives the preparation of the next action plan on drugs, based on information that is scientific, evidence-based and measurable. Portugal will also lead the EU and its Member States at the 64th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 12–16 April 2021).

The current Portuguese presidency, running from 1 January to 30 June 2021, is the fourth held by Portugal, following those of 1992, 2000 and 2007.