

Policy recommendations brief

MobilEurope Policy recommendations for Portugal

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In our research for the MobilEurope project we have found some main outcomes on the labour market changes related with the migrant work during Covid19 pandemic, and the role of social dialogue to mitigate the challenges to the labour markets raised by migrant work. According to these outcomes it is possible to establish some policy recommendations. They should address governance institutions, and social partners and NGO as well. These recommendations are focused on the Portuguese context.

1. In Portugal, immigration has never stood out among the country's main concerns. However, in recent years immigration has become a topic of political debate, particularly between extreme right movements.
 - a. **more information and statistical data should systematically be provided from official sources.**
 - b. **digested data on migration and impact on social security system can be disseminated in large media platforms.**
2. The countries that tend to associate themselves with the most favorable views of immigration (case of Portugal), are also those that value the development of integration policies for immigrants.
 - a. **increased dissemination of data on impact of integration policies should be provided by central administration institutions, by local administration.**
 - b. **NGO can also play an important role in this data dissemination.**
 - c. **support to increase the debate among unions and employers' associations about the integration policies for immigrants.**
3. As Portugal is in a situation of marked demographic aging, most movements recognize that not all immigration profiles can alleviate the country's demographic situation. For example, retired foreigners



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tend to reinforce the relative importance of elderly residents and, unlike the immigrant population of working age and childbearing age that the country has traditionally received in recent decades, they do not attenuate the country's demographic aging, but rather highlight it.

- a. **Rules for taxing the retired population in migration situations should be applied to all EU citizens. There were particular measures applied to attract wealthy retired people from Scandinavia, France, UK and USA, but taxing rules are still not clear.**
 - b. **local administration can provide increased integrative policies directed to this type of migrants.**
4. In general, immigrants tend to have greater difficulties in obtaining good educational results, when compared to nationals of the host countries. Portugal is no exception in this area. However, in recent years there has been a positive evolution in the academic performance of foreigners enrolled, reducing the distance between foreign and national students.
 - a. **This effort of education enrollment should be reinforced to contribute to having a less unequal society.**
 - b. **The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour can, jointly, provide and control a system of positive integration through language learning vouchers and network of training centers.**
 - c. **More active role of social partners on the management of vocational training for migrant workers.**
 5. Most foreign workers are associated with economic activities of accommodation, catering and similar and administrative economic activities and support services. However, our research shows that agriculture and manufacturing increasingly rely on foreign workers.
 - a. **National institutions should plan the size of contingents of specialized foreign workers in agriculture and manufacturing and provide residence authorizations accordingly. This planning must be permanently updated by the government and assessed by social partners.**
 - b. **Debate among social partners about medium- and long-term scenarios of labour market changes.**
 - c. **Anticipatory studies on the labour market are necessary to monitor evolution and detect trends related to specific sectors.**
 6. Foreign workers have a higher percentage of workers who do not use their qualifications in the functions they perform in the labour market. This is detrimental to the economy, productivity and social welfare.
 - a. **National vocational training institutions (especially, IEFP) should provide qualification assessment mechanisms.**
 - b. **Sector training institutions should provide courses in English to migrant workers**
 7. Foreign workers also tend to show a higher average monthly duration of normal working hours than Portuguese workers.
 - a. **control on working conditions settings must be provided by the national authority (ACT)**
 - b. **Support to active monitoring of working conditions by social partners (unions and employers associations) at sector level.**



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8. There is an increase in the risk of poverty or social exclusion in both foreigners residing in Portugal and nationals.
 - a. **national labour market institutions should provide information on labour market changes in terms of variation of income and labour relations, in particular, considering the group of migrant workers.**
 - b. **support to national NGO to monitor risk of poverty or social exclusion of migrant workers in Portugal.**
 - c. **Increase the debate among social partners on the risk of poverty or social exclusion of migrant workers.**

9. Foreign population continues to play an important role in counterbalancing the accounts of the Social Security system, contributing to a relative relief of the system and its sustainability. In view of the great pressure on the Social Security system in the face of demographic aging, the contributions of immigration and resident foreigners to the social security accounts are particularly important.
 - a. **systematic information and monitoring on the demographic changes and development of Social Security system**
 - b. **support to further scientific studies to anticipate long range trends.**
 - c. **dissemination of studies among social partners associations on the effects of demographic changes on Social Security**

10. In Portugal, the rate of foreigners residing in overcrowded accommodation in 2020 was 19.2% (-5 p.p. compared to the previous year) and 20.3% in 2021 (+1 p.p. compared to the previous year). Portugal appears in the thirteenth position in the set of countries that register the largest distances between nationals and foreigners about overcrowding of accommodations.
 - a. **further support to social housing and extension to migrant workers**
 - b. **monitoring system on the accomplishment of social housing park proportion in the municipalities**
 - c. **involvement of social partners on the monitoring system referred in b)**

11. Globally, immigrants tend to seek health services less than non-immigrant Portuguese, to consult a doctor less in recent months and to spend more time since the last specialty medical consultation they had. However, indicators around the use of health care do not always reflect, in a direct way, the real and effective needs of health care (both may reflect better health status of immigrants who provide health care; or may also reflect difficulties or barriers in access to health care that make them underrepresented in the universe of users of health services).
 - a. **Information support on the accessibility to the National Health System (NHS) by foreigners working in Portugal.**
 - b. **Support to NGO to replicate the information on the NHS the accessibility to migrant workers.**
 - c. **Inclusion of social partners as means to inform their associates about the accessibility of migrant workers to the NHS.**

12. In 2021, the proportion of preventive prisoners among foreigners was 30.3%, while in the case of Portuguese prisoners the proportion of preventive prisoners drops to 16.6% (that is, foreign prisoners have about twice the prevalence).



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- a. **Police department should have legal experts among their staff, as well social service experts.**
 - b. **Provide NGO with close activities among migrant population with legal expertise.**
 - c. **Support the legal expertise at social partners on the topic of security and civil rights.**
13. The Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR) found in 2020 and 2021, respectively, 655 (+50.3% compared to the previous year) and 408 (-37.7% compared to the previous year) complaints of racial and ethnic discrimination. The evolution of complaints of racial and ethnic discrimination in Portugal in recent years reflects the revision in 2017 of the legal regime for the prevention, prohibition and combating of discrimination, on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, colour, nationality, ancestry and territory of origin, and shows a greater awareness of the problem of racial and ethnic discrimination and a greater recognition of the mechanisms and entities associated with combating this type of discrimination.
- a. **Further support to NGO intervening in the field of racial and ethnic discrimination**
 - b. **Support to NGO and social partners networking on discrimination.**
 - c. **Increase support to municipal services on discrimination and civil/social integration.**
14. The overall decrease in foreign voters is essentially associated with the decrease in the number of non-EU nationalities with voting rights registered.
- a. **Support scientific studies on the role of voting among EU migrants for the European Parliament**
 - b. **Revision of voting rights in EU Member States**
15. Portugal has received international recognition for having quickly become part of the group of countries with the best legal framework for access to nationality and for finding more nationality concessions per total number of foreign residents (in 2nd place among OECD countries in 2020, after Sweden).
- a. **Need for increase of information on the rights to access nationality.**
 - b. **Dissemination of information on the good practices of nationality concessions to migrant workers**
 - c. **Incentivize social partners negotiations to include topics on migrant workers on their agreements.**

