HMDC Presents...

Country Profile: Portugal

Committee: WHO: Social Effects of Addiction

AT A GLANCE

Capital	Lisbon (World Bank, Last Accessed: November 2026)
Population	About 10.8 million people in 2025 (World Bank, Last Accessed: November 2026)
Region	Europe and Central Asia (World Bank)
Main drug law	Law 30/2000, in force since July 2001

WHY PORTUGAL MATTERS IN WHO

Portugal is famous for treating personal drug use as a health problem instead of a crime. That makes it a strong voice when our committee talks about how addiction hurts families and how countries should respond.

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

- Since July 2001, Portugal's Law 30/2000 has decriminalised using, getting and carrying drugs for personal use, so these acts are no longer crimes. (European Union Drugs Agency, June 6, 2019)
- A person caught with a small amount of drugs is sent to a local dissuasion commission. Its three members, two health or social experts and a legal expert, mainly explore the need for treatment. (European Union Drugs Agency, June 6, 2019)
- In 2022, 3.5 percent of people aged 15 to 74 in Portugal reported alcohol abuse or dependence. (OECD and World Health Organization, September 2025)
- Portugal signed the WHO tobacco treaty on January 9, 2004 and approved it on November 8, 2005. (United Nations Treaty Collection, Last Accessed: October 2026)

OUR POSITION IN ONE SENTENCE

Since July 2001, Portugal has sent people caught with small amounts of drugs to local commissions that explore the need for treatment.

THREE IDEAS OUR DELEGATE CAN PROPOSE

1. Sharing the health-first model: countries that want to can study Portugal's dissuasion commissions and choose treatment before punishment.

2. Helping families: more money for family support and treatment services, because addiction hurts children and parents, not only the user.

3. Keeping tobacco promises: every country fully follows the WHO tobacco treaty it has joined.

CAREFUL NOTE

Portugal did not make drugs legal. Using them is still a lighter offence, and selling them can lead to prison.

QUESTIONS WE STILL ANSWER OURSELVES

1. Does our country treat drug use as a crime or as a health problem, and what is the name and year of its main drug law?

2. How do alcohol, tobacco and drugs hurt families and children in our country, with one or two numbers and their years?

3. Has our country joined the three UN drug treaties and the WHO tobacco treaty?

WHERE WE LOOK

European drug laws: https://www.euda.europa.eu/topics/law/penalties-at-a-glance

WHO country data: https://data.who.int/countries

UN treaty status: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx?clang=_en

Every fact above names its source and date. We do our own research and write our own position paper, as the conference rules require. This profile is a starting point, not a script.