

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Lisbon, Portugal



Population: 507,220 (2018)

GDP per capita: \$28,146 (2018)

Major industries: services (public sector, financial/business services, retail)

Percentage of migrants: 10.1% (2016)

Mayor's name: Fernando M. M. A. Correia | **Next election date:** 2021

Socioeconomic profile

Lisbon, the capital and largest city in Portugal, lies on the country's Atlantic coast. It has 507,220 residents (Statistics Portugal, 2019a). The wider Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA) has a population of 2,846,332 and consists of 18 municipalities, including the municipality of Lisbon (Statistics Portugal, 2019b). Many residents of the larger metropolitan area commute into the city of Lisbon during the day for work. Due to Portugal's low birth rate, the country has long experienced negative population growth rates, with 2019 bringing the first annual increase in the population in the past 10 years (Portugal News, 2020). However, in Lisbon and its wider metropolitan area, the population growth rate, although low, is positive (0.2% and 0.45%, respectively) (Statistics Portugal 2019a; 2019b). Among EU states, Portugal has one of the lowest percentages of young people in its population. The profile of its urban areas reflects this, with the number of residents aged 65 and over growing much faster than the number of children under 15 across the LMA.¹ Within the city itself residents aged 65 and over make up 28% of the population (Statistics Portugal, 2019a).

The LMA has the highest concentration of population and economic activity in Portugal. Its GDP per capita is \$28,146.² The city is host to the country's most important port and functions as the commercial, financial and political centre. Services account for 83.8% of employment in the metropolitan area (EURES Job Mobility Portal, 2020). Public sector employment is particularly important given that the central departments of most state bodies are located in Lisbon. Also important are the financial sector, business services, companies managing national infrastructure (energy, telecommunications, transport), retail and

tourism. Lisbon's unemployment rate was 7.6% in 2018, a significant improvement on 2013, when it was 18.7% (OECD Stats, 2018a). Unemployment remains a major challenge for the city's youth, with 37.7% of young people out of work (EURES Job Mobility Portal, 2020). The LMA has the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rate in the country (13.3% in 2018), below the national average (17.2%) (Statistics Portugal, 2019c). Some of the key challenges facing the city are its ageing population, unemployment and the physical degradation and abandonment of buildings in the city (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2009). Although the city has avoided the speculation and commodification of housing experienced by many of the world's urban centres, there is still an inadequate supply of decent housing. According to survey data, 88% of residents are satisfied with life in the city (European Commission, 2016).

Migration profile

In the 1970s, the population of Lisbon grew rapidly as a result of an influx of migrants from the country's rural areas, alongside the return of citizens and immigration from Portugal's African colonies (Britannica, n.d.). Migration flows increased again from the mid-1990s, when Portugal became a country of destination for immigrants, particularly from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (ICMPD, 2011). Given Portugal's overall trend of population decline, and increases in emigration between 2011 and 2016 following the global financial crisis (Stone, 2020), migration is a critical contributor to renewed population growth. It is primarily the influx of migrants in the LMA that is driving population growth. Around 91% of population growth in the LMA is due to the growth in the migrant population.³

¹ See Statistics Portugal (2019b) for data for age groups from 2013 to 2018.

² This figure is provided in nominal US\$ and is not comparable with other cities profiled. See OECD Stats (2018). Information is extracted in US\$, constant prices, constant PPP, converted into local currency using OECD PPP-local currency conversion rate, and then converted into nominal US\$ using OECD's local currency to USD conversion rate.

³ Of the 0.45% growth rate registered in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area in 2018, 0.41% is due to the growth in the migrant population. See Statistics Portugal (2019b).

In 2016, 10.1% of residents in the municipality of Lisbon were foreign-born (Council of Europe, 2018), with higher rates in the LMA, where migrant populations are concentrated (ICMPD, 2011). The largest migrant group in Lisbon is from Brazil (Council of Europe, 2018). The recent increase in immigration has helped fill labour market gaps, including in sectors such as tourism and services (Caritas Portuguesa, 2019). Due to its peripheral position on migration routes, Portugal has traditionally been the EU country with the lowest number of asylum applications. This changed in 2015 when Portugal offered to accept much larger numbers than the quota set by the European Commission in response to the 2015/16 surge of asylum-seekers in Europe (ibid.). While the number of asylum-seekers residing in Portugal has greatly increased in recent years, there is no clear data on how many are living in Lisbon. It is estimated that around 35% of asylum-seekers who have entered under EU schemes are settled in the LMA, a small number in the context of the foreign-born population in the city (OECD, 2019). Most asylum-seekers entering through EU schemes have come from Syria, Eritrea and Ukraine.

The High Commission for Migration (ACM) is responsible for the reception and integration of immigrants in the country. The ACM runs National Migrant Support Centres in Lisbon, Porto and Faro, which act as ‘one-stop shops’ offering support in relation to health, education and immigration needs, as well as labour market integration. Lisbon

Municipal Council works with the ACM to support immigration integration, and has its own Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants in Lisbon (Council of Europe, 2018). The public position is that Lisbon is an intercultural city, and the city often makes reference to this commitment through official speeches and communications.

Governance structure

The city of Lisbon is part of the wider LMA, a regional administrative body made up of 18 cities, each with their own local administrations. The Lisbon City Council (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (CML)) is the executive body for the Lisbon Municipality. Its mission is to define and implement policies and strategies to promote the development of the municipality. The head of the CML is the mayor (president), elected by voters in the municipality. The mayor appoints 16 councillors, including the vice-mayor (vice-president). Each councillor is in charge of a particular area, such as housing, planning, environment, education and culture. The CML has produced a long-term strategic plan (2010–2024) to guide the development of the city. It aims to provide more affordable, decent housing; reduce social and territorial inequalities, and increase diversity; improve public spaces, green areas, infrastructure and living conditions; and increase the attractiveness and capacity of the city to retain its population over the long term (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2009).

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