# National Fiche – Portugal

## COVID-19 cases

On 7 August 2020, Portugal registered 1,743[[1]](#footnote-1) COVID-19 related deaths in a population of more than 10 million people[[2]](#footnote-2). Data on deaths and cases disaggregated by disability status are not available to the best of our knowledge.

No official data were published about deaths or cases in care homes. However, on 9 May 2020, the Portuguese government stated in the media that 450 older persons died in care homes, representing 40% of all COVID-19 related deaths in the country at that time.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## Emergency, lockdown, and confinement

Portugal declared a state of emergency from 19 March 2020 to 2 May 2020[[4]](#footnote-4). No specific legislation suspended disability-related rights or services but access to services was more difficult.

When the lockdown was lifted, persons with disabilities had the possibility to work from home as other persons belonging to the risk group[[5]](#footnote-5).

## Involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities

Organisations of persons with disabilities have not been involved in the development of national policy or task forces. The National Confederation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (CNOD) raised concerns to the government about the rights of persons with disabilities in relation to inclusive education, the lack of subtitles in official announcements about COVID-19 and the delay in the attribution of disability certificate among others issues. However, these concerns remained unanswered[[6]](#footnote-6). The Federation of Portuguese Cerebral Palsy Associations (FAPPC) issued a statement on inclusion of persons with disabilities in COVID-19 responses with a list of recommendations to the government for immediate action to increase the capacity of health sector entities and institutions dealing with persons with disabilities and disability support services.[[7]](#footnote-7)

## Communications and announcement

Official announcements were available in sign language but subtitles were not included. Besides calls for accessibility of official communications from the CNOD and the Portuguese Association of Disabled People that also requested simplified information for persons with intellectual disabilities[[8]](#footnote-8), no measures have been taken.

From 22 April to 17 May 2020, the National Confederation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities conducted a survey on the impact of social distancing on persons with disabilities during the pandemic in Portugal. 137 persons with disabilities answered the survey which revealed that 31% of the respondents were not able to follow official communications on TV[[9]](#footnote-9). According to another survey on disability and COVID-19 conducted by the Disability and Human Rights Observatory from 27 April to 10 May 2020 and answered by 725 persons with disabilities, their family and their carers, 20% of the respondents said that information about COVID-19 was not very accessible or not accessible at all.[[10]](#footnote-10) Regarding education, the General Directorate of Education shared with CNOD information from RTP, the Portuguese national TV channel explaining that there is not a sufficiently reliable technology to provide accurate live captioning and that there is a high risk of errors or misunderstandings[[11]](#footnote-11).

## Institutions and closed settings

Visits in care homes were prohibited. On 14 April 2020, the Portuguese Mercies Union and the National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions expressed concerns about insufficient conditions in homes for older people and persons with disabilities to ensure that they receive appropriate care in the context of COVID-19.

The Portuguese Association of Disabled People expressed concerns about the lack of information on the situation experienced by persons with disabilities in institutions, especially those with severe disabilities.[[12]](#footnote-12)

## Health care

Medical appointments, treatments, therapies and surgeries have been suspended. In fact, 45% of the respondents of CNOD’s questionnaire stated that their treatments or therapies have been cancelled during the pandemic[[13]](#footnote-13). Some medical appointments have been maintained via telephone. In a press release, CNOD urged the government to ensure access to health care services for persons with disabilities, to make sure that professionals dealing with persons with disabilities have protective equipment and to provide guidelines for nursing homes and health care services to avoid discrimination based on disability.

## Social Protection

On 13 March 2020, a Law Decree 10-A/2020 included exceptional support to workers’ families during the closure of school and social care services for early childhood and disability. One of the parents who cannot go to work to care for a person with disability is entitled to two thirds of their basic remuneration. The support is borne equally by the employer and the Social Security[[14]](#footnote-14)

1. Data on the website of the Directorate General of Health*, Direçao-Geral da Saude*, available at: <https://covid19.min-saude.pt/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Statistics Portugal, available at : <https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine_main&xpid=INE&xlang=pt> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Comas-Herrera A, Zalakaín J, Litwin C, Hsu AT, Lemmon E, Henderson D and Fernández J-L (2020) Mortality associated with COVID-19 outbreaks in care homes: early international evidence. Article in LTCcovid.org, International Long-Term Care Policy Network, CPEC-LSE, 26 June 2020. The article reporting the statement of the Portuguese government is «Coronavírus: já morreram 450 idosos em lares». may 09, 2020, Available in Portuguese at: <https://www.sabado.pt/portugal/amp/coronavirus-ja-morreram-450-idosos-em-lares> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Nao paramos estamos on – Resposta de Portugal à COVID-19*, available in Portuguese at : <https://covid19estamoson.gov.pt/estado-de-emergencia-nacional/o-que-e/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Information from CNOD - National Confederation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, 17 August 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Information from CNOD, 24 August 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. FAPPC, Inclusion of persons with disabilities in responses to COVID-19, 19 March 2020, available in Portuguese at: <http://www.fappc.pt/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020.03.19-FAPPC-Incluir-as-pessoas-com-defici%C3%AAncia-nas-respostas-%C3%A0-COVID19.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. FRA Bulletin IV, Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental rights implications, Country report – Portugal, p.16 Available at:<https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/pt_report_on_coronavirus_pandemic_june_2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The questionnaire has been answered by 137 persons with disabilities from 22 April to 17 May 2020 and the results are available at: <http://www.cnod.pt/docs/Resultados_do_Question%C3%A1rio_O_Impacto_do_Isolamento_Social_das_Pessoas_com_Defici%C3%AAncia_durante_a_Pandemia_do_Covid19_em_Portugal.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Disability and Human Rights Observatory – Observatorio da Deficiência e Direitos Humanos, Disability and COVID-19 – Impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities in Portugal, 27 April to 10 May 2020. 725 persons with disabilities and families and carers took part in this survey. Available at: <http://oddh.iscsp.ulisboa.pt/index.php/pt/mediateca/eventos/item/455-covid_estudo> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Information from CNOD, 24 August 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. FRA Bulletin IV, Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental rights implications, Country report – Portugal, p.16 Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/pt_report_on_coronavirus_pandemic_june_2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. CNOD, Questionnaire about the impact of social distancing on persons with disabilities during the pandemic in Portugal, The results are available at: <http://www.cnod.pt/docs/Resultados_do_Question%C3%A1rio_O_Impacto_do_Isolamento_Social_das_Pessoas_com_Defici%C3%AAncia_durante_a_Pandemia_do_Covid19_em_Portugal.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Eurofound (2020), Exceptional support to workers' families, case PT-2020-11/874 (measures in Portugal), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin, <http://eurofound.link/covid19eupolicywatch> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)