



# NATIONAL REPORT OF PORTUGAL

UNIVERSAL HEALTH AND  
PREPAREDNESS REVIEW (UHPR)

GLOBAL PEER REVIEW

GENEVE | 13 FEBRUARY 2024

# | Agenda

## Portugal

1. Country summary

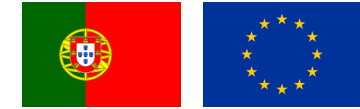
## UHPR pilot in Portugal

2. Preparation
3. What happened during the high-level mission
4. Outcomes
5. Added value and challenges
6. Practical outcomes

## Final remarks

7. The balance as a challenge

# Portugal - Country summary



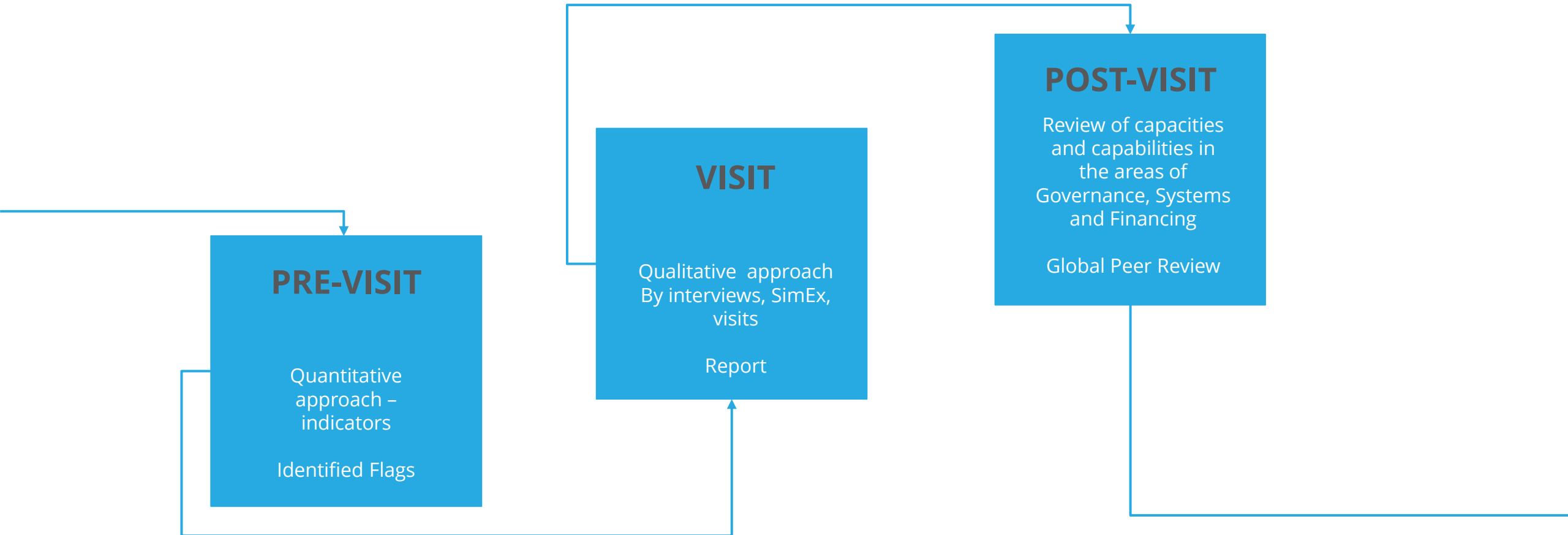
- 10.344.802 inhabitants (2021) in a total area of 92,212 km<sup>2</sup>.
- No changing borders since 1297
- Two archipelagos with Political and Administrative Statute of Autonomous Region (Azores and Madeira)
- Republic since 5 October 1910 and democratic country since 25 April 1974 (semi-presidential republic)
- **Head of State** – President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa | **Head of Government** – Prime Minister António Costa | **Parliament** - 230 members in a single chamber
- Founding member of NATO in 1949
- EU Member State since 1986
- Universal National Health Service (SNS) since September 1979
- Network of Public Health Authorities since 19th century

## UHPR activities - Background info:

- Still facing pandemic
- MoH delegation to technical level

# Preparation of the UHPR pilot in Portugal

## Overview



# Preparation of the UHPR pilot in Portugal

## Political

- MoFA and MoH engagement by the 73rd WHA RS (November 2020)
- Minister of Health delegated UHPR to be coordinated by DGS - technical and political level (November 2021)
- Political support was ensured during all the process

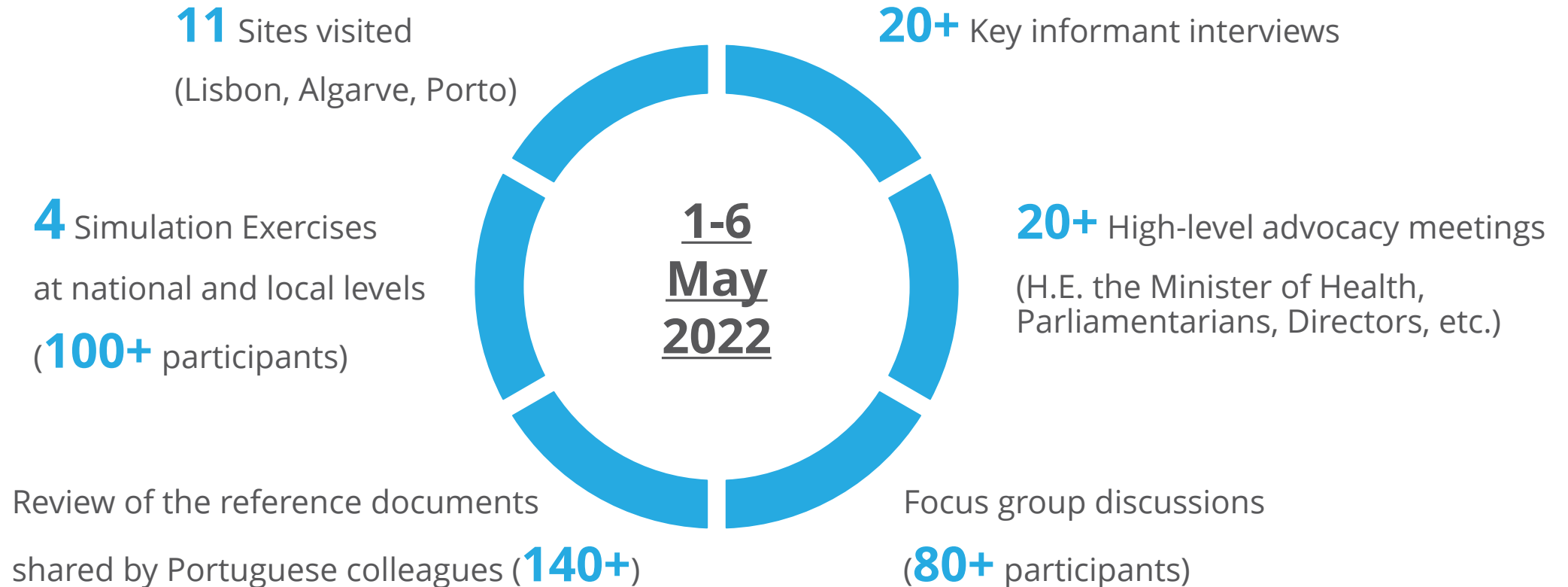
## Technical

- Technical inputs provided to WHO on methodology and indicators within EU country settings
- DGS engaged with different health institutions and sectors to appoint focal points (Animal Health, Environment, Civil Protection, Civil Society, Defense, Parliament)
- WHO pre visit on February 2022; green and red flags discussed
- Collection of contributions and inputs from the National Commission, through meetings, online surveys (best practices, gaps and recommendations), meetings emails and enlarged meetings

## Logistical

- National core team of 6 from Nov21-May22, weekly meetings, two full weeks field work
- Main venue and catering booked 4 months in advance
- SimEx venue and logistic booked 1 month in advance
- Some face-to-face interviews with WHO UHPR team in ad hoc approach

# | What happened during the UHPR Pilot (High-level mission)



# What happened during the UHPR Pilot (High-level mission)

## Multisectoral engagement

**13** ministries

**36** public institutions

**22** private and civil society institutions



# NATIONAL REPORT OF PORTUGAL

Universal  
Health and  
Preparedness  
Review (UHPR)  
Pilot

MAY 2022



[https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/universal-health-preparedness-review-\(uhpr\)--national-report-of-portugal](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/universal-health-preparedness-review-(uhpr)--national-report-of-portugal)



# Outcomes of the UHPR Pilot in Portugal

## Governance

### Best practices

- Commitment to health and health security at the highest levels
- UN and EU policies, legislations and regulations for health security, health systems, including the IHR (2005) are fully transcribed and integrated into Portuguese laws and other legal instruments
- UHC is under the national Constitution
- Development of multiannual National Health Plan (current 2021-2030), mainstreaming health in all policies

### National Health Plan 2021 – 2030



### Gaps and challenges

- Lack of revision, update and/or implementation of some legislation related to health security and public health needs:
  - IHR (2005): budgeting; human resources; zoonoses; and radiological emergencies
- All-hazard approach and corresponding coordination within IHR (2005) implementation is not clear
- There isn't a specific plan to cover core capacities improvements, especially on budgeting and inter-sectorial formal articulation
- Regular/routine sharing of information between different sectors is not formalized

# Outcomes of the UHPR Pilot in Portugal

## Systems

### Best practices

- Historic trust in the health system, in the institutions and health professionals and confidence in vaccines
- Role of science: mobilization of experts during the pandemic
- Strong nationwide network and structure of public health professionals and health authorities at all levels;
- Preparedness and response integrated in regular public health activities
- Surveillance system under the Epidemic Intelligence Framework; Application of ICT's tools
- National reference laboratory ensuring international standards for biosafety and biosecurity

### Gaps and challenges

- Lack of an overarching plan for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) that complements plans from other sectors
- Access to health services, particularly for vulnerable populations who do not regularly attend health services
- Issues with interoperability and information management of existing ICT tools
- Human resources shortages, with insufficient incentives, capacity building, and systematic training in public health emergency preparedness

# Outcomes of the UHPR Pilot in Portugal

## Financing

### Best practices

- Ad hoc financing and funding for rapid response to public health emergencies during COVID-19
- Solidarity for global health security: bilateral/multilateral mechanisms, especially with the Portuguese Speaking African Countries (PALOP)
- Sanitary and Food Safety Plus Fund (annual taxation) dedicated to surveillance and control of risks for food safety and consumers health
- StartUP Voucher measure (2019-2022), aiming at promoting the development of business health projects;
- EU and other international Grants and Scholarship Applications

### Gaps and challenges

- Spending on health per capita and as a share of GDP has been lower in PT than the EU average, with higher out-of-pocket medical expenditures
- Limited and non-sustainable budgets, leading to reactive spending during pandemics
- Inadequate investment on health promotion and prevention – funds directed towards clinical response
- Investments in human resources are needed; lacking flexibility in reallocating resources
- Lower research and development expenditure compared to other European countries

# Added value and challenges of the UHPR Pilot in Portugal

Added value

Better mapping of country capacities and capabilities

Visibility of national and subnational engagement to global preparedness and response

Recognition of common gaps in the health and other sectors: governance, procedures, tools, human resources

Need to implement lessons learned from COVID-19 (tools, information management)

Empowering the Ministry of Health across the government, in matters of Public Health Emergencies

Involvement of the National Parliament and Civil Society in Public Health Emergencies initiatives

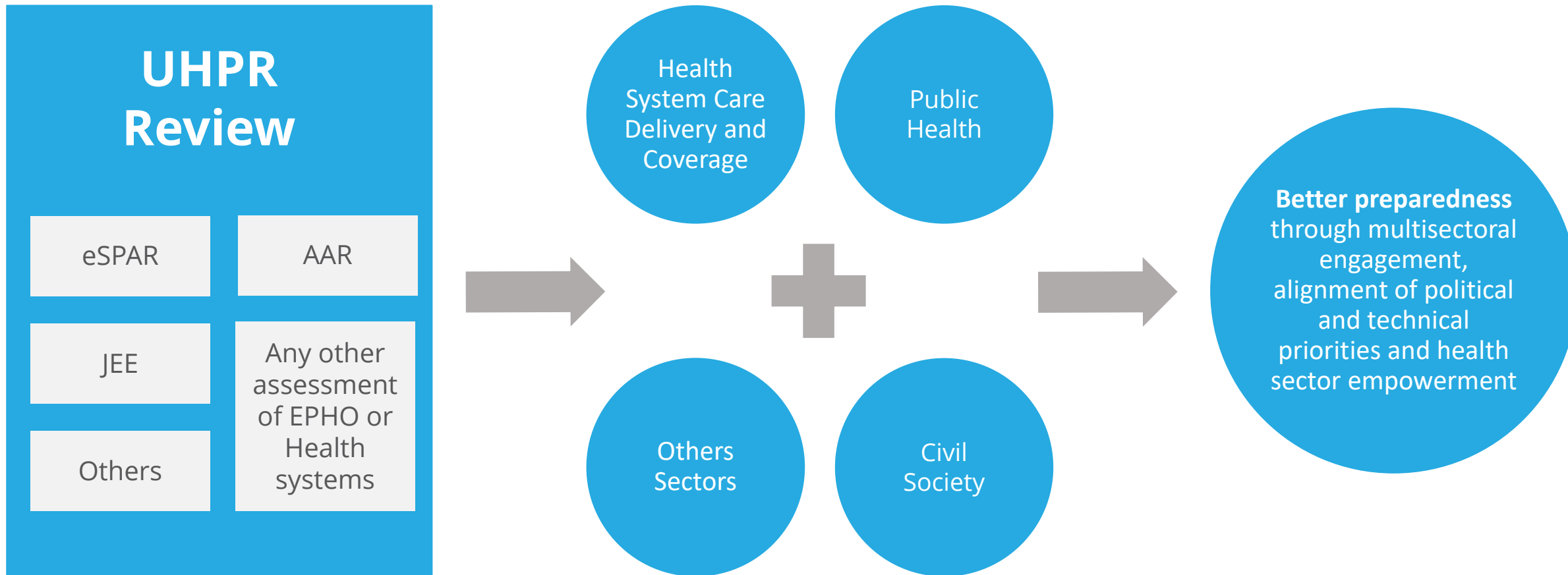
Challenges

# Practical outcomes of the UHPR Pilot in Portugal

## National level

- **New Director-General of Health appointed in late 2023**
  - mandate to reinforce national capacities and capabilities on surveillance, prevention, preparedness and response
  - establishment of a Working Group that will draft the National Strategy on Public Health Surveillance 2030, until the end of the year
  - establishment of a Working Group to develop the National Plan on Public Health Emergencies, until 4 October 2024
- **Restructuring of the National Health Service (SNS)**
  - creation of an Executive Board which succeeds the competencies of the 5 regional administrations
  - integration of primary and community care, public health and hospital care in 39 Local Health Units
  - integrated care risk-adjusted payment model, focus on population health management (health promotion and protection and disease prevention)
- **Revising national plans, reinforcement of strategies, guidance;** some changes in the methodology of work with national and international partners, more focus on the linkage between health care deliver and public health
- **Revising allocation of national health budget;** recommendations for multiannual budgeting plans
- Identifying a regular way to interact with the **Parliament health commission**

# The balance as a challenge



# OBRIGADO! THANK YOU!

