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 km².
- 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

PRE-VISIT
Quantitative approach – indicators
Identified Flags

VISIT
Qualitative approach
By interviews, SimEx, visits
Report

POST-VISIT
Review of capacities and capabilities in the areas of Governance, Systems and Financing
Global Peer Review
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)

- **11 Sites visited** (Lisbon, Algarve, Porto)
- **4 Simulation Exercises** at national and local levels (100+ participants)
- **Review of the reference documents** shared by Portuguese colleagues (140+)
- **1-6 May 2022**
- **20+ Key informant interviews**
- **20+ High-level advocacy meetings** (H.E. the Minister of Health, Parliamentarians, Directors, etc.)
- **Focus group discussions** (80+ participants)
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
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

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

- Ah doc 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

**Challenges**

- 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
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

Better preparedness through multisectoral engagement, alignment of political and technical priorities and health sector empowerment
OBRIGADO! THANK YOU!