

these are the faces of

# PORTUGAL,

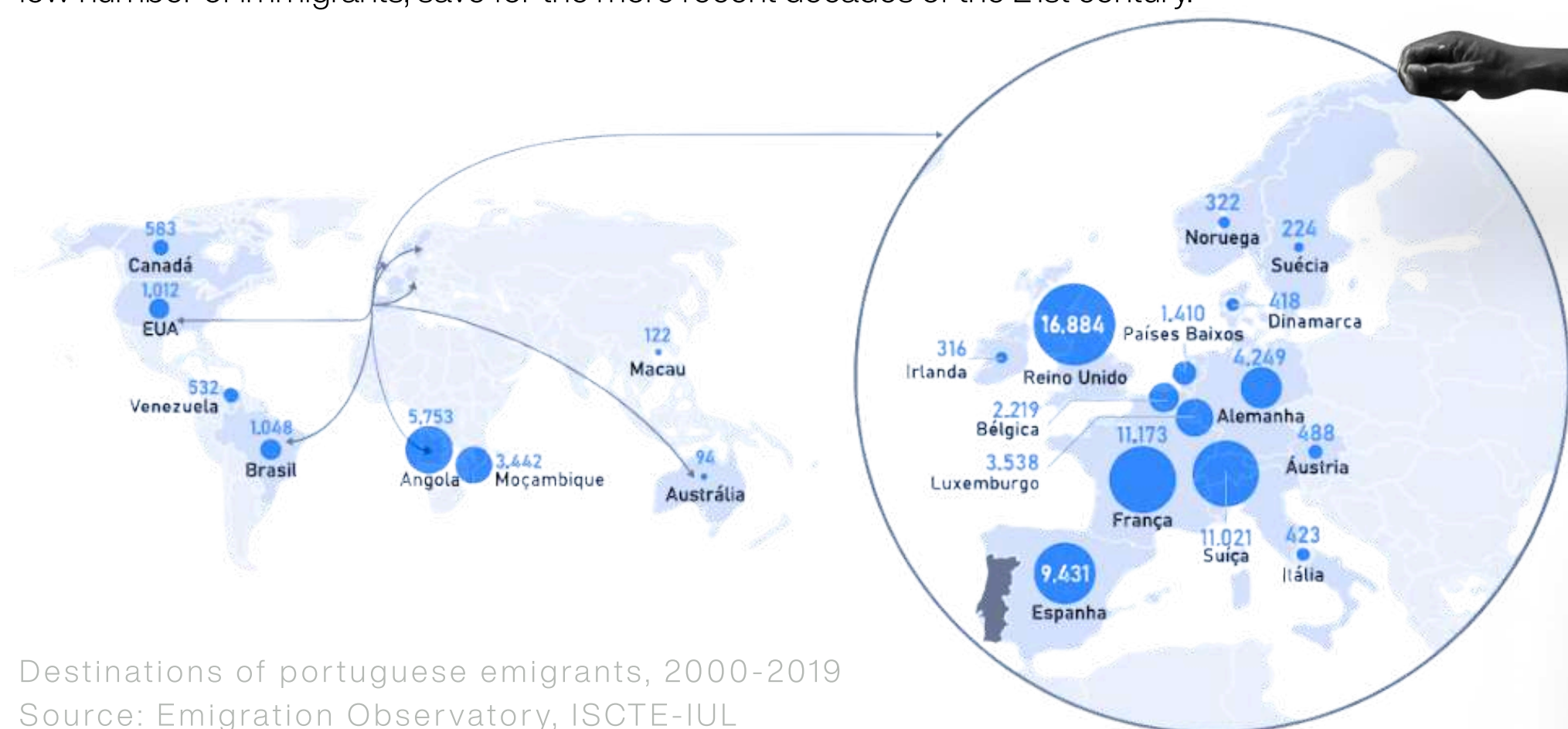
## A COUNTRY OF MIGRANTS.

Migration is a natural human phenomenon that has been recorded, studied and discussed throughout history. As human mobility has been growing, it has become a main topic of discussion in the most pressing social conflicts of today. The rise of anti-immigration views, extremist movements, Islamophobia, and racism has urged us to seek greater understanding.

Geography is a tool for understanding the meaning of social cohesion, beyond philosophical or moral debates.

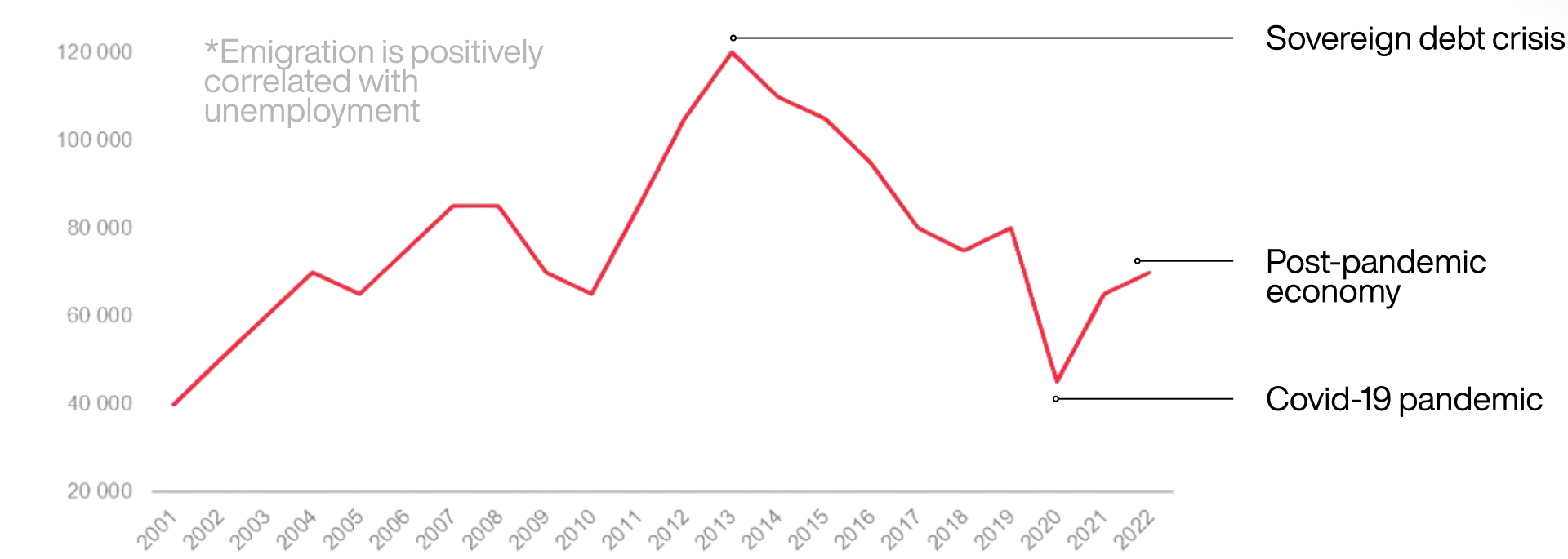
## Emigrants

Portugal has largely been a country with a significant number of emigrants, in comparison to a relatively low number of immigrants, save for the more recent decades of the 21st century.



In 2024, Portugal had **2 631 559** emigrants out in the world. That's more than Venezuela and South Sudan.

Source: United Nations



Source: Emigration Observatory, ISCTE-IUL

## key word: di·as·po·ra

*noun* : the complex network of communities established outside their homeland, united by their common origin.

### Associative work

In the main destination countries there are numerous cultural, religious, and professional associations of Portuguese or *Luso*-descendants. In the USA, according to the Observatory of Emigration (ISCTE-IUL), there were more than 300 associations in 2011, when the listing was last updated (research on emigration is sometimes incomplete).

### Culture

The carnival from Terceira, Azores, and its *bailinhos* can be seen in performances across Southern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the Greater Boston Area. Furthermore, in 2024, the 50th anniversary of the democratic Carnation Revolution was celebrated at Harvard University and the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

## Fleeing Fascism

In the 1960s and 1970s, the already notorious exodus of Portuguese citizens to France, often illegally under the fascist Salazar regime, intensified. Many Portuguese migrants established their new homes in the *bidonvilles*, precarious hut-like housing on the outskirts of Paris. Since then, the French have generally had a very positive view of Portuguese migrants as **humble, hard workers** who contribute significantly to the country's economy.

In France, more than **45,000 businesses** are headed by **Portuguese migrants** or their descendants. By 2014, there were already around 4,000 mayors of Portuguese origin, as well as three members of parliament and some regional and local councillors, numbers that are estimated to have grown since.

## La Cage Dorée (2013)

A Franco-Portuguese film about a migrant family that has become indispensable to their new French community



A story of how Europe's oldest borders have long been doors.

**Pepe**  
Luso-Brazilian centre-back who represented the Portuguese national team 141 times.

**Pedro Pablo Pichardo**  
Cuban-born and Portuguese, won Olympic gold in the triple jump at Tokyo 2020 and took silver at Paris 2024.

**António Costa**  
Former Portuguese Prime Minister and current President of the European Council, who is of Goese Indian descent.

### sports

Tiago Pereira

Ticha Penicheiro

Four-time WNBA All-Star

Paula Rego

Joana Vasconcelos

Internationally renowned textile artist

Fled Lisbon during the Estado Novo, one of the most well-loved figurative artists of his generation

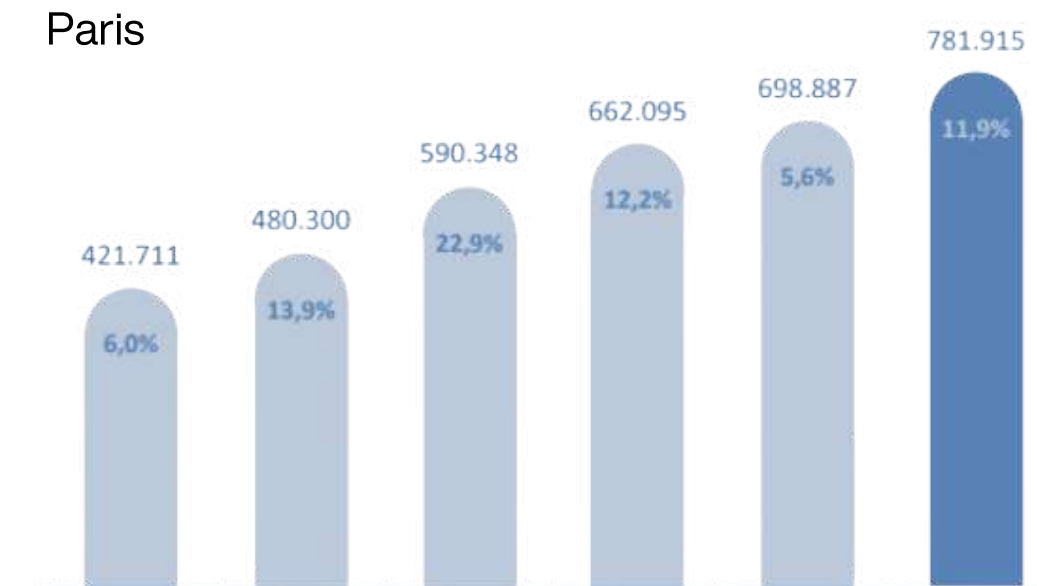
14,5%

of Luxembourg's population is Portuguese.

## Immigrants

During the Age of Discovery, Portugal forcibly brought large numbers of African slaves to the mainland. This sparked a history of miscegenation and ethnic diversity that has lasted to this day. It is estimated that in the 1500s up to 10% of Lisbon's population was of African origin. Many of those brought to Portugal as slaves eventually gained their freedom and, many centuries later, though the **scars of oppression and racism** remain, there is a significant degree of integration.

During Nazi rule, Bordeaux consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes helped Jews and other persecuted groups escape into Portugal, despite the dictatorial government's punishment, which would eventually lead him and his family into absolute poverty. Sousa Mendes provided thousands of visas that were required for leaving France, which was no longer a safe place to act as a host country after the fall of Paris



## Becoming a destination country

Population ageing + Full employment = Job market crisis

For every 100 youths there are **192,4** elderly citizens.

That makes Portugal the **2<sup>nd</sup>** oldest population in Europe.

The demand for workers has started to exceed the number of active adults looking for a job. In fact, this is one of the main factors that contributes to the arrival of new workers, who see job opportunities emerge in sectors such as **food and catering, agriculture and tourism**.

These industries are riddled with **workers' rights violations** and **extremely low pay**, contributing to the further widening of the income gap between nationals and immigrants.

Social tensions rise as violent groups, such as skinheads, become more active. Many intellectuals also point to a reinvention of Islamophobic discourse that is increasingly normalised.

## United in Diversity

In 1986, Portugal became a member state of the European Economic Community, soon made into the European Union, whose 21st century motto is "United in Diversity". Social cohesion is one of the challenges that fundamentally define the European project. Currently, many commentators point to **populist far-right movements** as a threat to the project's integrity.

The Portuguese iteration of anti-immigration politics, the Chega party, has reached 60 parliamentary seats in six years, becoming the second-largest party and leader of the opposition.

## We're Multicultural

Portugal's past, present, and future are multicultural. Although immigration processes have been made more difficult in recent years, Portugal continues to welcome immigrants from the most diverse environments, from countries such as Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, India, Nepal, Ukraine, and China. These communities have brought **new traditions, knowledge and a set of skills that are now part of the national fabric**.

**Fu Yu**  
Born in Hebei, China, portuguese european table tennis champion and olympic athlete.

## The Portuguese Human Tile

The history of Portugal is intertwined with the flow of people, both those who migrated to Portugal and those who left for other countries. Portuguese migration and immigration has not eroded national identity; on the contrary, it has enriched and helped shape a more multicultural society. Portugal's emigration allowed the country to gain global presence and a greater understanding of cultural coexistence. Today, the country continues to evolve through immigration by people who now call it home.

Portugal is an example of how a country benefits from the human exchange that has happened throughout history, at times unjust and cruel, but also often constructive and mutually beneficial. The diversity that such a society harbours will not necessarily create dissent and fragmentation, but instead create the opportunity to foster unity, even through times of division.

National identity is strengthened through dialogue, shared purpose, and openness. This is the core of "Unity in Diversity", which Portugal can use as a foundation to continue building upon, further uniting the country together as more inclusive, cohesive and resilient for the future.