

Dear Visitor,

Welcome to the website of the Portuguese Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Here you will find useful information about who we are and what we do, as well as regarding NATO and the outline of our participation in the Atlantic Alliance.

You will also be able to consult relevant content about the broad outlines of the Portuguese foreign policy through the links provided.

NATO is an international organization important to Portugal. It is situated in the convergence point between two main pillars of our foreign policy: the Atlantic and Europe.

Allow me to explain.

Portugal is a fundamentally European and Atlantic country. It is easy and even intuitive to understand it.

On the one hand, Portugal exists in Europe and us, Portuguese, profoundly believe in the importance of the European project and the European Union as key drivers of peace, stability and prosperity.

But Portugal is also structurally an Atlantic country. In fact, Portugal compensates its peripheric position within Europe with an objective Atlantic centrality.

Consider this: Portugal is located between the North Atlantic and the South Atlantic, between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, between Europe and Africa and also between America and Europe. As Fernando Pessoa has written, *Portugal is the face with which Europe stares at the West*.

By West may it be understood the Atlantic, a sea that prolongs us and gives us a strategic depth that we lack in our continental territory.

The Atlantic is and has always been our gateway to the world, as well as our platform of our national affirmation and security. It has been this way for many centuries.

Portugal's Atlantic vocation is therefore a structural and permanent feature of our foreign policy.

The Atlantic is not only important for us because it is a sea. The fact of the matter is that Portugal has always looked at the oceans, and not just at the Atlantic, as spaces for affirmation and projection. Our vocation has always been global and mainly asserted through the oceans, and our foreign policy and vast historical presence in the world reflect this reality well.

For us, the Atlantic is especially important for its security dimension, which is materialized namely in our participation in NATO and in the very close relationship that we have with other Atlantic countries.

This is the case of the United States, which are an essential ally, not only for its central role within the Atlantic Alliance, but also because they are our 9closest neighbours to the West. NATO, our system of collective defense and the transatlantic relation as we conceive it would not exist without the United States.

In this very same context it is well worthwhile to remember that our oldest military alliance dates back to the 14th century and was made with another Atlantic country: England. Out of curiosity, but not without importance, this is the oldest military alliance still in force in the world!

Portugal therefore has the double status of a European and an Atlantic country.

The importance of NATO to our country can be seen from here – the Alliance's area of responsibility coincides with our natural space for national affirmation: Europe and the Atlantic.

In summary, how can we best explain what is NATO?

NATO is a regional collective defense organization. Its main vocation is to guarantee the security and defense of the Allied countries and the approximately one billion people who live in them, including Portugal and the Portuguese.

It may seem odd at first to say that NATO, as a political alliance that supports a military structure with a mainly collective defense function, has as its main goal to contribute to the preservation of peace.

But it is exactly so. How could it be otherwise? NATO reflects the Allies willingness to live in peace. It is not directed against any particular adversary and its mission is to deter and create very effective protection conditions against any threat that may arise, whatever it may be, wherever it may come from.

Its constitutive treaty, that Portugal signed in 1949 as a founding country of the Alliance, is quite simple. Its short preamble clarifies that NATO is, above anything else, an Alliance of countries that share the fundamental values of Democracy, Rule of Law and Freedom. It is also an unusually short treaty, with only 14 articles, the most known and relevant of which: is its article 5, which perfectly translated the true spirit of the Atlantic Alliance by stipulating that an aggression against one Ally constitutes an aggression against all Allies. Solidarity, cohesion and unity are the basic principles on which the Atlantic Alliance is built.

These are some of the reasons why Portugal participates actively in all levels of NATO's activity, whether in its decision-making bodies, starting with the North Atlantic Council and the Military Committee, or in its missions within and outside the Alliance's area of responsibility.

About fifty percent of our military forces engaged in international missions are integrated into NATO operations. National participation in the Alliance is global and is not limited to this Diplomatic Mission. It involves our central administration, and particularly our Armed Forces at all levels and multiple geographic, always representing the country with great professionalism and dignity.

I hope with these words that I have succeeded in explaining the reasons behind the importance of NATO to Portugal.

Portugal looks confidently to the future of NATO, with the certainty that the most successful military Alliance in recent history will always know how to adjust to the new challenges it faces.

Dear Visitor,

You will find in this website useful elements of consultation about most of the subjects I have referred to. Myself and the elements of this diplomatic mission are entirely at your disposal for further clarifications for fully understanding the presence and action of our country within the frame of the Atlantic Alliance.

I wish you a good visit!