

# **P O R T U G A L**

## **SECTION A**

### **Capital**

Lisbon 681,063 (1991 est.)

### **Area**

92,391 sq km (35,553 sq mi) including the Azores and Madeira Islands

### **Form of government**

Republic

### **GDP—per capita**

Purchasing power parity—\$15,300 (1999 est.)

### **Population**

9,918, 040 (July 1999 est.)

### **Ethnic composition**

Portuguese	98.2%
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Cape Verdean	0.4%
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Other	1.4%
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### **Official language**

Portuguese

### **Minority languages**

Mirandese

Mirandese (Mirandés) is a Romance language of uncertain background but possibly related to the Asturian-Leonese group. It began to emerge as a separate language about the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Its linguistic similarity to Portuguese contributes to Mirandese being regarded by most people as a dialect of Portuguese. It is spoken in the villages of the

municipality of Miranda do Douro (except Atenor and the town of Miranda do Douro itself), in three villages in the municipality of Vimioso and in certain villages in the municipalities of Mogadouro and Bragança located in the far north of Portugal. The total population of the area in 1991 was 14,728. The Mirandese-speaking population - 10,000 who normally speak the language - is almost entirely concentrated in small villages with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants.

### **Legislation dealing with the use of languages**

*The Constitution*, adopted on April 2, 1976

*Law No 7/99 on Official Recognition of Linguistic Rights of the Mirandese Community*, that recognizes the right to preserve and promote the Mirandese language. This right will be maintained as long as it is a cultural heritage and means of communication and for the reinforcement of the identity of the Mirandese community. It was enforced in the course of the year 2000 under the title "Official Recognition of the Linguistic Rights of the Mirandese Community". The law opens a door for the introduction of the Mirandese language into education, and allows the institutions of the Council of Miranda do Douro to issue bilingual documents. It also recognizes the right to be assisted in scientific research and educational projects. It also allows for schools, the formation of specialized educational staff.

Portugal has approved the regulation required by the Article 5 of the Law No 7/99. This regulation, *Normative Document No 35/99* of the Ministry of Education, establishes the requisites for the educational needs of the teaching of this language in the schools of Miranda do Douro. Although the regulation does not specify the budget assigned to these projects, it requires the Ministry of Education (central and regional services) to supply the logistic, scientific and technical support necessary for its development.

### **Background notes**

Portugal's population is remarkably homogenous and has been so for all of its recorded history. This lack of ethnic variety helped it become the first unified nation state in Western Europe. For centuries Portugal had virtually no ethnic, tribal, racial, religious or cultural minorities. Almost all Portuguese spoke the national language, almost all were Roman Catholic and almost all identified with the Portuguese culture and the nation of Portugal.

Portugal has a sizeable Roma population (100,000). Despite government efforts to integrate them into the larger society, Roma remained a separate group.

Portugal's foreign community numbers about 90,000. It consists mainly of Africans (40%), Spaniards, British, French and Germans. These communities are not large and generally do not become involved in Portuguese life.

## **SECTION B**

### **The use of language in everyday life e.g. education, broadcasting and other**

The Mirandese speaking community has done little to promote its language. Only a few activities, based purely on folk arts and traditions, are organized by some associations, but promotion of the Mirandese language is left to the local authorities. Nevertheless, some articles in the local newspapers as well as radio and television features have demonstrated that the language is still alive in the region.

Mirandese has not been used or taught at any level of education. On the other hand, the local authorities have encouraged the inclusion of the language as an optional subject in the first three years of the secondary schools in the area. Mirandese was taught as an optional subject to a fairly small number of pupils in the first to third year at the Miranda do Douro secondary school. However, there were huge gaps in the system for teaching Mirandese. There was neither a course inspectorate nor training and support for teachers.

After the official recognition of the Mirandese language in the Miranda do Douro region by the Portuguese Law 7/99, several activities and initiatives have taken place in this community. The academic year started with a new possibility to attend some language courses in Mirandese. There are also some projects directed at the formalization of the language; i.e. the orthographical standardization of the Mirandese language. Other projects focus on the social use of the language, such as, programs and events aimed at cultural and linguistic promotion, creation of a "Language Day", actions to promote the language outside its area, works to promote and spread the language in media, etc.

The creation of an Institute of the Mirandese Language was obviously needed as a consequence of these initiatives, in order to coordinate both the formation and the normalization processes. The decision to create this body with legal authority, decision making capacity and consultative status, was made after a meeting held by several academic and government agencies. According to Voz do Nordeste (a biweekly Portuguese magazine), the statutes will be approved during the next meeting in November or December 2000. Mirandese is not used at all in

the mass media, apart from a very few articles that have appeared in the local press.

**Did the country ratify any international treaty dealing with the protection of minorities?**

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities signed on February 1, 1995.

## **SECTION C**

**Did the country ratify any international treaty dealing with the protection of minorities?**

***Updated (June 2002)***

Although the Portugal does not recognize the existence of any national minority within its borders, in May 2002 the government ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which will enter into force next September.

Besides of this, the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) has established a Portuguese state committee in representation of the Mirandese-speaking community (about 15,000 people) in the northeast of the country. More suitable instrument for the protection of this language community, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, has not been ratified by Portugal yet.

Source: Mercator news, <http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/index-gb.htm>

**The use of language in everyday life, education, broadcasting and other**

***Updated (March 2003)***

### **THE MIRANDESE LANGUAGE**

Despite the fact that some students were already enrolled to study the Mirandese language as an optional subject (1 hour per week) at schools in Miranda de Douro this school year (2002/2003), the teaching had been interrupted and it was authorized only in December 2002 by the Northern Regional Bureau for Education. This delay violated the right of children to learn the Mirandese language included in Law 7/1999, which

recognizes the linguistic rights of the Mirandese community and gives the Mirandese language a co-official status.

The issue of teaching Mirandese is also controversial at university level, as during the first semester of the current school year it was introduced as a “foreign language” subject in the curriculum of the Anthropology Department at the University of Miranda de Douro.

As for the media, the weekly regional paper “*Nordeste*” in Bragança includes since January a page written in Mirandese. Moreover, a radio program in Mirandese is broadcast by Mirandum FM and Rádio Brigantia.

Source: Mercator new, February 2003,  
<http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/index-gb.htm>

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF PORTUGAL



## **APPENDIX B**

### **PORTUGAL - CONSTITUTION**

(Adopted on April 2, 1976)

(Document Status in 1997)

#### **Article 9**

The basic tasks of the State are:

f) To safeguard instruction in, and a constant increase in respect for, the Portuguese language, to defend its use and to promote its international currency.

#### **Article 13**

(2) No one shall be privileged or favored, or discriminated against, or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty, by reason of his or her ancestry, sex, race, language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic situation or social circumstances.

#### **Article 74**

2) In the implementation of its policy for education, it is the duty of the State:

h) To protect and develop Portuguese sign language, as a cultural expression and instrument of access to education and equality of opportunity;

i) To ensure instruction in the Portuguese language and access to Portuguese culture the children of emigrants.

j) To ensure that the children of immigrants have adequate support to implement their right to education.

Note: The complete text of the Constitution and further information on the constitutional background of Portugal are provided by the Portuguese Parliament.

# **OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS OF THE MIRANDESE COMMUNITY**

Date: January 29, 1999

Number: 24/99 SÉRIE I-A

Author: Assembleia da República

Act: Bill n. 7/99

The Assembly of the Republic states, in the terms of Article 161, line c) of the Constitution, in order to enact it as a general law of the Republic, that:

## **Article 1**

The present document focuses on the recognition and promotion of the Mirandese language.

## **Article 2**

The Portuguese state recognizes the right to develop and promote the Mirandese language, as cultural patrimony, instrument of communication and support of the identity of Terra da Miranda.

## **Article 3**

The State recognizes the children's right to learn Mirandese, in the terms of its regulation.

## **Article 4**

The public institutions placed in the Council of Miranda do Douro will be able to issue their documents along with a version in Mirandese language.

## **Article 5**

The state recognizes the right to scientific and educational support concerning the formation of Mirandese language and culture teaching staff, in the terms of its regulation.

## **Article 6**

This bill will be regulated in a period of 90 days after its enforcement.



## **Article 7**

The present bill will come into force 30 days after its date of issue.

Approved on the November 19, 1998.

The President of The Assembly of the Republic, António de Almeida Santos. Promulgated on the January 15, 1999. The Prime Minister, António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres

## **NORMATIVE DOCUMENT NUM. 35/99**

### **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

The law num. 7/99, 29 of January, recognises the right to preserve and promote the Mirandese language as long as it is a cultural heritage, and an instrument of communication and reinforcement of the identity of the Mirandese land.

According to the provisions corresponding to Articles 3 and 5 of this law, the right to learning Mirandese must be regulated, as well as its necessary logistic, technical and scientific support.

Therefore, it is stated that:

1. Students attending primary and secondary education in schools of the Council of Miranda do Douro have the faculty to learn the Mirandese language, as a source of curriculum enrichment.

2. The availability of the instructive offer referred to in the preceding clause corresponds to those primary and secondary schools of the Council of Miranda do Douro by means of the development of projects aimed at the preservation and the promotion of the Mirandese language.

- 2.1. The projects must consider methodological and pedagogical purposes, so as the identification of the necessary means and resources, especially in the field of teachers' training.

- 2.2. The projects will be approved by the principals of the Basic Education departments and Secondary School departments, according to the level to which they influence, after having been favourably reported by the regional director of Northern Education.

- 2.3. Projects may be developed in coordination with bodies from the local community, specially with the town council and cultural associations, by means of cooperation protocols.

3. Qualified regional and central services of the Ministry of Education will provide the logistic, technical and scientific support which is considered appropriate for the development of the projects referred to in the present document.

Ministry of Education, July 5, 1999. The Minister of Education, Eduardo Carrega Marçal Grilo.

Note: This is the non-official English translation provided by Website Mercator Linguistic Law and Legislation,  
<http://www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator/index-gb.htm>

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