

CRISIS PRESIDENCY: HOW PORTUGUESE LEADERSHIP CAN GUIDE THE EU INTO THE POST-COVID ERA

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SUMMARY

- Portugal's plans for the EU presidency centre on European priorities for the pre-coronavirus world.
- These include the completion of the monetary union, the UK-EU relationship after Brexit, the EU's relationships with Africa and India, climate change, digital transformation, and social inequality.
- The Portuguese EU presidency should handle these issues in line with European voters' perceptions of the new reality created by the coronavirus.
- Many Europeans have lost confidence in the transatlantic relationship, fear for Europe's place in a world dominated by US-China competition, and want the EU to provide global leadership and shape the international order.
- Portugal can help the EU develop a foreign policy strategy that takes account of these changes.

INTRODUCTION

Portugal had high expectations of 2020. The country was experiencing political stability and its economy was starting to grow. Everything pointed to a year that would culminate with Portugal presiding over the European Council in the first half of 2021 – the fourth time it had done so since joining the European Economic Community, in 1986.

In his traditional speech to the diplomatic corps at the beginning of 2020, Portuguese Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva outlined an agenda for the presidency that aimed to integrate the challenges currently facing the European project with Portugal's strategic priorities. He built this agenda around four pillars.

Firstly, Lisbon regards the EU presidency as a golden opportunity to press for the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union. Secondly, following Brexit, it is necessary to establish the terms of the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom. Having never wanted this separation to happen, Portugal is among the EU countries whose top priority is for the divorce to take place smoothly and unambiguously. Thirdly, Portugal understands that most of the main challenges the EU faces are external. They stem from the erosion of the liberal international order – until recently led by the United States – and the resulting deterioration of multilateralism. Lisbon planned to promote multilateralism as a political value and a principle of EU action that is in the DNA of European integration. Finally, Silva spoke of his aim to align three issues that are fundamental to the future of Portugal and the EU – climate change, the digital transition, and social welfare – within a single policy 'basket'.

It was a good plan. But, within weeks of the speech, the coronavirus struck – changing the nature of the challenge that the Portuguese presidency would face.

This paper analyses how current thinking across the EU should guide the Portuguese presidency following the onset of the covid-19 crisis. It draws on surveys of policymakers, interviews, and – most of all – data from a public opinion poll that YouGov carried out for the European Council on Foreign Relations in nine EU member states in April and May 2020, covering two-thirds of the EU's population and GDP.

The paper argues that Lisbon will need to adapt the priorities it originally envisaged to the new reality

that confronts European voters. Europeans have experienced a huge loss of confidence in the transatlantic relationship, and are increasingly worried about Europe's place in a world dominated by US-China competition. However, far from wanting to batten down the hatches and wait out the storm, Europeans would like their leaders to fill the gap in global leadership created by the Sino-American rivalry – and to thereby shape the international order. The German presidency has emphasised the need to build European sovereignty; Portugal needs to show the EU how to do so, achieving results through the international institutions that the Portuguese foreign policy elite hold so dear.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

In April and May, as the first wave of the coronavirus was receding, ECFR's polling showed that Europeans had a strong desire for the EU to shape the international order that would emerge after the crisis. Sixty-three per cent of Europeans believed that covid-19 had shown the need for greater cooperation within the EU, and 52 per cent that the bloc should have a more coordinated response to global threats and challenges. The global nature of the pandemic has made voters recognise the importance of economies of scale in responding to crises. In both Germany and France, there was particularly strong support for reshoring: more than 50 per cent of respondents wanted the manufacture of medical supplies to return to Europe, and around 40 per cent wanted this for other products. Voters expressed a clear idea of Europe as a single regional space, and of the EU's importance in defending Europeans' interests in a world shaped by geopolitical competition.

However, they are far more uncertain about current EU institutions' ability to protect European interests in the current moment. Forty-seven per cent of respondents felt that the EU had been irrelevant in the coronavirus crisis. And voters had little confidence in other actors' ability or willingness to take their needs into account. In 2019 ECFR polling showed that Europeans were increasingly concerned about US-China competition, and wanted Europe to become a big enough player not to have to choose sides in the fight. But, in 2020, this seems to have developed into a deep loss of faith in America's and China's willingness or ability to shape the international system beyond the protection of their own interests.

Majorities in every surveyed member state except Italy, Poland, and Bulgaria said that their opinion of the US had worsened during the coronavirus crisis. And, even in these three countries, large minorities held this view. The proportion of respondents who felt that the US has been a key ally for their country this year were vanishingly small – peaking in Italy at just 6 per cent. Perceptions of

China and Russia have also become more negative among almost all voter groups and almost all countries. Many in Europe blamed China for the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis, including a plurality in every surveyed EU member state aside from Spain and Bulgaria.

America's withdrawal from international leadership and President Donald Trump's truculent approach to European countries at a time of global emergency may be the main reasons why Europeans are growing warier of their allies across the Atlantic. They see the stark differences between the events of recent months and previous US leadership in responding to health crises such as Ebola and AIDS, building international coalitions, and shaping multilateral institutions. But many Europeans still appear to believe that there is a need for an actor to take on America's former role, by leading international institutions. In every surveyed country, those who say that they have become more supportive of the rule of law, human rights, and democracy since the coronavirus crisis began significantly outnumber those who hold the opposite view.

Interestingly, deteriorating views of the US seem to go hand in hand with support for greater EU cooperation on international challenges. Seventy-three per cent of respondents in Portugal said that their perceptions of the US had worsened and that they wanted more EU cooperation – a larger share than in any other surveyed country. Portugal is also the most pro-EU country in this regard, as 21 per cent of Portuguese respondents said that their perceptions of the US had not changed but that they also wanted greater EU cooperation.

Like Spain, Denmark, and Sweden, Germany shows a strong correlation between deteriorating views of the US and a desire for greater cooperation at the EU level on global challenges. So, the transition from the German EU presidency to the Portuguese one will not involve a loss of domestic political support for the EU taking on a new geopolitical role – a role in which it shapes the international order, provides global public goods, and protects European interests.

This new role would pay a double dividend. Firstly, it would fill the leadership vacuum that voters have identified. Secondly, by influencing the global discourse on the issues that Europeans care about – from climate change to health, to economic sovereignty – the EU would demonstrate the potential of European cooperation and help address widespread disappointment with its handling of the coronavirus crisis.

EUROPEAN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP WITH A PORTUGUESE ACCENT

Asking the Portuguese presidency to push the EU to exercise greater leadership in the multilateral system may seem redundant: every instinct in a Portuguese diplomat would naturally push them in this direction anyway, as these authors argued in 2019. As ECFR's 2020 EU Coalition Explorer shows, Portugal's commitment to deepening European cooperation is understood and appreciated by policymakers in other member states. Portugal ranks in seventh place among member states' perceptions of their work on deepening European integration. So, one can safely expect the Portuguese presidency to push for Europe to become a more cohesive actor on the world stage.

ECFR's 2019 polling showed that the Portuguese had a somewhat idealistic view of how their country could act as a multilateral power, balancing the transatlantic and European relationships. However, this year's survey shows that, like their counterparts elsewhere in the EU, Portuguese voters are now keenly aware of the rupture in the transatlantic relationship and, to some extent, the limits of EU institutions. Therefore, it might play well to a domestic audience if the Portuguese presidency pushed for the EU to exercise pragmatism in its relationships with other major powers, with the goal of rebuilding a rules-based international system and, at the same time, protecting Europe's global interests. As Anthony Dworkin and Richard Gowan set out in 2019, this would mean working with partners on a case-by-case basis, despite disagreeing with them on some issues. This approach would allow the EU to build coalitions in areas such as climate change, global health, and the control of new technologies.

China and Russia could try to obstruct this effort – as could the US, depending on the outcome of its November 2020 presidential election. China has a relatively successful track record in driving wedges between EU member states using its 17+1 initiative. ECFR's polling suggests that China's much-publicised “mask diplomacy” – targeted aid of medical equipment, personnel, and research support (documented in the European Solidarity Tracker) – has had a similar effect. The differences between changes in member states' perceptions of China during the coronavirus crisis correlate with differences in the level of Chinese support they received. In Italy and Bulgaria, recipients of relatively large amounts of Chinese aid, only 37 per cent and 22 per cent of citizens respectively said that their perceptions of China had worsened during the crisis. In Denmark and France, which received far less

attention from China during the health crisis, 62 per cent of citizens held this view.

Portugal may be well placed to use its presidency to shape a pragmatic EU approach to China, as it is somewhere in the middle of this picture. As the European Solidarity Tracker shows, the country has received comparatively high levels of medical support from Beijing (directly through the government in Lisbon and indirectly through local authorities), but 46 per cent of the Portuguese say that their perceptions of China have worsened during the crisis – close to the EU average of 48 per cent. This suggests that the Portuguese are aware that such donations from China are not entirely altruistic.

The Portuguese government recognises the complexity of the relationship between China and the EU, but considers it to be crucial. From the perspective of the Portuguese government, not engaging with this interlocutor – a country that has 1.4 billion citizens, the second-largest economy in the world, and a growing capacity for global power projection – would be tantamount to ignoring one of the main features of today's strategic reality. Portugal is proud of having one of the oldest connections with China of any European country: as diplomats in Lisbon often mention, it has been 500 years since a Portuguese navigator became the first European to land in China. Relations between the two countries have always been stable and fruitful, aside from under the New State regime of António de Oliveira Salazar. This was reflected in the comparatively smooth transition between the Portuguese and Chinese administrations in Macau.

And, yet, the current relationship between the two countries is profoundly asymmetrical, particularly in the areas of trade and direct investment: Portugal's exports to China are worth less than €1bn a year, while it spends more than €2.2bn on Chinese imports. Additionally, Chinese investment in Portugal accelerated following the 2008 financial crisis – partly because the EU and the International Monetary Fund forced Lisbon to rush through privatisations as part of a bailout deal. These inflows turned Portugal into one of Europe's largest per capita recipients of Chinese investment (even if, in absolute terms, this continues to be concentrated in other countries, particularly the UK, Germany, and France). China now has significant interests in the energy, banking, insurance, tourism, port, and health sectors in Portugal.

Furthermore, in 2018, the two countries formalised a strategic relationship in which Portugal signed on to the Belt and Road Initiative. The Portuguese and Chinese heads of government have since exchanged state visits. And, last year, Portugal became the first eurozone country to issue so-called "Panda bonds" (those that are denominated in renminbi and issued by a state other than China).

After some critics of the relationship referred to Portugal as China's "special friend" in the EU, the

Portuguese government responded by cautioning against protectionist tendencies in Europe. The government argued that, so far, China has shown complete respect for the Portuguese and EU legal frameworks.

At the same time, the Portuguese government has said that it accepts the need for a strong EU policy on China. According to Lisbon, the EU must pragmatically reinforce its strategic dialogue with China by addressing the asymmetry in their relationship, while recognising that Beijing is an indispensable partner in a world of global interdependence and multiple challenges. Only by enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest can member states create a more balanced relationship (in priority areas such as the openness of the Chinese market) and prevent Beijing from driving a wedge between them in the wake of the covid-19 crisis.

According to Silva, “there’s no ambiguity here. [With China,] we are partners, not allies.” Lisbon recently confirmed that no Chinese company would be associated with the development of its 5G services and that, in the near future, it would be more careful in monitoring new Chinese investments in key assets in Portugal. If, until late last year, Portugal’s relations with China were essentially driven by short- to medium-term economic concerns, this is now changing. The shift probably results from US pressure – the American ambassador in Lisbon recently said that Portugal had to choose between the US and China, or risk the consequences – a change in Portuguese public opinion, and growing concerns about China’s true intentions in the long run.

In a complementary effort, the Portuguese government will host an EU-India summit during its presidency of the European Council. At the invitation of the president of the European Council and the Portuguese authorities, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Porto in May 2021. The move is designed to relaunch EU negotiations with India on an ambitious trade and investment agreement (which have been suspended since 2013) while simultaneously seeking an alternative partner in Asia, with a view to a systemic rebalancing. Following the same logic, the Portuguese presidency will seek to hold additional high-level meetings between the EU and Latin American countries, as well as the African Union.

In fact, it was during the previous Portuguese presidencies of the European Council (in 2000 and 2007) that the bloc began its summits with Brazil and African countries respectively. At the time, other EU member states noticed Portugal’s enthusiasm for multilateralism. Since then, there have been significant changes to the institutional dynamics of the EU as a result of the Lisbon Treaty, placing a new emphasis on the rotating presidency. Member states’ competences and direct influence on external relations have diminished during this period, with the treaty establishing the offices of the

president of the EU and the high representative of the union for foreign and security policy, and the European Commission and the European External Action Service taking on a greater role. Yet EU countries' historical relationships and direct cultural and political influence can still make a difference in this domain.

This is the case for Portugal in Africa – a continent in which other member states show surprisingly little interest. According to data from the 2020 EU Coalition Explorer, Portugal is the only EU country to include Africa policy among its top five priorities for the EU in the coming years (ranking it in second place, after fiscal policy). In contrast, the EU27 collectively rank Africa policy in 17th place out of 20 areas.

As such, Portugal's prioritisation of Africa might help it take on a central role in shaping the EU's policy on the continent. The country could do so by gaining support for its policy positions from other EU member states that have some interest in Africa, as well as those that have not yet developed strong preferences in the area. And Lisbon is already looking for opportunities in this. For example, with the pandemic having made it impossible to hold the next EU-AU summit during the German presidency, Portugal has expressed an eagerness to host the event and discuss a new strategy with the continent. However, the Portuguese version of the summit would come with a twist.

Portugal argues that the EU should not limit its Africa policy to countries that currently pose the biggest challenges – such as those in North Africa, particularly the Sahel – but should treat the entire continent as important. Furthermore, from Lisbon's perspective, Europe has somewhat abandoned Africa to other major powers – notoriously, China – in the past decade, and now needs to establish a new, more balanced partnership with the continent. In this sense, Portugal is closely aligned with the proposal for a new strategic relationship with Africa that the European Commission presented in March 2020. The proposal calls for a stronger, more balanced relationship between the sides, including through cooperation in key areas such as the green transition; digital transformation; sustainable growth and jobs; peace and governance; and migration and mobility.

Nonetheless, despite its multilateralist credentials, the Portuguese government argues that any comprehensive European strategy on Africa needs to account for individual member states' approaches to, and interests in, the continent. Between one-quarter and one-third of Portuguese respondents to the 2020 Coalition Explorer survey want to engage with African countries through national governments or coalitions outside the EU framework. Africa policy appears to be the domain in which Portugal not only favours a more national approach, but – as in defence policy – is less pro-EU than most of the EU27. The country may be unwilling to allow other EU member states access to

its expertise and contacts with certain regions of Africa – assets that are recognised internationally and have given Lisbon leverage in various forums.

And then there is Brexit. As things stand, it is unlikely that the transition period will culminate in the signing by 31 December of an agreement on the future EU-UK relationship. This creates another important challenge for the Portuguese presidency. From a strategic point of view, Portugal feels rather uncomfortable with the current situation. Portugal still has its long-standing bilateral alliance with the UK but, at the multilateral level, this is the first time in decades that it is in a European coalition without the country.

So, in addition to establishing the terms of a future relationship that benefits both Brussels and London (which, for Lisbon, means the closest one possible), Portugal is also eager to see how it can maintain and deepen the bilateral alliance. Moreover, Lisbon is concerned about the immediate impact of the UK's exit on intra-EU politics. For obvious reasons – not least geography – Portugal has always valued a balanced relationship between Atlantic Europe and central Europe. On the heels of the German presidency (with its obvious central European inclinations) and preceding the Slovenian presidency (which will bring a more eastern European perspective), the Portuguese presidency could place a more Atlantic and Western emphasis on the balance of power within the EU. It could do so with the support of partners that have similar strategic concerns, such as Ireland, Denmark, and Sweden.

LISBON'S PLANS FOR THE EU

As Susi Dennison and Pawel Zerka discuss in their policy brief [“Together in trauma: Europeans and the world after covid-19”](#), Portugal's immediate response to the covid-19 pandemic was markedly more effective than that of larger southern European countries. As a consequence, the government in Lisbon – unlike those in Madrid and Rome – has strengthened its political position. As ECFR's polling shows, in late April and early May, 61 per cent of Portuguese had a more positive view of the government than they did before the crisis began. In contrast, 53 per cent of respondents in Portugal regarded EU institutions as irrelevant to the response to the pandemic. However, in June, the number of infections in the greater Lisbon area began rising, and the health authorities started having serious difficulty breaking contagion chains. As in some other member states, infections continued to peak after citizens returned from the summer holidays. At the same time, the Portuguese have begun to feel the first economic and social consequences of the crisis. Slowly but surely, the public's initial

perception of the government and of the EU's role has begun to change.

Six months after the outbreak of covid-19 in Europe, Portuguese citizens view the crisis as comprising two different phases: the first, focused on healthcare, is coming to an end with the gradual removal of lockdown measures; the second, which is beginning, is marked by the heavy economic and social effects of the pandemic. While the first phase primarily required domestic solutions, the second demands broader economic and social measures designed to stimulate growth and prevent a deep recession.

In this second phase, 91 per cent of Portuguese respondents to ECFR's May 2020 poll believe that there is a need for greater cooperation at the EU level. Typically, they seem to lack confidence in the national authorities to respond to the type of challenges that lie ahead. In fact, only 9 per cent of Portuguese citizens believe in their country's capacity for self-reliance (one of the lowest levels in the EU). Conversely, 75 per cent of them expect to receive support from either European institutions or other member states. This explains why an effort to create a more resilient Europe will be at the core of the Portuguese presidency.

The Portuguese government has clear priorities for post-coronavirus Europe: to overcome north-south divisions on the value of financial solidarity; to strengthen the continent's social welfare capacity in preparation for the looming crisis; and to make the transition to a new way of life – one that is greener and more digital. Portugal was one of the European countries most affected by the eurozone crisis, which created significant divisions within the EU. This experience has made Portugal's Socialist government – which came to power in October 2015 and was re-elected last year – a strong advocate of greater European solidarity.

With the arrival of covid-19, Lisbon once again became very worried about the divide between richer northern countries, which have more buffers against the impending recession, and those in the south, which feel more vulnerable. The Portuguese government argues that asymmetries and imbalances between member states not only endanger the stability of the single market but could also limit European resilience. Indeed, ECFR's May 2020 public opinion data confirm that the notion of financial solidarity is relatively unpopular in the richer parts of the EU and, conversely, is cherished in the southern and more peripheral parts of the bloc. Of course, within the political battles between 'frugal' countries and the rest, Portugal sides unyieldingly with the latter. And it will use its EU presidency to reinforce the values and policies of European financial solidarity. Lisbon is committed to the idea that extraordinary times require extraordinary measures.

Similarly, the Portuguese government regards its next presidency as a good opportunity to press for the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union. Silva argued in his 2020 speech to the diplomatic corps that this would not only provide a budgetary capacity to support reform and investment, and lead to a true convergence of the eurozone's diverse economies, but would also create an effective stabilisation capacity that could deal with asymmetric shocks. Lisbon believes that the completion of the union is also the *sine qua non* of strengthening the euro's international weight amid a global economic slowdown.

During its presidency, Portugal will also seek to align efforts to address three issues it sees as fundamental to Europe's resilience in the near future: climate change, the digital transition, and social welfare. Lisbon perceives these three issues as not only interlinked but mutually dependent. The first two issues – climate change and the digital transformation – stem from profound societal, economic, and cultural transitions that are already under way, and are priorities of the von der Leyen Commission. The German and Slovenian presidencies also place a great emphasis on these challenges, as does the European Parliament. Still, the Portuguese presidency's main aim will be to address these two issues along with social welfare in the EU (in line with the Gothenburg Declaration of November 2017).

The nature of the challenges the EU faces in these three areas suggests that it cannot address any of them in isolation. How can Europe make climate action compatible with economic growth? How can it turn green growth into reform of industrial agriculture? How can it generate enough new jobs in the digital economy? How can it educate and train citizens to succeed in these transitions? How can it strengthen social protections at the same time? And how can it improve productivity and reduce inequality? These are some of the issues on which the Portuguese government wants to launch a broad debate that will culminate in a Social Summit (in the context of an informal meeting of the European Council) in Porto in May 2021.

Portugal is clearly committed to the green transition and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2050, the country has already begun to follow a plan to that effect. Moreover, the Portuguese government staunchly supports the implementation of a Just Transition Fund and the development of ambitious policy measures at the EU level to honour commitments made under the Paris Agreement. Domestically, there is a strong social and political consensus on these policies: data from ECFR's polling show that 58 per cent of the Portuguese have become even more supportive of climate change commitments since the onset of the covid-19 crisis.

Finally, the Portuguese government recognises the growing relevance of digital economy and artificial intelligence (AI) at not only at the national and EU levels but also in a strategic context. However, Lisbon emphasises that the material benefits of digitalisation and the widespread adoption of AI should not undermine human-centred European values. According to the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index 2019, Portugal is one of a group of EU countries with only "average performance" in these fields (ranking in 19th place among the EU28). Accordingly, Portugal recognises that it is not competitive in AI and digitalisation individually, so needs to further align itself with EU strategy and policies in these areas. The Portuguese authorities hope that this will happen as a result of the country's EU presidency. They also believe that this will create greater awareness of the importance of these innovative and somewhat technical issues among Portuguese citizens.

WILL PORTUGAL WIN SUPPORT FOR ITS AGENDA?

This is a complex and ambitious agenda for a country such as Portugal. However, due to the successive crises that have taken place in recent years, Portugal has come to see itself as a member state that is committed to deepening European integration. The country has undeniable structural weaknesses – both economic and social – and a peripheral position that sometimes leaves its voice unheard. Moreover, the UK's withdrawal from the project changed the union's internal balance, forcing Portugal to seek coalitions with other powers.

According to the 2020 edition of the EU Coalition Explorer, Portugal ranks in 18th place in its overall influence, responsiveness, contacts, and shared interests. It is, therefore, a mid-ranking country. With the exception of Spain and Italy, few fellow EU member states view Portugal as a privileged partner. Other countries with levels of similar influence – such as Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Slovakia – consider Portugal a likely partner. The same survey also ranks Portugal as less disappointed in other member states than any country other than Latvia. All these factors suggest that the country still has room to increase its influence. And, in this sense, the demands of the present moment provide a good opportunity for Portugal.

The EU now needs to use its global role and its internal policies to bring voters together, delivering on the issues they care about most. The fact that 63 per cent of Europeans favour more cooperation at the European level shows there is popular support for a stronger EU, if the bloc can demonstrate its

purpose and effectiveness to voters. Despite its status as a smaller member state, Portugal can have high ambitions in this area – particularly given that many of voters’ priorities for the post-pandemic era align with its original ambitions for the presidency.

To be sure, Portugal has shown in the recent negotiations over the Multiannual Financial Framework that it can act as a bridge between different groups in the EU. Lisbon’s skill in this could prove invaluable in discussions about how to handle Beijing, combining its sympathy with the hard-hit south with its clear-eyed assessment of China’s motivations for shaping the rules of the international system to its advantage in the wake of covid-19.

Likewise, Portugal’s effective cooperation with France during the crisis (as part of a wider southern alliance that pushed for a generous recovery mechanism) could provide a springboard for a longer-term approach to the EU. As its government is stable relative to those in some other southern EU countries, Portugal is in a good position to be an important voice in the south – a voice that it could amplify through close cooperation with France. As ECFR’s Coronavirus Special [shows](#), Lisbon and Paris see each other as being among their most helpful partners in addressing the economic aspects of the pandemic. By drawing on the partnership with France, and the focus on strengthening the EU’s voice on the global stage that it shares with Germany, Portugal will have the support of the two largest EU states as it pursues its international agenda with other European partners.

In recent years, Portugal’s governments and diplomatic apparatus have been relatively successful in projecting a positive image of their approach to Europe and the world. The Social Democrat government that led the country from 2011 to 2015 sought to reinforce Portugal’s role in globalisation by making the country more open to the world (an area in which it has been a pioneer in previous historical eras). The current Socialist government has continued on this path, but added another dimension by transforming from a participant into a player. Having been widely considered “the good student of Europe” for many years (at least domestically), Portugal is now making a greater effort to ensure that the rest of Europe hears its concerns. Prime Minister António Costa has been vocal on this matter. And the fact that Finance Minister Mario Centeno chaired the Eurogroup for two and a half years is a testament to this new approach. Given that the 2008 financial crisis spurred it to take on this expanded role, the Portuguese government now hopes that the pandemic will help the country further amplify its voice. There are signs that the Portuguese EU presidency could be exactly the boost it needs.

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