



PROVEDORIA DE JUSTIÇA

Information on how the Portuguese Ombudsman works to reduce mortality and morbidity of children under five years of age. In particular, please describe any action that the Portuguese Ombudsman has taken to ensure that human rights standards and principles such as non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability, are systematically integrated in efforts to address and reduce under-five mortality and morbidity.

How is the Portuguese Ombudsman working to ensure that underlying determinants such as safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, safe food and adequate nutrition, adequate housing, healthy environmental conditions and gender equality are taken into consideration in the prevention of child mortality and morbidity?

In Portugal, the protection and promotion of the rights of the child is entrusted to the national, general Ombudsman – the *Provedor de Justiça* – who is also the country's National Human Rights Institution, with A-status accreditation since 1999.

The Portuguese Constitution and the Statute of the Portuguese Ombudsman define the mandate of this independent State body in very broad terms, encompassing both the protection and the promotion of all fundamental rights, in relation to all citizens – regardless, *inter alia*, of their age.

As referred to in article 2 of the Statute of the Portuguese Ombudsman (Law 9/91, of 9th April), the activities of the Ombudsman shall focus namely on the activity of the services integrated in the central, regional and local public administration, the Armed Forces, the public institutes, the public companies or the companies whose capital is mostly public and the concessionaires operating public services or exploiting state property.

However under the Constitution and his Statute, the Ombudsman's activity results primarily of complaints that are submitted to him/her by the citizens, the Portuguese Ombudsman does not develop its activity directly before private individuals.



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Nevertheless, over the years the Portuguese Ombudsman has carried out several efforts to address the rights of the child in an increasingly specialized manner, namely by putting in place specific structures, members of staff and easier, more informal ways of lodging complaints.

At present, the area of the rights of the child is mainly handled by the Department on Children, Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (N-CID), not focusing on the subject matter of complaints, but rather on the special vulnerability of the person whose rights are being violated or at risk.

One of the aims of the N-CID is to concentrate the work of the Portuguese Ombudsman regarding children's rights.

However, it should be noted that the rates of mortality and morbidity of children under five years of age are not a major concern in Portugal.

In fact, the 2012 UNICEF Progress Report on Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed indicates that Portugal is on the list of the 10 countries of the world with the best results in this area: Portugal has a child mortality rate of 3.4 per one thousand children, along with countries like Singapore (2.6), Slovenia (2.8), Sweden (2.8), Finland (2.9), Cyprus (3.1), Norway (3.1), Luxembourg (3.2), Japan (3.4) and Denmark (3.7).

It is important to note, moreover, that over the past 51 years this indicator reached a maximum value of 111.70 in 1960 and a minimum value of 3.40 in 2011.

Considering that today Portugal does not have a problem related to the rates of mortality and infant morbidity, the work of the Portuguese Ombudsman does not focus specifically on this matter.