



Portugal launches plan to boost exports hit by pandemic



Portugal's government has launched a plan aimed at boosting its export sector to alleviate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with a goal of increasing exports to 53 percent of gross domestic product by 2030 from 44 percent last year.

Announced late on Thursday, the ambitious plan is set to include various measures to help firms access more foreign markets, diversify exports and hire internationally oriented specialists.

It would also include a financing line to increase foreign demand for Portuguese products, as well as a range of tax incentives such as exemption from stamp duty for export credit insurance backed by the government.

"We're experiencing a particularly difficult situation and we want to increase the height of the export sector," Eurico Brilhante Dias, Secretary of State for Internationalisation, told reporters.

"We want a 20 percent to 25 percent increase in the number of companies that export goods," he said.

The pandemic is set to leave long-lasting scars on Portugal's economy, which was propelled back to growth by exports and booming tourism after a 2010-14 economic and debt crisis.

Last year, exports of goods and services rose 4.3 percent to a record of 93.5 billion euros (\$108.5 billion), representing 44 percent of GDP.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has already led to an abrupt drop in exports, with the country's central bank predicting they will fall around 25 percent in 2020, mainly because tourism collapsed due to lockdowns and the absence of holidaymakers.

The central bank sees Portuguese GDP contracting 9.5 percent in 2020, after growing 2.2 percent in 2019.

Portugal has more than 35,000 exporting companies, of which more than 22,000 are exporters of goods.

"The Portuguese economy and the Portuguese export sector have good 'fundamentals' and, in this first phase, by 2023, the goal is to return to the same level of 2019," Brilhante Dias said.

2020-07-27 09:15

Reuters/AICEP

Partilhar

