



PORTUGAL – 2023

Key findings

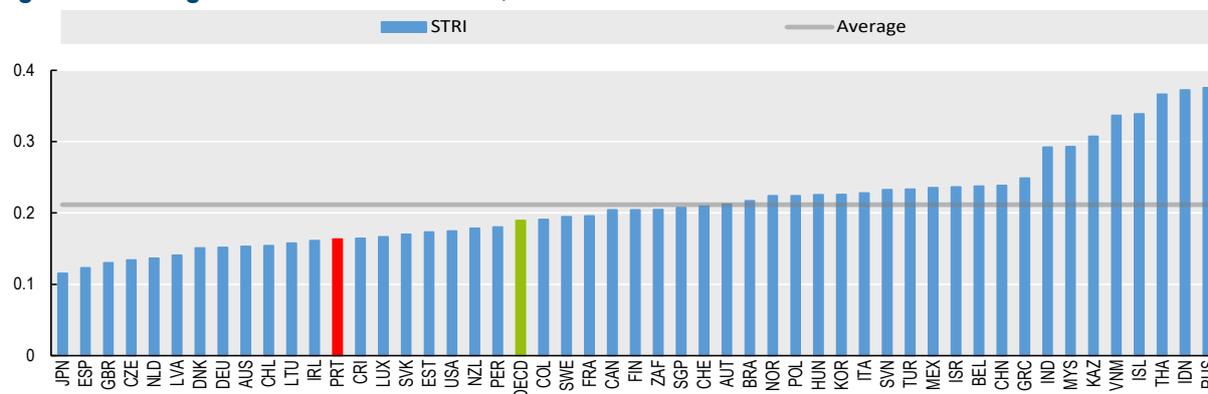
- The 2023 STRI of Portugal is below the OECD average and relatively low compared to all countries in the STRI sample. The index has decreased slightly compared to 2022.
- Courier services is the most open sector in Portugal while engineering services is the most restricted, relative to the sectoral average.
- Despite the overall favourable environment for services trade, restrictions remain for professional services such as legal services, accounting services and engineering services.

Recommendation

- Trade in services strengthens resilience across supply chains, facilitating environmental sustainability and promoting greater inclusiveness. To ensure the benefits of open markets and a rules-based international trading system, national and multilateral action is needed to lower barriers and reduce trade costs, promote greater regulatory interoperability, and facilitate the digital transformation of economies

The 2023 STRI of Portugal is below the OECD average, and relatively low compared to other countries in the STRI sample (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average STRI across countries, 2023ⁱ



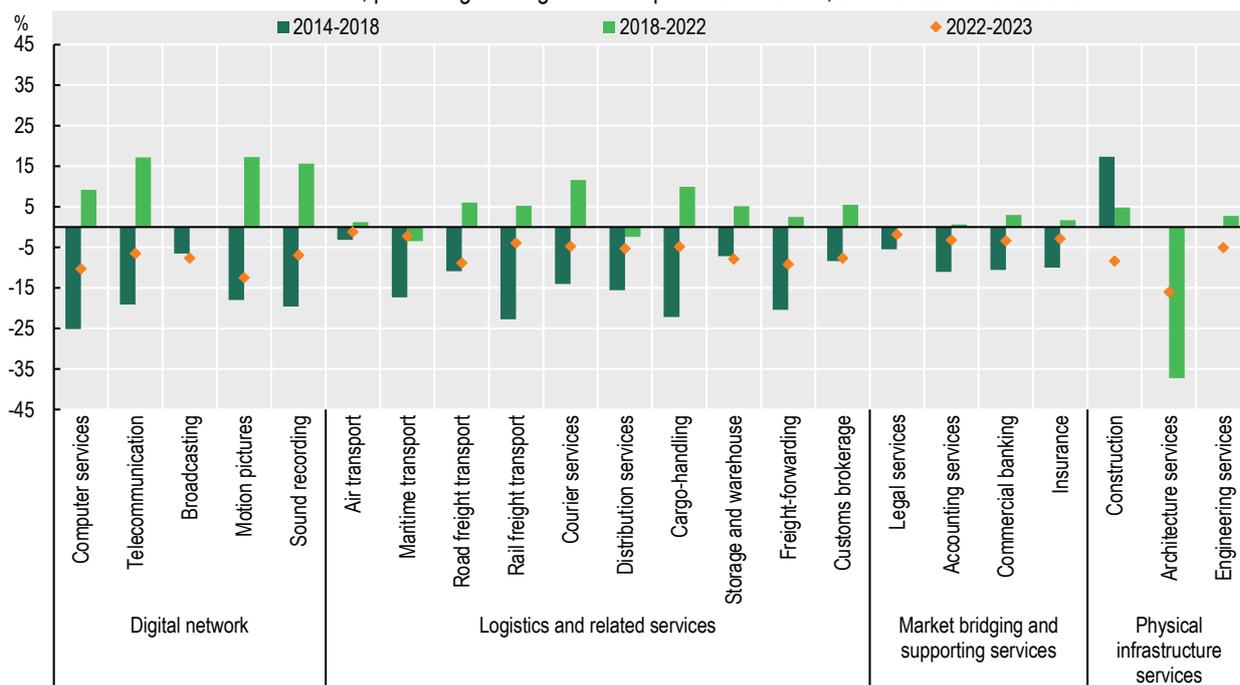
OECD (2023). STRI and TiVA databases.

The regulatory environment for trade in services in Portugal is relatively open. However, certain general restrictions apply, in particular regarding the cross-border movement of foreign (non-European) services providers. Foreigners entering Portugal as contractual services suppliers or independent suppliers can stay in the country only up to 12 months on their first entry permit. Regarding intra-corporate transferees, labour market tests apply and the maximum duration of stay in the country is 36 months. The standards for cross-border transfers of personal data are set at the EU level. Transfers to non-EEA economies can take place when these ensure an adequate level of data protection or, in the absence of this, appropriate safeguards (e.g. binding corporate rules or standard contractual clauses) are in place.

In recent years, several changes in policy affected the index for Portugal (Figure 2). In 2023, a decrease in the time needed to process a Schengen visa explains the decrease across sectors. In 2022, the STRI increased for all sectors except broadcasting and legal services due to new EU-wide measures affecting access to procurement markets. However, also in 2022, a reform on the Portuguese Public Professional Association for Statutory Auditors (Estatuto da Ordem dos Revisores Oficiais de Contas, Law n.º 140/2015) introduced the possibility for third-country (non-EU) auditors to provide services in Portugal if they have a domiciled representative in the country, eliminating the requirement of a three-year residency period in order to provide auditing services. In 2019, Portugal suppressed the reciprocity requirement to recognise qualifications gained abroad in the context of the admission to the Portuguese Order of Architects, which is a prerequisite to practice as an architect in Portugal.

Figure 2. Evolution of STRI indices by sector in Portugal

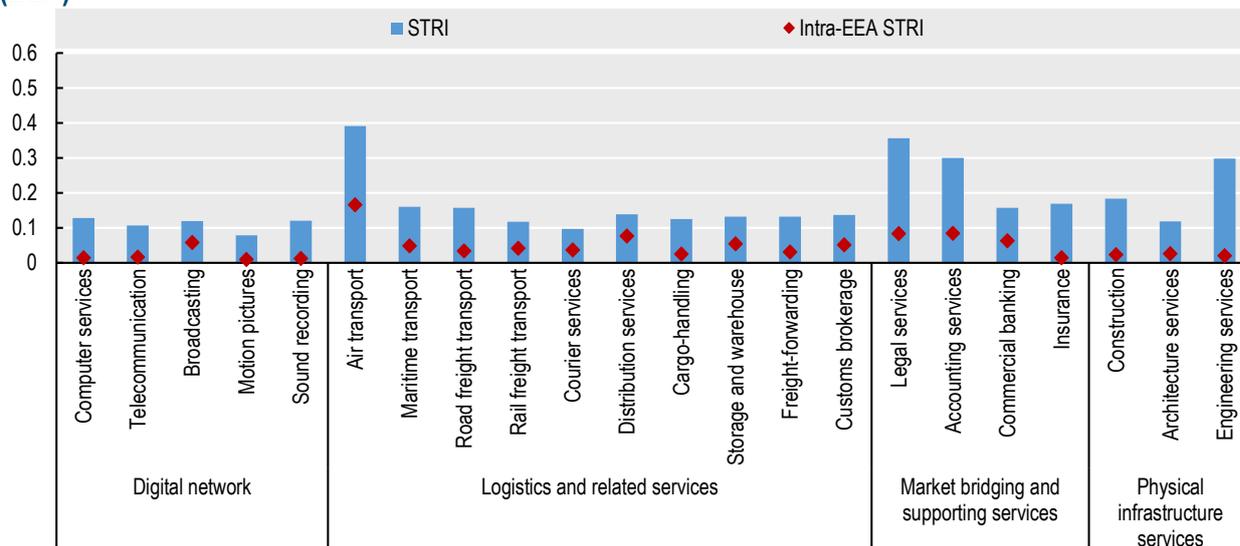
Services Trade Restrictiveness Index, percentage change over the period 2014-2018, 2018-2022 and 2022-2023



OECD (2023). STRI database.

Services trade barriers are significantly lower within the European Economic Area across all services sectors (Figure 2b). Portugal maintains an open market for services suppliers from other EU Member States.

Figure 2b. Regulatory barriers affecting services trade within the European Economic Area (EEA)



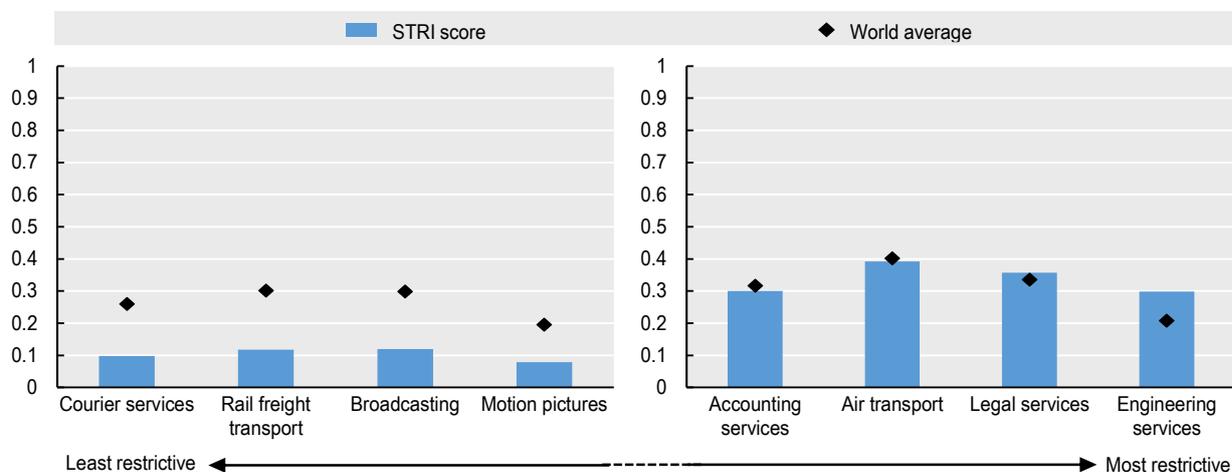
Note: The traditional STRI indicates the level of restrictiveness on a most favoured nation (MFN) basis towards third countries, and the intra-EEA STRI indicates the level of restrictiveness towards EEA members. Intra-EEA STRI covers 24 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden).

Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

Figure 3 ranks Portugal's sectors relative to the respective sector's world average. Courier services, rail freight transport, broadcasting and motion pictures are the sectors with the relatively lowest score.

Conversely, accounting services, air transport, legal services and engineering services are the sectors with the relatively highest score.

Figure 3. Sectoral breakdown - The least and most restricted sectors in Portugal compared to world average



Note: Selection was made based on how far the sectors' score were from the world average score, as a percentage difference

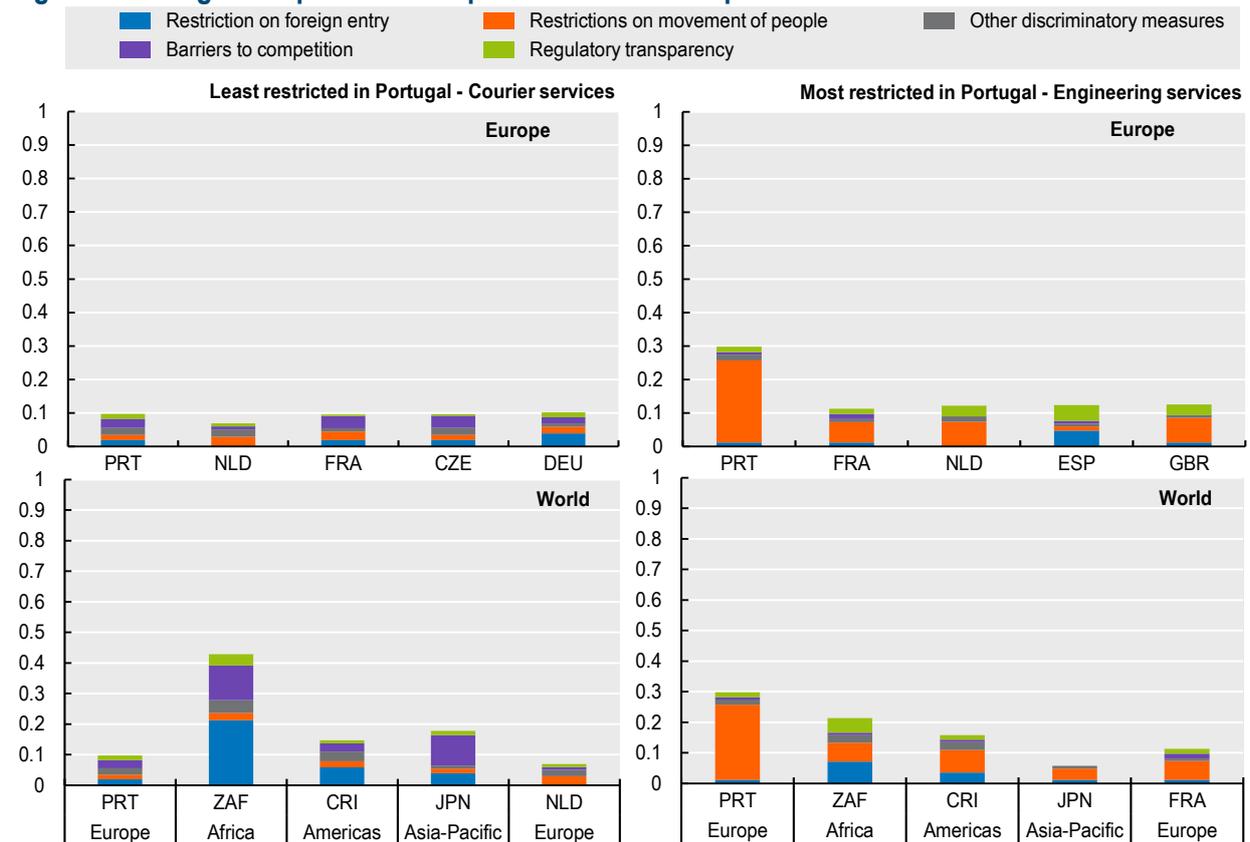
i.e. $(STRI_{country, sector} - STRI_{world average, sector}) / STRI_{world average, sector}$

Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

Courier services are the least restricted in Portugal compared to the average STRI across all countries. Relatively few restrictions regarding foreign entry or barriers to competition are present in this sector compared to other countries.

On the other hand, engineering services is the most restricted services sector in Portugal. The restrictions on movement of people are significant compared to best performers. Citizenship of an EEA country or a country that has signed a reciprocal agreement with Portugal is a prerequisite to practice engineering services, while temporary licensing systems are not in place (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Portugal compared to Europe and World's best performers



Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

Recent policy changes

In 2022, Portugal eased the residency requirements for non-EU auditors, allowing foreign service providers to designate a representative domiciled in the country to provide auditing services. In 2019, Portugal repealed the reciprocity requirement to recognise qualifications gained abroad for admission to the Portuguese Order of Architects, which is a prerequisite to practice architecture services in Portugal.

Furthermore, several recent changes affecting Portugal were due to changes in EU law. In August 2022, Regulation 2022/1031 (EU) entered into force, aiming to regulate access of third-country (non-EU) goods and services to the EU's public procurement and concession markets. At this stage, no implementing act restricting access to the EU procurement market has been adopted by the European Union. The Regulation applies to public procurement and concessions where the EU has not undertaken market access commitments in an international agreement.

In air transport, a series of temporary rules allowing airlines to retain historic slots, despite not using their slots according to the 80/20 grandfathering rule, were in place from 1 March 2020 to 25 March 2023 on grounds of reduced air traffic levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 26 March 2023, such slot relief rules are no longer in force.

In telecommunications, maximum Union-wide voice termination rates defined by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/654 took effect on 1 July 2021. These maximum termination rates do not, however, generally apply to calls originating from countries outside the EU.

From 1 July 2021, the EU abolished the VAT de minimis regime for goods valued under EUR 22. In maritime transport, Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/436 extended the existing block exemption to liner shipping consortia from competition law until April 2024.

More information

- » Access all country notes, sector notes, and interactive STRI tools at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Read more about [Services Trade Policies and the Global Economy](#)
- » More information about measuring the regulatory environment for services trade in the Intra-EEA region: oe.cd/intraeeaSTRI
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org

ⁱNote: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. The STRI database records measures on a Most Favoured Nation basis. Air transport and road freight cover only commercial establishment (with accompanying movement of people). The indices are based on laws and regulations in force on 31 October 2023. The STRI regulatory database covers the 38 OECD Members, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Peru, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and Viet Nam. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.