



## **48<sup>th</sup> PORTUGAL - UNITED STATES**

### **STANDING BILATERAL COMMISSION**

**Lisbon, November 17, 2022**

#### **JOINT STATEMENT**

1. The 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Portugal-United States Standing Bilateral Commission (SBC) met on November 17 in Lisbon to discuss developments in the bilateral relationship and pressing international and regional matters, as well as NATO and general security and defense topics. The SBC also discussed Lajes Field updates and cooperation in the Azores beyond Lajes.
2. Highlighting the importance of the bilateral partnership, the SBC noted the most recent high-level meetings since the previous SBC, in particular between Foreign Minister João Cravinho and Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on September 15, and with Secretary Blinken on September 20 during the UNGA Ministerial on Strengthening Atlantic Cooperation. These engagements further advanced our important collaboration on matters of common interest. The SBC also noted President Rebelo de Sousa's September visit to California, the U.S. state with the largest Portuguese diaspora, and the recent visit of the Secretary of Internationalization Bernardo Ivo Cruz to the United States in October, as well as the meeting between Minister of Economy and Maritime Affairs Antonio Costa Silva and Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Marisa Lago in Lisbon on November 2.
3. The SBC highlighted the excellent state of bilateral relations between Portugal and the United States, rooted in deep historical ties, shared democratic values, and a common vision for addressing global challenges, and identified opportunities to continue building upon the strength of this strategic partnership on new paths such as Atlantic cooperation and energy security, including long-term clean energy collaboration.

4. The SBC discussed several issues of mutual concern in the global political arena, with both countries reiterating their strongest condemnation of Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and reaffirming that Russia's attempted annexation of Ukrainian territory is illegal and will not be recognized. The SBC also expressed deep concern with the global consequences of the invasion, namely the exacerbation of food insecurity unleashed by this aggression, and reiterated their full support to the UN Secretary General's efforts to broker the Black Sea Grain Initiative and to renew it. The SBC highlighted the continuing transatlantic unity and EU-U.S. coordination, and both countries restated their support for Ukraine and their commitment to continue coordinating political, financial, material and humanitarian support.
5. Portugal and the United States reaffirmed Atlantic cooperation as a continued priority for both countries, that have been actively working together and renewed their commitment to a peaceful, prosperous, and open Atlantic region and a shared responsibility in addressing the numerous challenges and opportunities in the Atlantic. Both countries underlined the pledge of shared commitment expressed at the ministerial level in New York on September 20 to strengthen Atlantic cooperation and advance shared sustainable development, economic, environmental, scientific and maritime governance goals across the Atlantic, seeking to avoid duplication of efforts with other ongoing initiatives. Expressing their intention to complement and reinforce existing initiatives across all four quadrants of the Atlantic, the SBC recognized the contribution of both countries to strengthening Atlantic security, economic sustainability, and growth, and identified ways in which U.S. engagement with the Atlantic Centre can be reinforced. The SBC underscored the continued strategic importance of the Azores and its potential for advancing Atlantic cooperation.
6. Taking positive note of progress in the renewable energy sector, and reiterating previous commitments to energy security and diversification, both sides decided to explore opportunities for closer collaboration in areas of common strategic interest, including research and development and commercial partnerships in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and green hydrogen derivatives, as well as on their related value chains. The SBC also recalled the shared goal of reducing Europe's dependence on Russian fossil fuels, including through natural gas supply to Europe through Portugal, highlighting the geostrategic relevance of the Port of Sines, taking advantage of existing and future infrastructures, as a

gateway to supply LNG and, in the near future, renewable energies, including hydrogen, to Europe.

7. Recalling previous commitments to expand the scope of bilateral cooperation in cybersecurity and recognizing opportunities and challenges that arise from digital transformation, the SBC reiterated the importance of partners and allies working together to strengthen cybersecurity cooperation to increase national cyber resilience, promote responsible state behavior in cyberspace, and counter malicious cyber activity. In this regard, the SBC welcomed continued cyber cooperation engagements, including Portugal's offer to organize a joint seminar in the first semester of 2023.
8. Both countries welcomed ongoing negotiations on MOUs for enhanced cooperation between Portugal and the State of California, between Portugal's Directorate General of Health and the U.S. National Cancer Institute on cancer research and treatment in Africa, and between Portugal and the United States on the exchange of wildland fire management resources. They looked forward to the signature of the MoU between the Camões Institute for Cooperation and Language and the U.S. Agency for International Development on triangular cooperation in Africa.
9. Both countries reaffirmed the importance of a strong EU-U.S. transatlantic relationship to promote peace, security, democracy, multilateralism, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to strengthen our common answers to pressing global challenges.
10. The SBC welcomed Portugal and the United States' mutual ambition of reinforcing cooperation in trade-related matters. Considering the EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council as an important forum advancing the transatlantic trade and economic relationship, both countries support TTC work. In this sense, the SBC highlighted the further potential of bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries, as bilateral trade has consistently increased since 2019. The SBC further called for an expansion of trade to encourage economic growth, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The SBC also noted the priority accorded to boosting startups and the strides being made by both countries to create favorable ecosystems for entrepreneurship and lauded the successful convening of the global Web Summit in Lisbon in November 2022 and the prominent U.S. participation, including both government and private sector delegations, and the participation of Under Secretary of Commerce

for International Trade Marisa Lago as a speaker, a Women in Tech trade delegation, and the presence of a SelectUSA booth.

11. The SBC also highlighted both countries' shared goal of joint action to raise climate change awareness and to combat the ocean and climate crises, noting the pledges at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the announcements at the seventh Our Ocean Conference, and the commitments at the second UN Ocean Conference, held in Lisbon from June 27 to July 1 2022, in which the United States participated with an interagency delegation led by Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, who was joined by other senior officials including Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Monica Medina, and Members of the U.S. Congress. In Sharm el-Sheikh, at COP27, both countries intend to continue to work together on furthering the implementation of Glasgow commitments, advancing issues related to the Ocean-Climate-Biodiversity nexus, and enhancing efforts to keep the 1.5-degree goal within reach.
12. Both countries decided to maintain and strengthen their cooperation and consultations on security in Africa, namely in northern Mozambique, the Great Lakes region, Central Africa, northern Ethiopia, the Sahel, and the Gulf of Guinea. Portugal and the United States plan to continue to focus on supporting African partners' initiatives and capacities to face these challenges to help ensure peace, stability, sustained economic development and respect for human rights. Both countries noted the opportunities for joint economic cooperation, including by their private sectors, with several African partners, in particular Portuguese-speaking countries like Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe, and Guinea-Bissau.
13. The SBC also discussed the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the larger Indo-Pacific region. Both sides recognized the importance of closely consulting and cooperating on a full range of issues in the framework of their respective multifaceted approaches to the PRC and expressed their concern about reports on the PRC's ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Tibet. The sides reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and stressed that cross-Strait differences should be resolved exclusively by peaceful means. The SBC also discussed broader Indo-Pacific strategies and synergies and committed to closely coordinate on shared issues of concern.

14. The SBC recognized the strategic importance of Latin America in the current geopolitical context. On Venezuela, the United States and Portugal discussed the importance of resuming inclusive negotiations in Mexico between the parties as soon as possible, as well as the need to implement the EU Electoral Observation Mission recommendations on electoral reforms.
15. The SBC recognized the excellent bilateral relations in the field of security and defense, anchored in the Transatlantic partnership and NATO, and intensifying into greater mutual interest in the Atlantic space. The SBC welcomed the High-Level Defense Talks held in Lisbon in July 2022. The regularity of this dialogue, which has been sought by both countries, ramps up cooperation in important areas such as Space, Cyber Defense, Women Peace and Security, Maritime Security, and Africa.
16. The SBC reiterated support for initiatives to enhance capacity-building support to partners, which are essential to face known and emerging global threats. In doing so, the SBC acknowledged the need to cooperate in addressing these challenges in several fora, including NATO and the transatlantic community, through the U.S.-EU partnership, as well as the UN and the international community at large. The SBC commended Portugal and the United States for their significant contributions to overseas peace operations and international security.
17. The SBC also recognized that Russia's February 24, 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine triggered an important change in the Euro-Atlantic security landscape, resulting in a deteriorating strategic environment that has been accompanied by the broadening of the spectrum of military action to the domains of space, cyberspace or hybrid forms, and blurring the lines between conventional and unconventional forms of conflict. As a result, the SBC renewed its commitment to work within the NATO Alliance to adapt to and address this new environment.
18. While acknowledging NATO remains the indispensable transatlantic forum to consult, coordinate, and act on all matters related to Allies' security, both countries also recognized the importance of a reinforced strategic dialogue and cooperation between the EU and NATO to ensure complementarity and preserve a spirit of mutual openness and transparency.
19. The SBC also welcomed a greater U.S. involvement in European defense initiatives, including U.S. participation in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) Military Mobility project, as a contribution to a

stronger and more capable European defense, that is complementary to NATO.

20. The SBC received briefings on the most recent discussions held at the Technical Commission and Labor Committee meetings and their respective activities to resolve issues at Lajes Field, including pending issues relating to reassessing the area development plan in place at Lajes Field.
21. The SBC took note that the United States proposed at the last Technical Commission meeting a modification to the Project Approval Process to the Ministry of Defense in order to ensure timely award of contracts for future infrastructure projects and to preemptively avoid any potential loss of funding for such projects; this proposal is currently being analyzed.
22. The SBC reiterated the importance of environmental safety in the Azores and underscored the Technical Commission's role in continuing to track progress on matters related to environmental sites. The SBC lauded recent constructive discussions and was encouraged by ongoing progress on the environmental sites where a path forward has been identified. The SBC recognized the importance of the ongoing collaboration between the U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center and Portugal's National Laboratory for Civil Engineering at Lajes Field, and encouraged the continuation of joint fieldwork and the mutual exchange of data, reports, and technical expertise between U.S. and Portuguese representatives.
23. The SBC noted the significance of the completion of the groundwater flow study and that a contract was already awarded to address a suspected leak from a previously decommissioned fuel line at site 3001. The contract includes the installation of three additional monitoring wells and potential removal of any contaminated product if released product is found, as well as the planned commencement of a survey of the existing groundwater monitoring wells around the site, to maintain the integrity of the monitoring wells and ensure they continue to function for their intended purpose to avoid future risk to human health and safety. The SBC expressed its willingness to build on the results of the ongoing scientific and technical work.
24. The SBC registered the shared commitment of both countries to the strengthening of cooperation of the Azores with the United States. Acknowledging the work that is being developed at the scientific level, towards the establishment of cooperation between the University of the Azores and selected U.S. universities and colleges, particularly those

located in areas of stronger Portuguese-Azorean presence, the SBC encouraged allocation of adequate resources to foster this work.

25. Finally, the SBC commended the work of the bilateral committees of Science, Technology, Energy and Environment (STEE), Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), and Trade and Investment (TIC).
26. The STEE Committee held a fruitful discussion on Atlantic cooperation, highlighting the importance of the scientific, technological, environmental and ocean domains, including through cooperation in the Atlantic International Research (AIR) Centre and the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance. Participants identified opportunities to continue promoting joint initiatives on space, renewable energies, energy security and climate. The SBC lauded the joint effort of both countries to reinvigorate academic and research cooperation and praised the important support of the Luso-American Development Foundation (FLAD), the Fulbright Commission, the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and the Embassy Science Fellows Program.
27. The Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Committee met November 7 to discuss cooperation in Lusophone Africa, shared peacekeeping priorities, joint forest fire recovery and mitigation efforts, law enforcement cooperation, trafficking in persons, aviation security, and cybersecurity topics.
28. The Trade and Investment Committee (TIC) held fruitful exchanges on bilateral trade and investment, energy security and renewable energy transitions, the new Inflation Reduction Act, trade missions, Web Summit and startups, agricultural issues, the blue economy and updates on the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council. The TIC concluded by discussing potential areas of bilateral collaboration.
29. The SBC decided to hold its next meeting in Washington D.C. in the spring of 2023.