

# Foreign inmates in Portuguese (and European) prisons: Analysis of last decade's evolution.\*

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## Framework

The phenomenon of migration across and to Europe and the increase of the mobility among European Union countries presents both opportunities and challenges for the states of EU. Due to many reasons, the foreign population had contact with the legal system and the measures to combat cross-border crimes had led to a sharp increase in the number of foreign prisoners detained in Europe (Kalmthout, Meulen and Dunkel, 2007).

Globally, foreign inmates' proportion among European prison population increased in the last decade (Tournier, 2001; Aebi, 2003; Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). Portugal is a good example of that growth: from 2001 to 2007 the percentage of foreign inmates has increased by 8.4% (DGSP, 2001-2007).

Results about demographic, judicial and penal characteristics of foreign inmates constitute an important contribution to understand deviant trajectories and imprisonment experiences as well as to explore the role of migration in the changes occurring in foreign prison population in Portugal and Europe.

## Method

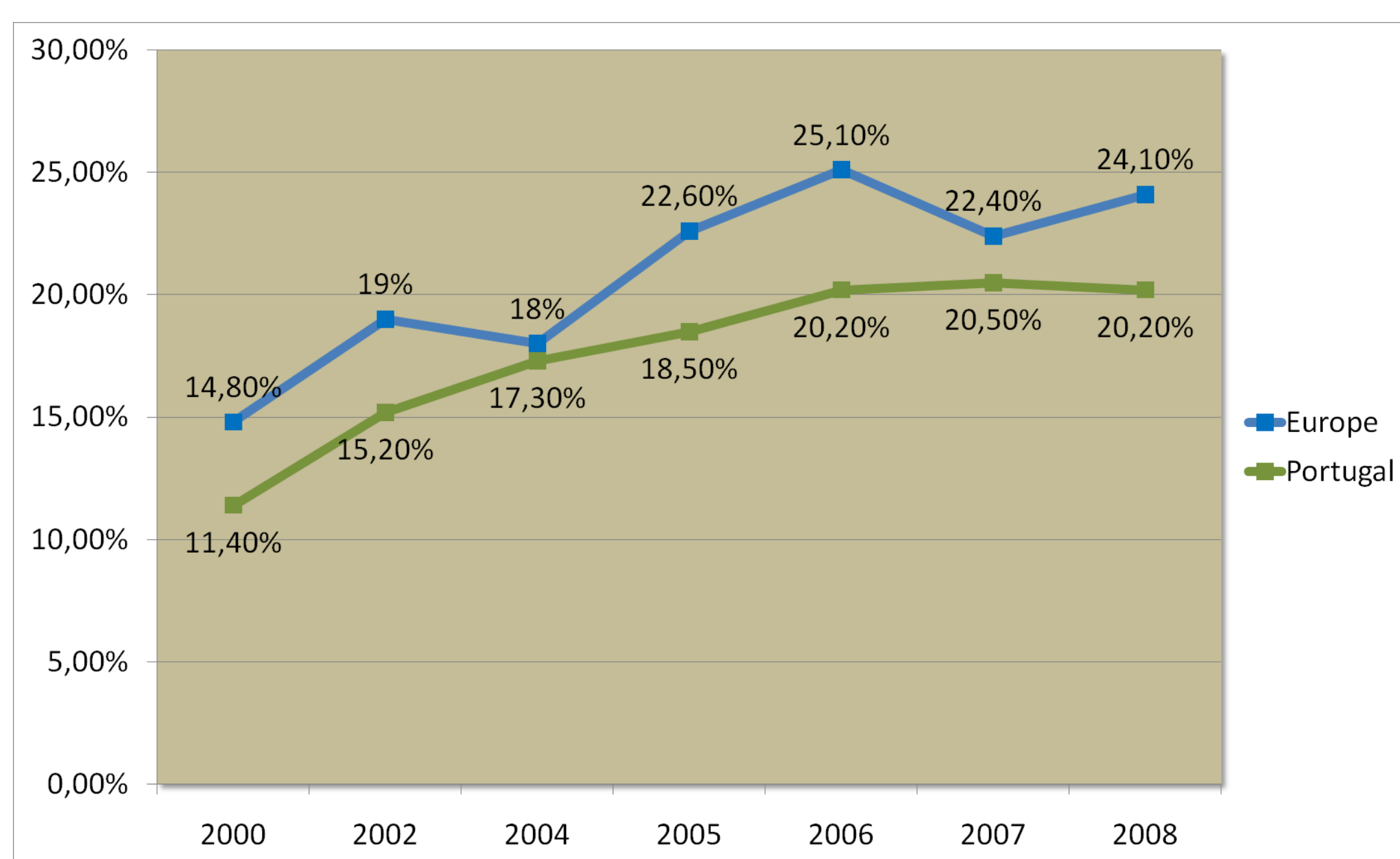
As a starting point for our wider study about "Life trajectories of foreign women in Portuguese Prisons" we analyzed data provided by official statistics' in several prisons in the Portuguese context.

The sources of information rely on data produced by the Official Prison Services from Portugal and on the reports created by the Council of Europe, during the last decade.

## Results

### Citizenship and criminal offences in foreign inmates in Portuguese prisons' context

Percentage of foreign inmates in Portugal and the rest of Europe



	2001	2003	2006	2008	2010
<b>Citizenship</b>	Africa: 61.3%	Africa: 56%	Africa: 53.5%	Africa: 57.6%	Africa: 56.5%
	Europe: 24.3%	Europe: 28.6%	Europe: 24.5%	Europe: 23.7%	Europe: 24.9%
	South America: 12.9%	South America: 13%	South America: 19.9%	South America: 17.4%	South America: 16.8%
	Cape Verde: 30.7%	Cape Verde: 31.6%	Cape Verde: 31.2%	Cape Verde: 31.9%	Cape Verde: 30.6%
	Angola: 15%	Angola: 11.9%	Brazil: 10.8%	Brazil: 10.7%	Brazil: 12.8%
	Brazil: 6.9%	Brazil: 6.8%	Angola: 9.6%	Angola: 9.8%	Guinea-Bissau: 9.4%
<b>Type of crime</b>	Drug offences: 52.6%	Drug offences: 52.8%	Drug offences: 52.1%	Drug offences: 51.4%	Drug offences: 44.6%
	Property offences against the person: 16.5%	Property offences against the person: 18%	Offences against the person: 18%	Offences against the person: 18.4%	Offences against the person: 21.7%
	Others: 3%	Others: 5.1%	Others: 12.5%	Others: 11.8%	Others: 12.1%
			Property offences: 17.4%	Property offences: 18.4%	Property offences: 21.6%
			Property offences against the person: 18%	Property offences against the person: 18.4%	Property offences against the person: 21.7%

## Discussion and Conclusion

- Globally, the proportion of foreign inmates has increased in EU countries during the last decade: in 2000 the proportion was 14.8% whereas in 2008 the proportion rose to 24.1%. During that period Europe had an irregular growth, whose higher point was in 2006 (25.1%) and lower point was in 2000 (14.8%).
- If we focus only on Portuguese context, Portugal displays a constant rise until 2007 (in 2008 we can see a slight decrease but there is no available data to confirm if it shows a new tendency). In 2000 the proportion of foreign inmates in Portuguese prisons was 11.4% whereas in 2008 the proportion increased to 20.2%.
- Regarding citizenship, Cape Verde was the country with the highest proportions during the last decade, followed by Angola, until 2003. From 2003 on, the proportion of inmates from Brazil increased and took second place (Seabra & Santos, 2006). In 2010, Angola was replaced by Guinea-Bissau which became the third country most represented by foreign inmates.
- Foreign inmates detained in prisons are mainly from Africa, followed by Europe and South America. Throughout the decade the proportion of African countries decreased – 61% in 2000 to 56.5% in 2010; the proportion of European countries kept stable and South American Countries gained relevance – 12.9% in 2000 to 16.8% in 2010. Despite those changes, African countries are still the most represented ones probably because, historically, they are related to the Portuguese immigration phenomenon (Seabra & Santos, 2006).

## References