

COVID-19

Fact sheet on the epidemiological situation in Portugal

6 September 2021

1. INCIDENCE OF CASES

- As of 2 September 2021, Portugal has a 14-day case notification rate of **286,6 new cases notified per 100.000 population**.

The number of new cases in Portugal has recorded a **trend reversal in the last week of July**, and **the number of new cases has been decreasing** since that moment (FIG. 1). In spite of the Delta variant, which became dominant in the whole country during the month of June, the mortality rate remains very low (as of 2nd September, the 14-day mortality rate reached 1,46/100.000 population), mostly due to a successful vaccination campaign.

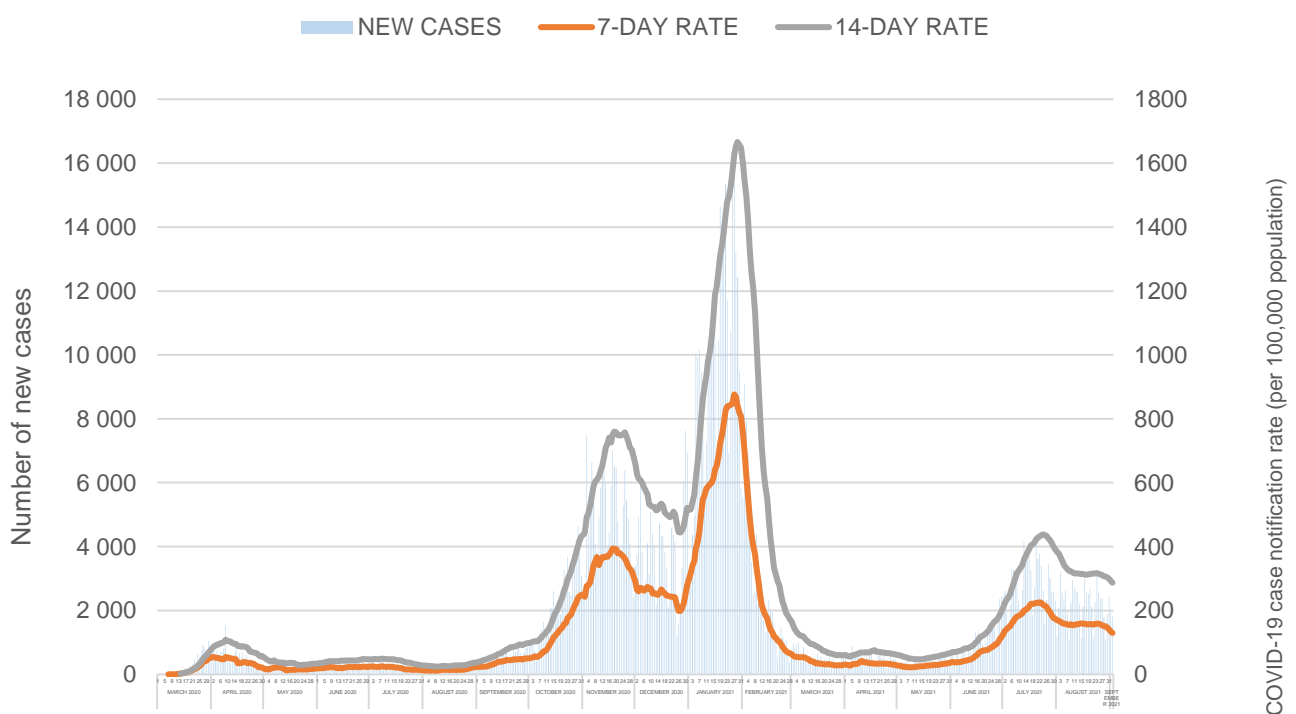


FIG. 1 | New cases, 7-day and 14-day COVID-19 case notification rate per 100.000 population, 2 March 2020 – 2 September 2021 (Source: Ministry of Health).

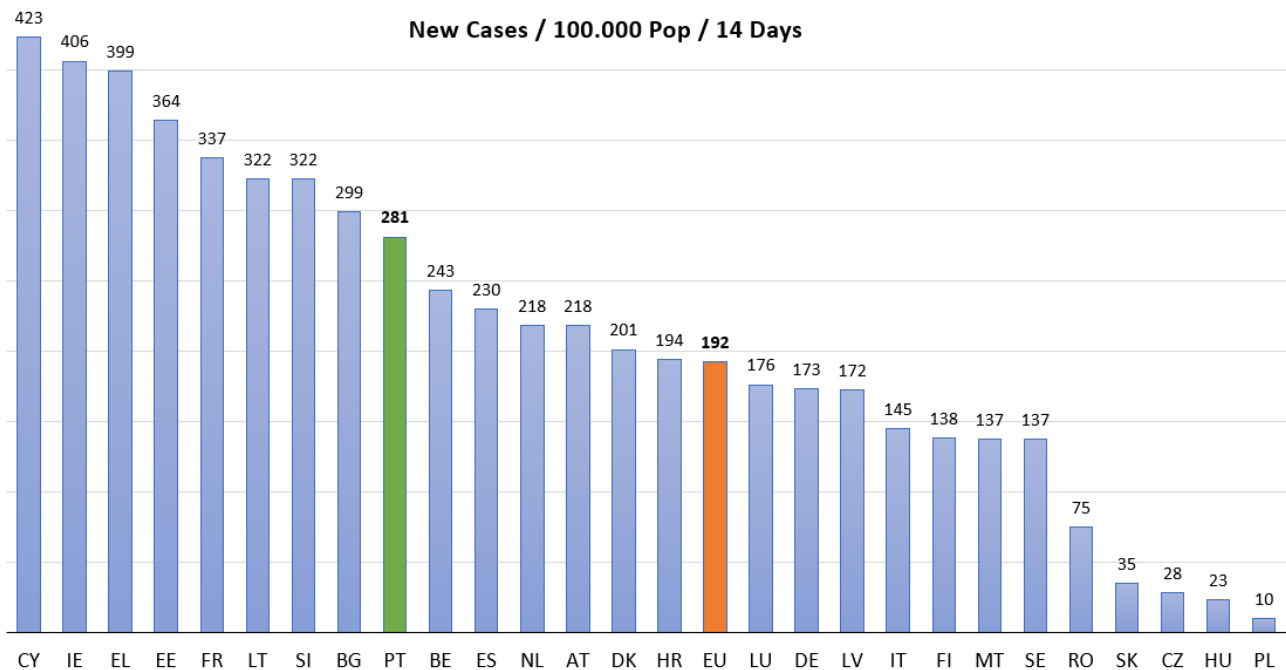


FIG. 2 | Biweekly COVID-19 cases per 100.000 population in selected countries, 4 September 2021 (Source: Our World in Data)

The **effective reproduction number (Rt)** dropped since the beginning of February because of the measures implemented by the Portuguese Government in the month of January, thus reaching a value of 0,66 between 8-12 February. Throughout March the Rt remained steadily below 1. Naturally, with the ease of some restrictions, after the middle of May, the estimated value of Rt has been slightly above 1, but by the end of July, it dropped again below 1. **Between 25th and 29th August, the effective reproduction number (Rt) in Portugal was 0,96.**

Hospitalizations have increased in the beginning of August and are now steadily decreasing, standing currently at 665, of which 138 in ICU. There are around 42.423 active cases.

The current epidemiological situation in Portugal is **heterogeneous across the different regions (TABLE 1)**. At this moment, there is an obvious decreasing trend in all the Portuguese territory, even though Algarve still has a very high incidence when compared with other regions.

TABLE 1. Cases notified in Portugal and health regions, 2 September 2021 (Source: Ministry of Health)

Country/regions	Total cases (2 SEP)	Total cases /100k pop (2 SEP)	14-day cases per 100k pop. (2 SEP)	7-day cases per 100k pop. (2 SEP)
PORTUGAL	1 044 144	10 150.9	286.6	129.7
North	401 833	11 243.4	305.3	141.5
Centre	139 268	8 469.2	263.0	118.6
Lisbon and Tagus Valley	404 864	11 047.0	252.3	113.0
Alentejo	37 540	8 031.2	339.5	151.5
Algarve	40 284	9 183.9	632.4	289.1
Azores	8 568	3 528.5	92.7	28.8
Madeira	11 787	4 638.7	174.7	62.2

The Portuguese government has been taking all necessary public health measures to protect the entire population as well as our visitors. Since the beginning of September there are less restrictions, but it is still mandatory to present EU COVID Digital Certificate or a negative test in some specific situations such as tourist accommodation, upon check-in, meal service inside the restaurants, on Fridays from 7 pm, at weekends and on public holidays, thermal baths and spas; group classes in gyms, cultural and sporting events with over 1000 people, outdoors, or over 500 people, indoors.

2. TESTING

- Portugal maintains one of the highest testing rates in Europe – 9th highest among EU countries – with more than **17,1 million tests performed since the beginning of the pandemic.**
- **As of 2nd September, Portugal had 3,9% of positive tests amongst all COVID-19 tests performed in the last 7 days.**

A new testing strategy has been put in place since March 2021 focusing on different professional and social contexts. We have increased the use of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests at a national level in the context of contact tracing. Nevertheless, they only represent 16% of the total amount of tests. As a result of the strong expansion of our testing capacity, Portugal has rapidly become one of the European countries with the highest rates of tests performed per million population. As of 2nd September, Portugal registered more than 17,1 million tests performed since the beginning of the pandemic which corresponds to one of the highest testing rates in the EU. 30% of the total number of tests performed since the beginning of the pandemic were performed in the last 3 months (June,

July, August), which shows the great testing effort implemented in this period (FIG. 3). The 7-Day positivity rate in Portugal was 3,9% on 2nd September (FIG. 4).

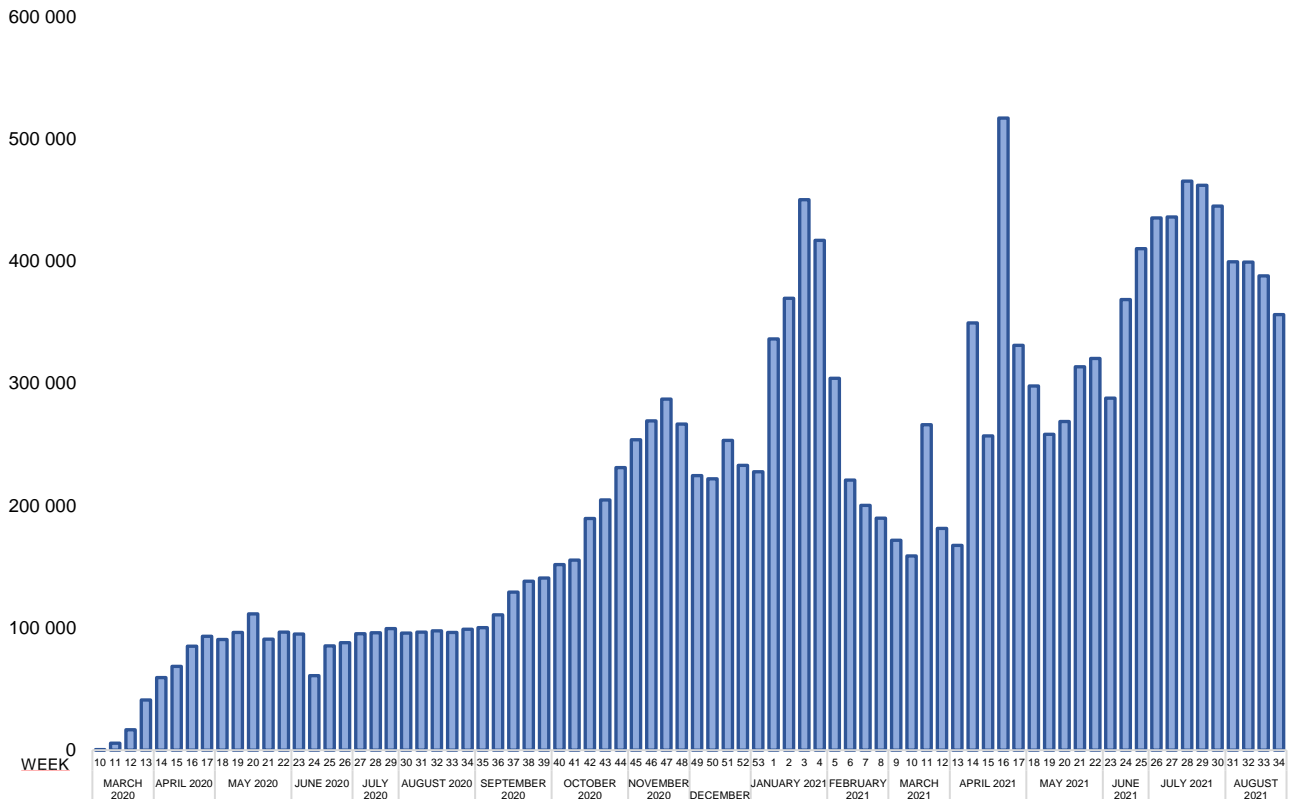


FIG. 3 | Weekly number of tests for diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 performed in Portugal, (until Week 34 of 2021) (Source: Ministry of Health).

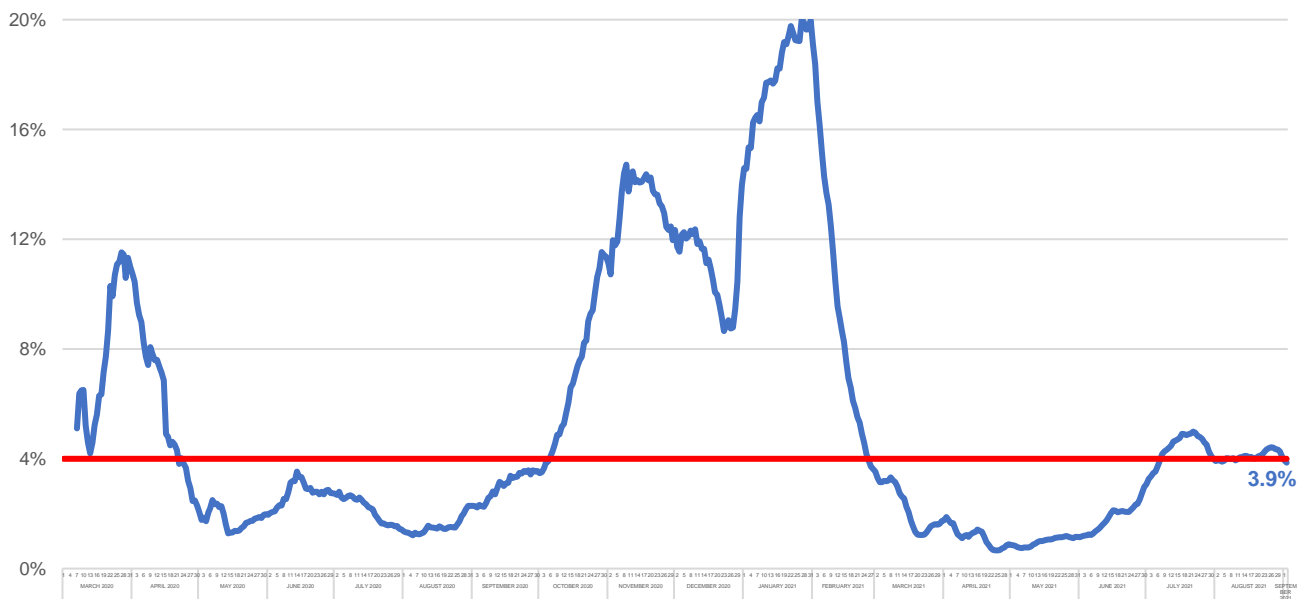


FIG. 4 | 7-day positivity rate as of 2 September 2021 (Source: Ministry of Health).

3. SARS-CoV-2 VARIANTS

- As of 31st August, **15.279 samples have been sequenced in Portugal.**
- **Delta variant** was identified in **100% of sequenced cases** in week 33 (16-22 August)

According to the WHO, the reported geographical extent of the variants of concern (VOC) detections has continued to increase around the globe as local and national surveillance activities are adapted and strengthened to include strategic sequencing.

- **Alpha variant** (B.1.1.7), first identified in UK, had a **significant decrease** in Portugal during the last three months, accounting for 0,0% of the sequenced cases in the middle of August 2021 (weeks 32 and 33).
- **Gamma variant** (P.1), first identified in Brazil, remains very low and without an increasing trend in the last few months. There were no cases of this variant identified in the middle of August (weeks 32 and 33).
- **Beta variant** (B.1.351), first identified in South Africa, also remains with a low number of cases and without an increasing trend in the last few months. There were no cases of this variant identified in the middle of August (weeks 32 and 33).
- **Delta variant** (B.1.617.2), first identified in India, **has become dominant in the whole country**, accounting for 100% of the sequenced cases in Portugal in the middle of August 2021(week 33).

The so-called “**Nepal mutation**”, not recognised as a new variant by the World Health Organization (WHO), has been identified in only 66 of 5809 cases of the Delta variant in Portugal. In the last 3 months, there has been a relative frequency of **less than 1% of cases identified of this mutation of Delta variant (TABLE 2).**

TABLE 2. Sequenced cases by variant of concern in Portugal, specimen dates from weeks 29-33 (19 July - 22 August 2021). (Source: National Institute of Public Health Dr. Ricardo Jorge)

Weekly sequenced specimens by variant of concern - 2021					
VOC	Week 29 (n=487)	Week 30 (n=458)	Week 31 (n=483)	Week 32 (n=503)	Week 33 (n=297)
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	0,8%	0,7%	0,4%	0,0%	0,0%
Beta (B.1.351)	0,2%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Gamma (P.1)	0,2%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,0%
Delta (B.1.617.2) not AY.1	98,4%	99,1%	98,8%	99,6%	100,0%
Delta (B.1.617.2) AY.1 "Nepal mutation"	0,2%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%	0,0%
Others	0,2%	0,2%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%

In week 33 (16-22 August), **Delta variant** had a relative frequency of **100% in all Portuguese regions**, which shows how dominant this variant has now become in the whole country (**TABLE 3**).

TABLE 3. Evolution of Delta variant as a percentage of sequenced cases in all Portuguese regions, specimen dates from weeks 29-33 (19 July - 22 August 2021). (Source: National Institute of Public Health Dr. Ricardo Jorge)

Weekly evolution of Delta variant - 2021					
Region	Week 29	Week 30	Week 31	Week 32	Week 33
NORTH	99,2%	96,8%	98,1%	100,0%	100,0%
CENTRE	97,5%	98,1%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
LISBON & TAGUS VALLEY	98,9%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
ALENTEJO	96,8%	100,0%	97,8%	100,0%	100,0%
ALGARVE	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
AZORES	98,3%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
MADEIRA	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

To contain the spread of these variants, Portugal imposes a 14-day quarantine to passengers coming from South Africa, India and Nepal, through direct flights or through airports in other countries.

4. VACCINATION

- In Portugal, **76% of the population** and 99% of the 65+ population has been **fully vaccinated**.
- More than **86% of the population** has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine

The vaccination campaign, which started on the 27th of December, is developing at a very good pace. On the 3rd of September, almost 15 million doses had been administered: 8,7 million people with the first dose and 7,7 million people fully vaccinated. This corresponds approximately to **146 doses per 100 people**, which is **higher than EU average (FIG. 5)**. Portugal is currently the 3rd top country of the European Union in vaccine doses administered per 100 people.

COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people

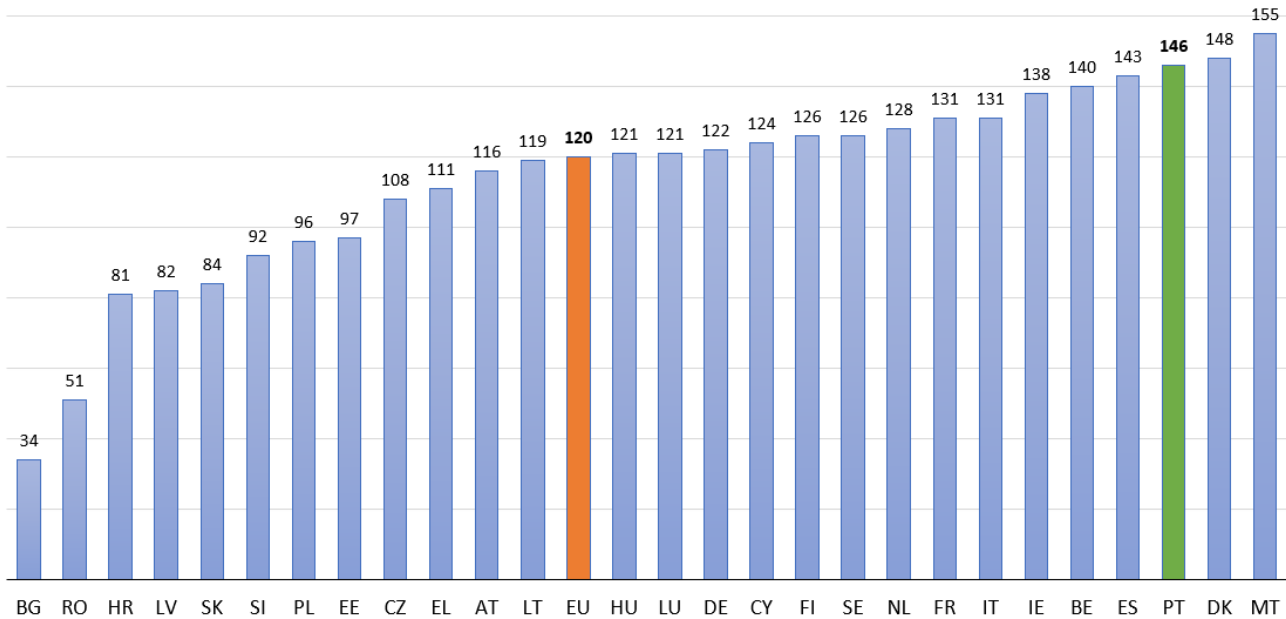


FIG. 5 | COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people in selected countries, 3 September 2021 (Source: Our World in Data)

In Portugal, around **7,7 million people are now fully vaccinated**, a number that is undoubtedly better than the share of population fully vaccinated in the European Union, currently around 59%. More than **8,7 million people have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine** in Portugal, which is also higher than the share of EU population that had at least one dose, now around 65%.

Health authorities in Portugal plan to reach the goal of **85% of the population fully vaccinated during the month of September 2021**. After achieving the target of having 70% of the population vaccinated before the end of the month of August, the current vaccination strategy is also focusing in the population between 12 and 17 years of age, so that students will be protected at the start of the new school year.

The vaccination campaign in Portugal has been considered very successful, as in around 8 months 85% of the population already received at least one vaccine dose. Even though the vaccination pace has slowed down in the last few weeks - currently around 60.000 doses per day - **Portugal is one of the top EU countries** considering the indicator of **daily COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people** (FIG. 6).

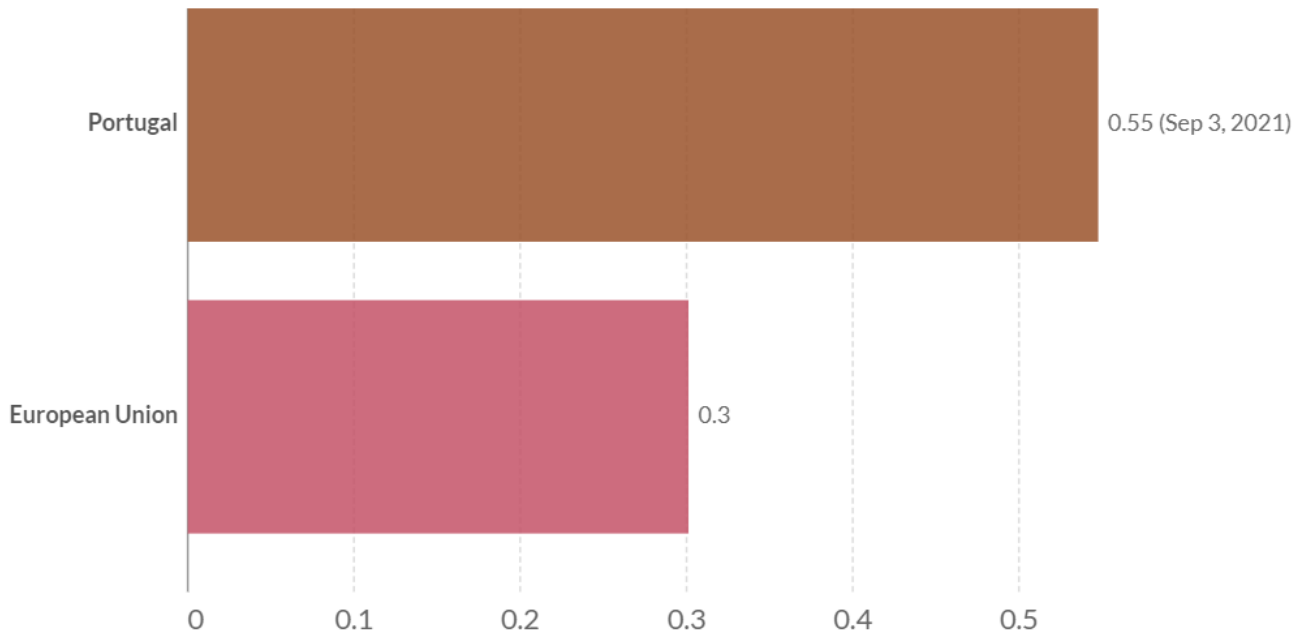


FIG. 6 | Daily COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people in Portugal vs European Union, 3 September 2021
(Source: Our World in Data)