# Democracia digital em Portugal:
## a propósito do relatório nacional para a conferência da EPTA em 2018
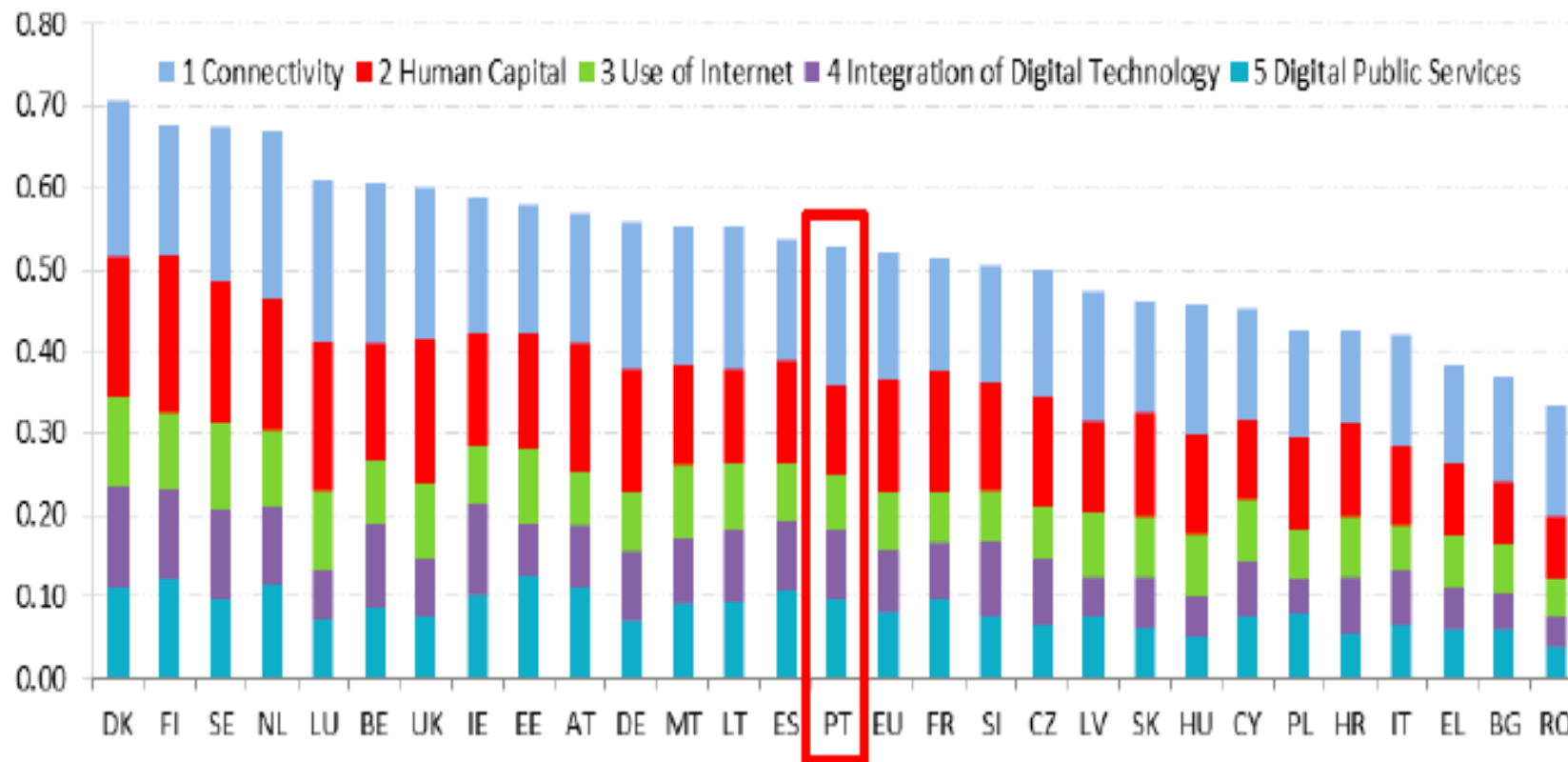
Antóno Brandão Moniz

# Tema da conferência

- **EPTA Conference 2018, Brussels, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

- **Towards a digital democracy – opportunities and challenges**

- Address the interplay between **democracy**, on the one hand, and **artificial intelligence, blockchain and/or quantum technology**, on the other.

- It will address the **impact** of current and expected developments in these new technology fields on democratic processes and institutions, and

- will examine this impact from **multiple perspectives**.

- Portuguese report authored by António B. Moniz and Nuno Boavida, both from the **Observatory of Technology Assessment** of CICS.NOVA (Portugal)
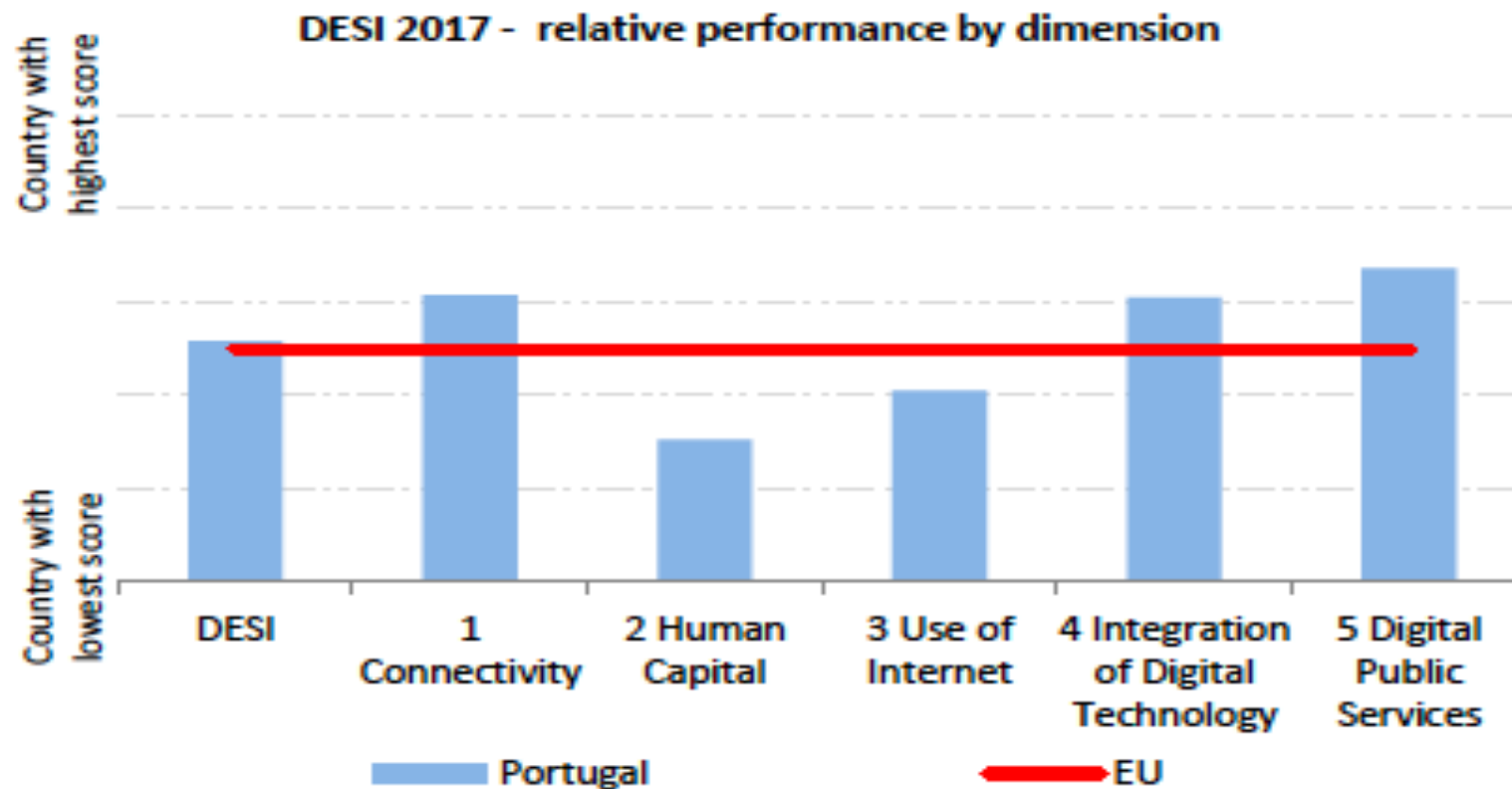
# Digital Economy and Society Index ranking

**Portuguese position in the Digital Economy and Society Index ranking, 2017**



Source: Europe's Digital Progress Report (EDPR) 2017, Country Profile Portugal

# Developments on the performance at DESI



DESI 2017 – relative performance by dimension

Portugal · EU

- There are difficulties to further expand **digital public services** uptake in a context where parts of the population lack the necessary **digital skills**.

# Current legislation on new or emerging technologies

- there is no legislation on new or emerging technologies

- creation of a National Authority for Cybersecurity (Law nº 119/XIII, approved in March 2018 )

# Interaction between blockchain, quantum technologies and artificial technology

- If blockchain (BC) data is immutable and encrypted, what happens if quantum technologies (QT) enables mass decryption of historical data?

- Could an advanced AI find a way of hacking a blockchain?

- Are QT and AI development synergetic, so that AI agents could help us to develop QT, and vice versa?

- Could AI help us to decide whether it is a good idea to proceed with transformative technologies, such as BC and QT?

- What are the implications of the three technologies and their interactions for our democracies and democratic processes?

# Societal and political debate

- Is there ongoing debate on the impact of these new technologies on our societies and democracies?
  - There are debates in internet forums related to BC, but significantly restricted to the engineers, scientists or enthusiasts.
  - The debate remains mostly limited to AI.
  - national initiative Portugal INCoDe.2030
    - Advanced Cyberinfrastructure (ACI) - including all advanced scientific computing fields.
    - Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF) - including quantum computing, among other areas of R&D.
    - Computer and Network Systems (CNS) - including big data, cloud computing, and IoT, among others.
    - Information and Intelligent Systems (IIS) - including artificial intelligence, as well as human-centred computing in relation to digital media.

# Societal and political debate - 2

- How about their political and public acceptance?

- Which arguments are used?

- Which stakeholders are involved?
  - Just the Portuguese Association for the Development of Information Society (APDSI) is taking positions and developing arguments through public debates.
  - Stakeholders are limited to some TV commentators, former military and engineers/scientists working with these technologies.
  - it was established an "Observatory for Digital Competences" (INCoDe.2030),

# Societal and political debate - 3

- Are there currently political or legislative proposals on these topics?

- Is there resistance and, if so, from whom and why?
  - The General Secretary of the regional parliament of the Autonomous Region of Azores (RAA) mentioned that some AI applications related to the parliamentary activity can be used.
  - Such applications are related to the availability of support systems to the presentation of legislative initiatives by the citizens, which can have automatic and intelligent mechanisms to formalize such initiatives.
  - It is also possible to make available intelligent systems that cross analyse and assess the legislative impact at multi-level and multi-sector stages.

# Societal and political debate - 4

- Can new technologies, such as social media applications, facilitate the creation of new political communities and new forms of public representation, as well as provide a communication channel for politicians?
  - Social media applications are facilitating the creation of new political communities and new forms of public representation, as well as provide a communication channel for politicians.
  - https://www.facebook.com/pages/Assembleia-Da-Rep%C3%BAblica-De-Portugal/544577758977669
  - https://www.facebook.com/grupoparlamentarPS/
  - https://www.facebook.com/psd.parlamento/
  - https://www.facebook.com/GPBlocodeesquerda/
  - https://www.facebook.com/OrcamentoParticipativoPortugal/
  - https://www.facebook.com/observatoriodeavaliacaodetecnologia/

# Societal and political debate - 5

- Can new technologies break down the hierarchical and top-down character of the political system and make it more de-centralised?
  - in the RAA, the Legislative and referenda Citizen Initiative (article 46 of the Political and Administrative By-Law of the RAA) enables proponent citizens, as in other legislative initiatives, and under certain requisites and formalities, to propose and follow-up (through a specific site) the whole legislative procedure of his/her initiative.

# Societal and political debate - 6

- Can new technologies empower citizens in voicing their interests and concerns in a more effective way?

- If yes, how?

- Can e-participation (e-petitioning etc.) by citizens in parliamentary affairs create stronger connections between citizens and the decision- making process?
  - e-participation is already increasing. Examples:
    - Parliamentary platform for petitions: https://participacao.parlamento.pt/initiatives/?type=petitions
    - Portuguese section of Amnisty International
    - Association for the Defense of Consumers (DECO)
    - Public petitions platform https://peticaopublica.com
    - Petition platform: https://www.activism.com/pt_PT/.

# Societal and political debate - 6

- Do new technologies pose a threat to traditional mediators, such as journalists, and political representatives and parties?
  - Yes, if they (journalists and politicians) maintain their activities in a just traditional way.

- Can new technologies contribute to the resolution of long-standing problems of representative democracy, such as the territorial base of constituencies ?
  - Very unlikely. It's a problem of political science and we do not see how can ICT help contribute to such resolutions.

# Societal and political debate - 7

- Can the transparency of parliamentary activities be improved by technological means?
  - e-parliament initiative: Parliamentary Working Group for the Digital Parliament (http://www.parlamento.pt/sites/COM/XIIILeg/GTARPD/Paginas/default.aspx). This parliamentary working group produced their final report on March 2018. Several measures were proposed and are applied.
  - The Azorean regional parliament approved the resolution for the transparency and citizen participation portal (Projeto de Resolução n.º 50/XI (PS) - "Recomenda a criação do "Portal da Transparência e Participação Cidadã" no âmbito do sítio eletrónico da Assembleia Legislativa da Região Autónoma dos Açores") in December 2017

# Experiences and outlook

- What are the possible impacts of these new technologies on the democratic system?
  - Impacts can be evident on elections forecasts, emergence of e-participatory activism, etc.
  - A new form of public participation is the "participatory budget" (https://opp.gov.pt/).
  - The Portugal Participatory Budget (PPB) is a democratic, direct and universal process that allows civil society to decide on public investments in different governmental areas.
  - Through the PPB, the Portuguese population is having a voice to decide where to invest part of the National State Budget:
    - in 2017, 3 million euros in the areas of education and adult training, culture, science, agriculture and justice.
    - In 2018, the PPB budget will consider 5 million euros and citizens will be able to propose ideas in all areas of government.
  - The Participatory Budget is deliberative.
  - in Portugal, the use of on-line petitions and parliamentary petitions have been effective.

# Experiences and outlook - 2

- Is there any form of evaluating the effects of these technologies upon the quality of democratic procedures in terms of increasing their transparency and accountability?
  - Yes, it is possible, but the answer needs a research project

- How can the recent fake-news initiatives possibly affect the exercise of the freedom of speech, freedom of expression, media pluralism and democracy?
  - In Portugal they are not yet very important. Knowing about other realities, it might become very important.

- Could automated content recognition (ACR) technologies represent a threat to freedom of expression and media pluralism, rather than protect it?
  - Yes, it could, but it depends on the quality capacities of the media professionals. We should address the question of who should regulate and reach consensualized ethical norms to proceed with defining ACRs.

# Conclusões

- A maior parte das respostas necessitariam investigação adicional sobre o tema

- A investigação deverá ser realizada em cooperação com a Assembleia da República e com os parlamentos regionais

- A investigação nesta área da avaliação de tecnologia necessita uma abordagem interdisciplinar: sociologia, ciência política, informática

- Poucas instituições em Portugal têm capacidade em desenvolver este tema de investigação e de cooperação inter-institucional