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Portugal

Finally, a new government in Portugal

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In the afternoon of 24 November the Portuguese president finally asked the SP general secretary to form the government. [1] Catarina Martins, spokesperson of the Left Bloc stated, "This decision respects the existing majority in the Parliament and recognizes the stability of the agreement reached". [2] This article from the Left Bloc English-language site explains the terms of the discussion between the President Cavaco Silva and Antonio Costa of the SP.

The President asked António Costa to explain six items of the left-wing agreement

After last week's marathon of meetings, the President has finally asked to speak to António Costa and announced he will consider appointing him Prime Minister, provided António Costa explains six items of the left wing agreement.

Over the past week, President Cavaco Silva met with employers' associations, bankers, economists, trade unions and all parties with elected MPs, a total of 31 meetings, but he never gave any indication as to when he would appoint the new Prime Minister and what his choice would be. Today, 50 days after the elections and 12 days after the government was ousted, Cavaco Silva has asked again to speak to António Costa, the secretary-general of the Socialist Party (PS). The meeting lasted for thirty minutes, after which António Costa did not speak publicly. The President issued a statement asking the Socialists to explain the following six items of the agreement with the left-wing parties:

- "1) passage of confidence motions;
- 2) passage of State Budgets and the State Budget for 2016 in particular;
- 3) observance of the budgetary discipline rules that apply to all eurozone countries and to which the Portuguese state is committed, i.e. those arising from the Stability and Growth Pact, the Budgetary Treaty, the European Stability Mechanism and Portugal's participation in the Economic and Monetary Union and the Banking Union;
- 4) respect for Portugal's international commitments in the scope of collective defence organisations;
- 5) role of the Standing Social Dialogue Council, given the importance of its contribution to the country's development and social cohesion;
- 6) stability of the financial system, given its pivotal role in funding the Portuguese economy."

The Socialist Party will provide the President with a written answer, probably still this afternoon.

Even with an Interim government, the Parliament has been discussing and voting bills put forth by the left-wing majority. One of these bills, which passed last week, repeals the changes to abortion laws introduced by the right-wing government. Another bill, submitted by the PS, the Left Bloc and the PEV, recognised same-sex couples' right to adopt children, which is a historic advance in civic rights in Portugal.

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Next week, members' bills submitted by the left wing will continue to be discussed. On Thursday, 26 November, Parliament will vote on Socialist Party bills, supported by left-wing parties, to change austerity measures that had been implemented by the right wing: wage cuts for public workers, reduction and removal of progressive tax brackets for income tax, and the solidarity tax. On the same day, debates will also include opposing bills, submitted by the right wing, to reduce or maintain these same austerity measures. Medically assisted procreation will be discussed on the same day, with bills from the Socialist Party and the Left Bloc, as well as ending standardised exams for 4th grade children, which had also been introduced by the right-wing government during their previous term.

Source *Esquerda Net English* ["The President asked António Costa to explain six items of the left-wing agreement"](#).

[1] *Esquerda.net English* ran the following short article (published after this posting on *International Viewpoint*) ["50 days later, António Costa has been appointed Prime Minister"](#).

[2] *Esquerda.net* ["Começa agora um novo ciclo"](#).