

## Portugal's President urges EU to face post-war challenges with determination



The President of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, addressed MEPs during a formal sitting © European Union, 2023 – EP

**In his speech to MEPs, Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa identified the post-war recovery, enlargement, migration and energy as the main challenges for the EU.**

Addressing MEPs during a formal sitting, President Rebelo de Sousa said he considers the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine to be a “shocking mistake of the Russian Federation” to which Europe responded with “firmness, unity, solidarity, and transatlantic and forward-thinking cooperation”. It is urgent, he said, to ensure that “a just and moral peace” will be the result of this war, preventing further wars.

On what comes after the war, which will result in a “new balance of powers”, the President said the EU should play “the biggest, the strongest role possible! If not, it will not end up being the smallest, the weakest possible”.

Mr Rebelo de Sousa also spoke in favour of EU enlargement and stressed the need to accelerate Europe’s economic recovery while taking into account social obligations and rights, as well as impact of inflation.

Speaking about the EU’s global connections, Portugal’s President called for openness and cooperation to collectively tackle challenges like migration and help increase Europe’s influence in the world. EU’s values should, he said, take precedence over national interests.

President Rebelo de Sousa also called on the EU to become a pioneer in climate, energy, and digital policy. If not, it will be “left behind,” he said.

He urged the EU to follow the example of other continents and act when it needs to, and to reinvigorate the EU’s political, economic and social systems. President Rebelo de Sousa warned that not doing so could alienate young people and lead to the emergence of populism and anti-system movements. If this happens, “it is our fault,” he said.

### Further information

[Speech in plenary from Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa \(10.05.2023\)](#)

[Speech in plenary from Roberta Metsola \(10.05.2023\)](#)

[Press conference from President Metsola and President Rebelo de Sousa \(10.05.2023\)](#)

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