

Portugal's public debt reaches 123.6 pct of GDP

LISBON, March 28 (Xinhua) -- Portugal's public debt reached 204.485 billion euros (262.088 billion U.S. dollars), 123.6 percent of its GDP in 2012, official figures showed on Thursday. The statistics released by the country's National Statistics Institute (INE) showed that Portugal's public debt ratio increased by 15.3 percentage points at the end of 2012 in comparison to the previous year. The INE figures also showed that the country's budget deficit reached 6.4 percent of its GDP last year. The Portugal Bank confirmed Tuesday that the country's economy is expected to contract by 2.3 percent this year, the same rate as the government previously predicted. Portugal has been implementing harsh austerity measures under a 78-billion-euro bailout agreement with the troika comprising the European Union, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank in May 2011. The government's move has triggered widespread protests across the country in recent months. After their seventh review of the bailout program for Portugal earlier this month, the international lenders agreed to ease the terms for Portugal to meet its public deficit target of 5.5 percent of its GDP this year, 4 percent in 2014 and 2.5 percent in 2015.