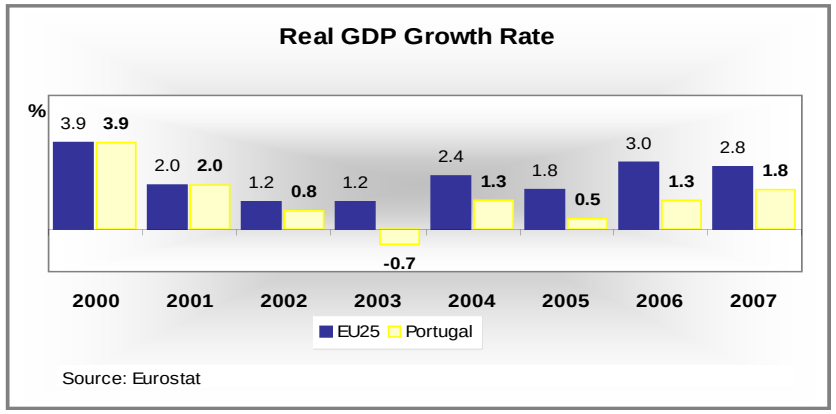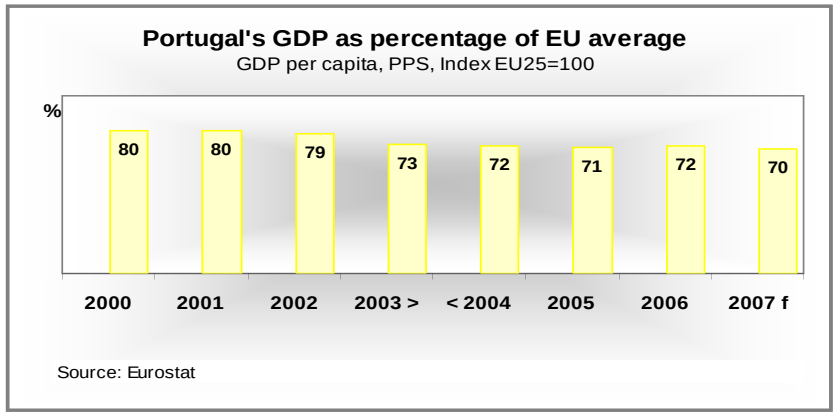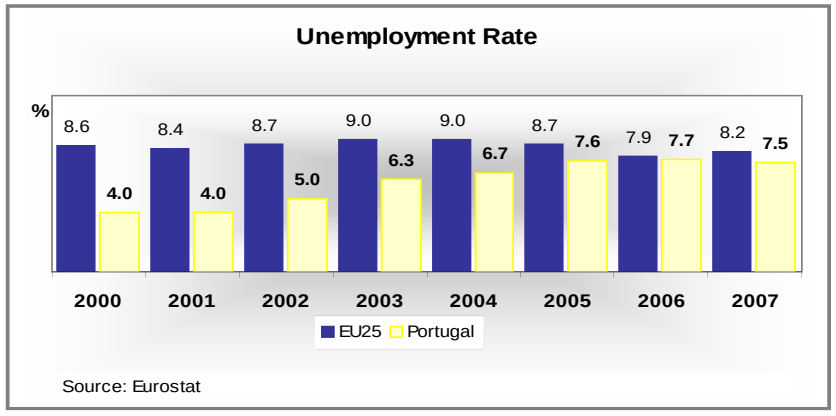'CATCHING UP' WITH THE EU