

**Country:** Portugal

**Commission:** Council of Ministers of energy and Ecological Transition

**Issue:** What are the solutions to ensure sustainable energy independence for the EU in the face of a challenge to its traditional energy sources?

The Portuguese Republic is a country located in the Iberian Peninsula, near Spain and has access to the Atlantic Ocean. Portugal is a semi-presidential regime, led by the president Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. The head of the government is M. Antonio Costa and the Portuguese government follows the social-democratic ideas proper to a center-left party. As a social-democratic country we believe that the future depends on renewable energies and that's why our energy policy is based on the development of that type of energy.

Regarding our issue, we propose to make a firm commitment to renewable energies and gradually reduce the consumption of classical energies.

As we said, we are very committed to renewable energy and we based our energy policy on it. Portugal is one of the best countries in the European Union in terms of renewable energy production. In 2021, the production of renewable energy was 56,3% and the consumption of those energies was more than 30%.

In electrical terms, 65% of the electricity consumed comes from renewable energy, which is produced thanks to hydraulic dams, solar panels and wind turbines. Our big challenge is that in 2024, all the electricity we consume will be produced using renewable energies.

Regarding nuclear power plants, Portugal is totally against it and does not have any nuclear power plants in the entire national territory. We are against nuclear power plants because of their disastrous impact on the environment and because of the danger of having one of these power plants due to their high risk of ending up becoming not only an environmental tragedy but also a human tragedy like Chernobyl.

It is true that today the lack of nuclear power plants in our country means a great energy dependence on other countries, 74.2% of our energy supply comes from foreign countries according to the OCED. That's why our objective is to reduce that percentage to 65% in 2030 and reduce it even more to only 19% in 2050. At least, today 74,6% of our primary energy needs come from fossil fuels. But, if we look at the annual balance sheet, 30,6% of our gross final energy consumption comes from green energies. We are therefore one of the countries of the European Union that consume the most green energy and we far exceed the European average, which in 2021 was 21,8%.

Moreover, since 2005, Portugal is the European Union member country that has reduced its CO2 emissions the most. Also, we are one of the first countries in the world to set a *goal of carbon neutrality* by 2050 and we intend to achieve this objective through widespread (carbon free) electrification, that's to say an increase in renewable sectors and an improvement in energy efficiency. Finally, Portugal is part of several energy projects and treaties such as the COP26 or in the BAR-MAR project.

In order to be consistent with our energy policies, we have carried out various measures and various projects to promote renewable energies in our country.

First of all, we have created the first wind farm in Europe, which is located on the Atlantic coast, about 20 km from Viana do Castelo. This wind farm produces energy for more than 60000 households and saves 33000 of CO2 per year. This park is composed of several wind turbines that are 210 meters high and have 80-meter blades. We would like to emphasize that all this device has been able to be carried out thanks to the financing of the European bank. Given the good results of this type of infrastructure, we call for the European Union to increase this type of financing even more, since they are beneficial for everyone and we encourage the implementation of this type of infrastructure wherever possible to carry out such a project.

However, in 2017, we were the first country in Europe to create floating solar panels, located at the Alto Rabagão hydroelectric dam, 10 km from Braga. The great advantage of this project was to create an electrical network as valid for the solar panels as for the dam. Once we had seen the excellent results of this project, we decided to create a much bigger and better installation than this one and that is what we did. We have recently inaugurated the largest floating solar park in all of Europe, which is located in the Alqueva reservoir. This floating solar panel will provide electricity to more than 1500 families.

In addition to all these measures, we also have certain propositions to make. First of all, we propose to establish an Iberian collaboration with Spain to be able to develop hydraulic energy more efficiently, especially taking into account the multiple reservoirs that the Spanish states have. If we were able to establish a close collaboration between the two countries, both Spain and Portugal would benefit greatly. On the one hand, the Portuguese state could continue to develop the solar panel system and eventually improve it. As for Spain, it would benefit greatly from the exploitation of the multiple reservoirs it possesses. This mutual benefit would also be beneficial for the European community since it would mean a great development and advancement of renewable energy in Europe, more precisely hydraulic energy.

Lastly, Portugal believes that the European Union should stop establishing energy directives for each country knowing that these directives are not complied with by a large part of the countries. Our proposal is to create a new European energy institution or give real weight and importance to the ACER (Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators). Creating a new powerful institution or strengthening the existing one, we would create a single energy policy for all the member countries of the European Union, which would cause all countries to collaborate among themselves to meet the same objectives, and thus create a single European vision that seeks to carry out a clean and independent energy transition.

In conclusion, we hope that the other countries of the European Union, especially those with the most budget and economic power, follow our example of energy transition in order to ensure a long-term sustainable energy future, using renewable energy and leaving fossil energy aside.