

PORTUGAL IS GREEN

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In Portugal, investing in energy means investing in renewable energy. It is almost inevitable, because in the last thirty years the legislation began to point towards a transition to clean energy. In addition, the awareness of the origin of the energy we consume has deeply penetrated

Portuguese society. And the commitment to hydrogen as clean energy appears on the horizon. In order to confirm that “Portugal is green”, we talked with Manuel Andrade Neves, partner at Abreu Advogados and expert, among other areas, in Energy



There is a determining date in the history of renewable energy in Portugal: April 10, 2013. On that day the *Diário de la República* (the official gazette of Portugal) promulgated the resolution of the Council of Ministers that defined the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency and the National Action Plan for Renewable Energy. These plans laid out the path to be followed by the country throughout the next decade. And the results could not be more satisfactory. Portugal is today one of the leading countries, both in the production of renewables and in their consumption.

In 2018, renewable energy production supplied 52% of national consumption. And there were historical milestones. For three days, from Friday, March 9 to Monday 12, local consumption was entirely fed by renewable energy, since 408 GWh were consumed in the country while production in the same period was 521 GWh. 65% of that amount came from wind power plants. The data for the first half of 2020 are even more encouraging, since the origin of 60% of the energy consumed in the country comes from renewable energy. These circumstances are the result of successful government policies, which were encouraging the creation of hydroelectric, wind, biomass and solar plants. Public awareness campaign on the origin of energy and its waste was added to this, which has made a deep impression on Portuguese society. The country does not have any nuclear power plant, and is suspicious of the one closest to its territory, specifically the two Almaraz units, in Cáceres, whose license the Spanish government has just extended until 2027 and 2028 to the discontent of the Portuguese authorities. The recent decision of the country's main electricity company, EDP, to close all its coal plants, including the largest thermoelectric plant in Portugal, located in Sines, scheduled to close in January 2021, has been unanimously applauded in the country, although it was well known since time ago that many of these plants were idle due to their low profitability. Portugal is green, at least in terms of its electricity production, and that is why it has become one of the ideal destinations for investors who want to put their money to work within this sector. To find out a little more about it, we got in touch with Manuel Andrade Neves, Abreu Advogados partner who, among the huge range of his specialisations, stands out for his knowledge of the Energy area. He was a founding partner and director of Euronatura - Centre for Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, where he also held various decisionmaking positions in areas such as Oceans and Rivers or in Land Management and Conservation of Nature. In addition to being a member of the European Council of Environmental Law and of the Advisory Commission on the Law of Land, Land Use Planning and Urban Planning, appointed by the Portuguese Ministry of Land Management. More than a specialist, he is a true reference. The Portuguese uniqueness is something that is very well understood with his explanations:

“Since the 1990's Portugal promoted a transition to clean energy, sequentially creating incentives for hydric, wind and solar generation which means that Portugal has already a long history concerning adaptability in legislation to accommodate new technical solutions. The most recent case on this

account is the possibility of hybridization of existing modules. For instance, it is now possible to mix the production of a solar farm with the production of a wind farm in a single injection point in the grid, which reduces soil use —and consequentially diminishes the need to contract with different lessors— and the administrative and financial costs concerning the award of capacity in the grid for new projects. This possibility includes the large dams and also the small hydro power plants with any of the beforementioned technologies."

Interview by antonio jiménez

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