

Socioeconomic context and climatic conditions created new environmental pressures in 2015

The dynamics of economic activity in 2015, characterized by a GDP increase in volume of 1.6%, coupled with the climatic conditions that characterize 2015 as an extremely hot and dry year, created new pressures to the environment preservation.

Among other aspects the economic activity development brought 43 thousand new jobs and increases in private consumption of 2.6% and industrial production 1.8%. The GVA rate of construction broke off a seven consecutive years of decreases and the domestic material consumption in the national economy amounted to 163 million tons, +0.9% over the previous year. The meteorological conditions determinate a decrease on the contribution of renewable sources to primary energy consumption from 25.9% to 22.2% as well as electricity produced from renewable sources, which decreased from 61.4% to 48.7%. Some additional highlights for 2015 are the 65 thousand hectares of burnt forest area, more than the triple of burnt area in 2014, the increase in environmental expenditure (+3.5%) and municipal waste generation (+2.1%).

In this scenario, economic activities covered by the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) issued 27.9 million tons of CO₂eq, the highest level of emissions since 2009 and 15.6% higher than 2014, due mainly to the behavior of the Portuguese energy matrix. The national energy system consumed more primary energy, as did economic activities with final energy consumption, breaking a cycle started in 2006 of successive decreases of energy consumption. As a consequence, national energy dependence from abroad rebounded peaks of 2011 with imports weight on primary energy consumption achieving 78.3% (72.4% in 2014 and 76.6% as average between 2011-2015).
