



20th of December 2024
ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS
2023

THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT 2023

2023 was the second warmest in the last 93 years, a year classified as extremely hot and dry. In the socio-economic context, there was the biggest population increase since the beginning of the 21st century (+123,105 inhabitants), in a year in which GDP increased by 2.5%, a slowdown compared to the previous year with an impact on domestic demand and net external demand which, although making a positive contribution, remained below the levels achieved in 2022.

In this context, there was a more efficient use of materials extracted from the environment (productivity in the use of materials increased by 16.8%) and positive variations in the selective collection of urban waste (+1.4%) and in the recovery of sectoral waste (+5.4%).

Greenhouse gas emissions fell by 6.3% compared to 2022, due to the emissions reduction from the energy sector (-9.1%) and from the industrial sector (-3.3%). This result is in line with the 24.3% growth in electricity production from renewable sources (75.8% of the total) and the reduction in industrial production (industrial production index fell by 3.1% compared to 2022).

The number of rural fires occurrences in 2023 was the second lowest of the last decade in mainland Portugal (7,523 occurrences), as well as the second lowest area burned (34.5 thousand hectares). However, 63.6% of this area (23.8% of incidents) occurred in August, which was the fifth hottest August of the last 93 years.

Investment by industry companies in environmental domains grew by 4.5%, with companies investing the most in Air Quality and Climate Protection (33.8% of total investment).

The value of taxes with environmental relevance, 5.4 billion euros, increased by 15.7%, reflecting the 16.0% increase in revenue from the tax on oil products, which maintained its relative importance in total taxes with environmental relevance (60.2%).



THE COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS OF 2023 WITH 2022, HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING MAIN ASPECTS:

Population and Human Activities

The resident population in Portugal in 2023 (10,639,726 persons) increased by 123,105 inhabitants compared to the previous year, corresponding to a positive effective growth rate of 1.17%.

Domestic demand generated a total expenditure, in volume, of 237 billion euros (+1.7% compared to 2022), with private consumption component raising 1.9% and totalizing 143.7 billion euros.

The Industrial Production Index decreased 3.1%, after a slight increase of 0.7% recorded in the previous year.

The Direct Input of Materials into the national economy for production or consumption increased 0.7% to 200.8 million tons. Domestic Consumption of Materials reached 160.1 million tons (+1.7% when compared to 2022).



Air and Climate

In mainland Portugal, 2023 was classified as an extremely hot and dry year. With an average air temperature of 16.59 °C, it was the second hottest year in the last 10 years and of the last 93 years, with a deviation from the climatological normal of +1.04 °C. Considering the annual average rainfall, 2023 was the fourth driest year (735.8 mm) in the last 10 years and the 25th in the last 93 years, corresponding to 87.4% of the 1981-2010 normal rainfall.

Preliminary data on Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 2023, without accounting for the LULUCF sector, pointed to a decrease of 6.3%, which was essentially due to the emissions reduction from the energy sector (-9.1%) and from the industrial processes and product use sector (-3.3%).

The Air Quality Index showed that, on average, 30.9% of the days in 2023 had a “very good” air quality and 47.2% “good” quality (28.2% and 45.6% respectively in 2022).

Water

In 2023 were monitored 667 bathing waters (666 in 2022) and 509 coastal or transitional waters (identical number in 2022). The water quality in most of the bathing waters was classified as “Excellent” (67.7% for inland bathing waters and 91.9% for coastal or transitional bathing waters).

Soil, Biodiversity and Landscape

In 2023 the 276 forest intervention zones (ZIF) covered an area of 1,980 thousand hectares, equivalent to 22.2% of mainland territory. In relation to December 2022, 6 more ZIF were created, with an increase of 47.0 thousand hectares in total area.

In 2023, the second lowest number of rural fires occurrences in the 2015-2024 period was recorded in mainland Portugal (7,523 occurrences), as well as the second lowest area burned (34.5 thousand hectares).

Agri-environmental measures benefited 102,435 farmers (100,710 in 2022), who received support in a total of 288 million euros (259 million euros in 2022).

Waste

The indicator for preparing waste for reuse and recycling has decreased, standing at 32% (33% in 2022), 23 pp of the 55% target set for 2025.

Sectoral waste generated by manufacturing and other industries businesses totalled 15.1 million tons (+4.7% compared to 2022), with emphasis on construction activities that reported 4.4 million tons (+529 thousand tons compared to 2022).



Energy and Transportation

Primary energy consumption was 20,619 ktoe, with a decrease of 3.3%.

National energy dependence decreased from 71.2% in 2022 to 66.7% in 2023.

Final energy consumption increased by 1.7%, amounting to the highest value of the period 2014-2023.

Electricity produced from renewable sources represented 75.8% of the total electricity produced in Portugal (61.3% in 2022). The installed capacity in photovoltaic energy increased by 45.1%, amounting to 3,892 MW in 2023 (2,682 MW in 2022).

The fleet of vehicles presumed to be in circulation increased by 0.6% and reached 7.3 million vehicles.

Sustained increase in the number of purely electric passenger cars, which reached a ratio of 33 vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants (+42.4%; +38.2% in 2022).

199.6 thousand new light passenger vehicles were sold (+27.7% compared with 2022).

Fuel consumption in road transport increased by 5.9% and diesel consumption accounted for 77.0% of total fuel consumption in 2023 (78.0% in 2022).

Environmental Economics and Finance

General government expenditure on environmental protection activities decreased in 2023, amounting to 1,507 million euros (1,618 million euros in 2022).

18.1% of industrial companies were involved in environmental management and protection activities (+2,3 pp compared to 2022). Company's investments increased by 4.5% and "Protection of Ambient Air and Climate" maintained the leading position in the domain ranking with 33.8% of total investments applied (52.6% in 2022).

In 2023, 223,336 members were registered with the Environmental NGOs, which reflects a decrease of 3.9% as opposed to the number of activities carried out, which grew by 3.4%.

Total firefighters on command and active staff in 2023 stood at 31,914 individuals (31,714 in 2022). Voluntary participation remained predominant, 58.8% of the total (61.1% in 2022) corresponding to 18,774 firefighters.

In 2023, the value of environmentally related taxes was approximately 5.4 billion euro, registering an increase of 15.7% comparing to 2022, reflecting the growth of revenue from tax on oil and energy products (ISP), as a result of the increase in fuel consumption and the reversal of the policy to mitigate the increase in fuel prices.

In 2023, the thematic objectives belonging to the environmental domain changed the allocations to 3,992 million euros, 17.0% representation in relation to the total Cohesion Funds programmed for Portugal 2020. Adding to this allocation the amounts of REACT_EU assigned to the environment area, an allocation of 4,303 million euros was obtained, 18.3% of the total allocation.