

APREN: What is the parties' view on energy transition?

APREN has promoted a political debate on decarbonization strategies bearing in mind the upcoming legislative elections

On the morning of Tuesday 20th, [APREN – Portuguese Renewable Energy](#), organised an [online debate](#) with several political parties, bearing in mind the next legislative elections scheduled for March 10th.

Moderated by Pedro Amaral Jorge (Chairman of the Board of APREN), the initiative was attended by António Leitão Amaro (*Democratic Alliance*), Jorge Costa (*Left Bloc*), Jorge Miguel Teixeira (*Liberal Initiative*) and Miguel Costa Matos (*Socialist Party*). All parties with parliamentary seats had been invited.

On the table was the topic of energy transition and strategies to ensure carbon neutrality by 2050, in accordance with commitments already made by Portugal to the European Union.

Left wing parties, especially PS, converge towards accelerating the energy transition. *Left Bloc* has emphasised social justice. On the other hand, the right-wing parties - represented in the debate by PSD and *Liberal Initiative*, were more cautious. Transition, yes, but at controlled costs.

The *Democratic Alliance*, through the voice of António Leitão Amaro, argues that the energy transition is necessary for the civilization, and an economic opportunity. "But it must be done with economic rationality, transparency, and a great deal of protection for industrial, business, and domestic consumers. We must also be very cautious about betting, sometimes adventurous, with immature technologies to avoid talking about excessive rents again", he stressed. For Leitão Amaro, the State should be an agile partner to decide, impartially, that there should not be added costs to bills that the Portuguese already have difficulty in paying.

The *Liberal Initiative* looks at technological neutrality and the price system as two major pillars that can make the energy transition work. "We cannot choose technologies and we must not make extemporaneous interventions in prices thinking that this is what will solve the problem of the possible social costs of the energy transition", stressed Jorge Miguel Teixeira, from the *Liberal Initiative*. This party has a vision of abundance for the country and for the energy transition, which must be compatible with the protection of the environment. Jorge Teixeira points out, however, that it is not possible to do everything at the same time, referring to the *Left Bloc's* proposal to ban private jet flights and reduce air transport by replacing it with high-speed rail transport. "This sector represents 2% of emissions and is making an effort," he said.

For the *Socialist Party*, represented in the debate by Miguel Costa Matos, the energy transition - which Portugal has accelerated in recent years, is an opportunity to transform the economy that guarantees, for example, the payment of better wages and helps to fix the most qualified generation ever in the country. "This is what we are seeing in many parts of the country with the attraction of investment for renewable energies. We must continue the work of training the Directorate-General for Energy and Geology, encouraging municipalities to permit and expand decentralised solar. We cannot postpone it, as some have said. Nor can we devalue centralised solar power plants, which play an indispensable role for our country," he said.



For Jorge Costa, from the *Left Bloc*, it is necessary to avoid reproducing the usual mistakes that have been made in Portugal, every time a new business sector is implemented, as happened with intensive agriculture in Alentejo, which is contributing to desertification and disqualification of agriculture. "For us, the energy transition is linked to social justice. Private investment needs to be linked to the objectives of the energy transition. But it is essentially from public policy and, in many cases, public investment that these policies can be developed by creating social consensus around them", summarizes Jorge Costa.

The CEO of APREN, Pedro Amaral Jorge, stressed that in 2022 tourism accounted for 15% of GDP. "By 2030, renewable electricity production alone could account for 6%, not including all renewable fuels. It is a fundamental opportunity to develop the country. We can generate more than 215,000 jobs by 2030," he said in a debate on energy transition, that promoted the exchange of ideas between four major political forces on the eve of legislative elections in Portugal.

The recording of the debate is available on APREN's YouTube channel, here: <https://youtube.com/live/FgWTsE7yBYo>

About APREN:



[The Portuguese Renewable Energy Association \(APREN\)](#) is a non-profit association founded in October 1988. Its mission is to coordinate and represent the common interests of its members, promoting renewables energies in the electricity field.

APREN works together with official bodies and other similar entities, at national and international level, constituting an instrument of participation in energy and environmental policies through the use and valorization of natural resources for electricity production, namely in the fields of hydro, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, biogas and urban solid waste.