

Let's repopulate Portugal

Portugal is the European Union country that burns the most. Looking at the rest of Europe, some countries have the same problem, such as France and Spain, but not as severe. The truth is, these countries are introducing innovative and different measures (apparently) more effective. **One of the measures pointed out by several experts would include repopulate and involve more deeply the populations**, thus altering the rural territory organisation and controlling forest advance.

The vagueness of the property rights in a significant part of the forest that, unlike other countries, is almost completely private; the lack of cadastre in a significant part of the territory north of the Tejo river, with its excessive property fragmentation (worsened by the law of succession); the difficulties to create farmers associations, inadequate taxation rules of rustic properties, an ageing population and people leaving the rural world; absence of many landowners (some enjoying only a symbolic income for their property); lack of education and reduction of pastoralism (eating the vegetation).

Besides, the fires cause more damage beyond the noticeable effects in persons, animals and nature. These represent a considerable emission of additional greenhouse gases. Fires are propitiated by climate changes (rising temperature, drought, humidity, strong winds, and so forth) and simultaneously worsen these.

So, we must act at the level of the occupation of the territory. **One must repopulate the countryside, but not by decree or by imposing conditions, nor limiting or hampering those who want to continue to invest in the coastline** (which will always be more interesting to any investor, or even for us, the citizens, considering that the coastline and specially the big cities offer bigger and better opportunities in terms of quality of life, education, labour, employment, etc.). There is no need to "kill" coastline investment, to promote investment in the countryside. **One must foster countryside investment, with tax benefits if needed, to create more offer regarding properties in all real estate segments and, with that, provide the conditions to repopulate again Portugal.**

Repopulating again the deserted, increasingly impoverished countryside, where the rural exodus has not yet been staunched and the offer in terms of quality of life, wealth, education, and employment are still very poor, would simultaneously serve as a strong measure for fighting fires through new reorganisation of the forests that every year burn in Portugal.

We must connect again the communities with the territories. Nowadays, it almost looks like the political authorities and the vast majority of the urban population in the big towns is at war with the rural world. One must change this paradigm.

After all, in terms of territory organisation and creation of new decentralization and countryside repopulation public policies, we note that the country is covered with freeways, and so **the countryside occupation should be part of an integrated policy for new residents, for traditional tourism and for new tourists that come to our country every year, but also for all the new foreign residents that choose Portugal as their final destination, originating from investment attracting programs, such as the Golden Visas or the Non-Habitual Resident Programme, including real estate developers interested in pursuing more and better offer in terms of housing, offices, logistics and retail in the countryside, evidently with clear benefits for those adhering to this policies and those designing more houses for people, more buildings for new offices and more jobs. One cannot decree the countryside repopulation. But this can be achieved through combined measures and stimulus to the local economy. Shall we get to work?**