

Lisbon, November 26th, 2015

Press Release

Alto Douro Wine Region wretched open by metallic towers of the size of the Clerics Tower

UNESCO recommendations are being violated by EDP which proposes a very high voltage power line in the core of the Alto Douro Wine Region. The Portuguese Ministry of the Environment has approved it dismissing Community environmental legislation. The Platform Save the Tua opposed the decision and has sent today a letter to UNESCO reporting all irregularities.

What EDP wants, the Ministry of the Environment, Planning and Energy approves. The very high voltage power line proposed by this energetic company in order to connect the hydroelectric power station of Foz Tua to the national grid **infringes legal requirements** that EDP must comply in accordance with the authorisation given for the construction of the dam.

The Environmental Impact Statement approved by the Ministry under Jorge Moreira da Silva, gave formal assent conditioned to the alignment “2SM”. This alignment is in clear **violation of Unesco requirements** that in the mission of July 2012, admitted a possible compatibility of the dam, however strongly recommending that the alignment should not cross the Alto Douro Wine Region.

If it goes ahead, the Douro landscape will be wretched open by deforested safety corridors and **metallic towers reaching 68m high**, almost the same size of the Clerics Tower in Oporto or the size of the April 25th Bridge between Lisbon and Almada.

This decision **endangers the life of species protect by law**, nesting in the surrounding area, like the Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), and the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), in clear violation of the European Law.

The “best” options, according to the environmental impact study, is the approved alignment, the one causing the most extended destruction of wine and forest that will affect the municipalities of Carrazeda de Ansiães, Torre de Moncorvo (Bragança), Alijó, Peso da Régua, Sabrosa, Vila Real, Armamar, Lamego, São João da Pesqueira and Tabuaço (Viseu).



The mission of the Plataforma Salvar o Tua is to protect the Tua Valley and one of the most beautiful rivers in Portugal by raising awareness about the incompatibility of the Foz Tua dam with the values abided by Unesco World Heritage nomination of the Alto Douro Wine Region.

The Plataforma Salvar o Tua has taken an **hierarchical appeal before the Ministry of the Environment concerning the Environmental Impact Statement of the Very High Voltage Power Line** considering this decision illegal. Moreover, the Plataforma has addressed today a **letter to UNESCO** reporting the illegalities and irregularities committed by EDP and by the Portuguese Government in the construction of the dam. It also addressed to **the new team of the European Commission, since it took office, a request for clarification** of the complaint taken in 2012, concerning the dam construction which still had not a response from this EU institution.

We demand to the Portuguese and European authorities as well as to UNESCO to observe their obligations. Beyond all illegalities, what is happening in Foz Tua is a “horse-trading” - as the terrible public and private partnerships, which affects everybody's purse. Foz Tua is the best example of the worse politics in Portugal over the last years, defends João Joanaz de Melo, from the Plataforma Salvar o Tua.

Attached:

- Report to UNESCO: “Non-compliance of commitments by EDP and the Portuguese State on the Alto Douro Wine Region and Foz”.
- Report to the Portuguese Ministry of the Environment: “Relatório sobre infracções no aproveitamento hidroelétrico de Foz Tua em matéria de mobilidade e protecção do Alto Douro Vinhateiro”, de 4 de junho de 2014;

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