



**Partido Ecologista Os Verdes**

**Os Verdes Strategy**

**For the post Covid-19 most critical moment**

**May 2020**

## **Introduction**

Portugal, faced, not long ago, a severe drama caused by the foreign intervention process from The Troika, that aggravated the chronical structural crisis of the country.

In the last 4 years, with the direct contribution of Os Verdes, Portugal managed to invert this pathway and pursued for the goal of economic and social recovery, although in a manner not as strong, fast and focused as Os Verdes felt it should be.

This recovery, being slow, did not provide the country with the necessary strength to face a new crisis, this time caused by the pandemic Covid-19, originating from the new coronavirus SARS-COV-2.

Portugal is, again, plunged into a significant social crisis, and, because it is necessary to learn from the mistakes of the past, we reaffirm our full conviction that austerity could only add more problems. It is not at all an acceptable solution, and Os Verdes will reject any attempt to apply austerity measures.

On the contrary, today, more than ever, we need an interventionist, proactive and determinate State, capable to make the necessary investments, that does not blindly places the deficit ahead of the necessary responses that citizens need and that does not leave anyone behind unprotected.

In this context, in which citizens were asked to confine themselves at home, in order to prevent, contain and treat the Covid-19 pandemic, and having most citizens respecting this determination, many of whom with enormous personal sacrifice (due to the loss of income), it is time to create some normality and promote public policies that may answer to our needs, as a developed country that we are, and with a commitment to promote quality of life and well-being.

Taking into account the present framework and the situation that the country is going through, Os Verdes, without prejudice to other necessary proposals that it may present, highlight the following measures as its priority for action, in order to respond to the current demands and to ensure a sustainable development process that cannot be overlooked.

## **Environmental prevention and intervention**

In a time of confinement, imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a very significant change in the daily life of most citizens. The data revealed, however, that pollution rates have dropped considerably, mainly because massive individual commuting has stopped, which proves the need for what Os Verdes has been proposing over the years: a real need for a good public transport network, with affordable costs for users, which demobilizes citizens from the daily use of private cars, thus helping to decarbonize the country and reduce the causes of climate change. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that nowadays is required to travel with less passengers in public transport, in order to guarantee the necessary distance for safety rules.

On the other hand, this pandemic, and the protective care it now requires, in a moment when several sectors of the society are trying to return to a certain normality, has been having the effect of an accumulation of residues of masks and gloves, which are often thrown away to the ground, confirming the arrival of an environmental problem that requires urgent intervention.

To the Green Party Os Verdes, the pandemic cannot, in any way, serve as an excuse to reduce investment in certain areas, such as nature conservation, which are crucial to ensure the ecological balance and the provision of ecosystem services that are essential.

In this way, Os Verdes prioritizes the presentation of proposals in order to:

- Reinforce the schedules and number of trains, ferries and buses, namely in the metropolitan areas where there is a greater agglomeration of commuting;
- Increase the offer of public transport, providing the country with greater coverage, with a greater focus on railroad;
- Extend the Metropolitan Monthly Ticket at a low-price model to all Metropolitan Areas and intermunicipal communities in the country, as well as the generalization of the municipal single travel pass;
- Implement a national network of cycle lanes in articulation with municipalities and regions;
- Launch a vast public awareness campaign on how to use and dispose of masks or other personal protective equipment after use;

- Encourage the use of reusable and non-disposable protective equipment;
- Reinforce human and technical resources for environmental inspection, in order to prevent attacks on natural resources and areas;
- Reinforce the technical and human resources for Nature Conservation in general and of protected areas in particular;
- Promote the recovery of wild habitats and biodiversity as a buffer for the spread of diseases;
- Safeguard protected areas and sensitive areas regarding major infrastructure projects.

## **National Health Service**

There is now a more widespread recognition of the importance of the Portuguese National Health Service (SNS) and all its professionals, taking into account the responses that were given in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The SNS is a determining agent in guaranteeing the right to healthcare to all citizens and has proved to be the pillar for an effective response in times of crisis, when private health units, which are managed solely from the perspective of profit, closed the door to the need of an increased response although they were able to give it. It is with the public health service that citizens must be able to count on.

The Green Party Os Verdes consider that it is time to insist on submitting proposals to:

- Increase the investments in the SNS;
- Hire more professionals, such as doctors, nurses and other technicians;
- Ensure that each citizen has a family doctor;
- Reinforce the primary health care network, in a logic of proximity through the reopening of closed services;
- Strengthen the hospital care network, strengthening hospitals with the necessary skills.

## **Social and economic intervention**

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of different countries gaining strength in terms of food sovereignty, not only because it is a determining factor in reducing the ecological footprint, but also because, in times of food supply crisis (like the one that a pandemic may cause), countries must be in a position to ensure responses to its citizens.

On the other hand, this crisis has shown how fragile an economic growth can be when based essentially on tourism and which neglects the production of diverse goods, not only in terms of food, but also health goods, as seen with the supply of personal masks.

Local and neighborhood commerce was also a determining factor in supplying food to populations confined to their homes and neighborhood, providing a proximity service that has now been widely recognized by most people.

This pandemic has triggered as well a very serious social and economic crisis and which consequences are now beginning to be felt with great weight. Many micro, small and medium-sized companies have closed, and many people have lost their work and jobs, others have been victims of lay-off measures and saw their monthly income substantially reduced, when family current accounts remained to be paid.

In this way, Os Verdes will bet on a set of proposals that materialize the response to the country's urgent needs:

- Fight rising levels of poverty, ensuring income for all families, promoting the recovery of jobs and supporting micro, small and medium-sized companies;
- Fight tax havens and prevent the distribution of scandalous gains in large companies and economic groups in times of crisis;
- Support the increase of the national minimum wage and the wage appreciation in general;
- Reduce weekly working hours, in order to allow for a compatibility between work and family life;
- Reinforce support for local and national production, namely at the level of small-scale and organic family farming and at the level of traditional industrial sectors such as the example of the textile industry;
- Strengthen and support the fisheries sector;

- Guarantee support for small food distribution networks and local markets and commerce;
- Support the diversification and decentralization of economic activities, also encouraging the establishment of a business fabric in the depopulated interior of the country.