



Strasbourg, 9th February 2024

T-PVS/Files(2024)19

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Bureau of the Standing Committee

18-19 March 2024
Strasbourg

Complaint on stand-by: 2020/06

**Presumed threat to Tagus Estuary Special Protected
Area from a new airport (Portugal)**

- GOVERNMENT REPORT -

*Document prepared by
the Institute of Nature and Forest Conservation of the Portuguese Government*

Complaint No. 2020/6:

Stand by: Portugal

Presumed threat to Tagus Estuary Special Protected Area from a new airport

Progress Report on the Location of the New Airport 09/02/2024

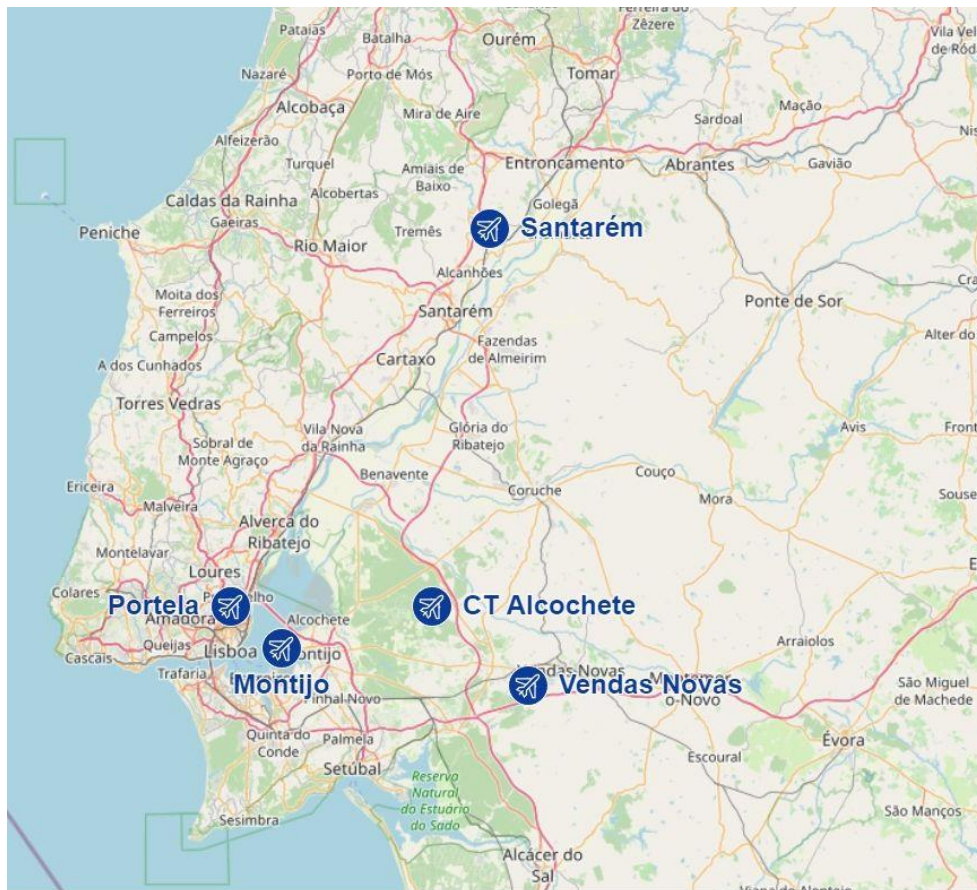
Council of Ministers Resolution no. 89/2022, of October 14, amended by Council of Ministers Resolution no. 86/2023, of July 26, hereinafter referred to as the CMR, determined the strategic and multidisciplinary analysis of the increase in airport capacity in the Lisbon Region, and the assessment of strategic options, through the coordination and carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), hereinafter referred to as the SEA.

The same CMR determined the creation of an Independent Technical Commission (ITC) to perform that SEA.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment evaluated 5 possible locations for the new airport, with dual or single options, depending on whether the current location at Portela Airport was to be maintained or not.

The 5 locations evaluated are shown in the figure, corresponding to the following alternatives:

Portela: current airport;



Montijo: location submitted to an Environmental Impact Assessment procedure which resulted in a favorable conditional decision in 2020, which expired on January 21, 2024, and was not renewed;

CT Alcochete: considered the most favorable location by the SEA, although, from an environmental point of view, it is located close to the Tagus Estuary SPA, and it could affect its integrity;

Santarém: option located to the northeast, 90 km from Lisbon, without affecting the Natura 2000 network;

Vendas Novas: option located further east of Lisbon, without affecting the Natura 2000 network.

The conclusions of the SEA point to the CT Alcochete as the most favorable location, particularly because it offers the greatest advantages for the creation of an intercontinental hub. This is followed by Vendas Novas.

According to the SEA, the Montijo option (dual or single) should be excluded from the options, as it does not allow for the development of an intercontinental hub.

The exclusion of the Santarém location from the most favorable options was due to the orientation of the runways proposed for that location. However, the ITC will still evaluate this location considering a different orientation of the runways, which could lead to different results for the SEA.

It should be remembered that, from an environmental point of view, the Montijo option was the one that posed the biggest problems from an environmental point of view, as it was located within the Tagus Estuary SPA and could significantly affect the region's bird biodiversity. One of the reasons put forward by ANA - Aeroportos de Portugal, the company promoting the project, for keeping this option, was the existence of a conditional favorable environmental impact statement. However, this expired on January 21, 2024, and has not been renewed, so together with the SEA's conclusions, this option is now a remote one.

In conclusion, there is still no decision on the location of the new Lisbon airport, and the most problematic option for the Tagus Estuary SPA is practically eliminated as a result of the SEA's conclusions. Also, the expiry of the existing conditional favorable environmental impact statement practically made this option unfeasible. Any decision will eventually be taken only after the formation of the new government that will emerge from the elections to be held on March 10. That decision will take into account the results of the SEA, which are still under development, with the re-evaluation of the Santarém option, in the light of the reorientation of the airport runways.

The complete SEA report can be consulted in the following link (PT language):

www.aeroparticipa.pt