

INNOVATIVE FIRE FIGHTING PROJECT STARTS IN 2022 AT PARQUE DAS SERRAS DO PORTO

Parque das Serras do Porto will be, in 2022, the stage of an innovative fire surveillance project in Portugal, which will stop fire and anticipate their evolution allowing a more proactive fight.

With six mountains – Santa Justa, Pias, Castiçal, Santa Iria, Flores and Banjas, covering the territory of Gondomar, Paredes and Valongo, in the Metropolitan Area of Porto (MAP), has an extension of almost 6,000 hectares and will receive the first three of seven surveillance systems that will be installed under the rePLANT project. This is an unprecedented technological project that brings together companies and universities for the valorization and defense of the forest. This mobilizing project led by Navigator Forest Portugal with technical-scientific coordination of CoLAB ForestWISE, was started in July 2020, includes 20 entities and will bring new technologies to develop and make the Portuguese forest safer, with an investment of about six million euros.

Involving more than 70 researchers and specialized technicians, the project in a second phase will install the remaining four towers at Góis (Alvares, Cadafaz and Colmeal) and Nisa (São Matias), being implemented in the North, Center and South of the country, explains the Head of Property and Right of Way of Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN). According to João Gaspar, the surveillance systems to be installed will be composed of a video camera, a thermal and optical camera and a weather station and "will be operational in the first half of 2022 when the first tower will be completed, at Recarei, in Paredes". Each camera, "will have a range of 10 kilometers and will work at 360 degrees". "The cameras will have a different purpose comparing to the already existing systems, combining fire detection to its monitoring, i.e., will allow fire monitorization, predicting to where it could develop, turning it more proactive on firefighting", he explains.

The implementation of this surveillance system "represents an investment of 2.1 million euros", revealed REN's head. "The choice of Parque das Serras do Porto aims the marriage between our infrastructures and territorial management, since it has a joint management. In addition, it is an area with many fires," Said João Gaspar, about choosing MAP territory.

Carlos Viegas, head of the project at the University of Coimbra, explains that its role in the project is in the scope of "defining the requirements and specifications of sensory systems installed in the towers and in the simulation of fire spreading and behavior". Revealing that an algorithm has been created for this purpose, Carlos Viegas explained that, besides knowing in real time the "wind speed or air temperature, this information, once placed in the propagation systems, will allow predict fire direction in one, two or three hours".

"I don't know if there is another system as complete as this. It is able to see through the fog, because it has various types of sensors, as video and also thermal, in the range of thermal infrared, which allows seeing through smoke, dust, fog and even through some vegetation", he described.

José Manuel Ribeiro, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Parque Serras do Porto, says that it is "an asset for the territory to have a system that also involves research and increases the capacity to defend the heritage of the mountains". "It is also the recognition of the good dynamics of the Park, the work done by the cities and other entities," he adds.

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About rePLANT:

RePLANT is a mobilizing project that gets together 20 institutions, including leading companies and non-business R&I players in the Forest sector, in a common and coordinated effort to contribute to value the Portuguese Forest by implementing integrated forest and fire management strategies. The Portuguese Forest is an environmental, social and economic wealth source, mobilizing about 24 thousand companies and being responsible for around 100.000 jobs and for 10% of Portuguese exports. RePLANT is a project co-financed by the Competitiveness and Internationalization Operational Program from Lisbon's Regional and Operational Program, by Portugal 2020 and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. More information at: www.replant.pt

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