



OUTLOOK 2017



MAIN TRENDS EXPECTED IN PUBLIC LAW

After a significant period of time with scarce public investment in infrastructures, 2017 may be the year we turn the corner.

In fact, for widely known reasons that bring back bad memories, Portugal was subject to innumerable budgetary restrictions, both on the level of the central State and on the regional and municipal levels.

These circumstances are naturally reflected in current work relating to the area of public law. There has been a lack of new infrastructure projects and, if memory serves us well, the only significant project in recent years has been the Lisbon Cruise Terminal. Fortunately, however, there has been a boom in administrative litigation, and public procurement and, above all public procurement relating to the purchase of goods and services, has maintained very reasonable levels of demand from clients.

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One important highlight is the programme known as *Portugal 2020* which includes, among others, the completion of a number of rail projects (*Rail Plan 2020*), including the key Sines / Caia line. Besides this, 2017 should also be the year that sees the launch of a long-awaited project: the new container terminal at Barreiro (its environmental impact study has been concluded). Another potentially important development is the strong possibility of a study being carried out with a view to building a new airport in the Lisbon area.

There are also plans for some investments in the healthcare sector, including the construction of new hospitals. However, the operation models for these hospitals still seems to be subject to some debate. Finally, the State Budget includes a provision of around €5 billion for public and private investment associated with European funds.

On another issue, 2017 will see a Public Procurement Code revised in line with the 2014 European Union Directives on public procurement. This is another element – this time relating to rules – that will undoubtedly give rise to debates about its interpretation at the various public entities and private entities with public functions. This will lead to additional work for lawyers who specialise in this important area.

As we mentioned above, we are living in times when the only certainty is uncertainty. Even so, we have plausible data that suggests an improvement in the outlook for 2017. Let's hope so!

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The Lawyer European Awards, 2015-2012

Portuguese Law Firm of the Year
Who's Who Legal, 2016-2015, 2011-2006
Chambers European Excellence Awards, 2014, 2012, 2009

Top 50 - Most Innovative Law Firm in Continental Europe
Financial Times - Innovative Lawyers Awards, 2016-2011