

City overview

Lisbon beyond the Tagus

Lisbon



La Fabrique
de la Cité

CITY

OVERVIEW

LISBON

City overview

Table of contents

5	Introduction
6	Overview
6	A historic relationship between the city and its river forming the basis of metropolitan renewal
12	Opening up to the Tagus, a series of very large-scale developments
17	Containing the port: developing its activity while building an interface
21	Conclusion
23	Key figures
25	About La Fabrique de la Cité



→ 25 de Abril Bridge, Lisbon

◆ Introduction

In 2023, La Fabrique de la Cité organised a study trip to the Portuguese capital, with the purpose of exploring two major features, the city's relationship with its river, and the development of its port activities over a limited surface area.

Lisbon, the smallest European capital, often attracts attention for the urban rehabilitation it is conducting. The current city council is reconsidering the constructions of the 1980s and 1990s, deemed too rushed. Other analyses focus on the impacts of tourism and of economic revival on property prices and home ownership. Lastly, recent studies highlight clear improvements in the city's transportation and decongestion measures, that must now be extended to the entire metropolitan area ¹.

This city overview aims to propose a new take on the Portuguese capital, considering it in relation to the Tagus estuary, which is to date seldom discussed in studies of the city. At the mouth of the river and at the gateway to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Lisbon is now developing as a major city on both sides of the Tagus. Whether on the quaysides which host several showcase buildings and recently installed activities, the port and its necessary economic revival, or the involvement of neighbouring municipalities, the Tagus estuary is an appropriate and now essential scale for the city's development.

Technical, commercial and industrial spaces, a public area for residents, pedestrians and visitors: how can the city leverage the river's presence in different ways? How have the areas along the Tagus been rehabilitated, given the multitude of expectations? What types of uses have been developed? There is also a need to understand the role of Lisbon's port, in terms of both river and maritime activities. What is the port's position in relation to international competition, at a time when reducing the carbon intensity of transportation and logistics are becoming major challenges? What is the port's relationship with the city?

When Portugal joined the EU in 1986 and strengthened its international position, the capital was suffering from a major crisis and poor urban development. Land management policies

struggled to provide positive results during the 2000s and

the 2010s were another painful period for the city, which lost inhabitants. Port and river economic activity were also hit hard by the crisis, leading to many waterfront areas being neglected as brownfield sites.

Since the 1990s, the city's recovery has been a key goal, driven by major growth in tourism. Nevertheless, the city did not overlook its port or the river in its urban development plans. The banks of the Tagus were opened to pedestrians and recreational uses back in the 2000s. The Parque das Nações (Park of the Nations), built by the river for the last World's Fair of the 20th century, is a prime example of this momentum. After several successive rounds of rehabilitation, of which some buildings are now iconic such as the quayside of Ribeira das Naus, the former shipyard and the MAAT Electricity Factory, entire districts are claiming the waterfront. The district of the LX Factory, where the former industrial textile complex has been converted into a cultural space, is a prime example of this. Lastly, the issue of continuity between the two banks of the Tagus remains open today, as the enlargement of the metropolitan area could be an asset for the smallest capital in Europe (100 km²).

Currently, international port competition disadvantages ports that cannot accommodate enormous cargo ships several times a day. Despite much more limited traffic than the major international ports (particularly in Asia), the Port of Lisbon can also count on a high level of tourism and excellent visitor rates. At least two issues will be decisive for the port's development in the coming years. Firstly, the rehabilitation of industrial and port brownfield sites which emerged at the start of the 21st century, and their integration in the current ambitious land use policies. Secondly, the management of a sustainable economy for this port system in a city which is very popular with tourists.

¹ Marc Breviglieri. [Lisbonne, 21^e siècle. Vers un nouvel espace référentiel du centre urbain: emprise marchande, aménagement certifié, libéralisme multiculturel.](#) EspacesTemps.net, 2019

◆ Overview

A historic relationship between the city and its river forming the basis of metropolitan renewal

A clear link between city and river

Europe's most westerly capital has existed since the time of Ancient Rome, and even since the Phoenicians according to some historians. From the outset, the city's access to its river and the ocean made it an important site for Mediterranean trade. This is evidenced in the many Roman buildings, mostly used for the purposes of exporting foodstuffs and livestock. Quickly, the port's importance and utility attracted interest and the city was invaded several times until the early Middle Ages: Moors, Vikings, Frankish and Germanic peoples, all saw the importance of this gateway to the sea.

The many departures of maritime expeditions in the 15th and 16th centuries gave the port of Lisbon a rare vitality. The "Age of Discovery", commemorated in particular by the monument inaugurated in 1960 on the banks of the Tagus, opposite the Belém Tower, was a major

challenge for the European governments involved. It was a geopolitical and economic race, influenced by great scientific and ethnological curiosity. For the Navy and the port industry, it was also a tremendous driver for innovation. Henceforth, the Port of Lisbon had to keep to an intense pace, between vessel repairs and preparations, and hosted a great number of crews (of more than 200 sailors per vessel, and sometimes more than 10 ships per expedition). Vasco de Gama, the first European to reach the Indies by ship, is an iconic figure of Portuguese maritime exploration in this regard. It was also at this time that the Portuguese elite gradually left the hills and began to live in the lower areas of the city, near the Tagus².



"The river is the city's most important feature, and has been since Roman times. There would be no Lisbon without the Tagus!"

Pedro Siza Vieira, former Minister of the Economy

→ The Port of Lisbon, engraving, 16th century, Theodor de Bry

² According to historian Cécile Mermier, this was also the "tipping point of the Middle Ages. In less than a century, the two ends of the Earth were connected to Lisbon, the first global city".

Up to 1755, Lisbon's port activities focused primarily on the city's access to the Atlantic Ocean, while being the maritime gateway to the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the river was mainly used for farming and domestic purposes. The city did not yet consider it in terms of recreation, development or a means of providing cool.

It took the powerful earthquake of 1755 and the destruction of the city for the Terreiro do Paço (now known as the Praça do Comércio) to be designed, which opened onto the Tagus. The earthquake heralded a new period of renewal for the city, rebuilt according to

the urban planning principles of the time (primarily by creating a grid structure for the city centre's streets).



→ Engraving depicting the Lisbon earthquake (1755, source: University of California, Berkeley).

The 19th century and the successive wars of invasion and reconquest (Napoleonic wars, Portuguese civil war until 1834) did not hamper the city's expansion, which moved more inland than along the river. The port retained an exclusive location in the Mediterranean area, despite many political upheavals and revolts in the 20th century. The Second World War gave the Portuguese capital a key role as the port, which remained neutral, was responsible for international movements, in relation with the United States. It was not subject to any major destruction. While Portugal could count on its accession to the European Economic Community from 1985 to instil new economic vitality, the city of Lisbon suffered another setback in 1988 when a fire destroyed part of its centre and undermined many local activities.

(...)
***Come, ye philosophers,
 who cry, "All's well," And
 contemplate this ruin of a
 world. Behold these shreds
 and cinders of your race,***

(...)
***Go, tell it to the Tagus'
 stricken banks;
 Search in the ruins of that
 bloody shock;***

Voltaire, extract from the "Poem on the Lisbon Disaster", 1756

Resilient and attentive to its cultural and economic vitality, Lisbon hosted the 1998 World's Fair, under a theme that was promising for the Tagus and the city's port: "The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future". It was an opportunity to rehabilitate many brownfield sites along the Tagus, in particular the Parque das Nações, and to renew the appeal of these districts by restructuring them (public transportation routes, road links, museums and places of interest). Having hosted 160 countries over 70 hectares during the World's Fair, the site is now a fully-fledged district with housing, offices and parks. It plays host to 25,000 residents, many headquarters of international companies and more than 18 million tourists each year.

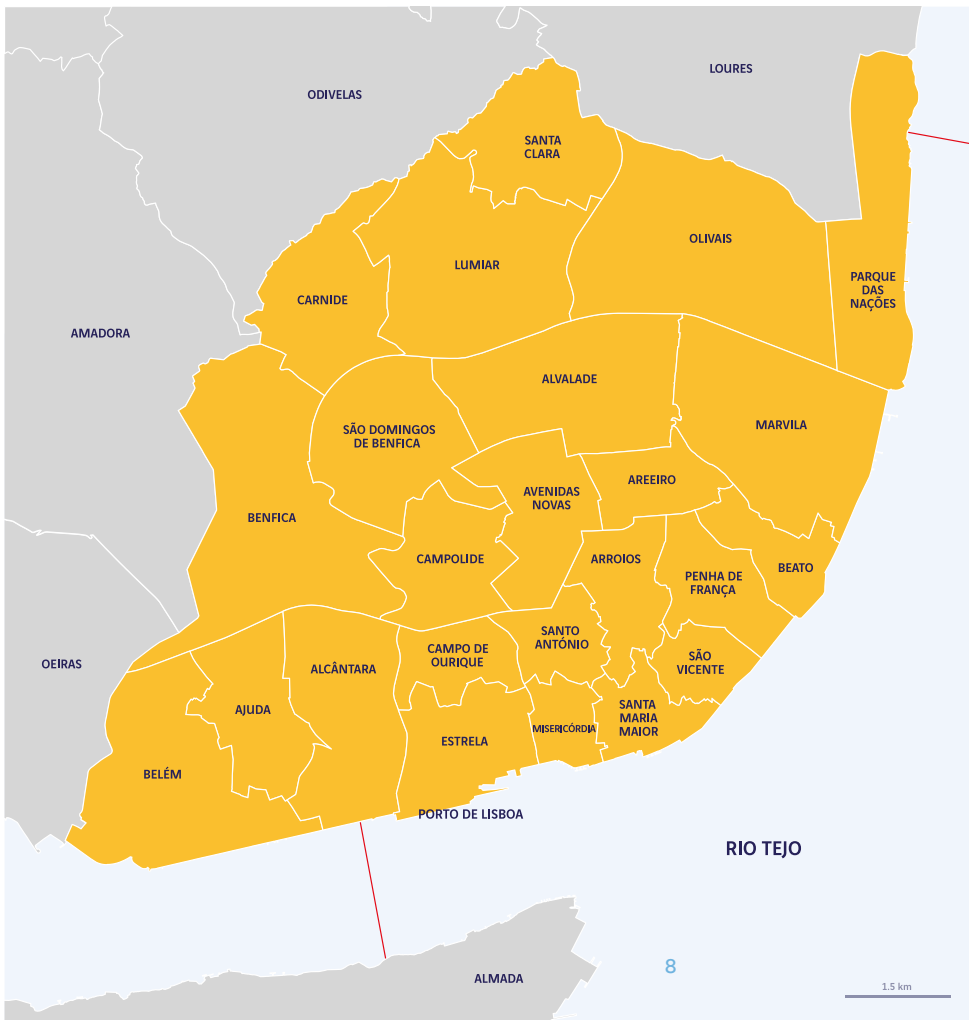
Building a metropolis open onto the estuary

Stretching over an area of 85 km², the city has seven hills, meaning certain districts are famed for their steepness. Located on the right bank of the Tagus estuary, the capital had 5 million inhabitants in 2021 and was divided into 24 districts. Lisbon's Mayor is Carlos Moedas (social-democrat), who was elected in 2021.


The country joined the EEC on 1 January 1986 and, despite being hit by a major crisis, the capital attempted to maintain an international standing. It experienced all-round development and poverty grew in the enclaves at the entrance to the city. The challenge was to implement a coherent land use policy to bring about both a seamless extension of the city and the renovation of the dilapidated centre, threatened by tourism and rising property prices.

Brownfield sites, former slums and industrial areas became the leading projects for this urban renewal.

However, the country, and in particular its capital, was hard hit by the crisis of 2008–2010. The capital lost many inhabitants and the revitalisation of the city centre, where some buildings were at risk of collapse, became paramount. In rolling out this land use policy, Lisbon became a benchmark for citizen initiatives. A pioneer of the participatory budget, the city experimented with local renovations through co-construction with inhabitants, even allocating some public resources.



[→ Map of Lisbon](#)



Lisbon launched its first participatory budget in 2008, under the initiative of Mayor Antonio Costa. This innovative approach was conducted on-line, by successive votes, to determine whether the plan was worth incorporating in the city's budget. The participatory budget accounts for more than 5% of the city's investment budget, representing a significant amount. It was therefore necessary to increase citizen participation to ensure that the greatest number of residents were investing the amounts involved. Since then, many initiatives have been rolled out to reduce the digital divide (creation of dedicated voting stations, creation of participative assemblies). While some of the projects voted are struggling to come to fruition, a fact which may erode citizens' trust in this system, the city is now offering two project categories: large-scale projects (transportation network, building renovation) and smaller projects that are easier to complete quickly (parks, pedestrianisation, on-line tools). Despite being influential in relation to other European cities - including Paris and Madrid - Lisbon's system is still hampered by a lack of projects arriving at completion, while election turn-out is also waning. The recently elected city council wishes to address this democratic challenge fully.

Today, the city has retained its major cultural influence and remains a leading tourist destination in Europe. It is one of the capitals with the greatest number of Airbnb rentals.

Apart from tourism, Lisbon's economy is focused primarily on industry (oil refining and textiles), shipyards and fisheries.

An incontestable economic resource, the Tagus is also at the centre of a planned policy to connect the two banks, which would incorporate neighbouring municipalities into the metropolitan community. The high level of traffic on the two bridges that connect the banks underscores this momentum. In Almada, opposite Lisbon, almost one in two inhabitants works in the Portuguese capital. Today, it is estimated that 160,000 vehicles cross the 25 de Abril Bridge (inaugurated in 1966) which was designed for 100,000 vehicles³. Congestion and city-centre access from neighbouring municipalities are now two key priorities to open up the city. This is all the more urgent as the city is developing as a metropolis on both sides of the Tagus. Ease and fluidity of access are prerequisites for the plan's success.

The Vasco de Gama Bridge is a clear echo of the 25 de Abril Bridge. Constructed later, in 1998, it spans 17 kilometres, making it the second-longest bridge in Europe. It was specially designed to withstand an earthquake of the same magnitude as the one that destroyed the city in 1755. By connecting Montijo, opposite Lisbon, and then other peripheral municipalities, this bridge also provides direct access to the airport, which is now at the centre of the urban area.

Lisbon has now reached its fifth era: a time of democracy and openness to the outside world".

Pedro Siza Vieira, former Minister of the Economy

³ Satellite analysis, CNES (French National Centre for Space Studies), 2022

-> View of the 25 de Abril Bridge from Almada



Building a metropolis across the two banks is a major political project for the smallest capital in Europe. Today, while naval economic activities and property renovations already overlook administrative borders, the political framework must be built up quickly and be supported by appropriate governance.

According to Pedro Siza Vieira, lawyer and former Minister of the Economy, the city of Lisbon is currently in the “*most democratic phase of its history.*” Through participatory budgets, public surveys and consultations, urban democracy is developing together with an openness to the outside world (hosting of events such as the WebSummit, aimed at start-ups). The city of Lisbon is extending its influence both to its direct periphery and on an international level. Yet surprisingly, the city’s location on the Tagus estuary has a more understated importance. This is understandable, given the age-old relationship between the municipalities around the river mouth. Nuno Canta, Mayor of Montijo, on the southern bank of the Tagus, reminds us that the trading routes linking Paris, Rome, Madrid and Lisbon had also passed through certain municipalities on the estuary since Roman times. At first sight, the relations between river

and city form a backdrop, such an obvious feature that one tends to forget its importance. However, political collaboration between the two banks of the Tagus is not a straightforward process. The 550 hectares of industrial wasteland opposite Lisbon, along the municipalities of Almada, Laranjeiro, Seixal and Barreiro, provide a great incentive for cooperation. Housing, green areas, cutting-edge port economy, the future of these areas has not yet been decided but, in a highly-concentrated urban area subject to heavy tourist traffic, such land is now the focus of a land use policy to rehabilitate the banks of the Tagus. Municipalities are showing a keen interest in this potential manna of land and are being politically proactive. However, these assets have not yet been developed and their renovation appears to be subject to a long-term political agenda that is yet to consider requirement planning.

While the political authorities in Lisbon, and more generally in the metropolitan area, are focusing on these exchanges between both sides of the Tagus, other key challenges are not being forgotten. For the last thirty or so years, Portugal’s tourist appeal, and in particular that of Lisbon, has posed a challenge to the city’s administration.

The aim is twofold: to welcome tourists and to contain rent price increases which are partly attributable to the upsurge in the number of Airbnb properties (+65% between 2015 and 2023). Lisbon concentrates 30% of Portugal's tourist accommodation. Many residents and resident collectives oppose the high traffic of enormous cruise liners along the Tagus. However, the tourism economy is vital for the city and the recent cruise terminal which was inaugurated in 2017 was designed to host up to two million visitors each year. We are far from the situation described by French journalist Charles Monselet in 1874: *"what noble and lustrous appearance of a great capital Lisbon enjoys, little-known among tourists, even English tourists"*⁴!

A political response to this conundrum is difficult, as tourism is essential for the city's economic activity. It is also complex, as protecting housing for inhabitants, particularly the most disadvantaged, requires ambitious renovation programmes for the sometimes-dilapidated central districts. There are, however, solutions being put forward. In 2019, the first Mayors' forum on sustainable tourism was held in Lisbon and in February 2023, the government announced that it was considering a means of prohibiting all new apartment

rentals on the Airbnb platform. The city council also boasts innovative tools such as two programmes set up in 2017 in response to the housing crisis. The first, called "affordable rents", results from a public-private partnership for the completion of affordable housing units, for which the land is ceded by the city council. The other, entitled "rehabilitation first, payment later", enables public authorities to sell residential buildings in high-demand areas to investors. The purchase is postponed, on the condition that renovation work is completed within tight deadlines. Be that as it may, these two programmes are only rolled out in a small minority of cases and are popular among many speculative investors, a fact which contributes to price increases in areas with high property prices. This means that a renovated residential building will only ever provide housing for wealthy residents!

This land pressure goes some way to explaining why the city views itself now as a metropolis, including both banks of the Tagus under the same urban development approach.

→ Vasco de Gama Bridge, inaugurated in 1998



⁴ Charles Monselet, *Les Souliers de Sterne*, 1874

Opening up to the Tagus, a series of very large-scale developments

The Parque das Nações: a waterfront district

In the 1990s, Lisbon City Council began to redevelop the banks of the Tagus, in line with a trend followed by many international major cities. First in the USA, then in Europe, the rediscovery of urban rivers was primarily a response to aesthetic considerations. Opening the city onto the river means creating less dense and renatured recreational spaces for its inhabitants. Public authorities have only recently begun to assess the positive impact of these operations on the city's ventilation, transportation and logistics options.

In Lisbon, the rediscovery of the Tagus follows these principles and the first stated objectives were the creation of convivial and recreational spaces. Faced with a keen need for space in a saturated city centre lacking available land, the banks of the Tagus were a very valuable resource.

The symbol of the rediscovery of the Tagus (sometimes called the "riverfront operation") is perhaps the Parque das Nações, inaugurated for the 1998 World's Fair, the theme of which was aptly oceans and their future. Topped by a cable car, built over former port and industrial brownfield sites, this mixed-use district (residential and office buildings) is currently the figurehead of a long-term operation that must articulate three separate objectives: to ventilate the city and disperse flows from the city centre, to redevelop brownfield sites and renovate existing buildings and, lastly, to host port activities and the blue economy.

The construction of the Parque das Nações is particularly interesting and reveals the way in which Lisbon opened



→ Panoramic aerial view of Lisbon's Parque das Nações (Park of the Nations)

up to the Tagus. While the project was conducted in 1992 according to conventional urban rehabilitation principles and through a rather pyramid-like system from the State to the city council, it was innovative from its inception, as it played host to one of the first public-private partnership formats in Lisbon. According to Branca Neves, architect and urban planner at Lisbon City Council, the district's construction met several objectives, namely to rehabilitate a former industrial and port brownfield site and to decontaminate the land, to drive the city's eastward development and, above all, to provide an access to the Tagus and to demonstrate modern urban development.



The aim was to keep to a very short timeframe, and to complete the project in time for the last World's Fair of the century, in 1998 (in only six years!). The challenge lay in a simple principle that came to govern future developments along the river: not only creating "a bigger city", but rather a new city centre. To achieve this, housing units, offices, sports infrastructure, cultural facilities and green spaces were created around the famous exhibition pavilions while roads, trains,

"The courts and a large part of the Ministry of Justice are located in the district. It has remained a genuine centre in the city, both for residents and for tourists".

Branca Neves, architect and urban planner at Lisbon city council

The photos below show the district's development.

→ Industrial and port land



→ The first phases of land clearance and decontamination



→ The Park during the World's Fair



→ The Park after the World's Fair



The Parque das Nações: a waterfront district

From the Parque das Nações in Lisbon, the rehabilitation operation was continued gradually, here and there, as the port began to give up some spaces and focus elsewhere. Since 2013, the spaces to the west of the Praça do Comércio, which used to house the old shipyards of the Riberia das Naus, have been occupied by a park and various promenades. Further west, near the 25 de Abril Bridge, the former quaysides and warehouses of Alcântara have now been converted into restaurants. One of the specific features of this reinvestment programme which has been effective since 2015 was to confer a cultural and heritage aspect on the new open space. Alongside the enlargement of the quaysides, many buildings were converted into museums, offices and public facilities while the logistics areas of the port were gradually hidden from sight, and navigation on the Tagus grew.

The new boat station is an example of this strong and distinctive architecture, as is the former boat station which is now open to the public. Constructed in 1932, this building welcomed passengers in two halls, for journeys in first- and second-class on the Tagus. With a clear Art Deco style, the building conveyed the city's openness to modern architecture and modern technology as the station was used by both trains and boats.

The building was renovated in 2019 and several cruises still operate today, but with a more recreational and tourist purpose than was originally the case. Once again, the relation with the opposite bank and the creation of a metropolitan area is in the background with a view to extending tourist flows to the municipalities on the southern bank. Other buildings have been constructed, embodying the city's modernity and architectural expertise, such as the cruise terminal inaugurated in 2017 and the Lisbon Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT), inaugurated in 2016. In some way, they showcase

this opening onto the Tagus. The fact remains that these numerous developments forming a string along the river actually constitute a series of distinctive places of interest rather than a full opening onto the Tagus. Between two buildings, transportation routes or major industrial and port sites still hinder the appropriation of the river. The city's polycentric organisation is struggling to direct the flows towards the estuary, at least for pedestrians.

The Parque das Nações model was replicated nearby: a few minutes' walk away, architect Renzo Piano was selected to design the new Prata residential district on the riverfront. Further south and once again along the Tagus, the Beato Hub, an innovation centre and start-up incubator, intends to enshrine the capital's ideal of modernity and openness. In full development, the site is beginning to host resident entrepreneurs and start-ups, in a bid to become one of Europe's leading entrepreneurship and innovation hubs (3,000 jobs on site, within companies committed to the urban energy transition).

The flagship of Lisbon's strong development along the Tagus is possibly still the LX Factory, a popular tourist attraction, located under the arches of the 25 de Abril Bridge. Initially built on a former industrial site and renovated in 2008, the building now plays host to restaurants and artistic performances. It is currently at the centre of a property programme overseen by the city council, with a view to promoting its extension and expanding its model.



Lisbon's rediscovery of the Tagus occurred gradually, as spaces became available. First motivated by aesthetic reasons, the operation is now being stepped up with the construction of innovation hubs, cultural creative centres and, while more difficult to incorporate, cruise terminals. These developments meet the requirement to open up the city and boost tourist appeal, while preserving the city centre. However, the Tagus is also being developed on the opposite bank, with for example the *Cidade da água* (City of Water) project. Visible from Lisbon, the former shipyard in Almada can be made out with its 90-metre red gantry weighing around 300 metric tons. It is now the site of the largest waterfront redevelopment operation, after the Parque das Nações in 1998. Planned since 2009 in an urban development document, the project is being conducted by the public company Baía de Tejo, which is

also working in other riverside municipalities. The plan is to build more than 600,000 m² of housing units, offices, shops and services there, as well as a new intermodal river terminal offering a range of links between the two banks. Funding is currently being sought for the project, which has slowed down its implementation. In 2017, a Portuguese delegation visited several European cities to analyse the success of similar programmes, particularly in Liverpool, and a consortium of investors has now been put into place.

While many brownfield sites are currently available, port activity is showing no signs of slowing.



→ New boat station (source: Lisbon City Council)

Containing the port: developing its activity while building an interface

Despite its strategic geographical position and its international status, Lisbon is only the third-largest port in Portugal with 13% of traded goods, behind Porto (23%) and Sines (48%)⁵.

At first glance, Lisbon's port activity appears to be showing little development. Many brownfield sites are being added to list of available plots of land. These are, however, difficult to develop due to the high levels of pollution or very large surface areas concerned. The port is also suffering from international competition. In the early 20th century, the railway and naval infrastructure contributed to the port's rise, while permanently isolating it from the city and its citizens who are now reinvesting the brownfield sites.

Nevertheless, there has not been a decline in port activity and the port's economy, instead it has diversified. Gone are the days of the colossal shipyards of the Lisnave, the long-standing ship repair company. The port is now focusing on several economies such as tourism (with the increase in the number of sea cruises), cutting-edge industry (refining, decarbonation of the economy, energy generation) and - despite a drop in the ranking of leading international ports - logistics.

The government's three priorities to boost Portugal's port activities are to increase container reception capacities (primarily at the Port of Sines), the creation of tech clusters, at the cutting-edge of the decarbonated blue economy (in 2022, Lisbon hosted the Ocean Conference, an international conference for maritime protection and environmental innovation) and the implementation of a more favourable fiscal policy.

In addition to heavy port industry, the city's economy clearly benefits from tourism. The city council views cruiseship tourism as a development opportunity and the new terminal, inaugurated in 2017, confirms this trend. While residents are currently contesting the presence of large cruise liners in the city centre, this activity is nothing new. The port already had three cruise terminals that were rehabilitated in the 1990s. The location of the terminal built in 2017 was selected for its proximity to the historical city centre. The idea is to stimulate urban renovation and to show that major infrastructure can be integrated into the city centre. The challenge lies in the size of the cruise liners!

Lisbon's recent cruise terminal will have to meet two key requirements for the development of the Tagus, namely integration into a rich architectural heritage and a need to remain functional. Remaining functional involves the capacity to host many cruise liners each year (325 vessels in 2022⁶), while addressing various restrictions such as size, pollution and traffic noise. It also entails no disruption to logistical vessel traffic in the estuary and no congestion of the city's transportation systems with new passengers. As regards the terminal's integration into the architectural landscape, the decision was made to build a discreet small terminal of a similar colour to existing buildings. Made using a composite material of concrete mixed with cork, the building is also highly innovative in terms of insulation and weight. Efforts to achieve discretion and mitigate noise pollution have not prevented continued fierce opposition.

⁵ Port of Lisbon, 2023

⁶ Port of Lisbon, 2023

-> Traffic at Lisbon's cruise terminal. A sharp increase in traffic was recorded between 2021 and 2022, which is set to grow further in 2023.

TRÁFEGO / TRAFFIC	Média mensal / Monthly average		Janeiro a Dezembro / January to December		
	2021	2022	2021	2022	Variação / Variation %
Navios Entrados / Incoming ships (n°)	140	170	1 679	2 045	21,8 %
Navio de Carga / Cargo ships	122	129	1 464	1 548	5,7 %
Navio de Passageiros / Passenger ships	8	27	91	325	257,1 %
Outros / Others	10	14	124	172	38,7 %
TOTAL (GT)	1 934 267	3 806 613	23 211 206	45 679 352	96,8 %
Mercadorias / Goods TOTAL (tonnes)	816 369	920 781	9 796 424	11 049 376	12,8 %
Via Marítima / Sea-borne TOTAL	798 444	905 994	9 581 333	10 871 926	13,5 %
Manifestadas / Manifested	785 886	893 436	9 430 637	10 721 230	13,7 %
Embarcada / Loaded	310 397	349 157	3 724 766	4 189 881	12,5 %
Desembarcada / Unloaded	475 489	544 279	5 705 871	6 531 349	14,5 %
Gastos de bordo / Ship supplies	12 558	12 558	150 696	150 696	0,0 %
Via fluvial / River-borne TOTAL	17 924	14 788	215 091	177 450	-17,5 %
Passageiros / Passengers (n°)	901 011	1 358 175	10 812 127	16 298 098	50,7 %
Navegação marítima / Sea-borne	10 409	41 278	124 904	495 338	296,6 %
Embarcados / Embarked	971	3 813	11 654	45 750	292,6 %
Desembarcados / Disembarked	1 093	3 584	13 114	43 013	228,0 %
Em trânsito / In transit	8 345	33 881	100 136	406 575	306,0 %
Navegação fluvial / River-borne (*)	890 602	1 316 897	10 687 223	15 802 760	47,9 %

(*) fonte / source : Transtejo / Soflusa

It should also be mentioned that the maritime cruise market is booming in Europe. In 2018, 282 million passengers took a cruise, representing growth of more than 30% since 2013 ⁷. In 2022, Lisbon's cruise terminal welcomed more than 16 million visitors, a 50% increase compared to the previous year. The map opposite shows the main cruise ports in Europe. Lisbon is still lagging behind the leading European ports and its stated objective is to join their ranks.

The challenge of developing this economy lies in reducing the environmental footprint of cruise liners. The same goes for freight transport: 10 billion goods transit each year through the world's ports and, according to the Carbone 4 consulting company ⁸, if the maritime transport sector were a country, it would be the sixth-highest in the world in terms of CO₂ emissions.

Even though Lisbon does not rank among the leading global ports, it is nonetheless concerned by this major issue. By the state-of-the-art logistics terminal near the 25 de Abril Bridge, many initiatives to decarbonate the blue economy along the Tagus can be seen, some of which are discussed below.

The logistics port in the district of Alcântara is being renovated to renew the cranes and improve container management. This is an opportunity for Pedro Nuno Santos, Portugal's Minister of Infrastructure, to remind that "the Port of Lisbon is a gateway to Europe and the world" and to display its international ambition. Carlos Correia, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Port of Lisbon announced that "the port is back". Together with the one in Setúbal further south, which is able to welcome vessels on the high seas, the port is now planning trading links with

⁷ Cruise Lines International Association, 2020

⁸ Is the maritime sector sailing towards decarbonization?, July 2019, Carbone 4

Argentina, the US and Brazil. Total investment of €122 million is planned until 2026 to renovate the entire port in Alcântara and enhance its importance in Atlantic trade.

Ruben Eiras, Secretary-General of the Fórum Oceano, a cluster created to promote innovation in Portugal’s port economy, lists many port activity decarbonation strategies along the Tagus and the port’s integration into the new port industry. Initiatives abound for this port in full renaissance, ranging from an underwater carbon sink and the renewal of infrastructure dependent on fossil fuels to the installation of off-shore wind turbines.

“The growth of maritime cruises - a global mega-industry - illustrates the “reappropriation” of former industrial port areas for tourism, and changes the urban and port landscapes by creating dynamics, conflicts, representations and new uses”

Alexandra Baixinho, geographer



→ Main cruise ports in Europe in terms of passenger volumes



Is the city obliged to absorb the port?

While certain port brownfield sites are already being reconverted, mainly for non-industrial uses, the city is exerting significant land pressure on the port and its development. The tourism industry, the protection of built heritage and the city's climate plans are difficult to reconcile with the port's development. This is why small urban spaces (wasteland that is difficult to use, places only accessible by sea) are now sought-after. The urban development on either bank of the Tagus (or beyond the Tagus) also brings about a rebalancing of the area, which is seen as a boon for political players on both sides. The expansion of port activities must be associated with the drive to renovate the city and develop several uses for the area: pedestrian promenades, tourist visits to museums, exhibition centres, and access to new office or housing districts.

It is still difficult to establish a relationship between the city and the port, and vessels and logistics infrastructure, industrial brownfield sites and cruise liners are still acting as barriers. One project aims to reconcile the city, its inhabitants and the enormous port areas. Called Ocean Campus, in a bid to create a genuine community, this 64-hectare district planned for 2030 will create more than 500 new jobs. With a budget of more than €300 million shared between public and private funds, this waterfront district (after the 25 de Abril Bridge, open onto the ocean) strives to offer one of the largest campuses in Europe for training on the blue economy and ocean protection. It will bring together universities and public institutions (Ministry of the Sea, port authority, etc.) and a range of start-ups specialised in the sustainable blue economy.



For this district created from renovated brownfield sites and new constructions, the gamble is to reveal Lisbon's identity as a pioneering city in the port and maritime economy. It is also to revitalise former industrial wastelands nearby districts that are now very popular among tourists in an approach similar to that which governed the construction of the Parque das Nações.

→ Source: Ocean Campus, Port of Lisbon, 2023

◆ Conclusion

Should Lisbon be recognised as a model?

The tone is set, even on the city's coat of arms (showing a ship sailing on dangerous waves): water is the element that forges Lisbon's identity. Against a backdrop where, for the last five to seven years, Lisbon has been lacking space, the river and its estuary are a tremendous solution for the city's development and well-considered extension. Far from undertaking a massive housing construction campaign according to the methods of the 1980s and 1990s, which the city council is now revising, the city is opening along the Tagus through the creation of fully-fledged districts. However, Lisbon also sustains a paradox. How can a major city lack space (for transportation and housing) and have so many industrial and port brownfield sites (with those on the southern bank able to welcome another million inhabitants)?

This city overview does not seek, therefore, to present Lisbon as a model to follow, but rather as a powerful laboratory for successful developments. The city is experimenting and is still looking to strike a balance. There is much left to do, particularly ten years after the European Troika, to improve Lisbon's transportation system, contain rising property prices and support the local economy. However, the Tagus estuary is becoming a fertile area for inter-municipal cooperation and private initiatives. Hub Azul, Fórum Oceano, Ocean Campus, Tagus Innovation... Lisbon is reappropriating the Tagus and is moving on from a period in which urban planning did not consider the estuary. The rediscovery of the Tagus and the city's opening onto the river have been supported by a series of remarkable developments, which nonetheless remain sporadic. The river is seen more as a vanishing point, an obvious feature rather than an element that has been appropriated by the city. The banks of the Tagus still seem to be considered as useful or utilitarian spaces rather than landscape features or recreational areas. The road ahead to achieve a coherent overall aspect, or to have a clear idea of the relationship between the port and the city is still relatively long!

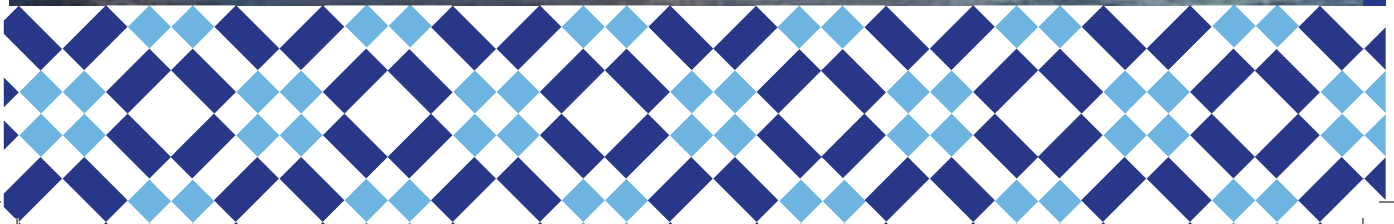
The Parque das Nações and its buildings designed by the leading names in architecture, the banks of the Tagus along the Praça do Comércio, the cruise terminal which blends in perfectly with the city's ochre tones, the two bridges straddling the great river: the city has successfully opened onto the Tagus and its remarkable developments attest to this. However, the estuary's potential has not been fully leveraged and it remains too sluggish for its large land reserves to be invested. A political seam beyond the Tagus is essential for the successful opening up of urban activities and to launch Lisbon's metropolitan area sustainably into the next decade.

Five centuries after the discovery of the sea route to India, the city inaugurated its Parque das Nações, a symbol of modernity, public-private collaboration and proactive urban planning. The port's renewal, the environmental transition and the city's international alignment will be the next driving forces for development. The ocean is a legitimate horizon.



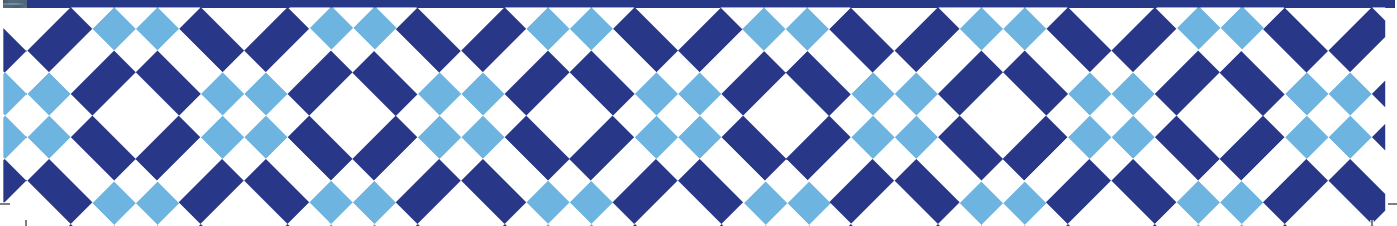


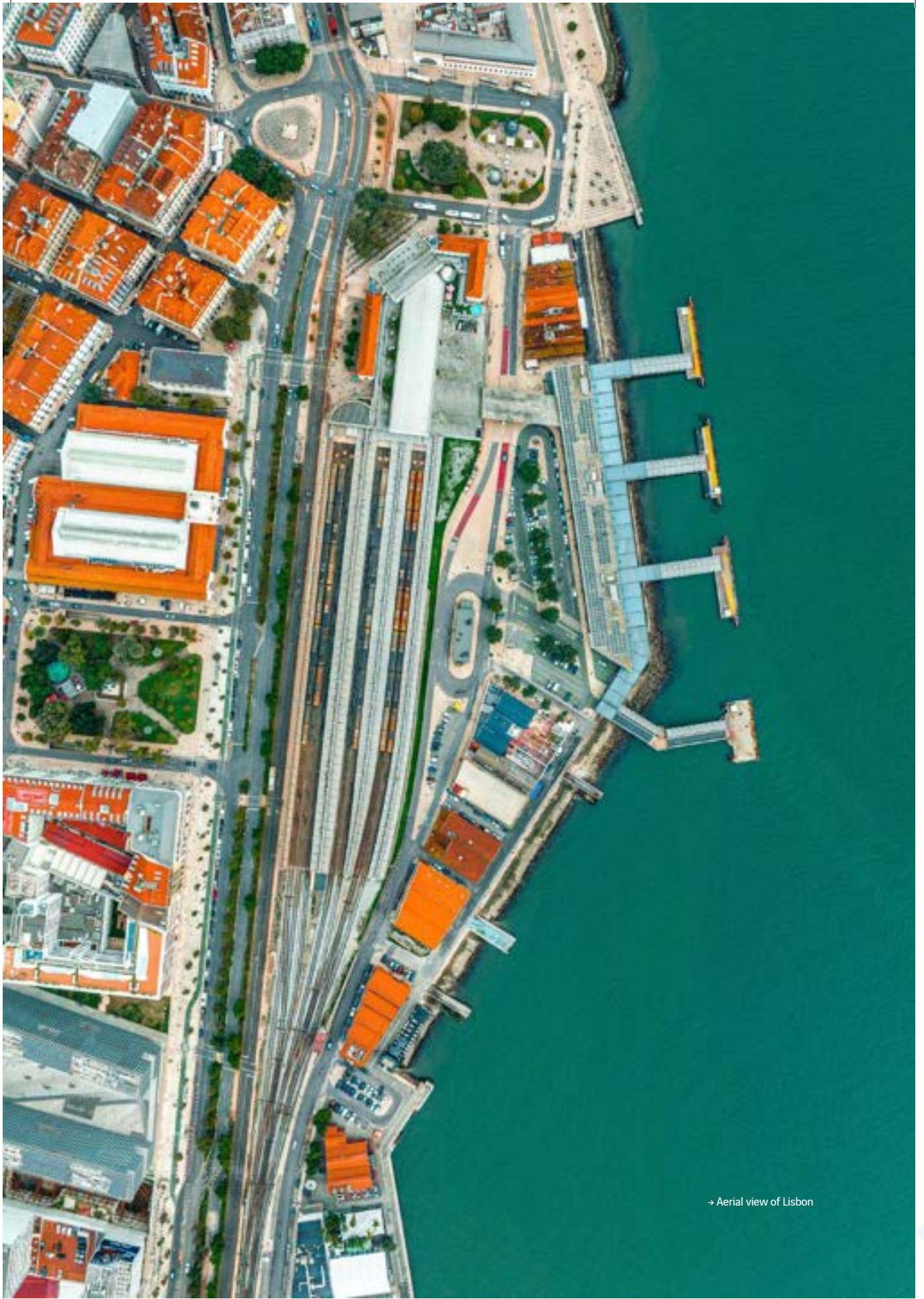
→ Vasco de Gama Bridge, Lisbon



◆ Key figures

Portugal's population	10,302,674 inhabitants
Density	112 inhab/km ²
Lisbon's population	545,923 inhabitants in 2021, of which around 15% live below the poverty line. The population has been declining for 30 years with residents moving to the periphery. The metropolitan region has almost 2.9 million inhabitants in total.
Density	5,093 inhab/km ²
Tourism	17.2 million in 2022, +10% visitors between 2007 and 2021.
Median wage	1,117 Euros (per month)
Freight traffic at the Port of Lisbon	11,842,229 metric tons in 2022





→ Aerial view of Lisbon

◆ About

La Fabrique de la Cité is a French think tank dedicated to urban transitions.

It seeks to bring together stakeholders and experts from diverse fields and geographical backgrounds to identify and understand the economic, social and environmental challenges of the modern city. It relies on the members of its steering committee to set an annual programme of debates, meetings, field studies and documentary work. Always attentive to French and international best practices, La Fabrique de la Cité is attuned to the various dynamics and equilibriums specific to local and regional areas. Moreover, it highlights inspiring initiatives, clarifies controversies, and fosters public debate on new city development models.

Founded in 2010 by the VINCI group, its sponsor, La Fabrique de la Cité is an endowment fund, and is thus vested with a public interest mission. All productions are available on its website.

lafabriquedelacite.com

Credits

Author

Alphonse Coulot

Proofreading

Agathe Ducellier, Celine Acharian,
Marie Dégremont

Graphic design

Louis Robinet

L

I

S

B

O

N

La Fabrique de la Cité

6, Place du Colonel Bourgoïn

75012 Paris

France

contact@lafabriquedelacite.com



lafabriquedelacite.com



twitter.com/fabriquelacite

La Fabrique

de la Cité