

2024 Figueirinha Nature Award



MOVEMENT JUNTOS PELO SUDOESTE WINS FIGUEIRINHA NATURE AWARD 2024

Contra a Corrente awarded the Figueirinha Nature Award 2024 to the Juntos Pelo Sudoeste (JPS) movement. Formed after the resolution of the Council of Ministers n° 179, of October 2019 (which authorizes the expansion of greenhouses on the Alentejo coast to double the occupied area, 4750 km²), the Juntos Pelo Sudoeste movement is a non-political organization of citizens of Odemira and Aljezur concerned about the situation of the Natural Park of Southwest Alentejano and Costa Vicentina (PNSACV in Portuguese acronym), given the advance of agro-industry in an intensive agricultural model with greenhouse crops and plastic.

In recent years and, namely, in 2023, JPS has denounced the lack of balance between the agricultural exploitation model and environmental values, through press releases, petitions, videos, podcasts, participation in television reports and organization of crowdfunding campaigns with the aim of raising donations to finance a judicial approach to this problem.

In January 2023, the Juntos Pelo Sudoeste movement welcomed the mega-operation to inspect agricultural holdings in the PNSACV, but questioned the ICNF (Portuguese acronym for Forest and Nature Conservation Institute) about the future, demanding regular inspections: “Enough of the inertia and irresponsibility of the authorities”; in March last year, the JPS called for “the restoration of the lost balance in this region” and criticized the Minister of the Environment, Duarte Cordeiro, for visiting Odemira and leaving citizenship off the agenda; “Odemira: respect for territory, people and resources is a matter of survival”, is the title of an opinion article published in the newspaper “Expresso”, that month, by three members of the JPS.

In October, Juntos Pelo Sudoeste participated in the “Hands Off the Alentejo Coast” march, which brought together various social and environmental movements in Sines, and wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister, António Costa, stating: “We do not have received the response we expected from the Portuguese State in this region of Portugal, where there appears to be no respect for natural and social values, neither in the light of the law nor in the light of common sense - as evidenced by the increasingly accentuated scarcity of the reserve of water from the Santa Clara reservoir/Mira Irrigation Perimeter, in contrast to the limitless ambition of fashionable agricultural crops - red fruits, avocados and even ornamental eucalyptus (irrigated!).”

Awarded annually, the Figueirinha Nature Award aims to reward the cultural, social or scientific initiative that stood out most in 2023, in terms of nature protection in the region where Figueirinha Ecoturismo operates, tourism in rural areas that is governed by the principles of sustainability, preservation of the environment and regenerative valorization of natural resources. The Figueirinha Nature Award is the responsibility of Contra a Corrente, publisher of prestigious books and management company of Figueirinha Ecoturismo and Casa Sol Nascente.