



## LNEC LISBON CONFERENCE

### **Floods, Water Scarcity and Extreme Events**

LNEC Congress Center | Lisbon | Portugal | 19-20 October 2023

## **Opening session**

Helena Alegre, Conference Chair

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be here today with all of you, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Hydraulics and Environment Department of LNEC and the birth of the LNEC Lisbon Conferences series.

The selection of the theme was collaborative and inclusive. We wanted to bring forward issues of great significance to society related to water and the environment, topics in which LNEC currently has significant activity and should continue to contribute by fostering new knowledge, promoting best practices, and acting as a catalyst for innovation. Our intention was to choose a theme that would be all-encompassing, spanning from tap to ocean, covering a wide range of natural and man-made systems, and be relevant to audiences beyond water professionals.

It should come as no surprise that the choice was, as you know, "Floods, water scarcity, and extreme events." Extreme hydrometeorological events, such as intense rainfall and coastal storms leading to flooding and inundation, and prolonged droughts, resulting in severe water scarcity, have significant social, economic, and environmental impacts. These adverse impacts can be exacerbated by climate change and human actions.

Our aspiration is to conclude these two days more inspired, more knowledgeable, having created more opportunities for collaboration, ideally with a handful of recommendations that will guide us at the European, national, local, and institutional levels in defining or adjusting research and innovation strategies to be implemented in the coming years. We aim to transcend the obvious and well-established strategies and fervently wish that, together with all of you, we can take a significant step toward building a more ambitious and improved future.

With the intention of not consuming too much of your valuable time during this session, I would like to conclude by addressing some practical matters for this first day and acknowledging those who made this event happen.

This morning is the time to set up the scene and start the thematic sessions with the extreme events.

Hopefully the weather is not that bad at lunch time in order to allow you to go out and enjoy the wide variety of restaurants of Alvalade neighbourhood, as lunch is not included and will be on your own.

The afternoon will feature sessions that I anticipate will be very interesting. As a concluding moment for this first day, we will have a half-hour concert of Portuguese guitar, followed by a tasting of sustainably produced white wine from Lisbon and artisanal beer produced at the Alcântara Water Factory. These are symbolic acts, meant to serve as a pretext for enjoyable conversations among all attendees.

Moving on to the well-deserved thanks, we are very grateful to all the speakers who will contribute substantially to these two days of reflection and sharing, and to all the participants who are here. We also express our gratitude to the Municipality of Lisbon, which promptly and enthusiastically accepted our challenge to be a strategic partner of LNEC in this series. We also thank all the supporting entities of the conference: the six water associations based at LNEC, FCCN, the Horto do Campo Grande, Águas do Tejo Atlântico, and the Junta de Freguesia de Alvalade. We are grateful to the postgraduate students, whether hosted at LNEC or external, who are contributing to the success of this conference. And as the chair of the conference, I cannot help but express my gratitude to the LNEC Board of Directors for all their encouragement and support, as well as to all my colleagues from: "my" department, the Scientific and Technical Dissemination Sector, the Cabinet of Public and Technical Relations, and the Structures Department, particularly to those who served as members of the organizing committee.

I end by wishing everyone two excellent, enjoyable, and fruitful day.