

Episode 4: “Railways in the Minho Region”

[mix of introductory sounds]

Pedro Portela [host]: *Estados do Tempo*, because information about railways and green mobility is a basic necessity.

[music]

Pedro Portela: Hello, and welcome to episode four of *Estados do Tempo*, December 2025. This is an initiative by BIP and *Communitas*, two platforms of the Communication and Society Research Centre at the University of Minho. In this episode, we’re talking about railways and green mobility, and about how information can help us better understand these issues. The discussion will be moderated by Pedro Chamusca.

Pedro Chamusca [moderator]: The State, at different levels, should aim to ensure redistribution and guarantee that everyone has equal access to opportunities. Not necessarily the same type of transport or the same speed, but making sure that everyone benefits, according to population needs.

Pedro Portela: Pedro Chamusca holds a PhD in Geography from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Porto. He is professionally qualified in Geographic Information Systems and is an accredited trainer recognised by both the Continuing Education Scientific-Pedagogical Council and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training. He is a member of the board of the Portuguese Association of Geographers and recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Department of Social, Political and Territorial Sciences at the University of Aveiro, where he coordinated research on territorial cohesion, particularly its links to place-based innovation processes.

Joining him in the studio is Ivo Oliveira.

Ivo Oliveira: We have a railway plan that has already been approved by this government, and it says far more than what is currently being done in Minho.

Pedro Portela: Ivo Oliveira holds a degree in Architecture from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto, a Master’s in Architecture, Territory and Memory from the University of Coimbra, and a PhD in Architecture from the School of Architecture, Art and Design at the University of Minho, where he works as an associate professor. Since 2004, he has taught design studios and public space seminars. He has supervised master’s dissertations on extensively urbanised territories, public space design, and the transformation of Portugal’s Atlantic façade. He is also a researcher at

the Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory at the University of Minho and has published research on the teaching of urban and territorial studies. As a board member of the *UM-Cidades* platform, he has been involved in organising and judging the *Municipalities of the Year* competition, which aims to promote and recognise exemplary practices in urban and territorial governance, contributing to a more sustainable and fair society. Since September 2023, he has also been part of the *Green Gap* project, which aims to promote local green infrastructure, restore biodiversity, and support climate-resilient landscapes. Also joining us is Luís Tarroso Gomes.

Luís Tarroso Gomes: Because only railways have the transport capacity required for this region's population.

Pedro Portela: Luís Tarroso Gomes holds a degree in Law from the University of Minho. In 2001, together with other recent graduates, he founded *Braga Tempo*, a civic initiative promoting public debate on urban planning issues, particularly in the municipality of Braga. This initiative later led to the creation of the cultural space *Velha Branca* in 2004. Over the years, he has led, supported, and taken part in various civic projects in the city, both as a lawyer and as an engaged citizen. His interest in urbanism and planning led him to complete a Master's degree in Regional and Urban Planning in 2023, with a dissertation titled "The 15-Minute City and the Challenge of Proximity". He has been following railway issues for over 25 years. With all this in mind, we clearly have the conditions for a very interesting conversation. Let's listen.

Pedro Chamusca: Today's topic is railways in Minho, which brings us into an interesting debate that goes beyond infrastructure and mobility. I think it touches on deeper issues such as territorial cohesion, regional development, and ultimately, what, I would say, motivates each of us as citizens: improving our quality of life. Railways were important in the past, and they should be important today. Yet what we see is that they occupy a very marginal place in the political agenda and in public debate. Perhaps we can start there. If railways have largely disappeared from the political agenda, often overshadowed by discussions about sustainable mobility, walking, cycling, or imported concepts like the 15-minute city, then my first question is this: why is it important to discuss railways, and what role can they play in a territory as specific as Minho, particularly in relation to development and quality of life?

Ivo Oliveira: Good morning. From my perspective, when we think about what the territorial characteristics of Minho are, and what current mobility patterns look like, that is, the relationship, essentially, between a territory with an extensive urban footprint — sometimes described as dispersed, as extensive urbanisation — and also with a great deal of dispersion in terms of... in terms of key reference points for where people live,

but also where they work, we end up facing a territory whose structure is extremely dependent, fundamentally, on the road system, and very little dependent, historically and structurally, on what would be, well, for example, a railway system, or any alternative mobility system. And, in fact, this mismatch that has been gradually consolidating over the last few decades, as we've also seen or accompanied the densification of territories... in a way, it was never really addressed properly, because we placed a great deal of emphasis on what used to be the major road infrastructure systems. And it was there, in the motorway network, that investment over recent decades was heavily concentrated, making use, of course, of European funding, and also leveraging on road concession models, which were probably easier and quicker to implement. And so, I think the issue of railways, or of a railway network, ended up staying somewhat distant from what were the main priorities, the major actions, the core of political action.

I also think that, in the context of Minho, rail probably never gained any real prominence because we never had... regionalisation was put on hold or pushed aside, depending on how one chooses to interpret it. So there never really was, at the regional level, an entity with political legitimacy and the room to act that could potentially give greater centrality to this issue. And I think these are two key factors.

And, in fact, going back a bit to the whole issue of mobility transformation, of mobility patterns changing, and looking more closely at the cities, at soft mobility issues, we know that, for it to actually happen, or for mobility to really transform, it needs a response that can't be delivered at the scale of a single city, or even a few cities. It has to happen at the scale of connections between cities, of linking larger areas, major urban centres. So, probably, if there's one debate that really needs to be at a national, but especially regional, scale, it's this one. And what's missing is exactly a framework, a political space, a decision-making space that can give it that centrality. And I'd say that, for now, that's my initial response to the question you posed.

Luís Tarroso Gomes: Yes, I mean, I think recently rail has started to feature more in the discussion, especially with the launch of high-speed rail, which runs through the area, and this region is one of the beneficiaries — Minho, that is. And so, people have been talking, or at least mentioning rail, but they haven't been discussing what Ivo was saying — that is, rail within the region. So, this debate that we've been trying to bring forward hasn't really happened. And that's strange, because there's a high-speed station planned for Minho, but the rail connections to that station aren't planned, including from Braga station itself. The new high-speed line isn't even linked to Braga's station as it was announced. And that's odd — we've seen a kind of passivity in accepting this reality, without politicians, I believe, fully realising that the decisions being made could seriously affect the region's rail network. And when we talk about the region, I'm mainly referring to the four-city area (Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães and Vila Nova de Famalicão) And it's important to note — even today, there was an article in *Público* making this

point — that the four-city area should be positioned nationally as the country's third-largest region. And that hasn't really been done by people, by the political leaders in the region. So, the four cities, and Minho — especially Baixo Minho — are clearly the country's third region. They might not be a conventional metropolitan area, but they have a population that demands — or even makes possible — claims on a scale that other regions simply can't. And in these regions, we should see the introduction of metrobus-type systems, bus-based systems connecting what used to be rail links.

And so, it seems to me that this discussion hasn't really taken place because there's this acceptance of the "crumbs" offered to the region, which are basically bus connections. Which, in reality, is what we already have. The region has been well served by buses for many years. Bus services were developed here in Minho back in the 1920s and 30s. So those links are more than sufficient, serving more than just the four-city area — they serve all the towns and villages in Minho.

What we've been trying to discuss is a different mobility paradigm in the region, which, in our view, requires discussing rail. Because only rail has the transport capacity needed for the number of inhabitants in this region, if we add together the municipalities of the four cities and the surrounding municipalities that complete the area, we're always looking at around 700-800 thousand people. And so, that's the perspective we need to discuss. That's the scale we need to think about. And it's with those numbers in mind... Ivo mentioned earlier something seen especially from Lisbon, looking towards Minho — the territorial dispersion. But this dispersion isn't uniform. Some parts of the region have extremely high population density and very concentrated urban cores. And that dispersion can't be seen as just villages scattered across a territory, the Minho territory. It's not that. We're talking about urban centres with lots of inhabitants, lots of facilities, lots of services, with mass-mobility needs between these points. And that's what needs to be taken into consideration.

Pedro Chamusca: Right, well... there are some really interesting points there. First of all, the capacity for coordination among the different actors in the region. And, I'd even say, between the different parts that make up what we tend to call Minho. And maybe I'd come back to you, Ivo, because we've been talking a lot about how solutions need to be thought of at a scale that's somewhere between supra-municipal and regional, especially since, truly, the region we have is part of the North, and so it's something that's very diverse, quite complex.

And I'd ask — sometimes, do we end up blaming centralisation, the planning that comes out of Lisbon? The truth is, often it's done without really understanding the local dynamics — and, as you said, a lot of the time the North, or the different 'Northerns', or specifically Minho, doesn't really have a voice. And then we end up accepting crumbs, because, well, it's something, it's an investment. So, part of the problem isn't it, right from the start, this ability for us to think about and manage the territory beyond administrative boundaries? Because we were talking, for example, about the four-city

area, which has now become more like a five-city area with the integration of Viana do Castelo... in practice, functionally, in terms of space and scale. I'd say it had everything to formalise itself as the third metropolitan area in the country. But the truth is, the municipalities that make it up chose to set themselves up as municipal transport authorities rather than delegate this competence to the inter-municipal communities, which, in turn, aren't all part of the same community anyway. So, before we even start thinking about rail, mobility, and planning, don't we need some sort of reorganisation here? Or is it something that could eventually be addressed by a new wave of local leaders, perhaps from the recent elections? Do we have a territorial culture, or is that part of the problem too?

Ivo Oliveira: I think that's definitely part of the problem. And, well, we do need some kind of reorganisation, and maybe a clarification of competences. We've seen some changes over time. The truth is, the Coordination Commission has gradually been given more responsibilities in terms of... well, territory management and organisation. And just this week, actually, we've heard that it might also get competences from the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests, and maybe also over national road infrastructure — roads that, before being transferred to municipalities, could stay under regional control. So there are some attempts to reorganise the map and the decision-making processes. I think that's a step forward. And, without true regionalisation, it's at least something.

But, either way, I think we also need to pay closer attention to the plans and documents we approve. We have the *PROT Norte* approved, we have a rail plan approved — already by this government — and it says a lot more than what's actually happening in Minho. In fact, it discusses the idea of a network. It obviously mentions the Vale do Sousa line, the Guimarães line, Braga, and the possibility of connecting these nodes. In Minho, we wouldn't always have to go down to Porto; we could travel between Fafe, Guimarães, Barcelos, and Viana. So, basically, if the local leaders demanded, or paid attention to, or gave the proper weight to what's set out in the Northern Territorial Plan, or the recently approved rail plan, they'd have a tool that could be really strong, really effective, to bring the focus back to rail.

And, in fact, we've also realised that we've never really had the chance to debate the distribution of investment. We've never been given the opportunity, for example, to question whether the Lisbon–Porto connection could maybe be built, in terms of the route, at a slightly lower standard — so not one hour and fifteen minutes, but maybe an hour and a half, for instance — and in doing so recover the 200 or 300 million euros that we're missing to make the connections up here in Minho. So this whole issue of managing funds and their distribution — sometimes people tell us there's no money — but perhaps what we need to do is look at each project and understand how far it can go without jeopardising others, or even so that the project, as it branches out and forms a network, can actually gain a new potential in terms of the service it provides and the

population it reaches. We've never really had the chance to discuss whether we should spend 200 or 250 million euros on a metro line in Porto of just two or three kilometres, or if we could instead have something that's maybe a little less efficient but could reach other territories. At the heart of it, it's a bit about this issue — about the money we have available, how we distribute it, and the types of systems that will naturally be associated with it.

Pedro Chamusca: Yes, and that's actually quite relevant, and, in fact, it ties into issues of spatial and social justice, because the State, at different levels, should aim to ensure redistribution and guarantee that everyone has equal access to opportunities — not necessarily the same type of transport, or the same speed, but making sure that everyone benefits, according to population needs. And, with that, going back to Luís, I'd come back to this curious expression... which is that, often, in all this redistribution and planning, we end up accepting very little, because, well... little is better than nothing, isn't it? So, thinking about Alto Minho, and thinking about rail in this dialogue with high-speed rail, how do we make sure that high-speed rail actually benefits the territory, and doesn't just create this tunnel effect, which, in many cases, can even act as a barrier? We see it with various investments — whether road or rail — the effect is that it becomes just a passageway, which often even divides the territory and the structure it already had. And precisely when we don't ensure connections to the stations, the rail connections, we might just be inviting it to be only a place you pass through, which can then alter the landscape, and change a set of social and economic dynamics. So, what needs to be done to make sure that the fact that high-speed rail passes through the territory actually works in the territory's favour?

Luís Tarroso Gomes: Yes, exactly, it's that... it is precisely that passage without a proper network that bothers us. Looking at it from the perspective of Guimarães or Barcelos, what's the point of a Porto-Lisbon connection taking an hour and a quarter, if someone from Guimarães or Barcelos then takes fifty minutes just to get to Porto, or doesn't have a rail connection to Braga, or the one they do have — or that's being proposed — takes just as long as getting to Porto? So... for example, the metrobus connection, or the Barcelos-Braga rail link, at the moment, it's practically impossible. Even if there were a direct train with a reversal at Nine, it would still be slow. And on top of that, the service goes to the old Braga station, not the new one. So, none of this has been properly thought through, and it's symptomatic... not only has it not been thought through, but there's been no advocacy, no discussion about it, because the National Rail Plan reflects precisely the lack of any real consideration for the Minho region. In fact, although it's no longer really considered part of Minho, there is a connection to Vale de Sousa, and that's actually the only real novelty in the National Railway Plan, because everything else... well, it's just old branch lines or former railway lines that the National Railway Plan even considers maybe bringing back... Lines which, as things stand now, with the old

trackbeds converted into cycling paths, wouldn't be at all competitive if they were turned back into rail. I'm talking about the Guimarães-Fafe line, the Póvoa de Varzim-Famalicão line, which are also mentioned in the National Rail Plan. What the National Rail Plan has done is introduce the Porto-Braga-Valença high-speed line, and add what was left over from nineteenth-century branch lines that had disappeared.

Whereas — just to compare — Minho... had absolutely no say in this. There was no real interest in rail. And I'm saying, Minho isn't really a region in this sense... the many local authorities in Minho didn't care, because at the same time, in the Trás-os-Montes region, a group of friends, part of an association — the Douro Azul Association... I've forgotten the exact name, but an association that managed, with a small group of friends, to do a series of studies on a line linking Porto to Spain through Trás-os-Montes — a high-speed link. And that connection... was discussed by those friends, it was carefully thought through, they did technical studies, and that line was included in the National Rail Plan. Something that, until then, had never even been talked about. It wasn't a project that had been debated for years; that group managed to get it onto the map, into the National Rail Plan from scratch. And so it's incredible how... municipalities... a group from an association of municipalities with a very small population — if you compare it with Minho — managed to do this, managed to have a role in the National Rail Plan. And we, in Minho, with the population we have, with the local authorities we have, with perhaps the privilege we have of being able to raise these issues quickly... we achieved nothing in the National Rail Plan, and we're left with the crumbs in that plan.

Pedro Chamusca: But, is this absence — especially this lack of mobilisation on the part of local mayors and other actors — do you think it's an absence out of disinterest, or just inattention to what's actually happening? I mean, is rail really a political priority for the mayors and other actors, because, after all, politics doesn't stop at municipal work, and these people are in Minho? So, was it just a matter of inattention, or is it something that doesn't really matter to them, and so we just get the crumbs?

Luís Tarroso Gomes: Yes, I think maybe... First, they're still, perhaps, stuck in the road paradigm, aren't they? The discussion still revolves around ring roads, connections, and probably new motorway exits... That's still very much the discussion that interests the mayors. And, on the other hand... they don't... or maybe, when they're told that the cost per kilometre of building a railway is very high, they give up easily, without even insisting that the studies be done. For example, the Braga-Guimarães connection... what's being discussed is a metrobus link, but a railway link isn't even on the table. I mean, compare what with what? The metrobus... with what? And so, this lack of... interest from the mayors is creating this problem, where something that maybe a group of friends could have managed, if it had been done in Minho, we don't see being demanded at all. So, asking them to discuss, like Ivo was saying, isn't it? Compare the costs, see what could

be reduced elsewhere to build the few kilometres needed. Because it's not many kilometres we're talking about in Minho. Just a few kilometres of railway. They create a network and make a huge difference in the connections between cities. And that's really important, isn't it?

Ivo Oliveira: In fact, with a small extension of a line, it could, indeed, move from being just branch lines to the creation of a network. Which, obviously, will then require levels of service, quality of service, won't it? That's also a point; sometimes we have the line, but then we don't really have the level of service. I just want to emphasise that it's worrying to imagine that... And if we broaden it, if we put a slightly longer time frame in front of us, imagining that, for companies and for future university students from across the Minho, access to a university, to a research centre... more straightforwardly, more directly, will be to Porto. It's much easier to go down to Porto, from Viana to Porto, from Barcelos to Porto. And it will be much harder for a student, researcher, or businessperson from Viana to get to Braga or Guimarães. So, is that how we imagine the connection between the various municipalities of Minho in 20 or 30 years? It doesn't seem to make sense to me. It seems to me that, going back a bit to the mayors, I think the mayors, perhaps, are inattentive or haven't yet realised that the commitments they're also taking on in terms of the transition, the European Green Deal, the decarbonisation of territories—and these are commitments that, generally speaking, are embraced by all municipalities, and there are interventions in the municipalities aligned with this reality — but it will only be effective when, in fact, we really manage to decarbonise mobility. And there, rail has always been, and will continue to be, the key element in this process.

Pedro Chamusca: We could bring up this topic because, actually, beyond the service itself, I think we've introduced here two other variables. One is related to the quality of service, and, in fact, I think it's a... Apart from the lack of a network and the limitations of what's on offer, I'd say that, in terms of service quality and timetables — leaving this particular connection aside — it's also a really problematic issue that puts people off using the railway. So, I ask whether, even there, where investments are usually smaller, something could be done — and I think we've been postponing it for a long time — to make improvements or implement a set of measures to enhance the service on the existing rail network. The second has to do precisely with these issues of decarbonisation, of ecological footprint. Are we also suffering from the problem of focusing too much on what's trendy in planning? And today, what's trendy is walking or cycling, and in some cases, we even end up — as we were saying — converting some spaces into cycle paths. But we forget that this only solves short-distance mobility. And so, if we want to think of a territory that is polycentric or multinucleated, we need connections between different areas that can't — even in the context of decarbonisation — rely solely on car use, and certainly not just individual cars. Especially

since we've already seen that the metrobus doesn't solve everything, and looking at the Porto example, the solution we might imagine doesn't always actually materialise. So, I'd leave these two points: how can we improve what's already on offer without a major investment? I think there are various complaints and many small things that could be improved. And how can we step away a little from what's fashionable? Today, fashion rules everything. Often, we end up with cycle paths that are just painted lanes on the road, which don't even guarantee safety because they're very limited. So, I'd leave these two topics for us to continue with.

Luís Tarroso Gomes: Yes, well, the Braga-Guimarães connection is sometimes misunderstood, and that ties into what I was saying. Usually, people talk about the Braga-Guimarães connection in terms of the railway. But it's much more than that. It's about linking and closing two existing branches — the Guimarães line with the Braga line. And that would allow, in terms of service, something that isn't possible right now. At the moment, we need different trains serving Guimarães, Braga, Barcelos, and Viana, all of which should go to Lisbon. Linking the Braga-Guimarães lines would mean the same service could serve both Braga and Guimarães. For example, a train arriving in Braga could continue on to Guimarães. In fact, the whole long-distance service could be reconsidered in that way, given that the Guimarães-Porto connection is very slow. It's a metre-gauge line that was converted to Iberian gauge, so the winding track doesn't allow for high speeds. So, instead of the current arrangement, long-distance services could go via Braga, allowing the same train to serve both cities. And this also ties into decarbonisation, because it would optimise the train compositions we already have to serve multiple populations. Right now, we have a duplication — or even triplication — of services just to serve Barcelos and Viana. Adding those small stretches of track to the existing lines would create the network needed to optimise this. That's one aspect.

On the other hand, the question of decarbonisation — like Pedro was saying — cycling works for short distances, bicycles and cycle paths solve short-distance travel. But the traffic that clogs up our cities isn't just short-distance. Sure, many trips are short, but because of this spread, there are lots of people working in different cities, commuting just between the two university campuses. I don't know how many drivers are represented on the highways or national roads, but just these two connections — the university campuses, the Hospital of Braga — probably justify a railway link and would remove all those cars that currently fill the cities up to the highway access points. The question is simple in theory, but in cities it isn't. Of course, at the local level, many problems need to be solved. A lot of the traffic comes from a lack of alternatives, especially in Braga and Guimarães. People either drive or have few options: public transport doesn't work well, schedules are poor, services often don't match people's needs, and the old system still forces travel through the city centre when many trips don't need to go there. It doesn't serve younger people who need to get to school, so parents end up driving them. Clearly, railways need to be thought about in this context

too. But it seems to me that the local authorities are still at the stage where it's nice to talk about decarbonisation and sustainability, and they use those ideas in speeches, but it doesn't translate into concrete measures that actually make an impact. It's not just about painting a cycle lane; it's about whether people actually use it. If they don't, why not? And what needs to be done? We don't see that. We see more PR, announcing yet another painted lane somewhere that connects nothing to nothing, without any follow-up.

And one of the questions we raise regarding the metrobus is precisely this: once it's running, what kind of people will actually switch to it? Who currently takes the Braga Guimarães bus? Or the coach between Braga and Guimarães? Or the shuttle between the two university campuses? I mean, is that really the modal shift we're going to achieve with the metrobus? Or is it just going to be those drivers who'll switch to the metrobus and end up taking 45 minutes to get to Braga's high-speed rail station? So, this discussion has to take place, or else we're not even clear about to who the investment is really for.

Ivo Oliveira: One of the key issues is always how simple it is to switch from one mode of transport to another — that's intermodality. And, in fact, on one hand, the location of the new station is, in a way, completely at odds with this idea of intermodality. We're building the station somewhere where there aren't other modes available — apart from private cars — and we're not ensuring any connection with the existing line. So, we also have to think about it like this: the location of these points has to be coordinated, on one hand, with the road network, with the motorways, so that I can drive in, exit a motorway, and enter an intermodal hub that can take me either to Faro or to La Coruña, or, of course, to the hospital or the university. This has to be done as simply as possible. The success of Switzerland's railway network owes much to this straightforward intermodality. We've sort of done things differently... Infraestruturas de Portugal, and before that REFER, always had a policy of building large railway stations, but they never really ensured genuine intermodality in these stations. Usually, a large station is needed only if it provides that intermodal function. If it doesn't, it's just an ordinary stop. So, it's not normal to arrive in Braga by car and have every sign pointing to the city centre rather than to an intermodal hub. That's what happens in any major city today with a proper, coordinated transport system — it's what we should be expecting. And that's what should be happening in Braga, in Guimarães, in Famalicão. Then, of course, there's the question of service quality, which also comes down to the rolling stock. Over the past two or three years, we've been watching a whole saga around the acquisition of 100 trains, which are now tied up in court by one of the competitors. The entire country has been penalised for two or three years, unable to introduce better services, while we're still running adapted trains or trains that are 30 or 40 years old. Here, I also think it's important to look at what's being done elsewhere — for example, in France. The SNCF, the French train operator, has been developing smaller train sets that are more

economical, which allows for more frequent services: fewer trains with 500 or 600 seats, and instead smaller vehicles with lower energy consumption, greater agility, more flexibility, and the ability to reach more places. This is happening on heavy rail in France and on light rail systems and tramways. In French towns with low population density or densities similar to those we find in the parishes of Minho, tram systems — that is, light rail — have been implemented. These systems have been operating for 20 or 30 years with great efficiency, and importantly, they have been able to expand over time. Because here's the risk: if we build a BRT line, it will work, it will improve a few things, but it won't grow. It won't have the capacity to attract people or to drive territorial transformation the way all railway systems can, whether light or heavy rail.

Luís Tarroso Gomes: It won't grow, nor will it have the possibility of being upgraded to rail, because if the connection is planned along the current Braga–Guimarães National Road, it simply can't be a rail corridor. It will never be a rail corridor, because it's not possible to convert it into a railway. The matter is settled.

Ivo Oliveira: The matter is settled.

Luís Tarroso Gomes: It's a waste if that money is invested like that.

Pedro Chamusca: Indeed, it touches on a point we often overlook: planning the territory in an integrated way. We tend to look at the railway as one problem, road traffic as another, when in reality everything has to work together. And that comes down to knowing what we want in five, ten, or twenty years — a practice that's still very limited in Portugal, and also here in Minho.

Ivo Oliveira: Just to give an example: for a long time, CP didn't allow bicycles on trains. Then they did, but access by bike to Braga station — and I believe also to Guimarães — is extremely difficult. And that's not just because of the urban context around the station, which is dominated by the high-speed line, but also because of the station access itself. So, we have the service, but the municipalities haven't adapted the city to make that service usable under proper conditions.

Pedro Chamusca: Thank you very much. It's been a very interesting conversation, highlighting the relevance and importance of this topic for the territory and people's lives. I hope this discussion helps listeners think about the issue, reflect on it, and, for some at least, encourages more active civic engagement. Thinking about these topics — planning and deciding where to invest — also depends on each of us and our capacity. As we've seen, three friends managed to put something on the map, in official documents, even. We can't just complain about what's wrong; it's up to all of us to have an active voice and mobilise to promote the development of our territory, to build the

kind of network we've discussed here, and ultimately to improve everyone's quality of life. So, once again, thank you very much, and I hope you enjoy it.

Pedro Portela: And that brings to a close episode four of *Estados do Tempo*, recorded and made available from December 2025. Our guests were Ivo Oliveira and Luís Tarroso Gomes, with moderation by Pedro Chamusca, production by Raquel Batista and me, recording by Luís Pinto, and presentation, editing, and post-production by me, Pedro Portela, with editing support from Inês Mendes. That's how we say goodbye, and we look forward to our next episode very soon.