



LETTER FROM THE
"PRINCE OF TASMANIA"
TO THE
"KING OF PORTUGAL"

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DEAR **CORK OAK**, MY ESTEEMED COUSIN,

I write you cousin because, as you know, my family, the **Myrtaceae**, have in distant ages lived in “your” Iberian Peninsula, and family ties are always possible between the well-bred...

I am writing to send my greetings and to congratulate you on your being officially declared a **National Symbol**, on 22 December 2011, by the Parliament of the country where we both live.

So it is only fitting that the plant kingdom to which we both belong should honour you as the “**King of Portugal**”.

I myself am young, slender, tall and vain (in contrast with your impressive girth and venerable age, and your more old-fashioned view of the world), and so I use the title ascribed to me by a Portuguese writer in the 1980’s, referring to my origins: the “**Prince of Tasmania**”.

We can both lay claim to remarkable and noble origins:

- You, my cousin the **Cork Oak** occupies **716 thousand hectares**, whilst I, the **eucalyptus**, cover **740 thousand hectares**¹, in other words, **21% of Portugal’s woodlands**, complementing each other in the use of geographical resources;
- Your output of **cork** (on the tree) generates revenues for farmers of around **110 million euros**² each year, whilst I contribute annual output (of standing timber) of **200 million euros**³;
- The goods manufactured from the **cork** you produce are worth some **1110 million euros**⁴ each year, whilst the cellulose pulp and paper manufactured annually from my fibres is worth **1891 million euros**⁵;
- Our products are sent around the world and are amongst **Portugal’s leading exports**. My cousin the **Cork Oak** exports products worth **754 million euros**⁶, whilst I, the **eucalyptus**, who arrived from Australia more than 150 years ago, now export cellulose pulp and premium quality paper with a value of **1340 million euros**⁷;
- The “jewel in the crown” of your products – **cork stoppers** – account for exports worth **529 million euros**⁸, whilst mine – **uncoated printing and writing paper** – generates exports each year of **1092 million euros**⁹;





● The carbon stored by my cousin the **Cork Oak** totals **64 million tons**, whilst I, the **eucalyptus**, store **66 million tons of carbon dioxide**¹⁰. In other words, we are amongst the leading net contributors to carbon sequestration and to fighting the greenhouse effect, as we capture much more CO₂ each year than our industrial facilities emit.

● We both incorporate an extremely **high level of national value** added (undoubtedly higher than 80%), in contrast with Portugal's other main exports of non-forestry products. We both support **powerful forestry-industrial sectors in Portugal** and abroad and are practically what it is left of **Portugal's truly home-owned industry**.

So, my cousin Cork Oak, this letter serves to send you my greetings and to tell everyone in Portugal how we represent an economic, environmental and social alliance on which the country can rely in the current economic emergency.

We and our cousin the **Maritime Pine**, Duke of Leiria (whom I hear is poorly), who also deserves to be mentioned here, can offer Portugal and its people good reasons for hope.

As an incomer, I have often been the victim of discrimination, as stupid and cruel as any other form of racism. But I am sure that, just like the potato, corn, the orange and so many other immigrants (plants or otherwise), we will eventually be accepted as the common sense and the rules of hospitality require.

Dear cousin, I am confident that our complementary qualities – the **Cork Oak, “King of Portugal”**, and the **Eucalyptus, “Prince of Tasmania”** – and our important **contribution to sustainable development in Portugal** are more than sufficient grounds for me to pay tribute to you in this public form.

In the hope that our mutual friend, the **Maritime Pine**, can regain its full vigour and health, and join us in generating well-being and wealth, alongside all our other valued and diverse relatives in Portugal's woodlands, I salute you, my cousin the **Cork Oak**, and offer my sincerest congratulations on your well-deserved appointment as a **National Symbol of Portugal**.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS, YOUR COUSIN THE EUCALYPTUS GLOBULUS

¹ Source: IFNS (2005/06).

² 716 thousand hectares x 9 arrobas per hectare per year x 17 euros.

³ 6.4 million m³ sc x 1.2 (20% for bark) x 25€

⁴ Figure for 2010. Source: Estudo de caracterização sectorial (APCOR, 2011).

⁵ Figure for 2010. Source: CELPA.

⁶ Figure for 2010. Source: Estudo de caracterização sectorial (APCOR, 2011).

⁷ Figure for 2010. Source: CELPA.

⁸ Figure for 2010. Source: Estudo de caracterização sectorial (APCOR, 2011).

⁹ Exports of printing quality paper in 2010 = 1337 t x 817 €/ton.

¹⁰ Data on carbon storage from IFNS, as we are unaware of official figures for annual carbon sequestration by the two species.

