



By: [Emre Alkin](#)

What do you mean, a power outage in the 21st century?



Of course, people like me belonging to Generation X are used to power outages. After all, a significant part of our childhood was shaped by this. However, the meaning of a power outage today is different! In the 1970s, electricity was not much of a strategic element, but now it has even become a cause for war. Now let me come to the topic of the article:

We decided to align our work with my wife's birthday and enjoy ourselves in Lisbon. We arrived in Lisbon on 27 April and settled into our hotel located at a prominent point in the city.

We threw ourselves into the streets, wandering among the charming houses adorned with tiles. We had our coffee, and of course, we didn't miss eating "Pasteis de Belem." This was my seventh trip to Lisbon, but it was my wife's first time.

Despite being an athlete and paying great attention to her diet, she succumbed to my insistence and indulged in the magnificent treat. On the first evening, we had dinner at a wonderful restaurant by the shore. Hundreds of people, unaware of what was to come, were discussing both life and work.

The next morning, at precisely 11:35, the **power** went out while we were waiting in the lobby, ready for a city tour. However, since there was a generator in our hotel, it activated immediately.

The reception staff raised their eyebrows, saying, "I hope everything is alright." I replied, "The power is out, which is why the generator kicked in." They looked at me with disbelief, as if to say, "What do you mean, a power outage in the 21st century?"

An incredible sight

When our guide took us to the heart of the city, we encountered an incredible sight. None of the shops had electricity. Lisbon's famous trams were stuck. Sirens from ambulances and fire trucks were coming from every direction.

Restaurants were telling their customers, "We apologise, but the kitchen is not working." Naturally, we got hungry and began searching for a place to have lunch.

Since we were closer to the beach, I pointed to the hotel I had stayed at on the opposite side while working with UEFA in the Belem area. I said, "There must definitely be a generator there."

I said it, but since the generator could not power the kitchen, we had to settle for salads and cold dishes. "Better than nothing," we said. Before we even sat down, the waiter told us, "The POS machines aren't working; you'll have to pay in cash." I quickly did the math and said okay. Whenever I travel abroad, I always carry some cash for emergencies.

However, not everyone was as lucky as us. Many customers complained, saying, "I don't have that much cash."

While we filled our stomachs amidst the sound of sirens, we learnt that all flights at Lisbon airport had been cancelled. In the meantime, we also received information that the outage was ongoing in several countries and that the energy company was having difficulty determining the cause.

Many issues arose, from people stuck in elevators to those stranded on the metro

When I tried to gather information by questioning everyone I deemed an authority, a rather interesting account emerged.

It turned out that very few health **institutions**, including CUF—Lisbon's largest hospital—had a generator. Many issues arose, from people stuck in elevators to those stranded on the metro.

Our hotel had a strong generator, but phones, internet, and air conditioning were completely out of order. Two elevators were operational. Room service was cancelled, and everyone was invited to the buffet in the large restaurant.

Frankly, I applauded the foresight and approach of the hotel staff. They were quite calm and sincere. The power was restored at precisely 20:35, and the city was filled with joyous shouts.

Exaggerated comments

As a witness, I condemn exaggerated comments. Despite traffic lights not working, everyone helped each other by yielding in a disciplined manner. Ambulances and fire trucks were given priority.

The city, built on seven hills like Istanbul and Rome, faced significant difficulties. Although social media was not functioning properly, posts highlighting that the power outage was occurring almost everywhere in the world were noticeable.

However, no one panicked; it was soon revealed that the claim was false. Nevertheless, there was constant talk of a **cyberattack** against the power company.

The services of the same conglomerate were identified as the cause of the outage that affected regions of Spain, Portugal, southern France, and Italy.

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If it was a cyberattack, it might not be possible to clarify the situation. Because hackers initiate the attack and then demand a ransom. If the company consents, the problem is resolved immediately. Afterward, they provide the company with information on how the attack occurred. It's as if they are subjected to a very costly test from the outside.

The realities experienced show that a significant portion of these types of attacks occurs from within the company. Therefore, setting aside sensitive data, those engaged in sensitive public affairs should especially

enforce continually improved protocols for cybersecurity among company employees.

Outage has cost Europe billions of euros

Honestly, I wasn't too worried. Because in many parts of the world, institutions involved in sensitive work have repeatedly been subjected to cyberattacks but resolve the incidents without notifying law enforcement.

For this reason, the energy company's statement, "We cannot provide information about the cause of the incident," was noteworthy.

Perhaps those who carried out the cyberattack contacted the company and began covering up this great scandal that would go down in history. Of course, these are strong rumours. I have no proof, but there is suspicion.



It would not be wrong to say that such a tremendous outage has cost Europe billions of euros - Emre Alkin

Fortunately, I returned to Istanbul on Wednesday evening without any further power outages or malfunctions.

We will learn about the cost of the power outages to Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France from news agencies.

However, as I mentioned earlier, we witnessed that transport in Lisbon, built on seven hills, was completely disrupted, with the electric trams established to climb the slopes completely stuck. Considering that restaurants

were also unable to operate, the cost of a day's outage could be quite high.

Portugal has a population of 11 million, with around 3.5 million people residing in Lisbon and its surroundings. Lisbon alone accounts for 45% of Portugal's national income. So we are talking about more than 130 billion dollars in output.

During the power outage, no vehicles could move in the ports or logistics centres. Therefore, there may have been nearly half a billion dollars in business losses here. Of course, it will be compensated in the following days, but the rhythm has been disrupted.

Portugal's tourism **revenue** is close to 20 billion dollars, and a significant portion passes through Lisbon. In this case, it would not be incorrect to say that the power outage cost touristic facilities millions of euros.

Of course, I do not know the details of the agreements between the state and private companies with the energy company. We will see if there will be any compensation issues.

However, it would not be wrong to say that such a tremendous outage has cost Europe billions of euros. I tried to estimate the damages to Portugal and Lisbon. There is also the aspect related to Spain, which I think will become clear soon.