

**Estoril Political Forum 2017**  
**25th International Annual Meeting in Political Studies**

*Defending the Western Tradition  
of Liberty Under Law*

**Estoril Palace Hotel, 26-28 June 2017**

**Opening Address**  
**João Carlos Espada**

Senhora Reitora da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Professora Isabel Capelo Gil,  
Senhor Presidente da Câmara Municipal de Cascais, Dr. Carlos Carreiras,  
Senhor Presidente do Conselho Estratégico do IEP, Dr. Pedro Norton,  
Senhora Directora do Estoril Political Forum, Dra. Rita Seabra Brito,  
Senhores Embaixadores, Distintos Convidados,  
Senhoras e Senhores, Caros Amigos,

Gostaria de começar por agradecer a presença de todos nesta 25ª edição do Estoril Political Forum, que assinala também os 20 anos do Instituto de Estudos Políticos da Universidade Católica Portuguesa — e a nossa Universidade Católica celebrará em Outubro próximo os seus 50 anos. É uma feliz coincidência, sem dúvida, neste ano de 2017. E é uma feliz coincidente homenagem à liberdade de ensino e à liberdade de escolha dos alunos e das suas famílias. Como tem insistido exemplarmente ao longo da sua vida o Professor Mário Pinto — a quem devemos a fundação do IEP — a velha ideia grega e depois cristã medieval de Universidade é inseparável da ideia de liberdade.

Também por isso — embora não apenas por isso — o tema geral do nosso 25º Estoril Political Forum é a defesa da Tradição Ocidental da Liberdade sob a Lei.

Pedia agora a vossa compreensão para prosseguir em inglês, de forma a facilitar uma conversação mais directa com os nossos inúmeros convidados estrangeiros. Como sabem, as nossas sessões serão bilingues, ou mesmo trilingues: graças à nossa equipa de tradução simultânea, a quem gostaria de saudar e agradecer, podemos usar a língua portuguesa, inglesa ou francesa em todas as sessões.

**Now to our English-speaking participants and friends:**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Be most welcome to the 25th International Annual Meeting in Political Studies, now also called the “Estoril Political Forum.” We are delighted to let you know that you are participating at Portugal’s largest annual meeting in political studies – and, yes, indeed,

almost twenty-five years have now passed since we had our first meeting, in the Arrábida Convent, in 1993. We were then no more than 20 participants...

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Catholic University's Institute for Political Studies, whose founding in 1996/97 was partly inspired by the Arrábida Meetings. This anniversary will be especially celebrated this evening, at our first Alumni Dinner, hosted by our co-founders Mário Pinto and Manuel Braga da Cruz, also former Rector of the Catholic University.

Last but certainly not least, I am delighted to let you know that in October of this same year of 2017, we will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Catholic University of Portugal.

It is a happy coincidence that we have these three anniversaries in the same year. And, as I have just said in Portuguese, it is a happy coinciding tribute to liberty of education and to the liberty of students and their families to choose the school and the programme they want to attend. As Professor Mário Pinto — the inspiring proponent of the creation of our Institute for Political Studies — has never tired to repeat, the ancient Athenian and later Christian and Medieval Idea of a University is inseparable from liberty.

This is why the title of this year's meeting — Defending the Western Tradition of Liberty Under Law — expresses the commitment that has animated both the Forum and the Institute since their inception.

The Western Tradition of Liberty under Law has also been the main cause of Mário Soares — one of the founding fathers of the 43 year-old Portuguese democracy. Mário Soares passed away last January and to him we want to pay tribute in this opening session.

In a brief Obituary that I was privileged to write for the *Journal of Democracy* — which is being distributed at this session — I recalled a passage of the lecture that Mário Soares delivered at George Washington University, in Washington, DC, in December 1998, that was later published in the *Journal of Democracy*. On that occasion he said:

“As an old fighter against dictatorship, I belong to a generation that learned from experience the value of democracy and the importance of liberty... We feel compelled to share our experience with the younger generations, so that they can understand that life without freedom makes no sense.”

This is exactly what we have learnt from Mário Soares: that life without liberty makes no sense. And this is what we are trying to share with the younger generations that have made possible this Estoril Political Forum and our Institute for Political Studies.

In this 25th edition this year, we are certainly concerned with the present condition of liberty and democracy around the world, including to a certain extent among older democracies of the West. This concern was beautifully expressed by the **Prague Appeal for a Coalition for Democratic Renewal**, signed by more than 60 signatories on May 26. We are delighted that at least three of the promoters of the **Prague Appeal** are with us in Estoril. We want to thank very emphatically our good friends Marc Plattner, Larry Diamond and Christopher Walker for their presence and, above all, for their friendship. Marc Plattner,

as you know, is the Chair of our International Advisory Board and has been with us in these International Meetings since the Arrábida times — over the last 19 years, I believe.

As it happened in previous years, we are delighted to have with us speakers and participants with different political dispositions: we have conservatives, christian-democrats, liberals, libertarians, social-democrats and democratic socialists; and even on the very crucial topic of the European Union, we have federalists and anti-federalists, europhiles and eurosceptics, “Remainers” and “Brexiters”. For example, and to mention just a few, we have José Manuel Barroso, former president of the European Commission, who now heads our Institute’s European Studies Centre; in the same session, we have John O’Sullivan, a prominent Brexiter who was special advisor to Margaret Thatcher; and we have Timothy Garton Ash, a prominent Remainer, who will speak at the Churchill dinner tomorrow.

This, I believe, is as it ought to be. Because, underneath our different views, we all share a fundamental common ground: the common ground of liberal democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy — the common ground of the Atlantic alliance. This common ground incidentally is also one of the distinctive features of the hotel where we are. The Estoril Palácio Hotel was the hotel of the Anglo-American allies during the second world war. And this common ground is of course epitomised by the patron of our Estoril Political Forum: Winston Churchill.

Please allow me to conclude with a brief quote from one of Churchill’s pre-war speeches, in 1938, about the Western Tradition of Liberty Under Law:

“Have we not an ideology — if we must use this ugly word — have we not an ideology of our own in freedom, in a liberal constitution, in democratic and Parliamentary government, in Magna Carta and the Petition of Right?”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last 25 years at these International Annual Meetings in Political Studies, we have been mainly committed to the spirit of conversation, of compromise and moderation, associated with an uncompromising defence of liberty and personal responsibility.

Thank you very much. Enjoy our meeting.