

AWA-IEP Conference 7 March 2023
Opening Remarks, JCE

Dear Ambassador Satu Suikkari-Kleven,
Dear Ambassador Ana Martinho,
Dear Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Dear Students,

I would like to start by welcoming you to this first Conference jointly promoted by the Association of Women Ambassadors and the Institute for Political Studies of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Portugal — who will give us the honour of joining us at the closing session this evening for a Town Hall Debate hosted by our Rector, Isabel Capelo Gil, with the presence of the Secretary of State for Equality and Migration, Isabel Rodrigues.

I am pleased to recall that this Conference is taking place on the eve of the International Women's Day.

This is for us a rare privilege and pleasure. And I would like to emphasise that this is **just the first** joint event of The Association of Women Ambassadors with IEP-UCP. Another one, incidentally, is already scheduled as a special panel within the 31st edition of the Estoril Political Forum, to be held at the classical Estoril Palace Hotel, on June 26-28.

It is perhaps worth noting that the word “Consensus” appears both in the title of our Conference today and of our forthcoming Estoril Political Forum. The title of the Estoril Forum is “Rebuilding Democratic Consensus — At Home and Abroad”, (the subtitle being “Celebrating the 650th Anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance”). Our subtitle today is “Building Consensus and Common Agendas in the 21st Century” (the title being “Women in Diplomacy and Globalisation”).

This convergence on “Consensus Building” is quite remarkable — especially because it has emerged spontaneously, not by central design. And it certainly is a significant expression of our mutual commitment to rule-based orders, as opposed to orders based on arbitrary commands, not to mention brutal warfare.

We, at IEP, have been devoting deep academic attention to this crucial distinction between rule-based orders and orders based on arbitrary commands. We have been studying this crucial distinction since our very foundation, in 1996.

And we have always emphasised the crucial importance of Diplomacy in the promotion and defence of an international order based on general rules. We have established and developed close relationships with NATO and the European Union,

as well as with the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And we are very proud of having as director of our Centre for European Studies, Mr. José Manuel Durão Barroso, former Prime Minister of Portugal and former President of the European Commission.

For many years now, we have launched and kept a semester course on Foreign Policy and Diplomacy, as well as an intensive programme on Diplomacy — the latter being a preparation for the admission exam to the Portuguese Diplomatic Career. We are delighted that our students have registered over the years an enormous success in this admission exam: roughly one third of the selected candidates have been IEP students — and we are talking about admission exams where there usually are more than 1500 candidates and only around 25 admissions. We are also delighted to acknowledge that at least half of our students who have been admitted over the years are women.

Both programmes in Diplomacy have been headed by our Colleague Professor Lúcia Franco, who will chair the first panel at this Conference and has played a crucial role in the preparation of our Conference.

I am also delighted to recall that we have a Research Line on Peace and Civil Society — within which we have several projects on the role of women in conflict resolution. This Research Line was launched and has been headed by our Vice-Director, Professor Mónica Dias, who will chair the second panel, and has also played a crucial role in the preparation of this Conference.

Another woman, incidentally, the distinguished Portuguese Ambassador Ana Martinho, has recently given us the privilege of accepting our invitation to join our Institute's Research Centre. She is in fact the Project Coordinator of our Conference today, and we are extremely grateful to Ambassador Ana Martinho.

**Dear Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Please allow me to conclude with a further personal note. The Lecture room where we are gathering today, kindly made available by our colleagues of CLSBE — Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics — has been for many years the host of IEP's Alexis de Tocqueville Distinguished Annual Lectures, launched in 1998.

We have had the privilege and pleasure of hosting in this very lecture room such distinguished speakers as Sir Martin Gilbert, biographer of Winston Churchill, George Weigel, biographer of Pope John Paul II, and Margaret MacMillan, Warden of St. Antony's College, Oxford, to name but a few. All of our distinguished guest-speakers shared with us the admiration for Alexis de Tocqueville — a great 19th century sociologist and political thinker who opposed all kinds of authoritarianism, either from the so-called left or the so-called right, and who deeply defended liberal

democracy, as a social and political order based on rules and not on arbitrary commands.

This seems to me a very happy coincidence: that we are gathering at the traditional Lecture Room of the Tocqueville Lecture this very first joint conference of the Association of Women Ambassadors and the Institute for Political Studies of Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

Thank you very much.