

Estoril Political Forum 2016
24th International Annual Meeting in Political Studies

*Democracy and Its Enemies:
New Threats, New Possibilities*

Estoril Palace Hotel, 27-29 June 2016

Opening Address
João Carlos Espada

Senhora Reitora da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Professora Maria da Glória Garcia,
Senhor Presidente da Câmara Municipal de Cascais, Dr. Carlos Carreiras,
Senhor Professor Manuel Braga da Cruz,
Senhor Presidente do Conselho Estratégico do IEP, Dr. Pedro Norton,
Senhora Directora do Estoril Political Forum, Dra. Rita Seabra Brito,
Distintos Convidados, Senhoras e Senhores, Caros Amigos,
Querida Dra. Isabel Soares,

Depois das tocantes palavras que ouvimos de homenagem à nossa querida Dra. Maria Barroso, resta-me talvez apenas dizer que o tema da nossa conferência deste ano — *Democracy and Its Enemies. New Threats, New Possibilities* — é em si mesmo uma homenagem a Maria Barroso. A democracia foi sempre uma das centrais, talvez a central causa da sua vida. Também nós, aqui no Estoril Political Forum, queremos honrar a nobre causa da democracia — que foi a nobre causa de Maria Barroso.

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.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Be most welcome to the 24th 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 Arrabida Convent, in 1993.

I have just said in Portuguese that, after the moving words we have heard in this opening tribute to our dear Maria Barroso, perhaps I may just add that the theme of our meeting this year is itself a tribute to Maria Barroso. Democracy was one of the central, perhaps *the* central cause of Maria Barroso. We too, at the Estoril Political Forum, honour the the noble

cause of democracy — which was the noble cause of Maria Barroso and the noble cause of Karl Popper, of whom she was a great admirer.

In this 24th edition this year, we are privileged to have the partnership of the distinguished *International Forum for Democratic Studies*. We want to thank very emphatically our good friends Marc Plattner and Christopher Walker for this partnership and above all for their friendship. Marc Plattner, as you know, is actually the Chair of our International Advisory Board and has been with us in these International Meetings since the Arrabida times, over the last 18 years, I believe.

In the next session they will be hosting a distinguished panel that will address the main threats against democracy in present times. This will be also an opportunity to announce their new book, *Authoritarianism Goes Global*, that will be for sale during our Estoril Political Forum.

A closely related theme will be the defence of Free Speech, by our good friend Timothy Garton Ash, in his Dahrendorf Memorial Lecture on Wednesday. His latest book, *Free Speech: Ten Principles for a Connected World*, will be for sale during our conference.

But one cannot deny that one of our crucial concerns during these days is and will be the impact of the British referendum on the future of the euro-atlantic democratic alliance. There will be plenty of opportunities to discuss this important issue. In the session on the future of the EU, tomorrow afternoon; in the session on NATO, just after that; in the session on the US-UK special relationship, on Wednesday morning; and in the *Europaem* special debate on Wednesday afternoon, not to mention also the Polish Jan Karski dinner tomorrow night and the closing Konrad Adenauer dinner on Wednesday.

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, 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, “Breiners” and “Brexiters”. We have Jose Manuel Barroso, former president of the European Commission, who now heads our Institute’s European Studies Centre; and we have John O’Sullivan, a prominent Brexiteer who was special advisor to Margaret Thatcher.

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 and the rule of law, the common ground of the euro-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 passage of Churchill’s, in 1934, about the spirit of compromise and gradual evolution that he attributed to British political life:

“In England the political opinion of men and parties grows like a tree shading its trunk with its branches, shaped or twisted by the winds, rooted according to its strains, stunted by drought or maimed by storm... In our

affairs as in those of Nature there are always frayed edges, border-lands, compromises, anomalies. Few lines are drawn that are not smudged.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last 24 years at these International Annual Meetings in Political Studies, we have been mainly committed to this spirit of compromise and moderation, associated with an uncompromising defence of liberty and personal responsibility. This, I believe, was also the spirit of Maria Barroso.

Thank you very much. Enjoy our meeting.