

**Speech at the opening session of ECTP 2014 - 20th European Conference on  
Thermophysical Properties**

**Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, 1st September 2014**

Dear Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Professor António Fernando Silva

Dear Chairpersons of the ECTP 2014, Professor Luís Belchior Santos and João Coutinho, and other Organisers of the ECTP 2014

Dear Conference speakers and delegates

Distinguished guests of this session

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by greeting and welcoming all the almost 400 delegates, coming from 39 countries of 5 continents of our world, to attend this 20<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Thermophysical Properties.

Welcome to Portugal, welcome to Porto, welcome to the University of Porto and in this occasion to its Faculty of Sciences, one of the 2 faculties that constituted the university when it was formally founded in 1911.

I am delighted to chair this opening session, for what this conference means, and these are not words of occasion. Indeed these are words of someone that in all his professional life, as academic and educator, as researcher, as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and now as Rector, has been working in favour of international cooperation.

International cooperation is the only way for the future in our open and global world of this XXI century.

The proactive contact and cooperation between academic and research communities, and between these and the society as a whole, is decisive for educational, scientific, technological and intellectual advancement in all fields of study.

On this major issue of cooperation, let me share with you this thought – our success in doing well, through international cooperation, is largely dependent on how much and how strongly we are able to promote a major value in our open society. The keyword for this value is TRUST, and this value we shall be able to promote in as much as our quality is perceived and understood by all stakeholders and partners, both at national and international level.

The dimension of international cooperation that we are able to promote and attract is thus simultaneously a promoter of our development and a key indicator of the stage of development where we stand.

To have been chosen to host this conference, held for the second time in Portugal, is for us, and for me as Rector, a very good signal and indicator that our strategic goal of internationalization is being met and that we have the capacity and conditions to be successful in our work, in our public mission.

It is absolutely clear to me that ECTP 2014 is an event of great academic and scientific interest. It is a conference with international scope, gathering prestigious speakers and addressing topics of undeniable scientific relevance. It is therefore an opportunity for the worldwide thermophysics community to share their recent achievements, to exchange valuable experiences and, not the least, to inspire young researchers for their so relevant work.

For all these reasons, it is quite gratifying for the University of Porto to host the 20th European Conference on Thermophysical Properties. We are very honoured and be sure that we all will do our best to deserve the trust placed in us.

Also, I note with great pleasure that the organization of this conference is a joint effort between our university through our Faculty of Sciences and the University of Aveiro. By all means this is good for Portugal. This is undoubtedly a recognition of the quality and visibility of our community at large, on advanced training, scientific research, innovation and international cooperation in the field of thermophysical properties. They are doing well.

I would like in this occasion to acknowledge and thank the work put by so many colleagues and support staff, a group headed by the two chairmen that I had already occasion to greet Luis Santos and João Coutinho.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me give you a very short introduction of the University of Porto.

The University of Porto was formally established on the 22nd of March 1911, but its origins date back to the 18th century, with a succession of institutions, the first of them created in 1762, that after several merges gave rise to the University in 1911. So, we are speaking of more than 250 years of history and experience in education and research.

Specifically, over the past 40 years, the University of Porto has been putting a lot of effort into expanding its international scope, as well as promoting the exchange of advanced knowledge with experts across the globe.

Today our institution is the second largest of Portuguese universities, with more than 32.000 students, more than 1800 FTE Faculty and more than 1600 technical support staff.

We are organised in 14 faculties, covering essentially all areas of knowledge, and we are the academic partner of a business school, in association with the major companies and institutions of the region.

About 10% of our students come from 112 countries.

About 10% of our students work for their PhD.

Our research is mainly organised in 51 certified research units and is responsible for more than 20% of the Portuguese scientific production indexed in the Web of Science.

Several indicators of academic quality show a continuous progress along the years.

It is clear that we must do better, much better, tomorrow, than what we are doing today, but we have reasons to say that we are doing reasonably well.

The University of Porto is catching up with the top 100 European universities, being clearly within this group in several fields.

I know that many of you are in Porto for the very first time. According to historical descriptions, we can trace back to the days of the Romans, more than 2000 years ago, the existence of a settlement known as *Portus Cale*, located by the Douro river, close to where the Luis I bridge and the Port Wine cellars are today. The name of Portugal derived from Portus Cale. So, we come from ancient civilizations. Therefore, I would like to invite you to enjoy the architectural heritage and the cultural and human wealth that our city has to offer, and also to invite you to visit the University of Porto.

We appreciate very much your presence. We wish you a pleasant stay in our city and a very fruitful conference.

Thank you.

1<sup>st</sup> September 2014,

Faculty of Sciences, University of Porto

Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, Rector