

Speech for the Opening Session of the 10th Yes Meeting

Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, 18 September 2015

Dear Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professora Maria Amélia Ferreira

Dear President of the 10th Yes Meeting, Marisa Martins

Distinguished conference speakers

Honourable guests of this session

Dear conference organizers,

Dear delegates,

Dear Faculty members and technical staff

Dear students,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by greeting you all and in particular the members of the board, the organizers, the speakers and the delegates of the 10th Yes Meeting. I am very pleased to participate in this opening session.

It is important to acknowledge and praise the entrepreneurial capacity of our students from the Faculty of Medicine, who were responsible for organizing this meeting. Their effort is an example for the student community at our university, considering the academic and scientific benefits that derive from hosting an event of this magnitude, prestige and quality.

Indeed, the 10th Yes Meeting has significant academic relevance given its international dimension, the fact that it opens doors for young scientists to showcase their research projects, the relevance of the scientific topics under discussion and the high quality of guest speakers. We will have among us some of the greatest scientists in the world, which we feel will be a more rewarding scientific experience for many young scientists, and will enhance their motivation for their research projects.

It is, therefore, very gratifying for the University of Porto to host the 10th Yes Meeting. Moreover, it meets one of the strategic aims of the University of Porto: to strengthen the internationalisation of the university through the organisation of scientific events. The University of Porto has sought to expand its international projection and promote the sharing of advanced knowledge among experts from different parts of the world. We are aware that the proactive contact between research communities is decisive to scientific, technological and intellectual advancement in any area of study.

The University of Porto hopes to strengthen its leading role in life sciences and health. To that end, it has scientific critical mass and excellent R&D centres, in addition to offering high quality graduate and post-graduate training in this area, with hospitals open to scientific research, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies interested in working with us, and international cooperation agreements with reputable foreign universities.

The University of Porto is aware of the scientific and economic potential of life sciences and health. Medicine, biomedicine, oncology and molecular biology, bioengineering, neurosciences, pharmaceutical sciences, marine sciences, geriatrics, physiology and immunology are of great scientific and economic applicability. In fact, further to being exported, to developing innovation activities and to creating qualified employment, the health sector in Portugal, today, generates a significant turnover.

The recent development of the health sector led to the establishment of the Health Cluster Portugal, a competitive cluster to which the University of Porto is associated, with the head-office in Greater Porto. The location of this cluster is important: in fact, many of the major players and resources of life sciences and health in Portugal are found in the northern region, in the city of Porto and in its university.

Therefore, my message to young biomedical experts is one of hope and encouragement. Life sciences and health have developed considerably in developed countries, with all that it means in terms of opportunities for scientific, professional and personal achievement. As we have seen, Portugal is no exception. So, if young Portuguese biomedical experts so desire, they can make a career in this country, thereby contributing to the socioeconomic development of Portugal and to improving the quality of life of its population.

Dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to greet the speakers and delegates of the 10th Yes Meeting. We appreciate your presence here in Porto, at the University of Porto.

We are delighted to having you here and will do everything within our reach to make sure that your participation in the meeting is enriching, that your stay in Porto is pleasant and that your visit to our University is stimulating.

The University of Porto, though formally established on the 22nd of March 1911, has indeed origins that date back to the 18th century. The Faculty of Medicine, one of the two pillars of the University, from its very beginning in 1911, indeed can be seen as having REAL origins in 1825, with the creation at the time of the Real Medical School.

Today our institution is the second largest of Portuguese universities. With more than 31,000 students, 12% of them from more than 120 countries, the University of Porto is made up by

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

The University of Porto has 50 certified research units and is responsible for 23% of the Portuguese scientific production indexed in the Web of Science. Several indicators of academic quality show a continuous progress along the years, and particularly a consolidated reputation nationally and at international level.

For all these indicators, it is clear that we enjoy today a robust reputation in the Country, the society as a whole trusts the University of Porto in the fulfilling of its mission and as a result we have the highest demand in all country and we receive the best young students of the secondary school that want to follow higher education studies.

This high scientific performance has allowed the University of Porto to improve its position in international academic rankings, being the Portuguese institution with the best score in many of those rankings. Today, the University of Porto is catching up with the top 100 European universities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Students

I know that many of you are in Porto for the very first time. I would therefore like to invite you to enjoy the heritage, architectural, cultural and human wealth the city has to offer.

Discovering Porto will bring you many surprises. For those who visit the city, you can find traces of the medieval period; many works of art from the Roman and Baroque styles; neo-classical and neo-gothic buildings; the old part of the city by the riverside, which was the reason why it received the World Heritage title; some of the finest contemporary architecture and the bridges linking the margins of the Douro River.

Therefore, please take full advantage of everything that the city and the University of Porto have to offer.

I wish you a pleasant stay!

Opening Session of the 10th Yes Meeting

Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade do Porto

Sebastião Foyo de Azevedo, Reitor