

**Speech for the Opening Session of the 15th IACEE
World Conference on Continuing Engineering Education
Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, 17 de maio de 2016**

Dear President of IACEE, Professor Kim Scalzo

Dean colleague António August de Sousa, representing the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering

Dear Dean of the Porto Business School, Professor Ramon O'Callaghan

Dear Professor Alfredo Soeiro, chair of this conference

Distinguished conference speakers

Honourable guests of this session

Dear conference organizers, delegates, teachers and researchers, 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 15th IACEE World Conference on Continuing Engineering Education.

We are honoured to host more than 120 delegates, most of them foreigners, coming from 24 different countries.

I want to congratulate the IACEE, the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto and Porto Business School for organising this Conference, and applaud the energy that is put into an event that promotes the sharing of knowledge and best practices of Continuing Engineering Education.

Many of you here know how much I care for these issues related to this new global model of education, in all aspects – methods, substance of syllabus, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and of course continuing education.

The University of Porto is fully committed to the development of continuing education and it is increasing and improving the offer of courses in this segment. We are well aware that continuing education is and will be further in the next future, a major instrument for individual and collective development. It is and will be still more in the future a major instrument, the major instrument I say, to promote employability and professional achievement and improve working conditions. It is in fact the effective answer to the challenges posed by our ever changing world.

For this reasons, it is very gratifying for the University of Porto to host the 15th IACEE, an action that further 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.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think that it is appropriate to let you know a few details about our University. The University of Porto was formally established on the 22nd of March 1911, but indeed its origins date back to the 18th century.

Today our institution is the second largest of Portuguese universities. With more than 30,000 students, the University of Porto is made up by 14 faculties covering all major areas of knowledge. We are also the academic partner of Porto Business School, where this meeting is taking place a very relevant association of the University with the major companies and institutions of the region.

We are particularly committed to international cooperation through ERASMUS programmes – in the programme 2009-2014 – ERASMUS MUNDUS – we were the 3rd European University with more coordinated projects and the 5th in number of participation in networks, involving 5 continents, 142 countries, 792 institutions, 7.612 mobility flows and 151 M€, of which 35 M managed by U.Porto.

The University of Porto has 35 certified research units and 9 major interface institutes, being 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, and particularly a consolidated reputation nationally and at international level.

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,

So, we are really 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.

I know that many of you are in Porto for the very first time. Therefore, I would 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. You can find traces of the medieval period; many works of art from the Romance 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.

Take full advantage of everything that the city has to offer.

I thank you for the attention you cared to pay to my words.

17 de maio de 2016

Porto Business School

Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, Rector