

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY PROF. MANUEL LOPES PORTO, PROFESSOR, FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

Dear Colleagues,
Dear Friends,

This tribute has for me a great meaning, for different reasons.

Of course, it is particularly so because it is a tribute of the University of Macau, together with the University of Coimbra, both here well represented.

And being conferred in Macau I cannot avoid mentioning the connections that I have with this prestigious region since more than three decades ago, on different occasions.

My first visit to Macau, in an academic context, was in 1987. Came then to Macau the choir of former members of the University of Coimbra, having invited to come with them also two other persons, two well-known persons of my country: António Almeida Santos, former Vice-Prime Minister of Portugal, and Miguel Torga, one of the most prestigious Portuguese writers.

From 1989 until 1999, in the period in which I was member of the European Parliament, I was always a member of the delegation working with China. It was a time in which Macau was still Portuguese, but the procedure of integration in China was going on. I came then three times on official visits to China, and in two of them the delegation came to Macau (and to Hong Kong). Besides other meetings, I shall never forget a meeting of four members of the delegation, in Beijing, with Lu Ping, the member of the Chinese government with

the responsibility of the negotiations with the Portuguese and with the UK governments; in particular, remembering the words that he expressed about the conversations with the Portuguese authorities.

The good evolution of Macau can, to a great extent, explain the presence, nowadays, of the Portuguese community, as is the case of having here six persons of my closest family: one daughter, my son-in-law and four grandchildren. You can understand that it has for me a very special meaning to have this distinction in the city where they live.

It was well stressed that this academic distinction is due to the academic cooperation that I have had with Macau for more than three decades, in the University and in the Institute of European Studies: lecturing, participating in seminars, publishing texts and being supervisor or member of juries of academic proofs. At the University I was also, for some years, a member of the Advisory Council, and quite recently renewed, until 2027, my participation as invited professor of the Faculty of Law.

Has also for me a great meaning the edition in Macau of my book “Theory of Integration and European Community Policies”, edited in Chinese by the University of Macau (translated by Professor Wei Dan), and in English, edited by the Institute of European Studies.

The area covered in this book is a very important scientific area, of course, as other areas of research and teaching. But it is very good to have in this way the opportunity to express to the students in Macau that the contributions of economic research, expressed in the EU policies, show that the ways followed, of openness, contribute to the progress of the European Union and of any other area or country, as China, and for our convergence.

After alternating periods of protectionism or of openness of the economies, in the last century, economic research has shown that

economists defending the openness of the economies were indeed right; public intervention should not be a protectionist intervention, the right way to follow being the promotion of the competitive conditions of the economies.

But together with this contribution of economic theory we have the clear indication given by the experiences in the last century, of slow growth or even stagnation in periods of protectionism and more growth in periods of openness.

And already in this century we have the great contribution of the experience of China, with the impressive rates of growth of the last decades due, to a great extent, to the openness of its economy, internally and externally.

Economic science and recent experience have also shown that the growth of other countries is a benefit not only for their economies, but also for other countries, opening more opportunities. And China is giving a good example in this sense, as well as the European Union (with the bad example, for some time, of the common agricultural policy, but no more nowadays).

It has indeed been a good experience to deal in Macau with scientific, economic and legal areas, which are areas of connection between China and Europe.

And I want to finish these words stressing in particular the benefits, for professors and for students, of the convergence at the University level, contributing in this way to a better and more friendly world in the 21st century.

Manuel Lopes Porto
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