



Opening Ceremony of the General Assembly of CEPLIS – European Council of Liberal Professions | 26.06.2026

Opening remarks by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

It is with high honor that I mark the opening of the General Assembly of the European Council of Liberal Professions, the first to be held in Portugal. This is a historic milestone, a moment that celebrates the union of the liberal professions at the European level but also proves the vitality of a sector in Portugal that is, in its genesis, the backbone of any free, developed, and democratic society.

In our country, as in so many others, liberal professionals have been decisive in the construction of democracy and development.

It was the liberal professionals who, over generations, brought science, technical innovation, critical thinking, and the intellectual vanguard to the center of our society.

It is quite interesting to note that when the European Council of Liberal Professions was founded in 1974, still under the name of the European Secretariat of Liberal Professions, Portugal was founding its democracy.

With the fall of the regime and the April 25 Revolution, professionals were able to organize themselves and place all their intellectual, technical, and scientific capacity, all their entrepreneurial, determined, and bold essence, and their entire free and autonomous spirit at the service of the country.

The proof of this is that many of these professionals became indispensable figures in national politics, whose contribution was decisive for the modernization, transformation, growth, and development of Portugal, from the consolidation of democracy to the modernization, opening, and integration of our country with the European Union and the world.

If we look at the founding structures and the development of our political parties, we find the indelible mark of the thought of these professionals.



The evolution of ideas, the strategic vision for the country, and the structuring of the major State reforms were, to a large extent, conceived, inspired, and led by professionals who brought their experience, their technical rigor, and their intellectual independence to the life of the country. I speak of Sá Carneiro, Lucas Pires, Mota Amaral, or Morais Leitão. I speak of so many others who passed through Governments, Public Administration, local government, or Parliament.

And as a political decision-maker, as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, my daily role is exactly to ensure that this construction, with these same values, which so many liberal professionals started, continues to develop.

Parliament is, par excellence, the house of words and of ideas, the mirror of plurality, and the engine of a country's democracy.

And, therefore, the work of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has several points in common with the work of a liberal professional: it is an intellectual and technical work that excels in ambition and freedom, especially given the times we live in and the parliamentary architecture that the Portuguese have designed.

And, in particular, it excels in freedom because only freedom allows us to listen, speak, negotiate, and have the courage to find moderation, understanding, and the best possible decision.

As Albert Camus said: *"Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better,"* and in my case, as a Minister, as a member of the Government, it is effectively a daily opportunity to do better for all Portuguese people and for Portugal.

We live today, on a global and European scale, in times of great complexity, instability, and uncertainty. Times when we are led to believe that to do our best we must choose fragmentation, division, or intransigent positions.

This is not my point of view and that is why I believe that political decision-makers, but also civil society organizations or anyone who lends their voice in representation of something greater, have the imperative duty to work tirelessly.



To work so as not to fall into this temptation, so that we do not stop believing that "virtue lies in the middle," that progress lies in balance, and that the future lies in understanding, overcoming the traps of fear, hatred, apathy, or division.

Because when the social fabric tears, we all run the risk of isolating ourselves in darkness, within the walls of our own reality, losing sight of the common good and the opportunity to be and do better.

Politics, representatives, and those who lead must be an answer. They must be a living example and an authentic expression of hope. For this, we must prove, every day, that we are capable of finding much more of what unites us than what divides us.

It is essential today, more than ever, that we know how to live with the freedom of the other, that we work together with one another, and find a common path, a collective future.

And it is precisely in this reflection on freedom, responsibility, and union that I find the most solid bridge to the universe of the liberal professions.

Professional freedom is not, and has never been, a selfish privilege. It is the ethical foundation that allows the exercise of functions with independence of judgment, based on science, knowledge, and conscience. The freedom of a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, or an architect is the guarantee that the citizen is protected. It is freedom that allows the defense of the rights of others.

As I mentioned at the beginning, in Portugal, the importance of liberal professionals merges with the very History of our development and our democracy.

And this Government recognizes the vital role that liberal professionals continue to play in our country. This Government looks at liberal professionals as a fundamental strategic partner of the State, identifying the excellence that characterizes these professionals to face the challenges of administrative modernization, digital transition, the economy, health, territorial planning, and justice.

We have, therefore, sought to implement measures that value and benefit this professional practice.



We work actively:

- In the simplification and digitalization of bureaucracy, freeing up the administrative burden and barriers that stifle innovation;
- In the review of the tax structure, ensuring that merit and individual effort are fairly rewarded and not penalized.

The Government knows that valuing and protecting the autonomy and dignity of the liberal professions is to value and protect the public interest itself.

However, we know that the challenges we face are no longer confined to national borders. The impact of artificial intelligence, new economic dynamics, and globalization require a concerted response.

It is here that the role of the European Council of Liberal Professions, and of all the organizations that comprise it, is of the utmost importance.

The voice of professionals at the international level is indispensable, as it creates a consistent force of dialogue with an impact on European institutions, ensuring that community regulations are not exclusively top-down and that they are the reflection of those who feel the challenges firsthand, those who live the consequences of public policies.

This is indispensable work, work clothed in a public cause and that must be supported by political bodies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The work of a liberal professional is, in its essence, an act of transformation, through the free exercise of knowledge.

This Government has exactly the transformation of Portugal as a priority and intends to work with and for liberal professionals with the certainty that the same objective is shared: the construction of a country and a Europe where merit, knowledge, freedom, mutual respect, and progress prevail.

Thank you.