

Editorial

This Supplementum to the 15th volume of the Scientific Journal *Debater a Europa* is entirely devoted to the publication of reports resulting from the Serralves Conferences *Global Trends 2030: The Futures of Portugal*, held between September 2015 and June 2016.¹ The Serralves Conferences tried to identify and debate global megatrends observed in the public, economic, political, technological and security spheres, as well as their impact on the future of the Portuguese and the Portuguese democracy.

In our current transition period, these global megatrends can help us understand what is happening in Europe and in the world. This exercise is particularly important as we are facing times of great uncertainty, in which unlikely events are taking political decision makers and analysts by surprise. According with Luís Braga da Cruz , at the time Chairman of the Serralves Foundation ,the understanding of the change of paradigm at global , national and local level is essential to be able to avoid “reactive policies “and develop more cost-effective “preventive policies.”²

Faced with this finding, the European Union, by initiative of the European Parliament, created the European Strategic Political Analysis System (ESPAS), an unique inter-institutional structure whose purpose is to study global megatrends and build a common European perspective when defining solutions to the challenges they create.

The report on global trends 2030³, entitled *Citizens in an Interconnected and Polycentric World*, drafted by the European Union Institute for Security Studies for ESPAS, identifies four megatrends: the empowerment of individuals; the dissemination of power; the polycentric nature of a post-hegemonic world and human development, all of which pose

¹ The Portuguese version of these Reports will be published in the first semester of 2016 by the Serralves Foundation

² See Luís Braga da Cruz , opening speech of the Serralves Conferences ,September 2015, unpublished paper

³ See Álvaro Vasconcelos (ed.) *Global Trends 2030-Citizens in an Interconnected and Polycentric World*, ESPAS Report, EU-ISS, Paris, March 2012.

serious threats to the environment. Those megatrends have been confirmed in the subsequent ESPAS reports⁴ and by the US National Council Report entitled *Alternative Worlds*⁵

The Serralves Conferences identified a fifth megatrend – diversity – that was not sufficiently debated in the ESPAS report. The report concludes that two alternative scenarios can take place: a world that is more inclusive and convergent or a more fragmented world, both internally and globally. Both scenarios are a currently a possibility, and it is impossible to predict which one will prevail.

The five identified megatrends were debated by nine expert panels, who analyses the theme from a global perspective, on the one hand, and how it impacted Portugal and Europe, on the other. A group of scholars attended these conferences and developed a report on each of the five identified megatrends, which were similarly debated in a public seminar. These reports are included in the publication resulting from the conferences, in addition to the synthesis prepared by the Conference Coordinator.

The reports that are now published try to understand how these megatrends affect Portugal. We try to offer a contribution to the Portuguese debate and, more specifically with this English edition, expand the scope of the debate to the European level⁶.

The alternatives for the future of Portugal, whose European destiny was sealed with the consolidation of democracy, depend, to a large extent, on the ability of the Portuguese people and other European citizens to shape these global trends.

The authors' recognized scientific profile and different scientific backgrounds, in addition to their diverse origins lend the scientific journal *Debater a Europa* a standard guarantee of quality which has ensured, we are certain, the crossing of outlooks, views and fruitful dialogue with the reader.

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⁴ see <http://espas.eu/orbis/espas/>

⁵*National Intelligence Council*, “Global trends 2030: Alternative worlds”. Dezembro 2012. Disponível em: <https://globaltrends2030.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/global-trends-2030-november2012.pdf>.

⁶It is also in preparation is the Portuguese edition of a book dedicated to Serralves Conferences, which will be published in the first half of 2017.