The Futures of Portugal in and beyond Europe

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The universal is the local without walls
Miguel Torga

Broadly titled Global Trends 2030: The Futures of Portugal, the nine sessions of the Serralves Conferences sought to identify and discuss megatrends in the fields of politics, economy, technology and security, as well as their impact on the future of Portuguese democracy and on the quality of life of its citizens.

The debates focused around five global trends identified in previous reports: empowerment of citizens; cultural diversity; diffusion of power; polycentric world and sustainable development in a context of global warming.

The main conclusion of this exercise was that we are living in a transition period marked by huge uncertainty. Nevertheless, it can already be said that the trends on which many of Portugal’s options were based, both at the internal and external levels, are undergoing profound changes. This is certainly the case with the political consensus that resulted from the democratic transition of the 1970s but it also applies to the two main pillars of Portugal’s international integration: the European Union and transatlantic relations.

Within a context of increased volatility and greater variety of international frameworks, in the future, Portuguese citizens will be more dependent on the civil society and the local authorities, following a trend common to many other States. Nevertheless, the scale of the effort required to effectively manage this transitional stage may be unique to Portugal.

Five major global trends, along with seven corresponding questions, dominated the debates of the Serralves Conferences: