



UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA  
REITORIA

*Francisco*

## DECLARATION OF THE PORTUGUESE STATE

The history of the University of Coimbra – heir to the foundational act of the university studies in Portugal of the 13<sup>th</sup> century – has been, for over seven centuries so closely connected to the production of knowledge, the rise of new worlds, the tensions of the human genius, the interchange of ideas, the statement of science, the humanities and the political thought that it is impossible to forget it in the making of the Portuguese history and of its globalization experience, many centuries before the term was created.

Permanently installed in the city of Coimbra in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it creates with the city a peculiar and close relationship, designing and organizing the space by incorporating knowledge and heritage, taking advantage of the values that has transformed and brought into force, in a passionate relation so many times confused with love and hate, that spread throughout the country and the world as the only university of Portuguese language until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the political, cultural and technical elites were educated there. The same elites that in America, Asia and Africa gave birth to autonomous creative and transforming forces, most certainly operating in a longing nostalgia but never in subservience to Coimbra.

The political powers never ignored it, even when they acted as if that were the case. The University always had the strong support of the religious orders, with the manifestations of the Enlightenment, the rupture with the Darwinism, with the power of experimentation and, already in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the tensions of the dictatorial power. The students, the professors and the city have learnt to live under this constant challenge of thinking more, of contesting through creation, and aimed at consolidating several singular traditions.

When the growth of the University dictated its settlement in the city uptown, it occupied the Royal Palace which, moving backwards in history, had been hosting constant occupations of forts, palaces and houses of power since the beginning of our age. Therefore, besides the marks of exceptional genius and architectural quality created for the University of Coimbra, it takes hold and preserves the memory of the spaces it occupies, widely enhancing the scenery of its history.

To this day, unique testimonies of all eras have survived in an intrinsic and genuine effort of conciliation between its safekeeping and the intense university activity and consequent challenges. And if, by any time lapse in this course, less attention, overcrowding as a result of the democratization of education, or the several political and economic pressures have reversed this statement, the University and the city, as organic living beings, always knew how



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to heal and to establish new plans of recovery that were absolutely visible both in the restoration actions and in the present management plan.

By presenting the application of the “University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia” to UNESCO world heritage, the Portuguese State takes a cultural responsibility, an imperative for world citizenship, and an imperative that is now placed at a country that developed for centuries an experience of this kind.

With this application we reinforce the determination of being closer to all those who, through the centuries, have built their existence and have created roots in it, which were then disseminated worldwide, and that from today on are committed in a future closer to the humanity.

Coimbra, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Dr. Francisco José Viegas

Secretary of State (Culture)