

TESTIMONY OF THE INTERVENTION



CLOSING SESSION



José Ribau Esteves

“We have to look for proper solutions for a country that is not only fashionable, but which is an extraordinary country, which is internationalized with a structural base, because there are no kinder people in the world than Portuguese, there are no people to settle anywhere in the world with the ease of Portuguese and this is a heritage that our history has shown. “

“Good afternoon to all of you, a special word of appreciation to the Secretary of State for coming to the event and also wish him a good mandate, to succeed and to help us to internationalize our country more and with more quality.

I know the day consisted of a lot of reflective thinking but I just wanted to add these three thoughts.

I think they will be relevant to the reflection that has been made here, to the reflections that we have to continue to make and to the operations of a good manager that we all have, surely with high determination, whether they are in the private or public sector.

First of all, I wanted to say that we are going to discuss a lot of this subjects in the upcoming weeks.

The European Commission presented the so-called 7th Cohesion Policy Report. We had a first debate in Brussels in the plenary of the committee of the region. We were all together and we thought that it was very important to approach that report, also because of instrumental issues regarding the future, because as we know there is an open debate in the EU by the Commission on what scenarios we should follow for the future of our Union The name of the debate is exactly : the Future of the European Union, based on five scenarios that the Commission has drawn up.

One of these data ends with the cohesion policy and it is a very intense discussion that the State has in the EU. We have already started in Portugal, by a proposal that I made myself at ANMP and which the Prime Minister welcomed, which we held at the penultimate meeting of the territorial contracting council. We have already started this debate. The Government has already presented the first document last May and basically the idea is to understand that Europe still has cohesion to do.

But we also understand that the cohesion of the future can't have instruments equal to those we have had up to now. When we read some data from the report, and I will only talk about 2 or 3, we see that they were supposed to be much better. Those in



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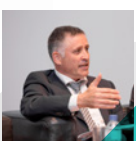
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arrears grew significantly with the use of the policy instruments in financial action of cohesion policy, but the fact is that development disparities in Europe increased in the analysis space of the 7th Report.

So, there is something here that is right.

Obviously, those who are most behind in terms of development have grown, but cohesion is not exactly that. Cohesion is to be all with levels of, finally, several indicators where the per capita is the most used, we are closer to each other. We will never be the same, this does not exist as is evident. But there is this growth. What the Report says is that cohesion rather than growth has declined.

There are also indicators that have to be crossed.

For example, with respect to infrastructures, often in a country like Portugal we have an idea that the infrastructures are all made, and we, working on the report, find that the level of structuring, for example in the area of transport, in any country in the central Europe is far ahead of Portugal; or what is the investment of countries in research and development in the countries of central Europe is also far ahead of Portugal.

It is necessary to verify that these areas are different and are treated differently, in the policy of cohesion that we have had. The infrastructure has still a lot of work to do. The President of AIDA gave the example of the Aveiro-Viseu-Salamanca rail link, which is of major importance for 70% of our exports, which are located in the central and northern regions of the country.

We have been discussing this for 30 years, I do not know if we will discuss another 30, but it would be very important if we didn't. Moreover, we look at what is happening in Spain and the monumental investment made in railway structure in the last decade. More and more we are an island. Islands in Europe is equal to development delays, which leads to delays in what convergence is, in what is the objective construction of the Commission.

This mode of approach at this intense phase of debate in which we are, in which it was very important to get more involved in the debate with the Secretary of State that we have here today dedicated to the areas of the internationalization of the economy and is therefore important because we have to train ourselves to be more competitive, to have more international projection. But at the same time, we have to inform, as our policy actions do to converge with the market, to internationalize more and better our economy.

I draw everyone's attention to this moment. It is a moment of great importance for Portugal and for Europe. We know that Europe is having a difficult time and that it has serious problems in political change.

The Europe of the great political leaders no longer exists, we have a problem of serious conditioning of European politics by the technicians of the bureaucracy, which is terrible. Any structure needs good technicians, but it also needs good political leaders.

It is vital that today, at such a difficult time that we will begin and end, by the end of the first half of next year, the discussion on their finances for Europe in the coming years, we will discuss the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union. This will have a complex impact on our accounts, as the UK contributes about 15% to the budget and withdraws 5% and is thus a net contributor to 10% of our Union budget. All at the same time and it is vital that it is led by politicians and that they take the risk of decisions.



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CONCLUSIONS

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We must pay close attention to what is the answer to the new cohesion policy, because Europe must continue to have cohesion policy. Adding to this, the last note. The issue of demographics.

We are with industrial entrepreneurs and I would like to talk to you about the questions of labour. We have a serious problem in Portugal.

We have a problem in Europe, it's a demographic problem. When we open the doors to migration, we do not open just because we are good-hearted people and humanism is a value of Europe that is not frivolous! But the 900,000 migrants from Germany are there because Germany is supportive and humanistic, but also because Germany needs those people. As well as the thousands who went to Austria, to Sweden, Finland. Let's hope they make up their lives, we're all human beings and we want each other good, but it's very important for those countries.

No matter the number of those who came to Portugal, because it is small, not even accounting for the percentage, which is high, of those who have come and gone.

Yes, because being a refugee is not being silly. It is to be the victim of a serious problem in the case of wars more declared as Syria or more terrorist like those of Africa. To be a refugee is to be a person who has the courage to say "I want to bet on my life, I do not want to wait for death". But being a refugee is not being silly, and so if I'm a refugee, I can go to Australia, to Finland and to Sweden, why do I go to Portugal? in an undifferentiated function, why stay in Portugal to win 520 € per month?

And it is good that we look at this matter, for what is a great challenge for Portugal, a European challenge. The challenge is simple. How are we attractive to citizens who want to live here?

We are in Aveiro, the Secretary of State of our Government, worries very well and with unemployment, but you know that we already have many industries and even many mayors who have a recruitment problem. Recruitment of highly qualified technicians in some areas and recruitment of undifferentiated workforce, we have serious problems.

Today, we have hundreds of places available for various institutional units in our Municipality, for labour that can start working tomorrow.

How, then, will we induce a good percentage of the 300,000 people who are unemployed to go to the labour market?

We have a serious problem in Portugal. I do not know if structural unemployment is 8%, 7%, 5%, if it is 4.5%, but I know it is not 0%.

Did we create a set of professionals in unemployment?

Yes, we did. As long as we do not differentiate the income from work, from the income from nonwork, there is a high percentage of these 300,000 who will continue to opt for the mechanisms that the law gives them, to continue a "no work". Because the difference in income for work in Portugal is too low.

I like to tell the story of a group of my friends, from childhood. We often meet to relax and talk about life.

Six of them were stonemasons, men who dedicated themselves to the construction industry, today with specialty they are all working in France. When we can find them

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job offers, in several Portuguese companies, some of the best that the country has in this area, they refuse immediately. They say that in France they earn between four and five times more than they would earn here. Today coming by plane from Paris and Lyon, where most of it is, costs what we know. Today the homesickness, is generated by "Skype" or other mechanisms. So how am I going to convince my friends who live in France, who work six weeks and are entitled to a week's rest, to return to work in Portugal, while income is no longer attractive?

There are important notes of challenges that we face.

These are problems we have today. Portugal has an employment problem. Today we have to find solutions to very difficult problems, because there are no migratory flows coming to Portugal. In what is reading the world today, tomorrow can change and we all have the awareness that the world has absolute variables from one day to the next.

This approach is very important for an economy that is growing and that has everything to continue to grow. It is internationalized and has many good conditions to pursue this path of internationalization, but it has new problems.

Although some are not exactly new, but we will have to look for good solutions, for a country that is not only fashionable, but an extraordinary country that is internationalized with a structural base, because there are no kinder people in the world than Portuguese and there are no people settling in any part of the world with the ease of Portuguese. This is a heritage that our history has shown.

Until recently, emigration was a very disregarded thing, but we are citizens of the world and if we want to internationalize, the best ambassadors are the Portuguese and this is a powerful area, which obviously we are all interested in using better, in a positive logic, looking for answers to these new problems. They are difficult, but it is my conviction that with the wisdom of the Portuguese and with the cooperation of the various actors we will surely succeed! "