

**Intervenção do
Subsecretário Regional dos Assuntos Europeus e Cooperação Externa**

***Intensive Program*
“Regionalism and Europe of the Regions”**

Sessão de Abertura

Universidade dos Açores
4 de Abril de 2011

At the opening of this Intensive Program, allow me some very brief words in English, on behalf of the Regional Government of the Azores, to congratulate the University of the Azores, particularly, the Department of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences and, very specially, the Jean Monet Chair, for organizing this first **Intensive Program on “Regionalism and Europe of the Regions”** and to express the satisfaction of the Azorean Government for having supported it since the very beginning, as we consider this initiative very significant for our Region.

It is, thus, with great satisfaction that we witness the presence of such distinct participants – students and speakers from so many countries -, definitely, a first and clear sign of the success, not only of this Intensive Program, but also for the work that will follow regarding other academic studies and degrees, promoted by the University of Azores, on European studies.

In fact, the Azores - we believe - are the ideal scenario to debate and reflect upon European topics, namely, on importance of “Regionalism”, in the national and European context and what it means for these islands: -

autonomy, proximity with the populations, good governance, solidarity, cohesion.

I will have the opportunity, during this Intensive Program (just in a few minutes) to share with you some aspects of the external political action of the Azores Government, in special regarding European affairs and our dual special status: of a Portuguese Autonomous Region and of an European Outermost Region. So, I will be very brief at this moment...

But, nevertheless, in this opening session, I would like to strength that, without doubt, the Regions of the European Union - with differences between themselves, of course - are not, any more, mere statistical units or the subordinates or delegates of central governments: - it is undeniable that they have, in fact, importance and an acting roll in this Europe that we are building every day.

We are not anywhere near - or even wanting - to replacing the member-states, but Regions are, definitely one of a many actors whose strategies, decisions and lobbying are shaping the future of the European Union.

The regional dimension of cooperation and political action represents, clearly, a Europe that is focused on solidarity, on economical, social and territorial cohesion, on good governance, on decentralization and proximity with the populations...

I'm looking forward to discuss some of these issues with you and I wish you all – as I am sure it will be -a very motivating and fruitful stay amongst us.

Rodrigo Oliveira

**Subsecretário Regional dos Assuntos Europeus e Cooperação Externa
Governo da Região Autónoma dos Açores**