

His Excellency Prime Minister of Portugal, His Excellency Prime Minister of the Netherlands, City Mayor of Almada, Secretaries of State, NOVA Rector, FCT Director, colleagues, students, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I address you a few words in the scope of this event:  
*Science and Innovation - building together the future of Europe.*

On this special occasion, I would like to highlight the work done by the Commissioner Carlos Moedas responsible for the area of Research, Science and Innovation, and promoter of the Scientific Advice Mechanism composed of a Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, whose main action was to provide independent scientific advice to the College of European Commissioners, aiming to support their legislation, policy decisions based on the scientific evidence, from which I am proud to belong.

**Some examples of this group are:**

Cyber Security in the European Digital Single Market  
Food from the Oceans  
Microplastic Pollution – Scientific perspectives and its impacts  
Carbon Capture and Utilization

## **The new Horizon Europe program and the ERC**

Concerning Horizon Europe, the new program for the next 7 years, the successor of H2020, it is also based on several funding instruments which will support projects across a large range of scientific disciplines, from the most exploratory stages of research to the commercialisation of innovative products or services, where the key issues concerns the establishment of missions, crosscutting different thematic areas, with the target to reach a clear application from which all benefits, as the Portuguese did with the Henry, the Navigator with the discovery mission!

From this Programme I would like to highlight one of the best instruments, the European Research Council and in my opinion the best research program in the World, supporting all fields of science on the basis of scientific excellence.

It was due to this instrument that CENIMAT, the Materials Research Center, is proud to be a success story not only in Portugal but in Europe, since with the already six awarded grants, has placed Europe in the leadership of the areas of TRANSPARENT ELECTRONICS AND PAPER ELECTRONICS.

NOVA University is also very proud, since hosts 19 ERC grants, placing NOVA as one of the top national institutions.

Finally, I just would like to ask to our Prime Minister, to always place science as a government priority, since the development of science and technology is the critical factor for the future of a competitive nation, and also science should be embedded in politics and in the society, should be the central part of all the system.

**If You Think Education Is Expensive, Try Ignorance.**

**Thank you**

**Elvira Fortunato**  
**Vice-rector for Research at NOVA University**