

Opening ceremony welcome Speech by

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51st Congress of the European Societies of Toxicology Bridging Sciences for Safety

**13th September 2015 Archive Hall, Alfândega International Congress
Center Porto.**

Distinguished Speakers, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear all.

**A very good afternoon to everyone, and thank you, for joining us,
at the 2015 Congress of EUROTOX.**

**I would like to present my compliments to all academic colleagues
and administrative authorities participating in this opening ceremony
and express to you my deep satisfaction for sharing this important
moment for the development of the science of toxicology.**

**To our eminent speakers and all participants who have come from
all over the world and Europe, I am greatly honored and pleased to
welcome you to Porto, on behalf of EUROTOX. We are indeed honoured
to have you here with us.**

**We have about 1600 participants from 60 countries gathered here
today, making once again our congress a truly European initiative. Your
presence is indeed an opportunity to establish new scientific and
professional bridges with all geographical realities.**

**The Portuguese organization committee and also the scientific
committee have done a great work preparing our congress and I would
like to thank them for their energy, competence and professionalism
during the organization process. For sure, the success I anticipate to
this congress will certainly be the result of the effective collaboration
between all those committees involved. I would like to present a special
thanks to the Portuguese society of toxicology, and exceptionally to
professor Felix Carvalho chairman of the organizing committee and
secretary general of EUROTOX. Felix is a valuable asset for EUROTOX,
as he is working constantly hard and with great efficiency for
EUROTOX'S interests and is also a charismatic personality. I would like
to thank them not only for their fundamental work in motivating**

Portuguese colleagues to propose the organization of this congress, but also by their commitment during the organization and also the continuous communication and coordination with the EUROTOX Board.

This Congress is certainly a special occasion for those who work for the development of toxicology in education, research and professional development. It will be an occasion to meet, to listen, to discuss, to share information and to plan for the future. Indeed, a congress is an opportunity to discuss key points of scientific and professional policies and strategies, helping us to define how we should encourage responsible conduct in our policy decisions, to promote the science of toxicology at the European and international level and also to establish personal contacts with colleagues from other parts of the world.

All previous EUROTOX congresses have been developed under this principle. And here we are again, now in a great city, Porto, in Portugal to continue this exceptional course that begun back in 1962 in Zurich, when the roots for EUROTOX, the European Society for the Study of Drug Toxicity was founded and a year later, in 1963 the first annual scientific meeting of the European Society of Toxicology (EST), as it was meanwhile renamed, was held in Paris.

Today, EUROTOX as the Federation of national European societies of toxicology with more than 8.000 members, is proud to host this annual event, this institution again, bringing together renowned experts in our field, to address the vital issue of research excellence and professional development.

In my opinion, as recent economic developments in Europe concerning primarily Greece have emerged, now is the right time to reflect on some questions.

Today, Europe is at the crossroads of its future, in a difficult situation of crisis. Are we choosing the right path in the crisis?

Do our intervention programmes achieve the intended effects?

Which innovative sectors or methodologies can we search for to work on? How can we secure via our science a safe world and produce at the same time a long-term value development for our scientific and professional field?

In an increasingly globalised world, Europe faces its own crisis. Therefore, I feel, that there is a critical need to continue to foster EUROTOX'S aims in order to develop guidelines and recommendations for promoting the science of toxicology at a common European level, even though there is indeed amongst the European countries diverse

integration in their systems of political organization, mainly in Health, and Education.

To this effect, EUROTOX'S ERT regulations, given today's requirements created by the political and economic demands and pressures upon professions, is intended to improve and consolidate the professional, educational and research efforts to provide the European community with exceptional value for toxicology.

The EUROTOX mission was and is to advance human, environmental and animal health by being the leading voice of toxicology in Europe. In order to achieve this EUROTOX provides a system to recognize qualified toxicologists and works on harmonization and setting training standards leading to the EUROTOX Registered Toxicologist system. Besides EUROTOX promotes inside the ERT system a solid basis for a specialization in toxicology. EUROTOX works and interacts with European Authorities and international organizations with efforts to achieve worldwide recognition of toxicologists but in order to achieve these aims we seek the cooperation of the national societies.

I believe strongly that by ERT EUROTOX will succeed to accomplish a European "harmonization" by creating common standards across the internal market by a consistency to what an ERT Toxicologist is, so that the same rules will apply to businesses that operate in more than one Member State. This is an objective I feel for EUROTOX : To achieve uniformity in laws or regulations of member states regarding to ERT recognition so as to facilitate the professional toxicologists by setting and providing those high quality standards, ensuring thus the advancement of our science.

This will be our roadmap for more recognition and harmonization of the ERT system and Excellency in Toxicology education, research and profession. More than ever, toxicology, amongst other fields, has become an important element in environmental and occupational health, not only in Europe but in all nations of our world.

In a world where as Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher back in around 500 BC, perceived it's ever-present change in the universe and stated that “πάντα ῥεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει”, that is, "Everything flows, nothing stands still", It is clear that we cannot make this journey alone! We need bridges! And here we are! In the wonderful city of Porto and its amazing works of art, Porto's' astonishing bridges.

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new, but by enhancing our knowledge and communicate with one another, EUROTOX's history proves that we can advance in bridging the knowledge of sciences like Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacology, Physiology, and many others, for the desired path of humankind towards a safer world.

The theme of this congress is *“Bridging Sciences for Safety”*, and will certainly help us to think about some of these subjects. Research activities are now taking place at a higher level and so it is imperative to discuss positive approaches to encourage best research practices, including examining the role of academic publications in setting the standards for toxicology and also to present professional experiences.

We have with us today representatives from universities, research organizations and the industry. I hope that these four days of congress, allows academics, researchers and professionals to share their ideas and views, discussing about the ongoing challenges and responses in research which may in turn inspire new or validated standards of practices in the professional field.

With these words, I hope this Congress provides you with a forum to exchange scientific ideas, inspire new research, and new contacts for closer co-operation, so that we can, together, Envision the future of a promising development of the science of toxicology in Europe and all over the world.

I also wish you a pleasant and interesting stay in the beautiful city of Porto.

Finally, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the European Societies of Toxicology, I'm very proud to declare officially opened the 2015 51st European Congress of Toxicology, Here in Porto.

Thank you very much