



**EUROPEAN UNION**

## **European Union Academic Programme-Macau Bi-annual Conference**

**"60 Years after the Treaties of Rome:  
What is the Future for the European Union?"**

**27 November 2017**

**Speech by Ambassador Carmen Cano  
Head of European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao**

**-Dear Professor Martins, Vice-Rector for Research of the University of Macau and President of the EUAP,**

**-Dear Dr. José Luís de Sales Marques, President, Institute of European Studies of Macau**

**-Dear Dr. Liu De Xue, Director of the Legal Affairs Bureau**

**-Dear Prof. Tu Guangjian, Director, Institute for Advanced Legal Studies of the Faculty of Law**

**-Dear Prof. Augusto Teixeira Garcia**

**Dear participants, students, ladies and gentlemen.**

I am very pleased to be here this morning for this Conference organised by the European Union Academic Programme. The title is particularly well chosen: "60 Years after the Treaties of Rome: What is the Future for the European Union?". Indeed, 2017 is a special year for the European Union, 60 years is quite an achievement for a project that many said was unrealistic.

I am often asked "what are the reasons to celebrate the EU's 60th anniversary?" as many people mainly see the challenges that the EU is confronted with.

It is a legitimate question. Particularly for those who are not familiar with European history.

- Thanks to the European Union, Europeans citizens live in a continent in peace. Actually, its longest period of peace in history!
- Thanks to the EU, our citizens elect democratically their leaders, 28 sovereign countries who believe that the protection of civil liberties and human rights are fundamental for the development of a modern society.
- Thanks to the EU, Europeans travel freely, companies do business without barriers and trade is free and protected by the rule of law.

It is undeniable that the EU is facing new challenges, the world is facing new challenges. "Uncertainty" is a word that one hears all around the world these days, not only about Europe. Brexit, hyper-globalisation, populism, terrorism, violence, etc. We have many challenges. And to me, the biggest challenge is being able to listen to our citizens and adapt to their needs and demands.

But it is not the first time that the EU faces challenges. The EU was born amid scepticism. If our founding members could see the European project 60 years on they would struggle to believe how far our work has taken us. Furthermore, economic data in Europe shows positive growth, populism has been defeated in France, The Netherlands, Austria and Germany.

As we continue to build this unique experiment that is the EU, we will find more challenges – I am sure you keep track of the news – and we will most certainly make mistakes as we continue to build this once farfetched project.

So, "What is the Future for the European Union?". I think we will continue doing what we have done for the last 60 years, that is, face our challenges, build on our values, and ensure our rights and freedoms; and we will do it together. Because at the core of the EU is the firm belief that we are greater and stronger when we work together. Our diversity strengthens our unity and it is only by working together that we can tackle the global threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**We are not weak when we face challenges, we are weak when we forget our values. Let me assure you that our values are sound.**

To finish, I would like to say a few words about the organisers of this event, the European Union Academic Program which is now coming to an end after 5 years. We are very pleased of the work it has achieved. For several years, the EU Academic Program has strengthened ties between the EU and Macao in research, People-to-people exchange, cultural outreach and it has created fantastic networks of cooperation between the EU and Macao. I know it was not easy when it was launched in 2012. There were many difficulties. This is why I want to thank all its members for their extraordinary work and particularly Professor Martins for his great leadership and continued support. Although the EUAP is coming to an end, I want to assure you that the EU continues to offer grants and funds through the Jean Monnet activities. My office is ready to support you and your initiatives to further EU-MO relations.

Thank you very much for your attention. I wish you a very productive conference and I look forward to its outcome.