



PRESS RELEASE

President of Portugal sees crucial role of foundations in building more hopeful future

Cascais, 26 May 2011 – Addressing the topic of the oceans at the opening of the EFC's 22nd annual conference, President of Portugal Aníbal Cavaco Silva stressed the need for combining the efforts of government, the scientific community and NGOs to provide better knowledge of the oceans and find ways to minimise risks to them. "European foundations have a crucial role to play in finding solutions to offer a more hopeful future for humankind," he said.

The conference, entitled "Resources and Sustainability – The Oceans", is being held from 26 – 28 May in Cascais, Portugal, and brings together more than 600 foundation practitioners, and NGO and political representatives to debate opportunities and challenges facing foundations as they both build and employ their resources to make sustainable and positive change in the world, with oceans as a starting point for these discussions.

At the opening, the Mayor of Cascais, Carlos Carreiras, welcomed delegates and emphasised that, "Foundations are a cornerstone of our democracy... they have a direct impact on the lives of millions of people."

Emílio Rui Vilar, President of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Chairman of the EFC, said in his address that one of the main priorities of his chairmanship had been to emphasise the responsibility of European foundations to look beyond the borders of Europe. "There is a growing sense that so many of the issues that European philanthropy addresses have global implications and causes," he said. "To tackle these issues, we must look out beyond our borders – for ideas, for partners, for knowledge and for solutions."

The opening day also saw the awarding of the Mercator Fund's Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe to Bassma Kodmani, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative, which promotes democratic reform in the Arab world. In her acceptance speech, Ms Kodmani said of the change that is underway now in the Arab world, "There is a long way to go, but... the task is exhilarating."

The topic of ocean governance in Europe will be the focus of a special plenary on 27 May, featuring keynote speaker HRH Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, as well as high level ocean experts from the European Commission, national governments and academia.

The conference offers foundations and their partners a chance to consider how to make the best use of their and the world's resources - natural, human, knowledge, financial or otherwise - so that future generations can benefit from work done now. Sessions will cover a variety of topics - from the environment, education, and migration to the financial crisis and the role of philanthropy in supporting reform agendas. Delegates will also discuss current trends in philanthropy with their peers during site visits and social events.

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Conference dates: 26-28 May, 2011

Conference venue: Hotel Cascais Miragem, Cascais, Portugal

Conference schedule: <http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Pages/ConferenceSchedule.aspx>

Programme: http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Documents/2011_EFC_AGA_and_Conference_Final.pdf

For further information please visit: <http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Pages/2011Cascais.aspx>

Press representatives interested in attending should email the European Foundation Centre at press@efc.be

Notes to Editors

- The European Foundation Centre (EFC), founded in 1989, is the leading membership association representing public-benefit foundations at European level. It is based in Brussels.
- The EFC currently has 235 members including community and independent foundations as well as corporate funders spread across more than 30 countries. A majority (90%) are based in Europe.
- EFC members have established a range of **Interest Groups, networks and fora** which facilitate cooperation and exchanges of good practice in various fields of activity including: children and youth; learning for well-being; diversity, migration and integration; human rights and disability; protecting the environment; HIV/AIDS; global health challenges; social investment; Central and Eastern Europe; communications; Roma rights; peace and security and global philanthropy leadership.
- The EFC hosts the secretariat of the **Donors and Foundations' Networks in Europe (DAFNE)**, which supports cooperation among national networks covering 22 European countries.
- The EFC coordinates the **European Forum on Philanthropy and Research Funding**, which was launched in 2007 with the support of the European Commission and other partners.

For more information about the EFC and its members please visit: www.efc.be