

Ambassador Moitinho de Almeida, currently Consul-General of Portugal in Macao and Hong Kong and Special Representative of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union for the Strategic Dialogue and Troikas with third countries on Asian Affairs, has had an outstanding diplomatic career since he joined the diplomatic corps of Portugal in 1975, in the first batch of diplomats of the democratic Portugal. In the course of this rich experience he has served in several countries and has contributed to the three Portuguese Presidencies, in 1992, 2000 and 2007. His relation with Macau stems from 1997 where he first served from August 1997 to two days after the hand-over of Macau to China as Deputy Head of the Portuguese Delegation of the Sino/Portuguese Joint Liaison Group on Macau and Head of the Portuguese Delegation to the Lands Group. Since February 2003 he has been the Consul-General for Macau and Hong Kong. Other prominent posts were the ones he performed in several African countries, in the Balkans and in East Timor, up to this Asian's country independence.

Ambassador Moitinho de Almeida, an experienced Portuguese diplomat, recalls his own past experience in the Portuguese Presidencies as a means to highlight the kind of wide-encompassing and demanding challenges that Presidencies of the European Union involve and to underline the achievements obtained in the course thereof. The role of the presidencies and their very holding in the current format may be up for a radical change if the proposed Lisbon Treaty enters into force, some questions remaining as to the balance to be established between the new model of presidencies of the Council, the President of the Union and the prospective European diplomatic corps.

The speaker equally addresses the topic goals and results of the Portuguese Presidency, drawing the attention to not only the three main targets originally set – the Summit with Brazil, the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty and the Summit of the European Union and Africa – but also the very important ongoing strategic dialogues of the European Union with prominent Asian partners, namely China, in the process equally calling the attention to the different regional integration endeavours in Asia.