

**Remarks of Paula Franco, President of the Ordem dos Contabilistas Certificados
before the 2025 IESBA Ethics and Independence Conference**

Dear Dr. Joaquim Miranda Sarmiento, Minister of State and Finance of Portugal,

Dear Dra. Gabriela Figueiredo Dias, Chair of the IESBA, in whom I greet all members of the IESBA Board and other international guests and participants,

Dear Dr. Virgílio Macedo, President of the Ordem dos Revisores Oficiais de Contas, Dear Professor João Duque, President of ISEG, Dear Lee White, IFAC CEO; Dear Alan Jonhson, IESBA & IAASB SAC Chair, Dear Maria Luís Albuquerque, European Commission Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investment, Distinguished guests, Colleagues Certified Accountants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pride that, on behalf of the Order of Certified Accountants, we welcome and host this international conference dedicated to a theme that is, and will always be, the foundation of our profession: ethics, independence, and professional conduct.

We live in times of rapid change. Emerging technologies, the globalization of markets, and increasing regulatory complexity, that place us before new challenges, but also new opportunities. In this context, it is imperative to reaffirm a fundamental principle: public trust in our profession is only built with technical competence and with exemplary ethical conduct.

Ethics and professional conduct are not mere abstract concepts. They are the daily commitment that each Certified Accountant assumes when performing their duties. It is this commitment that ensures transparency and accuracy of financial statements, that protects the collective interest, and that sustains the integrity of the economic system. It is ethics that shapes the public interest of our profession.

Independence is not just a formal requirement. It is a safeguard of objectivity that allows us to act impartially, even when such action requires courage. In a world where pressure can, at times, put our integrity to the test, independence is the shield that protects the truth.

Over the years, Portugal has earned a place of distinction in the European landscape for the quality and rigor of its accounting profession.

The close collaboration between the Order of Certified Accountants and the IESBA is the proof of this recognition. By participating actively in the debate and in the development of international ethics standards, we bring to the decision-making table the Portuguese

experience, our knowledge, and best practices. By collaborating with the IESBA, we reaffirm our conviction that ethics is a universal language. Regardless of cultural, economic, or legal differences between countries, there are principles that cannot be relativized, such as integrity, objectivity, responsibility, and service to the public interest.

These principles are the foundation upon which the credibility of our profession is built and the trust of citizens in economic institutions.

This conference reflects the concerns and priorities of our time, among which I highlight the ethical implications of the technological and artificial intelligence revolution. This challenges our ability to maintain objectivity in an automated and interconnected environment, and arms the fight against financial crime and corruption.

The Order of Certified Accountants is proud to maintain a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct aligned with the IESBA international guidelines. But more than a set of written rules, this code is the expression of a value that unites us: the duty to serve society with honesty, rigor, and responsibility.

Ethics is not static. It requires updating, reflection, and continuous commitment. It requires that we know how to interpret new challenges in the light of the timeless principles that govern our profession. It requires continuous professional training and exceptional personal and professional development.

On behalf of the OCC, I reaffirm here our commitment to train, support, and demand that every Certified Accountant be an example of integrity.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the end, our greatest credential is not the signature we place on a report or a statement; it is the trust we inspire.

I wish you good work and an excellent day. Thank you