

Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, your Excellency, I begin by greeting you and expressing our thanks for your presence at this conference.

Mr Commander-General of the National Republican Guard,  
Mr Director-General of the Immigration and Borders Service,  
Mr Secretary-General of Home Security System,  
Mr Director-General of the Criminal Police,  
Mr Deputy Secretary-General,  
Mr President of the Portuguese Psychologists' Association.

Dear speakers, guests, academics and participants who accompany us in person or by videoconference, thank you all for honouring us with your presence.

The question must be raised: why the interest in the theme of Control Conflict and De-Escalation in the scope of police intervention?

Why are we here today?

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The answer is simple: because we care. Because we care.

We care about the citizen who wants to continue to live in a safe and peaceful country.

We care for the citizen who demands that Law Enforcement Officers act in strict respect for the Constitution and the Law.

But we also care about the police officers who perform a demanding and vital service for the normal daily life in society.

Police officers who sometimes are faced with lack of respect and every so often are targeted by provocation from some citizens.

We want police officers prepared to deal with all of this, without compromising their well-being and mental health.

We will only continue to live in a safe and peaceful Country if police officers are well aware of the importance of their duty, but also of the duties and special obligations that derive from it.

We will only continue to live in a safe and peaceful Country if each and every one of us respects and is proud of our Police.

And this mutual respect must exist and be manifested at all times of our lives.

Studies show that the most relevant factor of motivation for an institution and for the individual is recognition.

And there, in recognition, we cannot fail before those who watch over our security day and night, who guarantee the normal functioning of the institutions and the Rule of Law, who, very recently, remained on the street while we were at home.

Are there police officers who fail on the line of duty?

Certainly!

A police officer must know that the powers he exercises do not derive from himself but rather from the function he performs.

We all have to bear in mind that it is a particularly difficult human activity.

Police officers are required to make sacrifices that impact on their family life, hours of rest and sometimes even on one's own life.

It should make us reflect that in Portugal, as in many other countries, more police officers die by suicide than on the line of duty.

This mirrors the demands of the job, the stress to which they are subjected to and even to physical and emotional health conditions that are symptomatic of burnout.

Police officers need and deserve more.

They need to know techniques and have the tools to be able to introduce de-escalation in a conflict relationship.

They deserve from us that we pay attention to their mental health and to their need to manage the tensions they deal with every day.

We have the responsibility to study, better manage and resolve this state of affairs.

We owe it to those who guarantee our way of life every day.

All State activity must be subject to scrutiny.

Therefore, we have the right to demand responsibility from the police officers, but we also have the duty to respect them.

It is for the citizen and it is for the police officer that we care.

It is for the citizen ...and it is for the police officer that we are here.

I hope that today we start a joint effort as well as cooperative work that promote further quality of police service and the fair recognition of the community. And that no one and no institution is left out.

To conclude, I would like to express, as Inspector General of Home Affairs, the respect, consideration and recognition that those who serve well in the Security Forces and Services so deserve.