The reason of the Professional Regulation International Conference arises from puzzle-ment: European Union is implementing policies promoting professional deregulation, at the same time as the introduction of new forms of regulation is limiting professional bodies, which are growing, following the increasing number of professionals.

In Portugal, the pressure of professional groups on the political decision-makers has led to the legislators’ discretionary foundation of self-regulating bodies, which in turn led to the creation of a specific legislation to regulate self-regulating bodies, by Law nr. 6/2008.

Like in other countries belonging to the European Continental pattern of professional regulation, in Portugal, a professional group that becomes a self-regulating body, this is a public professional association (PPA), acquires a monopoly over professional regulation. This monopoly implies an important professional empowerment and an inherent ambiguity of interests, given that while the State charges the PPA with the mission to defend the public interest; PPA represents at the same time the interests of the affiliated members.

There are currently 18 Portuguese PPA and more than 10 professional groups (archaeologists, biochemicals, designers, landscape architects, physiotherapists, teachers, social workers, etc.) pursuing the objective of acquiring the PPA status and thereby gain greater influence, which in this country is also visible through a significant exposure in mass media. In this sense some...
The organisers believe that this first international conference on professional regulation may give an important contribution to the understanding of the systems of professional regulation trends and to their apparent contradictions. For that we count on the presentation of the work and reflections of sociologists and other experts of various geographical origins. We expect that other countries realities and a comparable approach will help us to analyze this subject with greater awareness.

The Professional Regulation International Conference will contribute to the knowledge of the quality of democracy in the extent to which it will enable us to understand the evolution of the relationship between professional groups and the State, and its effect on public policies and the economic and social well-being of the nation. In this sense, this conference is addressed, not only to the scientific community, but also to political decision-makers and organized professional groups.

This international conference aggregates one general conference where we will present and discuss national and international trends, and an international seminar focused on the psychologists in Europe in particular on the half next day.