
Why Facts and Think Tanks Matter – 1st Launch of Global Think Tank Ranking in Lisbon

Event

[Discussion](#)

Date

31 January 2019

Location

Lisbon, Portugal

Speaker

[R. Andreas Kraemer](#)

To mark the launch of the 2018 Global Think Tank Ranking report on 31 January 2019, Ecologic Institute convened a Luncheon discussion of think tankers and policy experts to discuss "Why Facts and Think Tanks Matter". The event, the first of its kind in Lisbon (Portugal), was part of a worldwide launch of the report in over 80 cities around the world, with over 230 think tanks hosting or co-hosting.

The discussants were:

- Carmen Fonseca, Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais (IPRI), discussing the tension between policy relevance and scientific rigour and excellence in a university-based think tank;
- Reinhard Nauman, Friedrich Ebert Foundation Lisbon, recalling the role of German political foundations in setting up think tanks in Portugal after the 1974 revolution
- Pedro Martins Barata, Founder, Euronatura, and Director, Get2C, highlighting the fragility of small think tanks, in part due to government co-opting think tankers;
- Tiago Pitta e Cunha, President, Oceano Azul Foundation, discussing the challenges presented Portuguese law governing foundations and associations;
- Michael Meyer-Resende, President, Democracy Reporting International, providing insights into the work of think tanks in countries transitioning to democracy;
- Francisco Ferreira, President, ZERO, explaining the history and challenges to advocacy think tanks in Portugal, and ZERO's innovative responses and solutions;
- Host: R. Andreas Kraemer, Founder, Ecologic Institute, presenting the ranking (purpose, methodology key findings) as well as the various Think Tank Summits.

Portugal is a country with string civil-society engagement but weak non-governmental institutions. A liberal democracy since the Carnation Revolution in 1974, the country has strong political parties but few and weak policy institutes or think tanks. Against this backdrop, the discussion yielded the following insights:

- There is a need for regulatory reform concerning associations, foundations, and new organisational options in between;
- After investment in the development of political parties, Portugal now needs to strengthen other (non-governmental) actors;
- A broader international comparison of good and best practice as well as recent reforms and innovations to strengthen non-governmental institutions would be useful;
- A stronger and more diverse set of actors is needed to move politics from personalities to evidence, and
- Portugal needs stronger engagement with EU policy-makers in Brussels and think tanks as "policy whisperers" in other EU Member States.

Funding

[Ecologic Institute](#), Germany

Organizer

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Participants

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