

The birth of a geography journal should be a celebration moment. The dawn of *Aurora – Geography Journal* is no exception and I feel privileged and honoured to have the opportunity to write the first pages of what we at the Geography Department and at the Geography and Planning Research Centre of the University of Minho, together with a vast panel of experts from our scientific committee, hope it will be a positive contribution towards the development of Geography in Portugal and internationally. This celebration is the more significant, since the Geography and Planning degree (now Geography degree) at the University of Minho commemorates 10 years in 2006/2007.

Our aim at the Research Centre is not to publish a journal that attempts to mirror the research and publications done 'at home'. Our aim is to publish on an annual basis a range of international articles of a high scientific standard, within an all-encompassing understanding of what Geography ought to be. Therefore, *Aurora – Geography Journal* intends to be a very inclusive international forum for research and critical reviews in any aspect of social, economical, political, cultural, environmental and physical geography, in planning and related disciplines.

On a sad remark, the year of 2006 for Portuguese geography is marked by the passing away of Professor José Manuel Pereira de Oliveira (1928-2006), from the University of Coimbra. His inspiring geography was always an encouragement for a vast number of Portuguese geographers, and he has critically contributed to the birth of the Geography Department at the University of Minho. I must also pay tribute to Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), the writer, thinker and activist that challenged the way geographers and other viewed cities.

The inaugural number of *Aurora – Geography Journal* consists of seven articles written by some of the members of our scientific committee. Professor Claval, Professor Emeritus from the University of Paris – Sorbonne IV, continues his outstanding work on the role of culture in human geography, and explores the theoretical implications of the cultural turn to the discipline. Lúcio Cunha, from the University of Coimbra, engages our attention in the ways geomorphology can be a useful field of study for various practical planning processes. López Trigal, from the University of León, provides an insightful analysis of the role of small size Spanish and European cities in the context of the European Spatial Strategy. Carlos Ferras Sexto, from the University of Santiago de Compostela, explores the ways in which the territory can be marketed in the context of the development of the Society of Information. Patrick O' Flanagan, from the University of Cork, skilfully investigates the construction of a representation of an Estate in eighteen century Ireland, while Denis Linehan, from the same department, explores tensions and transformations of social, economic and spatial contexts in which consumption and lifestyles takes place in contemporary Ireland. Closing the journal again with a particular look at geography and culture, Petri Hottolla, from Joensuu University, investigates conflicts, confusion and problems of marketing tourism in South Africa.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the inaugural issue and become a regular reader and writer for *Aurora – Geography Journal* in the future.

João Sarmento
Editor

