

Assunção Cristas

Co-Head of Practice Partner Environment & Climate Change

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Assunção joined VdA in 2022 as Partner to head the firm's ESG Integrated Services Platform and co-head the Environment & Climate Change practice area, which encompasses ocean and agriculture related matters.

She is associate professor at Nova School of Law, coordinator of the Master's degree in Law and Economics of the Sea — Ocean Governance (ranked 1st place globally by Eduniversal), lecturing on Ocean Policies, and director of NOVA OCEAN, a knowledge centre established in 2021 dedicated to ocean research. At the undergraduate level she lectures several courses, namely Law and Sustainability. Her areas of research interest are focused on sustainability and legislative architecture and development. At the NOVA University level, she has been leading the launching of the Ocean Studies degree, an innovative and interdisciplinary three years cycle starting in 2024 and coordinates the Ocean Challenges Eutopia Community.

From September 2009 to January 2020, Assunção held several political positions: she was Minister of Agriculture, the Sea, Environment and Land Use Planning (2011-2013) and Minister of Agriculture and the Sea (2013-2015); Member of the Portuguese Parliament (2009-2011 and 2015-2020); President of the political party CDS-PP (2016-2020) and previously Vice-President (2009-2016); and Councilwoman of the Lisbon City Council (2017-2021).

During her term of office as Minister she was responsible for the institutional reorganisation of several areas of administration, participation in the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention, negotiation of the European Common Agricultural Policy reform, and the drafting of structural national legislation, such as the framework law for maritime spatial planning and management. In this field, she led the National Sea Strategy 2013-2020 and was particularly active in the international agenda, having organised and hosted in Lisbon the "Blue Week" (2015) that joined 70 members of governments and



multilateral agencies and approved a Declaration on “blue economy”.

In July 2019, Assunção published her book “*Confiança. As mulheres, o poder e o país que ambicionamos para todos*”, in which she reflects on various issues faced during her ten years in politics, such as the role of women in politics and issues related to the environment, agriculture and the sea.

Assunção is a former Director of the Portuguese Ministry of Justice’s Legislative Policy and Planning Office (2002-2005), where she participated in numerous legislative production processes at both the national level and in the context of international cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries. From late 2005 to early 2009, she was exclusively dedicated to academia. In addition to her teaching and research work in Private Law, she held several organisational positions.

Assunção is regularly speaker in conferences, both academic and organised by civil society, on topics related to the sea, agriculture and sustainability in general. She is engaged in several areas of the civil society, namely, she coordinates the SEDES (think tank) Ocean Observatory, is president of the prize “Floresta é sustentabilidade” awarded by Biond, and in the social side is President of the Board of Management of Cadin, a non-profitable association dedicated to the integral children development.

Assunção is also a member of the World Economic Forum’s Expert Network on the oceans and sustainability.

Academic background

PhD in Law from Universidade NOVA de Lisboa Law School.

Law Degree from Universidade de Lisboa Law School.

Additional training:

- “Driving Government Performance in Portugal”, Harvard University and Instituto Nacional de Administração (Portuguese National Institute of Administration)
- Seminar in Public Administration Senior Management, Instituto Nacional de Administração

Teaching chairs

Associate Professor at Nova School of Law, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa.

Coordinator and Professor of the Master's degree in Law and Economics of the Sea – the Ocean Governance at Nova School of Law, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa.

Director of the NOVA OCEAN knowledge centre established in 2021 to carry out research in the ocean field.

Elected Member of both the Council and the Scientific Council of NOVA School of Law.

Previous posts:

- Member of the Board of CEDIS - Law & Society Research Centre, NOVA School of Law.
- Coordinator of SPEED - Permanent Seminar on the State and the Study of Law, NOVA School of Law.
- Director of UMAC - Mediation and Monitoring of Consumer Disputes Unit, NOVA School of Law.
- Member of the Pedagogical Council of NOVA School of Law.
- Member of the Council of NOVA School of Law.
- Monitor and Trainee assistant professor at Universidade de Lisboa Law School.

Other professional background

Assunção is a former Director of the Portuguese Ministry of Justice's Legislative Policy and Planning Office (2002-2005), where she participated in numerous legislative production processes at both the national level and in the context of international cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries. From late 2005 to early 2009, she was exclusively dedicated to academia. In addition to her teaching and research work in Private Law, she held several organisational positions.

She was a consultant lawyer at the Portuguese law firm Morais Leitão, Galvão Teles, Soares da Silva e Associados from 2009 to 2011.

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Published works

Assunção has authored several works and academic articles, including:

- *Transmissão Contratual do Direito de Crédito: do carácter real do direito de crédito*, Almedina, Coimbra, 2005 (PhD thesis)
- “Concorrência Desleal e Protecção do Consumidor: a Propósito da Directiva 2005/29/CE”, in *Prof. Doutor Inocêncio Galvão Telles: 90 anos. Homenagem da Faculdade de Direito de Lisboa*, Almedina, Coimbra, 2007, pp. 141
- “Direito à resolução e direito ao cumprimento”, in *Código Civil: 40 anos de vigência*, Almedina, Coimbra, 2008, pp. 277
- “Portuguese Contract Law: in search for regimes unification?”, in *European Review of Contract Law*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2009, pp. 357-367
- “On the boundary between torts and contracts. An economic view”, with Nuno Garoupa, in *Economic Analysis of the DCFR*, Pierre Larouche and Filomena Chirico (ed.), Sellier, Munich, 2011, pp. 277-294
- “Incumprimento Contratual - O Código Civil Português e o DCFR - Notas Comparadas”, in *Estudos em Homenagem ao Professor Doutor Carlos Ferreira de Almeida*, vol. II, Rui Pinto Duarte, Assunção Cristas et al. (ed.), Almedina, Coimbra, 2011
- “Green Paper on Policy Options for Progress Towards a European Contract Law for Consumers and Businesses. What do we want?”, in *European Review of Contract Law*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, pp. 314-334
- “One Cannot Change the Wind, but One Can Always Adjust the Sail: The Role of a Legal Framework in Developing a Blue Economy”, in *Ocean Law and Policy: 20 years under UNCLOS*, H. Scheiber, C. Esposito et al. (ed.), Brill | Nijhoff, Leiden, Boston, 2016, pp. 379-386
- “A sustentabilidade no centro da evolução legislativa europeia. Os novos princípios estruturantes da Taxonomia Climática e Ambiental e os seus reflexos”, in *Estudos de Homenagem à Professora Doutora Maria Helena Brito*, vol. II, Gestlegal, Coimbra, 2022, pp.843-860

She has also co-authored or coordinated the following works:

- *Transmissão da Propriedade e Contrato*, co-authored with Mariana França Gouveia and Vitor Pereira das Neves, Almedina, Coimbra, 2001
- *Portuguese Law - An Overview*, co-authored with Nuno Piçarra and Carlos Ferreira de Almeida, Almedina, Coimbra, 2007
- *Estudos em Homenagem ao Professor Doutor Carlos Ferreira de Almeida*, Volume I, Volume II, Volume III, Volume IV, co-authored with Rui Pinto Duarte, Marta Tavares de Almeida and José Lebre de Freitas, Almedina, Coimbra, 2011
- *Incumprimento dos Contratos. Avaliação legislativa e perspectivas de desenvolvimento*, co-authored with Jorge Morais Carvalho, Alice Ramos and Cícero Roberto Pereira, Almedina, Coimbra, 2013
- Carlos Ferreira de Almeida, *Contratos I - Conceito, Fontes, Formação*, 7th edition, revised and updated by Maria Helena Brito, Jorge Morais de Carvalho and Assunção Cristas, Almedina, Coimbra, 2022

Member of

Admitted to the Portuguese Bar Association.

Member of the World Economic Forum's Expert Network.

Member of SECOLA – Society of European Contract Law.

Languages

English, French and Spanish.