



15 September 2025 | Lisbon, Portugal | In-Person and Virtual Participation

In several major jurisdictions, we are witnessing a pushback against regulation. Competitiveness has risen to the top of political agendas, driving calls for simplification, reduced oversight, and lighter regulation, against a backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions.

At the same time, organizations are facing growing pressure from other directions. Technology is advancing faster than regulatory frameworks can keep up. Public expectations around transparency and accountability continue to evolve. In areas like sustainability reporting, but not only there, regulatory delays and divergence are placing more responsibility on firms and professionals to uphold trust, ensure integrity, and manage risk in less certain conditions.

In this environment, ethics and independence remain essential anchors. They provide a foundation for trust, a compass for responsible innovation, and a stabilizing force amid regulatory fragmentation. The 2025 IESBA Ethics & Independence Conference will explore how ethics, as a principle, a practice, and a culture, can strengthen resilience, support long-term growth, and reinforce public confidence in a world of accelerating change.

Event Schedule (Lisbon Local Time, GMT +1)

The IESBA Ethics and Independence Conference 2025 will take place at the [ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics and Management Campus](#)

9:00 | Opening Session

- [João Duque \(ISEG, President\)](#)
- [Paula Franco \(OCC, President\)](#)
- [Virgílio Macedo \(OROC, President\)](#)
- [Gabriela Figueiredo Dias \(IESBA, Chair; IFEA, Co-CEO\)](#)
- **Opening Address:** [Joaquim Miranda Sarmiento \(Portuguese Government, Minister for State and Finance\)](#)

9:45 – 10:05 | Keynote Speech

- [Jean Paul Servais \(IOSCO, Chair\)](#)

10:10 – 11:00 | Ethics in a World of Regulatory Shifts and Market Transformation

As social, economic, and regulatory expectations evolve, organizations and decision-makers face growing complexity. In sustainability reporting and beyond, fragmented approaches, exemptions, and political pushback are increasing around the globe. Similar trends are emerging in tax transparency, corporate disclosure, and the regulation of new technologies. This panel will explore how these shifts affect the financial system and the accounting profession, and how ethics and professional judgment can act as stabilizing forces, supporting innovation, public trust, and alignment with the public interest.

Moderator: [Alexandra Abreu Loureiro \(Brunswick, Partner, Office Head Portugal\)](#)

- [Gabriela Figueiredo Dias \(IESBA, Chair; IFEA, Co-CEO\)](#)
- [Panos Prodromides \(CEAOB, Chair\)](#)
- [Lee White \(IFAC, CEO\)](#)
- [Megan Zietsman \(Deloitte, Global Audit & Assurance Quality, Risk & Regulatory Leader\)](#)

11:05 – 11:30 | Fireside Chat: Trust and Transparency in Capital Markets

Trust is the foundation of capital markets, relying on the integrity and quality of financial and sustainability information to ensure transparency, comparability, and stability. As expectations rise and oversight remains fragmented, ethics plays a critical role in reinforcing market confidence—going beyond compliance to ensure fairness, truthfulness, and accountability. This session will explore how ethics standards and professional judgment by accountants and other information gatekeepers support market integrity, informed investment, and alignment among issuers, investors, and the public.

Moderator: [Vincent Huck \(Corporate Disclosures and Insurance Asset Risk, Editor\)](#)

- [Neil Acres \(MSCI, Global Head of Government and Regulatory Affairs\)](#)
- [Nandini Sukumar \(WFE, CEO\)](#)

11:30 – 12:00 | Coffee Break

12:00 – 12:50 | Ethical Culture and Governance – Reinforcing Resilience and Public Trust in Accounting Firms

Trust in financial and non-financial information is the lifeblood of businesses and markets, and it depends heavily on the ethical culture and governance structures of the firms responsible for preparing and auditing it. This panel will explore how firms can embed ethics at their core through leadership, incentives, oversight, and accountability. Moving beyond checklists and compliance, panelists will examine how a strong ethical culture can be a strategic asset, reinforcing trust, strengthening resilience, and enabling firms to thrive under growing scrutiny.

Moderator: [João Lima \(Bloomberg, Editor Southern Europe\)](#)

- [Alan Johnson \(IESBA & IAASB SAC, Chair\)](#)
- [Gilly Lord \(PwC, Global Leader, Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs\)](#)
- [Maggie McGhee \(ACCA, Executive Director, Strategy & Governance\)](#)
- [Channa Wijesinghe \(IESBA, Vice-Chair; APESB, CEO\)](#)

12:50 – 14:00 | Lunch Break

14:10 – 14:55 | 'Decoding Ethics' Podcast: Ethics vs. Innovation? The Future of Technology in Audit and Accounting

Technology, and AI in particular, is transforming how the profession gathers, analyzes, and assures information. But as capabilities grow, so do the ethical stakes. This panel will explore how firms can balance innovation with transparency, accountability, and trust. From algorithm explainability to the evolving nature of professional judgment, panelists will examine how ethical leadership can ensure technology strengthens the integrity of the profession, and whether ethics can keep pace with innovation or risks being sidelined in the race for progress.

Moderators: [David Wray \(IESBA Board Member\)](#) and [Jeanne Viljoen \(IESBA, Principal\)](#)

Kick-off Statement: [Tom Seidenstein \(IAASB, Chair; IFEA, Co-CEO\)](#)

Panel Discussion

- [Maria Axente \(Responsible Intelligence, CEO\)](#)
- [Ian Freeman \(KPMG UK, Partner\)](#)
- [Marc Jeschonneck \(E&Y, Global Assurance Digital Leader\)](#)

15:00 – 15:35 | The Rise of Private Equity in Accounting: Strategic Partnerships or Increased Risks to Public Interest?

As accounting firms navigate rapid change driven by technology, globalization, talent shortages, and competition, private equity (PE) investment has emerged as a major trend—tripling in 2023 and quadrupling in 2024. This session will examine how PE is reshaping firm ownership and structure, raising new ethical and public interest questions, and what it means for the profession's future.

15:40 – 16:30 | Accountants at a Crossroads: Ethics and the Fight Against Financial Crime

From Panama to Pandora, Glencore to Wirecard, recent scandals have exposed the role professional services can play, knowingly or not, in enabling illicit activity. With an estimated 2–5% of global GDP laundered annually and enforcement fragmented across jurisdictions, the accountancy profession faces a pivotal question: will accountants remain passive participants, or will they assert themselves as ethical gatekeepers of financial integrity? This panel explores how firms and professionals can confront legal grey zones, align incentives with the public interest, and foster cultures that support transparency, accountability, and the courage to speak up.

Moderator: [Michele Wood-Tweel FCPA, FCA \(CPA Canada, Vice-President Regulatory Affairs\)](#)

Kick-off Statement: [Luís Laginha de Sousa \(CMVM, Chair\)](#)

Panel

- [Jens Poll \(Accountancy Europe, President\)](#)
- [José Ranito \(European Prosecutor, European Public Prosecutor's Office\)](#)
- [Pascal Saint-Amans \(Professor at Lausanne University, Former Director Centre for Tax Policy and Administration at OECD\)](#)

16:35 – 16:55 | Closing Keynote Speech

- [Maria Luís Albuquerque \(European Commission, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union\)](#)

16:55 – 17:00 | Conference Close

