

# Ten Years of Solfarcos: Portuguese Scientific Innovation with Global Impact

*The Braga-based biotechnology company has established itself in two complementary areas: cosmetics, with biomimetic ingredients behind the international brand K18, and pharmaceuticals, with liposomal formulations and drug delivery systems showing promising clinical results*

**Braga, 29 June 2026** — Solfarcos today marks its 10th anniversary, celebrating a journey that demonstrates how Portuguese science can move beyond the laboratory, transition into industry and compete in international markets. Founded in 2016 by Artur Cavaco Paulo and Eugénia Nogueira as a spin-off from the University of Minho, the company has grown from Braga with a solid foundation of research and development, intellectual property and highly qualified talent. The public anniversary celebration held today was attended by the Minister of Education, Science and Innovation, Professor Fernando Alexandre, the Mayor of Braga, João Rodrigues, and the Pro-Rector for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Knowledge Transfer at the University of Minho, Professor Raul Figueiro.

Solfarcos expects to double its turnover between 2024 and 2026, following growth of around 70% in 2025 from the previous year. The company now has a team of around 30 highly qualified professionals, while its founders hold, between them, 39 registered patents.

“Today, we celebrate a company, but also the idea that science developed in Portugal, when it is rigorous, persistent and closely connected to real-world challenges, can create value, generate technology, create highly qualified jobs and compete internationally,” **says Artur Cavaco Paulo, co-founder and CEO of Solfarcos.** “These ten years have, above all, been shaped by people: our outstanding team, our partners, our clients and everyone who has believed in Solfarcos from the very beginning. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of them, because they are an essential part of this journey and of everything we still aim to build,” he adds.

Over the past decade, Solfarcos has built a scientific platform based on the development of biomolecules, particularly peptides and proteins, which act either as active ingredients or as part of advanced bioactive delivery systems. This shared scientific foundation enables the company to operate in two distinct but closely connected fields, while creating the conditions to expand its work into new clinical and cosmetic areas through the identification of new drug delivery vehicles and the development of active ingredients.

In cosmetics, Solfarcos has become a rare example of knowledge transfer with global impact. The K18PEPTIDE™ technology underpins products from K18, a brand within Unilever Prestige. Through this trajectory, the company has established a pioneering position in the concept of biotech beauty and is extending the application of its technologies to solutions such as odour control in dry shampoos and thermal protection.

In pharmaceuticals, the company's most advanced project is the investigational drug product FBL-MTX, a folate-targeted liposomal methotrexate formulation for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. Currently in a Phase 2a clinical trial in Portugal, this technology is the result of 17 years of research and approximately €13 million of investment, supported by two patented technologies. The aim is to improve tolerability, reduce the frequency of administration and extend the benefit of a well-known, accessible and clinically validated therapy, with potential impact for millions of patients worldwide.

The company uses artificial intelligence, computational studies, molecular docking and molecular dynamics simulations to identify and optimise functional peptides. This approach makes it possible to accelerate the discovery of new solutions, reduce reliance on exclusively experimental processes and strengthen the company's ability to develop high-performance ingredients and formulations.

Over the next ten years, Solfarcos aims to consolidate its presence in cosmetics and wellbeing, advance its pharmaceutical pipeline, develop new strategic partnerships and further strengthen its platform of knowledge, technology and intellectual property. While maintaining its close ties to the University of Minho, Braga and science, the company expects to evolve into a group with a central R&D base and units or partnerships capable of taking its technologies into new markets and new pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications.

## **About Solfarcos**

Solfarcos is a biotechnology SME inspired by nature and driven by the transformative power of peptides. Focused on pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications, the company develops proprietary peptide- and protein-based bioactives, as well as nanotechnology solutions that improve health, wellbeing and sustainability. Its innovations leverage targeted delivery systems through peptide anchoring and simplified nanoparticle production methods to create therapeutic advances, alongside the use of biotechnology-based cosmetic ingredients for truly effective products in the premium market.