

# **OUTER FRAGMENTS**

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Josep Borrell



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# FOREWORD

## WORLD PIECES

Barely a year after being appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, I found myself facing a new challenge in my political career. In my current office, I have sought to reconcile the defence and promotion of Spain's interests with the rights of my fellow Europeans out of a profound faith in the European project. A faith which, as in the works of Maimonides and Saint Thomas Aquinas, is compatible with reason. Such reason, it is true, is informed by Enlightenment philosophy, and is therefore necessarily critical. From now on, if our representatives at the European Parliament see it fit, I shall have to place that same drive at the exclusive, but not exclusionary, service of the supranational European cause, and of Europe's presence in the world. I am aware that returning to the European Union's institutions may confirm what Oscar Wilde said about first and second marriages: the first being the triumph of imagination over intelligence; the second, the triumph of hope over experience. I hope to be able to correct Wilde on this point, and that on this road back to Europe I will know how to marry imagination with intelligence, hope with experience.

Spain, Europe and the world: I do not understand these three spaces as isolated compartments, but as communicating vessels. I have devoted the prime of my life to them and I intend to continue doing so for as long as I am able. In my opinion, they are privileged spheres of action, but also of constant reflection and learning. In this past year at the head of a Ministry on which the sun literally never sets, and which calls for constant travel beyond our borders, I have had to subject myself to the most rigorous discipline in order to devote a few hours each day to reading, writing and deliberation.

In my experience, the constant flow of ideas and actions is lost in the current of time if it is not set down in words, which endure. This is why, my current obligations permitting, I wanted to leave a written record of the main foreign policy events in which I have been an actor and witness. The result is this collection of forty-six articles, or short essays, published in different media. In them, the reader will find pieces of an increasingly complex international reality in constant change, but in which it is possible to identify certain trends that may guide our action. In the following pages, I invite you to accompany me to the decision-making forums and centres at which the major topics of the global agenda are addressed: from a NATO summit to debate the future of the transatlantic security relationship, to the Marrakesh conference on the management of migratory flows; or to the latest Ibero-American Summit, at which we discussed the best way we can contribute, from our shared space, to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, including the fight against the harmful effects of climate change. This stroll through essays and journalistic articles will also lead us outside the corridors of diplomacy into the regions of the world that are literally making the future: we will draw closer to the Africa that defies clichés and stereotypes; we will travel across China and along its New Silk Road; we will venture into India and its democracy in the digital era, and traverse the Indo-Pacific, the maritime space through which a good part of international trade passes. And, of course, we will attempt not to lose ourselves in the European labyrinth, made more complicated, if such a thing is possible, by Brexit, by disinformation campaigns and by the new correlation of forces following the recent elections of the European Parliament.

I am well aware of the fact that this compilation of texts I am presenting is not a polished landscape conforming to classical standards of beauty. The world is no longer like that, if it ever was. The canvas before us shows a vast, unfinished landscape, made from

pieces that are decomposing and reconstituting themselves before our very eyes. It is up to us to try to make sense of it, before others do so for us.



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**EUROPEAN UNION**



# 1

## EL PERIÓDICO DE CATALUNYA

25 September 2018

### **EUROPE FACES ITS CHALLENGES**

«The upcoming European elections will be the most crucial  
and polarized»

«Migration is not synonymous with invasion»

Now that the 73<sup>d</sup> session of the General Assembly of the United Nations is under way in New York, and the European Council in Salzburg is at loggerheads in the search for a solution to Brexit, it is a good time to recall Winston Churchill's famous speech, delivered in Zurich on about this same date in 1946, in which he called on Europe to rise from its ruins and unite to prevent new wars—but with the premonitory warning that the United Kingdom would not form part of that union.

In this time of a major reshuffling of the world order and the transatlantic relationship, what is Europe's role in the face of increasing radicalism, nationalism and populism, Donald Trump's «America first», and the expansion of the Chinese giant? This is the question that is being posed at all the discussion forums, such as the Ambrosetti Forum held a few days ago, which shed light on the major differences between the views held by Eurosceptics like Matteo Salvini, Minister of the Interior of the current Italian Government, or those of Europhobes such as Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch nationalist party, and the pro-European positions espoused by former Italian prime ministers Enrico Letta and Mario Monti, and the Netherlands' Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission.

Everything would appear to indicate that in the 2019 elections, European citizens will be asked to choose between two different visions of Europe. One, advocated by the Spanish government, in favour of deepening the economic integration of the eurozone and of Europeanizing immigration and asylum policy with a view to solidarity-based management of flows; and another, averse to receiving refugees or migrants and also against moving forward in the process of political union.

But things are more complicated than that. For example, Salvini has closed Italy's ports and wants shipwreck survivors to go to other coastal countries, but Viktor Orban's Hungary rejects the notion of distributing refugees, which would clearly benefit Italy. As for the discussions about the future of the euro, the Visegrad Group, which includes several Eastern European countries that are not members of the monetary union, does not play a relevant role, and its economic positions reflect a division which runs North-South as opposed to East-West. Even in the field of immigration there are important nuances. France certainly defends solidarity in the management of arrivals, but is more reluctant to welcome economic migration, a challenge that needs to be approached differently in a continent where the populations of several countries, including Spain, are ageing at a fast pace. And, although it appeared difficult to achieve, on 12 September the European Parliament voted by a two-thirds majority to initiate a sanction process envisaged in the Treaties against Hungary for its questionable policies on fundamental principles and rights.

In this complex scenario, in which identity issues, associated with migration problems, are linked to socio-economic ones arising from a euro crisis that has exacerbated inequality, fear is mounting over the formation of a large anti-European group in Strasbourg which could become the second most important political force. In my view, this prediction is exaggerated, but will depend on our

ability to provide an operational response at a European level to the migration issue, which is not an «invasion», but which could pose a management problem for some countries if they do not have the support and solidarity of the rest. Such is the case of Italy. And there is the risk that the Schengen area, free of controls at internal borders, could come under serious scrutiny due to the lack of common management of the external border.

On the other hand, surveys indicate the greatest degree of support for European construction since 1983, although paradoxically, 40% of those surveyed have a negative view of the EU. This is like being satisfied with the work done by someone you are not very keen on.

All things considered, the upcoming European elections will be the most decisive and polarized since the European Parliament instituted direct popular elections in 1979. The response to external and internal threats and transnational challenges—such as climate change and migration—that Europe is facing should help make it a stronger and more sovereign, politically integrated and socially supportive group of nations. But the balances on which it has been built may undergo a profound shift, and nothing will be possible without the commitment of European citizens who have been called upon to go out and vote in May.





## 2

LA VANGUARDIA

8 October 2018

### **THE MEDITERRANEAN: A SHARED DESTINY**

«The Mediterranean is the best example of inequality»  
«The challenges we face are as important as the opportunities»

For the third time in three years, Barcelona is hosting the ministerial conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the 43 countries on the Sea's two shores. The UfM, headquartered in Barcelona and celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, emerged from the Barcelona Process which Spain promoted in 1995 as a clear example of its leadership in everything that concerns the Mediterranean.

The presence of the UfM in Barcelona is indisputable proof of Europe's general and Spain's specific interest in developing a comprehensive regional agenda, and of a willingness to jointly assume responsibility for our shared future through practical achievements. Spain, Catalonia, and Barcelona should feel proud to host the headquarters of this vital institution promoting international cooperation.

This year, the UfM meeting will be co-chaired by the EU and Jordan, and should be an opportunity to speak frankly about recent developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean has changed since 2008; many Springs have passed.

The Mediterranean, the focus of both Europe and Africa, is the best example of this era's greatest problem: inequality. Relations between the northern and southern shores are asymmetric. Specif-

ically, the line that separates Spain from Morocco is the most unequal external border of the entire European Union, the latter being the region of the world where inequality among internal borders is the lowest. Inequality is greater on the Spanish-Moroccan border than between the United States and Mexico. GDP per capita in Spain is 15 times higher than that of Morocco, whereas GDP in the USA is only six times that of Mexico.

According to data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the GDP of all African nations combined accounts for a mere 2.79% of world GDP (Europe's GDP accounts for 25.11%). Per capita income in Africa is USD 1,787, compared to USD 27,106.

In addition to these data, we must also consider the demographic factor which has a negative impact on economic growth in Africa. In fact, the UN estimates that by 2050 Africa will have 2.5 billion inhabitants, compared to 450 million in the European Union. And by 2100, nearly half of the world's population will be African. The population today already stands at 1.2 billion.

The magnitude of these data makes it more vital than ever for the UfM to be able to effectively fulfil its role, and for the European Union and all the member states to become aware of the importance of the situation and to be able to act swiftly and in a determined and effective manner. We cannot wait for things to become easier. Unfortunately, since 2014, every year more than 3,000 people have died in the *Mare Nostrum* and last year alone the World Migration Organization rescued 4,000 people who were lost in the desert... and we have no exact figures on how many never made it out.

The severity of the regional context calls for urgent and effective measures to transform these challenges into opportunities for societies on both shores.

Although the Mediterranean is largely the reflection of many of our world's problems, these can be solved if rhetoric is left aside and operational proposals are launched that, based on close and strengthened cooperation, meet demands for greater prosperity, better services, and an open political space between two worlds that share a history as well as geography.

The UfM's vocation is eminently practical. Therefore, in addition to being a forum for political dialogue, it must offer concrete results that serve as a basis for greater regional integration, which today remains incomplete and fragile, and promote projects focusing on sustainable development and equality.

Before the ministerial meeting, civil society groups will meet in Barcelona to advance the Med4Jobs programme, an initiative that includes 13 job creation projects in several countries of the Southern Mediterranean, targeting mostly young people and women. The most emblematic project today is, without a doubt, the desalination plant in Gaza, which will provide 2 million Palestinians with quality water.

Despite all its difficulties, today the region is undergoing intense and sustained economic growth. Possibilities for cooperation are enormous. Regarding energy production, the development of renewable energy in North Africa has the potential to change the supply map in Europe, contributing to greater diversification of sources and furthering the fight against climate change. This is another area in which joint work is essential, as global warming knows no borders.

Demographic growth also provides European companies with opportunities for development and expansion through investment in the region and the opening of new markets. The increase in the number of business undertakings from China and other countries

bears witness to the region's enormous economic potential, which Europe should take advantage of, as well.

The challenges are as important as the opportunities. Migratory flows are the most visible manifestation of these challenges and must be managed by combining realism with responsibility and respect for human rights. The complete closure of our borders is neither possible nor desirable. *Chiudiamo i porti* is not a solution, just as totally open borders are not the solution either. The EU still does not have a common migration and asylum policy, and this is its most important challenge.

A comprehensive migratory agreement between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East is needed, and should be based on the recent Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

However, we need to realize that this is not a single crisis, but several deeply interrelated crises which reinforce one another. If we try to address one of them individually without including the rest, we will fail.

It is now in vogue to talk about a Marshall Plan for Africa. All political leaders with no resources take up this mantra, which is easy to adopt without really understanding what it implies. It is difficult to imagine that today's financial circumstances would allow an influx of funds like the one received by Europe under the original Marshall Plan. However, the vitality of European companies, together with new facilities for investment and existing trade, can contribute to a process of economic growth able to generate employment, which is crucial for regional stability.

It is also essential to provide alternatives for young people (age 15-24), who will number 246 million by 2020 on the African continent. That is why training and cultural exchange programmes should be at the heart of our Mediterranean policy, increasing the number of Erasmus Plus Euro-Mediterranean study grants.

Our knowledge of the intricate interdependence between the two shores of the Mediterranean should lead to renewed awareness of the challenges and opportunities and the need to act urgently, and should motivate us to take advantage of the synergies of the outstanding historical and cultural legacy that unites us. Only in this way can we guarantee our own stability and prosperity.



# 3

EL PAÍS

25 October 2018

(Also published in *La Repubblica*, 2 November 2018)

(Also published in *Le Monde*, 2 November 2018)

## **FOR A STRONGER, MORE UNITED EUROPE**

«If the EU did not exist it would have to be invented, but it needs  
to be reinvented»

«The EU is an instrument of shared prosperity»

The EU and the world have changed dramatically since the last European Parliamentary elections in 2014. All the social consequences of the euro crisis were being felt at that time, and people feared for its survival. Today, after a lost decade, European GDP has recovered its pre-crisis level, but with major differences between countries. The burden of the adjustment should have been more equally balanced between debtors and creditors. The result has not been good for European cohesion, with greater inequality in many countries and a North-South divide which erodes the mutual trust needed to move forward with political union. The refugee crisis caused by new arrivals from the Near East, and the increase in migratory flows from Africa, had not yet taken place. This problem could be the biggest threat to European unity, putting the Eastern countries, plus Italy, at odds with Western Europe.

The United Kingdom had not yet decided to leave the EU in 2014, and the world's geopolitical situation has also shifted since then. Under the Trump administration, the United States has disassociated itself from Europe, abandoned multilateralism, dropped out of the Paris climate change agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, and has become the champion of protectionism. China has

emerged as the defender of free trade, and Russia as a military power. The terrorist threat persists. The internal adversaries of a free, supportive, and united Europe now have powerful external allies.

What is the future of this EU where, according to the latest Eurobarometer, 68% of Europeans (75% of Spaniards) believe it has been positive for their country, but at the same time, 50% say they are not happy with the direction it is taking? Perhaps *that* EU was a 20<sup>th</sup>-century invention to solve intra-European problems in a bipolar world that had not yet been globalized. An invention that has enabled us to overcome the antagonisms which had caused so much death and destruction. But, as the memory of war fades with the passing of those who endured it, peace is no longer a strong enough motivation, especially for the young.

The Union, then, can only be conceived in a federal manner—accepting a differentiated process of integration between its Member States. Therefore, given the array of external threats and internal problems just mentioned, doubts arise regarding the continuity of this great post-war project.

And yet, if the EU did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it. But to survive, it must be reinvented, making it more united so that it can grow stronger. And this means that it must speak with one voice if it is to act as a global power. It must foster strong collaborative relationships with its closest neighbours, especially with Africa. Its growth must be more robust and inclusive. The economies of its member nations need to converge, and it must be able to win the battle of technological innovation.

The upcoming European elections will be the litmus test on the future of the EU. The electoral results will show the inroads made by those who, from the right or the left, reject European integration—a rejection we blame on *populism*, that multi-purpose term



covering the various manifestations of citizen disaffection towards a project legitimized more for its results than for its decision-making processes.

What about fighting populism by making Europe popular? In other words, for it to be perceived as the most powerful instrument shielding us from the concerns created by globalization and the resurgence of the spectres of nationalism. To that end, Europe's political leaders, in each country, need to convince their citizens that their future depends on increased unity. Countries, on their own, cannot impact the world's problems. Building Europe begins at home, because decision makers in Brussels are not aliens; rather, they are people who were originally elected in each country. And we must combat the fallacies that promote liberation from the «yoke of Brussels» as the cure for all evils.

But deepening the union, which necessarily implies pooling risks and opportunities, also requires greater participation and democratic control of decisions. Historically, European integration has been built through agreements between the political elites of the different countries, with the «permissive consensus» of their citizens. But those days are over. People are now aware, and this is good news, of the importance of what is decided in Brussels. But many feel, rightly or wrongly, that they have no say in those decisions. They are unable to identify who is responsible for what, and do not understand what gives the institutions, in which governments exercise shared sovereignty, legitimacy to act.

They must be given reasons to perceive the EU as an instrument of shared prosperity that favours the equitable distribution of income and that is increasingly influential throughout the world.

And from that perspective it must be acknowledged that the results achieved by the Union over the last decade have not been satisfactory, thus accounting for the disaffection of many citizens.

It would be unwise to take refuge in an uncritical Euro-enthusiast attitude towards some EU policies, but one must also realize that the criticism levelled against the EU is not always fair. Limits to our sovereignty resulting from the growing interdependence of the globalized world, and the restrictions resulting from the European Treaties that we have sovereignly accepted, are mistakenly interpreted as impositions from Brussels.

The system whereby the EU took care of macroeconomics while the states dealt with income distribution has also become obsolete. The liberalizing EU boosted competition and abolished national economic barriers, while states used redistributive policies to protect, to a greater or lesser degree, the losers in that process of economic liberalization in Europe and openness to the world. Aware that inequalities could not be totally alleviated by redistributive policies at the national level, Delors implemented the cohesion funds, created in response to a Spanish initiative, to favour economic convergence among EU countries. But European economies have diverged over the last 10 years, losing their pre-crisis convergence.

The economic crisis, with the inequality and middle-class impoverishment it left in its wake, together with the fears kindled and fuelled by immigration, has sparked a nationalist, populist, and extremist reaction. Feeling helpless, the losers of globalization have sought protection in what they know best: the nation state, and in so doing have defined their identity.

If we expect citizens to get on board with the European project, the union of Europeans needs a social and protective dimension. It is difficult to imagine the long-term sustainability of a monetary union without a budget that is both redistributive and stabilizing to cushion asymmetric shocks. A new balance needs to be struck between the monetary dimension of European economic policy, incapable of doing everything in every situation, and its fiscal di-

mension. And we need to forego the unanimity rule as it applies to tax matters and foreign policy.

We need a social Europe. But one cannot proclaim lofty social goals with a budget totalling 1% of European GDP . If these goals cannot be financed, they will only cause frustration and disaffection.

No longer being under the US military umbrella could provide an opportunity for Europe to develop its strategic capabilities. The answer to *America First* should be *Europe United*. The great cultural battle of our time is to build open and cohesive societies. The EU must prove to its citizens that it is able to better protect them and to create more opportunities than nationalist withdrawal and closed economies.

But that requires strength. And strength, in a world dominated by political and economic giants, can only come from union. And this will require a federal approach, accepting a differentiated process of integration among states, as not all will have the same appetite for it.



# 4

## EL MUNDO

14 November 2018

### EUROPEAN KALEIDOSCOPE

«Recent years have witnessed the demise  
of the European social contract»

«We need to make Europe popular»

The electoral map of the European continent increasingly resembles a kaleidoscope, with more and more colours (parties) and shapes (coalitions) that vary as we rotate it around Europe's geography. A quick look at the latest national and regional elections shows the end of the hegemony of the great post-war parties, and a growing fragmentation of the European political landscape.

Luxembourg, despite being a country the size of a large European capital city, has become the paradigm of this trend. In its legislative elections, the Christian Democrats lost two seats; the Socialists lost three; the Greens improved (three more seats), becoming the big winners of this contest; and the ARD nationalist right gained one additional seat.

In Bavaria, Germany, the CSU won the elections with 37.2% of the vote, but lost 10 points compared to the 2013 elections—it was its worst result in the last 60 years. The SPD lost half of its support (from 20% to 9.7%) and dropped in the political ranking from number two to five.

Although the CDU won the elections in Hesse, Germany, its support declined by 11 points, from 38.3% in 2013 to 27% today. Similarly, the SPD went from 30.07% to 19.8%, also the worst result for the Social Democrats in this federal state in the post-war period.

The CDU's bear-hug and a multi-faceted Merkel preventing the SPD from marking its own political territory continue to bleed Europe's oldest Socialist party.

Meanwhile, extreme right-wing parties continue to rise in Western Europe, even in large countries such as Germany and Italy. For the first time, the Alternative for Germany party (AfD) achieved representation in Germany's 16 federal states after entering the parliament of Wiesbaden (Hesse) and Bavaria, with 13.1% and 10.2% of the vote, respectively. And in the Italian region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Vice-President Salvini's League party won the elections with nearly 50% of the vote, six times more than in the previous elections.

But for those who like to see the glass as half full: The Greens, a progressive force with a pro-European and pro-immigration message, also did better. In Hesse, the Greens improved from 11.1% to 19.8%, and in Bavaria they doubled their number of votes (from 8% to 17%). They also did well last year in Holland, and in Austria their candidate was elected president.

In contrast, Europe's Social Democratic parties have fallen from 40% of the popular vote in the 1990s and early 2000s to 20% (and in some cases even lower) over the past five years. Even that percentage is now in danger. And this is without even considering their dismal performance in Eastern Europe, although support for Polish ultraconservatives is waning as they have lost control of big cities like Warsaw and Krakow. However, this shift is not necessarily benefiting the left.

There are many reasons for Social Democrats' loss of support throughout Europe, and these vary from one country to another. But some common features can be identified.

Recent years have witnessed the demise of the European social contract. The effects of globalization, the technological revo-

lution, and liberalization in the EU with a view to facilitating free competition and creating a single market, have led many European citizens to conclude that their children will have fewer opportunities than they had.

A large proportion of citizens feel that traditional parties have been unable to develop a model capable of protecting them from the harmful effects of globalization. The result has been an increase in nationalism and extremism. Feeling helpless and abandoned, the losers of globalization have sought the protection of political forces that advocate retreating to what they know best: the nation state.

Rather than succumbing to the temptation of imitating the extremists or forging large national German-style coalitions, it is important to stress that it is possible to win elections from a pro-European position, seeking to form open and cohesive societies—which is, by the way, what Spain's Socialist government defends. Another lesson can be taken from the party of the businessman Köllensperger in Bolzano (South Tyrol), which came in second place with a pro-European platform in which he presented the EU as a guarantee of well-being and freedom from the attacks of nationalism.

Will these same national and regional electoral dynamics also characterize the European Parliamentary elections in May 2019?

According to the latest forecasts scrutinized by the Delors Notre Europe Institute, and in line with the above, the Christian Democrats (with 178 seats) and the Social Democrats (with 137) will lose support and, for the first time, the sum of the two will no longer account for the absolute majority of parliamentary seats (353 in the new Parliament). The Socialists, despite foreseeable progress in Spain and Portugal, are suffering from the departure of Britain's Labour Party and the weakness of the parties in France and Italy. But it appears that they will continue to be Europe's second political force.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats is expected to win approximately 100 seats if it manages to bring Macron's party on board, while the Greens and the United Left should hold on to the 50 seats that each currently has.

If this is the case, the current pro-European majority will remain intact, but a broader parliamentary coalition will be needed to elect the next President of the Commission and to implement the latter's legislative programme, with the complications involved in reaching consensus among three or four parties.

In contrast, despite a few catastrophic forecasts that have been circulating, just as in 2014 the Europhobes and Eurosceptics—which are not the same thing and today are divided into three different groups—will only improve marginally, from 151 to 160 seats.

Only in the unlikely event of an agreement among very heterogeneous movements, such as the pro-Russian right in the West and the anti-Putin groups in the East, Italy's Five Star Movement, Germany's ultra-right and the Nordic conservatives, and if Orban were to leave the European People's Party, could one imagine a single nationalist group achieving second-largest-party status. And even if it did, it would be shunned by everyone else.

But we must not become complacent, because the influence of these parties will undoubtedly grow, especially in the Council, as they have made their way into some national governments. Therefore, in order to effectively combat national populisms, we have to make Europe popular. To that end, its social and cultural dimension must be bolstered. The EU must be perceived as the most powerful instrument with which to build a strongly united European society that has a say when it comes to governing globalization. Only in this way will we manage to neutralize the recurring nationalist spectres of the past, whose ill-fated legacy we were recently reminded of during the centenary of the end of the First World War.



# 5

## THE EUROPEAN

December 2018

### **MIGRATION: MYTH AND REALITY**

«We are now facing the challenge of how to manage migration»  
«If we make the wrong diagnosis,  
we will provide the wrong response»

Societies are forged by major challenges. Europeans, Spaniards included, are now facing the challenge of our times —how to manage migration— a challenge that will determine, to a large extent, the destiny of Europe: our future, and our present. If we think about the European elections of May 2019, the truth is that it is no easy task to counter the arguments of certain political representatives whose discourse on migration is far from accurate.

They are establishing a non-existent reality in the collective imagination, and they are doing so rather successfully: Orban has been re-elected for the third time in Hungary; Zeman, for the second time in the Czech Republic; Kaczynski, in Poland; the AFD in Germany; Salvini in Italy; and the threat of Bannon with *The Movement*, a project seeking the spread of Brexit-like processes and of Italy's Northern League tenets throughout Europe. Thus, a great anti-European coalition has been formed. Fortunately, for now this is not the case in countries such as Spain, where the issue of migration is not dividing society, nor has it given rise to xenophobic political forces. These politicians are using language based on perception, and not on an accurate analysis of reality. They are exploiting fears capable of concealing the truth.

On 13 April 2018, the European Commission published the results of the special Eurobarometer survey 469 on «Integration of

immigrants in the European Union». According to the results, only a minority (37%) of Europeans think that they are well informed about immigration and integration related matters. Respondents tend to overestimate the number of non-EU immigrants: In 19 out of the 28 Member States, the estimated proportion of immigrants in the population is at least twice the actual proportion, and in some countries the ratio is even higher.

As George Orwell cautioned, our first duty when threats are hanging over liberal democracies is to preserve the integrity of political language. Conversely, the first task undertaken by the enemies of plural and open societies like ours is to pervert that very same language. This is also the case with migration. But let us not mistake eye-catching headlines for reality. If we make the wrong diagnosis, we will provide the wrong response. Spikes in arrivals on Spanish, Greek or Italian shores are not merely episodes linked to current circumstances, but, rather, a recurring phenomenon of a structural nature.

Africa is facing poverty (36 countries out of the 41 in the group with the lowest human development levels are African, according to the UNDP's Human Development Index), the impact of climate change (droughts affecting 22% of the population, floods, deteriorated soil), and a lack of peace, safety and security. After a drop from 1995 to 2014, the number of refugees in Africa has doubled since 2015. Today, six million Africans constitute 26% of the world's refugees; most of the United Nations' peacekeeping operations are in Africa, and unemployment—especially among young people and women—is a source of enormous frustration. The greatest cause of migratory flows is undoubtedly the scarcity of economic opportunities, which makes it impossible to maintain a decent standard of living in the countries of origin.

Moreover, as a result of having a developed economy and an increasingly aged population, the EU has become a global des-

tinuation for migration, attracting 1.5 million to 2.5 million non-EU immigrants per year . These figures may seem considerable, but they barely represent 0.3% to 0.5% of the EU' s total population (508 million).

It is simply a matter of balance. Suffice it to note that Africa's population has risen from 477 million in 1980 to 1.25 billion in 2017, and is estimated to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, and to represent 40% of the world' s population in 2100. Meanwhile, in Europe we are facing a demographic winter and the ageing of our population. Spain is an extreme example. By 2050, Europe will have lost 80 million people of working age and Africa will have gained 800 million. Only if we are aware of this reality and we use accurate and reasonable language to describe it, avoiding rabble-rousing manipulation, will we be able to turn this challenge into a great opportunity for Africa, Spain, and the rest of Europe.

To date, the EU Member States have not been able to agree on a Europe-wide response in this regard. The asylum system has too many imbalances, which have been present since before 2015. The Dublin Regulation, which sought to rationalize asylum-seeking processes in accordance with the Geneva Convention, was not designed to manage the numerous irregular arrivals of economic immigrants by sea. Reform of this Regulation must be approved as soon as possible, to include a permanent relocation mechanism.

Consequently, we need to advance towards a system that is effective, capable of reducing people smuggling, combatting criminal networks, setting up humanitarian channels for legal migration, protecting and guaranteeing the rescue of lives in danger. This requires comprehensive management, a shared migration policy.

Europe, in the framework of close partnership between the two continents, as proposed by President Juncker , must contribute more decisively to the long-term development of Africa, especially as regards institutional strengthening.

As a result, emigration will be a freely chosen option, and will take place through safe and legal channels; it will no longer be a necessity stemming from pressure exerted by armed conflicts, mass violations of human rights, public insecurity, or a lack of professional opportunities, especially for young people.

# 6

## EL PERIÓDICO DE CATALUNYA

8 December 2018

### **BACK TO BREXIT**

«The agreements between Europe and the United Kingdom  
will not include Gibraltar»

«Experience is showing us just how difficult it is to disengage»

Next Tuesday, 11 December, we will know whether Westminster has approved the Withdrawal Agreement allowing the United Kingdom to leave the European Union in an orderly fashion. This treaty opens the door to a transitional period which could last for years and during which the «future relationship» between Great Britain and the EU will be negotiated. Even if Theresa May prevails that day, the Brexit saga will not have concluded but at least we would have avoided the chaos that a hard Brexit would cause.

Spain maintained its veto of the text until it was satisfied that the agreements on the «future relationship» between Europe and the United Kingdom would not include Gibraltar. Following an exchange of declarations with the Council and the European Commission, the British ended up accepting the interpretation of the now famous Article 184 defended by Spain.

That is not to say that agreements between the EU and Great Britain regarding the Rock cannot be negotiated. However through declarations made by the European Council and the Commission, the EU has guaranteed that no agreement could be reached regarding its relationship with Gibraltar without Spain's consent. And although the British Government, that of the «Rock» and the opposition parties all refuse to recognize this guarantee, it allows us to

embark upon the next negotiating phase of an endless Brexit from a position of strength.

Brexit has no small impact on us as relations between Spain and the United Kingdom are particularly intense. Great Britain is the main destination of our investment and the second biggest investor in our country. There are more than 300 Spanish companies in that country from many different sectors: banking, financial services, transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, health... Moreover, Spain is the preferred destination of British tourists, accounting for 25% of the total number we receive annually.

To provide an idea of where the process is heading and how it affects us, it is worth recalling that the United Kingdom did not endorse the EU declaration recognizing Spain's veto right.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the Spanish and British are concerned about Brexit. Brexiters themselves now recognize that the result of the referendum was greatly influenced by false information: one of the main arguments used by the *leave* campaign was the famous 350 million pounds that the United Kingdom was supposedly going to save each week.

Experience is showing us just how difficult it is for Great Britain to «disengage» from the EU, even though it has its own currency (it is not in the euro) and its own border (it is not in Schengen). It is hard to understand how some have been led to believe that Catalonia, which shares the same currency, borders, and economic and political institutions of all kinds with Spain, could become an independent State overnight.

Returning to Gibraltar, the Withdrawal Agreement contains a specific Protocol that explains how that Agreement will apply to Gibraltar, which is not an integral part of the United Kingdom like Scotland or Wales, but is rather a British Overseas Territory, whose external representation corresponds to the UK and which is considered by the UN as a territory pending decolonization.

As a complement to that Protocol, Spain has signed four bilateral agreements with Great Britain that address some of the problems of the Rock's relations with Spain regarding citizens' rights, tobacco, the environment, and police and customs cooperation, respectively, and another on taxation which will have international treaty status. These agreements will significantly improve the situation in Campo de Gibraltar.

In the controversy that came in the wake of these agreements, the *Generalitat* (regional government of Catalonia) sided with Gibraltar and the United Kingdom while the opposition patriotically refuted the legal validity of the declarations referred to above. Of course, Theresa May did the same, but her stance is more understandable. The Gibraltar Government considered the declarations meaningless, which should serve as a warning regarding their credibility in future negotiations. It would behoove us all to recall that Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties specifies that such declarations are considered an authentic interpretation of the treaty and hence are legally binding, because «The context for the purpose of interpretation of a treaty shall comprise, in addition to the text [...] any agreement relating to the treaty which was made between all the parties in connexion with the conclusion of the treaty».

The United Kingdom did not endorse the EU declaration that recognizes Spain's veto right regarding Europe's future agreements with Great Britain on Gibraltar. Why would it if this country will no longer be in the EU when these negotiations take place? These are issues that need to be clarified to gain insight into where Brexit is headed and how it affects us.





# 7

LA VANGUARDIA

21 January 2019

## NEVER-ENDING BREXIT

«Much political energy has already been wasted  
in a matter of the past»

«The world is galloping forward and Europe is falling behind»

If this were not such serious business, Mrs May could do with Brexit what Puigdemont did with Catalonia's unilateral declaration of independence: proclaim it, and then immediately suspend its implementation. At the rate this is going, never-ending Brexit may have a similar outcome.

Proclamations abound. After Parliament unequivocally rejected the withdrawal agreement she had agreed to with the European Union, May has once again reiterated her commitment to get the United Kingdom out of the Union. But we still do not know how , and now we do not even know when. Nor do we know what leaving the European Union actually consists of and the tautological references to «Brexit means Brexit» certainly do not shed any additional light on the question.

Some of the exit formulas are quite like staying. For example, exiting while remaining in the Customs Union and the Internal Market, the solution called Norway Plus, would be equivalent in practice to maintaining the fundamental ties that link the United Kingdom to the EU, with the former losing all decision-making capacity. It would also entail continued contributions to the community budget and, freedom of movement, one of the major objectives underpinning Brexit, would remain intact. This would cross all the red

lines that May imposed on herself when she defined the essence of Brexit. That trip would not have required so much luggage.

But things are apparently clearer at Westminster. They rejected that agreement, but we still do not know what it is they want. A vote of 432 to 202 is too much of a landslide to f x with some minor adjustments and the EU is not willing to engage in an in-depth renegotiation process.

At the same time, no one seems to want a no-deal Brexit which would hurt everyone, especially the United Kingdom. We will have to wait and see what new ideas May can bring to the table; and the EU would be justified in requiring guarantees that these ideas have enough parliamentary backing so as not to stumble on the same stone again. This would require an agreement between Conservatives and Labour, which does not appear likely. Corbyn wants to exclude the very possibility of a no-deal Brexit and has called on the United Kingdom to remain in the Customs Union. A reasonable solution, but one that would surely lead to the implosion of the Conservative party.

Any solution avoiding a no-deal Brexit means extending the expected March 29<sup>th</sup> deadline. The United Kingdom can request such an extension, with the approval of its Parliament, and the 27 can approve it with a unanimous vote. This is what should happen because no one wants to take responsibility for a no deal. But how much of an extension? If the United Kingdom is still an EU member when the European elections are held they would, in principle, have to choose British MEPs, appoint their commissioner and participate in the negotiations of the next multi-annual budget. But some of the UK's seats have already been reallocated to other States, further complicating an already very complex European scenario.

That is why some are thinking of a long-term extension, five years no less, to complete Brexit. But that would make the problem

chronic and be like looking at Europe's future through the rear-view mirror. Much political energy has already been wasted in a matter of the past, instead of focusing on the problems which will determine the future of the EU such as completing the euro, immigration, or Europe's role in the world. Furthermore, a United Kingdom that remains in the EU because it is not able to implement its referendum result would be a recipe for inefficiency and frustration. And the British cannot expect Europeans to solve their internal political problems.

Long or short, we need to know what the requested extension is for. Perhaps to reconsider how a nation's popular will should best be expressed as this is a legitimate question: by means of a referendum whose result was skewed by false information such as the 350 million pounds a week that «Brussels steals from us», propagated by the pied pipers who disappeared after acknowledging that they had made a mistake/deceived the public? Or should Parliament, mostly composed of members who oppose Brexit, be responsible for finding a way out of this impasse? Support for a new referendum is growing as is the number of tabloids claiming that «Parliament is against the people». And in Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system, the difference between a social and a parliamentary majority is structurally quite large.

According to surveys, in just two years simple demographic evolution —young people in favour, the elderly against— could change the result. But by what margin? Decisions of this magnitude should require reinforced majorities and an informed debate free of falsehoods and collective mirages.

There are many lessons to be learned from Brexit. Seeing how extremely complicated it is for the United Kingdom to leave a supranational union with which it does not share either a currency or a border, how could people have been led to believe that Catalonia

could unilaterally «disengage» from Spain despite having much more intense ties than the United Kingdom has with the EU?

But that is another matter. Now we must wait and see what Premier May proposes. But we must soon decide how to resolve Brexit or non-Brexit because the rest of the world is galloping forward with increasing speed while Europe is falling behind.

# 8

REPUBLICA  
24 January 2019

## **EUROPE'S STANCE ON IMMIGRATION AND THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD**

«There is an Arab pillar in European culture»  
«Managing identities is more complex than governing the euro»

Although today's news is dominated by Brexit and the crisis in Venezuela, two problems that seem irresolvable, the world keeps turning and other questions demand our attention in a more structural way. The EU's Foreign Affairs Council held a ministerial meeting in Brussels with the Southeast Asian countries forming part of ASEAN and another with those of the African Union. And still another is being prepared for February between the EU and the League of Arab States (LAS), which will be followed in Egypt by the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the first of its kind between the two regional organizations.

It is clear that for our continent and for Spain in particular, the Arab-Islamic world is of great importance in the areas of security, energy, climate change and migration, but also from the viewpoint of understanding between cultures and civilizations, and therefore in relation to the political dimension of our relationship.

Although up to now we believed ourselves immune from certain trends, Spain has followed suit and political parties are taking electoral advantage of turning immigrants, especially those who are Muslims, and Islamic civilization in general, into an external enemy that should be defeated or expelled.

The migratory phenomenon is part of this rejection. But like it or not, demographic imbalances will turn this into something we will have to learn to live with. In 2050 there will be 9.7 billion people in the world and Europe, which will continue to have approximately the current 500 million, will account for a mere five percent of the world's population. In contrast, Africa will have 2.5 billion. In other words, in 2050 there will be five times more people in our neighbouring continent than in Europe. Hence, the need to address the sociocultural dimension of the migratory phenomenon.

Migrations could be instrumental in slowing the loss of population and revitalizing the workforce, in ensuring the sustainability of our pensions system, and in building a multicultural and dynamic society. Of course, unless we want to slam the door and be a continent of (not very many) elderly, dependent white people.

But let's not fool ourselves. Managing identity is a very complex task, much more so than governing the euro which can be done with money and institutional reforms.

If this task is not properly addressed, and this means channelling flows to reduce irregular immigration in favour of the legal sort, the exploitation of migrations by the populist ultra-right could become a factor contributing to the dissolution of European integration.

Especially when the aim is to present West and East as opposing poles in everything, as Huntington does in his clash of civilizations theory, from religion to the political system, and including secularism and the role of women. But is this truly the case?

This approach inevitably leads one to consider these two spaces, Europe and the Arab-Islamic world, as homogeneous. But in both there is great diversity in terms of faith, democracy and modernity in general.

In Europe, for example, the right to terminate pregnancy is not universally accepted; nor is same-sex marriage. On the other hand, in a conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, a sociologically Islamic country, I learned that they are building (undoubtedly with some difficulty) a non-denominational democracy with a Constitution that enshrines equality between women and men.

One could claim that these are extreme examples, exceptions to the rule of a liberal Europe and an authoritarian and theocratic Arab-Islamic world, but generalizations should not be used to simplify what is complex.

It is important to approach and support the cultural and political currents that, in the lands of Islam, are seeking to show that there is nothing in their culture that inexorably leads to the establishment of confessional dictatorships or terrorism.

This approach is also fundamental in combatting the radicalization spreading amongst some young Europeans of Arab origin who are lacking opportunities, and not only in Islamic countries.

According to 2017 data (from the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain), there are 1.9 million Muslims in our country, accounting for approximately 4% of the Spanish population. A figure that refutes any impression of Islamization, as some would have us believe, and not only in our country. People such as the Dutch xenophobic leader Wilders use this fearmongering tactic, when the fact of the matter is that only seven percent of the Dutch population practice the Islamic religion.

In any case, given the growing importance of the debate on identities in European society, it is worth looking at the role of Arab culture as part of European, and of course Spanish, *acquis*.

Is Islam or, if you prefer, the Arab-Islamic world, an integral part of European culture and historical experience or, on the con-

trary, is it an alien and imposed element and, in any case, circumstantial and eccentric?

In other words, is Islam a religion that has made its way to Europe on makeshift *patera* boats and should leave in the same manner, as some advocate, or is it a religion, and above all a culture, with age-old roots in Europe that has been enriching our societies for centuries?

This question is reminiscent of the debate we had during the negotiation of the failed European Constitution about the Greco-Roman-Judeo-Christian essence of Europe.

Of course, that led us to other questions: Should we forever leave Turkey out of that essentialist Europe and include Christian Russia up to Vladivostok?

On the topic of the Caucasus, is Christian Armenia a clear candidate to form part of Europe but not Azerbaijan where Islam is the mainstream religion?

Should citizens of the European Union who profess Islam be considered second class because they are not «pure-bred» in terms of race, religion and culture? This debate is especially relevant in Spain.

After all, along with southern Italy and part of the Balkans, although with much greater intensity in our case, Spain is the part of Europe where the presence of Islam has left the greatest and most lasting impression. And this impression is not a thing of the past but is alive today. It is part of our language, our place-names, our cuisine, our architecture and urban planning. And therefore, it should not be considered as something alien to our society, and much less as antagonistic.

The presence of Islam in Spain for seven centuries has been identified as the main differential element by nationals and foreigners alike when referring to the supposed «Spanish exception».



According to the romantics, Spain is the East of the West. In this regard, it is interesting to recall the dispute among historians in the middle of the past century concerning the place of Islam and Arab culture in Spain's historical experience.

Of course, I am referring to the debate between Américo Castro and Sánchez Albornoz. In short, the former sees Spain through the coexistence of the three cultures, while the latter finds our national essence in the Visigothic kingdom. A debate that is clearly applicable to Europe today.

The question that could be posed to the «Albornozists» is whether we can consider seven centuries of history as a mere deviation. And the question that could be posed to the «Castroists» is whether they may have overestimated the Islamic factor in terms of its real contribution to our history as a whole.

In any case, it is both important and necessary to accept our historical experience in its entirety, understand it, seize it, make it intelligible for both ourselves and others, and see to what extent it is relevant today for Europe and the East.

This entails understanding and, where appropriate, integrating the Islamic component, in its fair measure, into our history and therefore into European history. The answer to the question of whether there is an Arab pillar in European culture can only be yes if we accept its existence in our own Spanish culture.

At certain points in our history that pillar has not only been inherent to the historical trajectory of our country, but, thanks to the very presence of Islam in Spain, it has also played a role in the growth and maturity of a Europe that had been looking inwards for centuries until the rediscovery of our classical legacy thanks to the Arabic translations and reinterpretations that reached the rest of the continent through the Iberian peninsula.

For all these reasons, Arab-Islamic influence in Europe is not due exclusively to the recent influx of immigrants into our societies as a result of the decolonization process or recent flows of refugees; historically, Islam and the Arab world have been part of our cultural acquis.

Once we accept this premise, our next step must be to analyse the extent to which this early impression enables us to find solutions to many of the current dilemmas facing the West.

The Alliance of Civilizations, a Spanish initiative that the United Nations has endorsed, and whose High Representative is former Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, is undoubtedly a political expression of this approach.

The 5+5 Initiative in the Western Mediterranean and the Union for the Mediterranean, to which Spain is especially committed, could also play an important role in the mutually beneficial management of migration and other regional public goods such as water or trade, and in the rediscovery of that shared culture between the two shores.

For all of these reasons, in the face of closed and xenophobic views, we must work towards a society open to ideas and influences, knowledge, technology transfer, goods and services; and also to people, through safe, orderly and legal channels as proposed under the Marrakesh Global Compact.

Finally, the legacy of Al-Andalus, an integral part of the essence of Spain, and of Europe, offers us a great opportunity not only to make important progress in the area of cultural diplomacy, but also to enhance our political dialogue with the Mediterranean Arab, and Islamic world, which we must promote to the fullest possible extent.

## **EUROPE IN THE MIDST OF BREXIT IS NOT DOING SO BADLY**

«The European project has proved to be extraordinarily resilient»  
«Brexit has not had the domino effect that some predicted»

In this period of Brexit which we do not know how or when will end, it is easy to doubt the vitality of the European Union project which seems to suffer from a very Spanish defect: lack of self-esteem. We Europeans tend to celebrate its weaknesses and fail to recognize its successes. But the fact is that this project has proved to be extraordinarily resilient and is not in as bad a state as some say.

Admittedly, the division between creditor and debtor countries persists, the architecture of the eurozone is incomplete and we have not yet managed to come up with European deposit insurance or a countercyclical budget so that the next crisis does not catch us off guard. We have experienced several years of strong economic growth in the eurozone, although at the end of last year the industrial production of the three major euro-economies (Germany, France and Italy) declined and the GDP of Germany and Italy fell in Q3 2018 by 0.2% and 0.1% respectively. That was due to the general slowdown of the world economy, but also to our own problems.

The year ended in France with the «yellow-vest» protests showing that the crisis left a lasting effect on our social fabric. While it is true that the EU, with a GDP of 15 trillion euros, has created 14 million jobs since 2013, that is not enough to mitigate

the social harm done by the crisis, as job insecurity and inequality have grown enormously.

This social gap, together with the lack of a European response to the migration issue which has caused an East-West divide, has sparked the proliferation of national-populist parties throughout the EU (and now also in Spain).

And Europe, with its declining population, is still not a global player in a world where countries such as the United States, Russia and China act assertively in defence of their own interests, to the detriment of a multilateral, cooperation-based system.

Since 2016, the year of the referendum in the United Kingdom, support for the single currency and the EU began to grow and today is at its highest level since 2002.

And in the social arena, some formerly pending issues in the EU have been addressed. After years of wage stagnation, in 2019 household income will grow by 1.9%, the highest rate since 2006, in a context of low inflation and a 7.9% unemployment rate, the lowest since 2008. The posted workers directive has been adopted, ensuring that workers who are temporarily in another EU country receive the same benefits and salary as local workers doing the same job with a view to preventing unfair social competition.

At the same time, the national-populist front has met with defeats and setbacks. Italy has had to amend its budget at the behest of Brussels to correct an initial proposal in which spending skyrocketed without a credible increase in revenue. Poland has partially reversed its reform of the judicial system as a result of the measures undertaken by the Commission. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's zero immigration policy has led to increased overtime hours causing deep social unrest.

Even Brexit can be moved out of the Union's debit column: it has not had the domino effect that some predicted, but is actually

having the opposite effect: It has brought citizens, institutions, and countries together helping them see the advantages of remaining united despite differences in issues such as the euro or refugees. At least up to now, the negotiating position of the 27 has been unyielding. Meanwhile, Britain is in the midst of an existential crisis due to the difficulties encountered in extricating itself from the EU without damaging the economy and social welfare.

So much so that none of the parties that criticize the European project, but which participate in coalition governments, propose leaving the EU or the euro. Since 2016, the year of the referendum in the United Kingdom, support for the single currency and the EU began to grow and today is at its highest level since 2002.

Clearly, despite the EU's failures in the last decade, from Greek debt management to immigration, the Union remains the only real mechanism capable of addressing transnational challenges ranging from refugee flows to the digital economy, security and climate change. Only by strengthening it will we effectively be able to tackle all these challenges and become a global power.



# 10

REPUBLICA

14 March 2019

## HOW TO ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EU'S FOREIGN POLICY

«Consensus, unity and unanimity are not synonymous»  
«A qualified majority in foreign policy would allow the Union to  
speak with a single voice without the need for agreement  
from all Member States»

In his «letter to Europe» President Macron warns of the urgent need to strengthen the European project, threatened with decay that could lead to its disintegration.

The swift response by Merkel' s successor at the helm of the CDU, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (known by her friends as AKK), strays quite a bit from the fundamental premise of Macron' s proposal, but does agree on the urgent need to strengthen Europe so that it can defend its values and avoid being held captive between the strategic interests of the USA and China, on the one hand, and the new threats from Russia, on the other . Like Macron, she proposes moving forward with common security and defence policies, expanding Europe's strategic capacity, the compatibility of military equipment and the creation of a European Security Council which would be open to the participation of post-Brexit United Kingdom if it so desired.

Thus, France and Germany at least agree on the need to make the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP) more effective, particularly the common security and defence policy (CSDP).

But let's take this one step at a time and begin by addressing the CFSP, which is what we typically discuss at the FAC, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council meetings. After nearly a year of participating in the FAC, my impression is that all too often the European Union is incapable of taking a stance on crucial international policy issues.

And, by not being able to react to these issues swiftly and effectively, we risk becoming irrelevant as a global player and not being able to defend our values and interests on an increasingly complex world stage featuring powerful new players.

This was the case in the Venezuelan crisis, the United States' suspension of the treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces, and relations with the Arab world; all issues that directly affect the credibility of the role that the EU seeks to play in the world and the security of European citizens.

The Union was incapable of taking a unified stance shared by the 27, or the still 28 Member States on any of these issues despite long hours of discussion and the redrafting of texts to satisfy the different positions taken by countries.

The reasons for this incapacity vary considerably depending on the problem in question, but the fact that they all occurred within a short span of time painfully reflects the EU's inability to act and the time wasted in reaching agreements. Thus, at the ministerial meeting to prepare the Summit between the European Union and the League of Arab States in February 2019, it was impossible to arrive at a common position because just two Member States refused to get on board with the intra-European agreement. Fortunately, the Summit held in Sharm el-Sheik managed to overcome these difficulties, but at the cost of limiting the scope and watering down the content of the final agreement.

This situation is of particular concern for at least three reasons. Because it is occurring in the new geopolitical environment defined



by the competition between superpowers such as the USA and China, which are using all the resources at their disposal to promote their particular strategic objectives.

Because of the weakening of multilateralism and the rules-based international order which are being replaced by the imposition of unilateral measures and a return to decisions based solely on national interests.

Because of the new existential and transnational challenges facing the international community such as global warming, migration, inequality, terrorism, etc.

To strengthen the EU as a global player, we must give ourselves the strategic capacity for autonomous defence, but this will be of little help if we cannot use it due to lack of political unity. We must therefore begin by strengthening decision-making mechanisms.

The EU's strength has traditionally been based on its ability to reach consensus and build bridges based on the conviction that we can more effectively defend our values and interests if we act in unison rather than individually. But in recent times this conviction has been waning, to the point that each decision is considered in isolation and, in the process, we lose sight of the fact that we must consider the framework of a shared strategy over the long term.

The distrust that underlies this attitude may be due to the growing heterogeneity of our foreign policy cultures following enlargement to the East. And more recently, new national-populist parties, preying upon the insecurities of a sector of the population that feels slighted by globalization and abandoned by their elite ruling class, offer false simplistic solutions to extremely complex issues such as migration and reinforce the identity-based factors that separate communities, and block the implementation of policies that have a long-term vision.

There is no single or easy solution to these problems. But there are some measures that could prevent obstruction if we understand that terms such as consensus, unity and unanimity are not synonymous.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy is governed by the basic principle of unanimity given its eminently intergovernmental nature. But there are also mechanisms that can introduce flexibility and enable a more agile decision-making process, respecting in any case the interests that each Member State may consider vital.

Such is the case of constructive abstention, whereby States may abstain in a vote and consequently are not bound by it but, in so doing, allow the EU to approve the initiative in question.

A more radical solution would be to take decisions by qualified majority. This method would provide powerful incentive to negotiate and reach a consensus, seeking counterparts instead of remaining isolated, losing the vote and obtaining nothing. In contrast, unanimity offers the opposite incentive and leads to entrenchment in one's own position or, at best, to demands for unacceptable compensation in exchange for facilitating an agreement which, in the end, lacks substance.

Decisions by qualified majority in the field of foreign policy, which would allow the Union to speak with a single voice without the need for agreement by all Member States, do already exist but are reserved for very specific cases and such a limited scope is insufficient to keep up with the rapid succession of events.

This would not require an amendment of the Treaties. It would be enough to apply the Commission's proposal, which Spain supports, to activate what is known in Community jargon as the «*passerelle clause*» provided for in the Lisbon Treaty. That would allow the EU to take decisions by qualified majority on issues involving

human rights at international forums and the deployment of civilian missions in response to crises when the urgency of the situation justifies this expedited procedure.

Of course, it will not be easy to activate that procedure provided for in the Treaty. We should recall the empty chair crisis provoked by De Gaulle at the time of the common market in response to opposition to the use of a qualified majority at the Council, already envisaged in the Treaties, which was resolved with the so-called Luxembourg Compromise which allows States to invoke vital interests to block a decision that must be taken by qualified majority. A compromise which, by the way, has never been invoked or recognized in the Treaties.

The difficulty is that the decision to do away with unanimity in the aforementioned areas can only be taken by ... a unanimous decision. We therefore have no other choice but to negotiate and make counteroffers but without ruling out the possibility that some particularly serious international event may give the European Council the incentive to reach the necessary consensus. Hopefully it is not too late but rest assured that the more this step is postponed, the more the EU's role in this new world that gallops inexorably ahead will be weakened.



# 11

LA VANGUARDIA

25 March 2019

## **EUROPE, BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES**

«The rise of China has changed global geopolitics»  
«Given the divisions in the EU, China will prioritize  
bilateral relations»

The European Council had not concerned itself with the strategic relationship between the European Union and China since 1989, after Tiananmen. It is surprising that it took so long, because since then, China's rise has changed global geopolitics with an increasingly assertive attitude in the diplomatic, technological, and military spheres, and has now drawn the animosity of the Trump administration in the United States.

Why this prolonged disregard, despite the fact that China as a global power has been the subject of thousands of comments and analyses?

Firstly, its accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 had the whole world longing for the gigantic Chinese market to open up under common rules on international trade. The expectation was of a huge increase in trade and in the global GDP. But this has been only partially realised. Over the past 18 years, China has been the great beneficiary of globalization, but its market has not been as open as that of Europe.

Secondly, because we Europeans have been wrapped up in our own crises—the euro, refugees, Brexit—to the point that introspection has become an unhealthy habit for the Council. Our sole

interest has been the economic advantages of the rapid growth of China, which is our largest trading partner . However, while China has been increasing its international influence, first in Asia and the Pacific, then in Africa, in Latin America and, even, in Europe's own economic and business fabric, the crisis *du jour* has acted as the tree that keeps us from seeing the forest.

This has changed. Although an interminable Brexit forces us to keep looking at the future in our rear-view mirror , no longer have we been able to postpone collective reflection on the challenges posed by the new China. Trade wars, both our own and abroad; competition over new technologies; industrial policy and cybersecurity; all of these, among other issues, have placed China on the European political and strategic agenda. So, on 18 March, EU foreign ministers broke bread and debated with our Chinese counterpart. It was the first time that this had happened in 30 years, even though it is very common for international political representatives to participate in these kinds of luncheons, where direct dialogue gives rise to a report that is deliberately kept vague.

The trigger for this process has been China's leadership position in the most critical of all critical infrastructures, 5G, and the role played by the Chinese company Huawei. In a key change to the EU's views on China over the past 30 years, the Commission issued a communiqué that considers it a «systemic rival» and an «economic competitor».

I would highlight three elements of this communiqué. The first is that we cannot continue to regard China as a developing country . This could hardly be the case, given that its per capita GDP is superior to any EU member state, and it is about to draw level with the United States in terms of the number of its companies in the world's top 500.

The second is that it is true that China, notwithstanding its status as a key potential partner, is also a strategic competitor after having added political clout, diplomatic influence, and military power to its already considerable economic capacity.

The third is the need to broaden the focus on China. In addition to the habitual reflection on how its economic expansion affects us, we must incorporate geostrategic and national security considerations. China is a country that has regained the place it occupied for centuries «at the centre of the world», with the implications that this has for our European peninsula at the western end of Eurasia. It is not just an opportunity anymore. It is an existential challenge. And China, in part, is waking the EU up to the historic opportunity to relaunch the Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

China is experiencing the end of the so-called «peaceful rise», which has characterized its re-entry into the international system. Since Deng Xiaoping, Chinese leaders, acting with great strategic vision, have accumulated power and influence. In doing so, they have shunned conflict, being aware of the need to avoid raising fears and to inspire confidence. Other than in matters that have struck a deep chord (Taiwan, territorial integrity), Beijing has avoided imposition, or *diktat*. It has laid the foundations of global importance with a constant message of cooperation, goodwill, and harmony, to use a term held dear by the Taoist-inspired Chinese diplomacy. In the words of Deng himself: «Hide your strength; bide your time.» With that time having now arrived, its leaders have partially discarded Deng's discourse.

All this serves to remind Europe not to be misled about the real possibilities of the bilateral relationship. China is a great country that has been able to lift tens of millions out of poverty in record time, but —as the Commission points out in its report— it advocates a model of society and has a vision of international relations that differ from ours. This does not rule out collaboration, of course.

However, it warns us of the need to manage a relationship that is unlikely to be free of tensions. Times have changed. What we are looking at is not a new Soviet Union or a new Cold War, but something far more complex that is playing out in several fields—particularly technology—in which Europe must choose whether to act together or become irrelevant. The problem is, precisely, that Europe is not united. It is understandable for China, given the divisions in our midst, to prioritize bilateral relations.

We must be aware that no EU member state can aspire to maintaining a balanced relationship with China. The relationship will always be asymmetrical. Only as a European Union can we have a balanced relationship. Here, as in so many other issues, Europe is not an option. It is a necessity if we wish to preserve our social model.

Although the relationship will be complex, it can be of benefit to each party and, given both actors' global responsibilities, to the entire planet. In recent years, the view has been spreading that China's rise to challenge the United States is leading us towards a new «Thucydides trap». The ancient Greek historian described the conflict that arises when an emerging power attempts to displace the dominant one. Graham Allison's recent study *Destined for War* concludes that only four of the sixteen such moments in history have failed to lead to a war. Beyond the predictive risk of projecting past experiences onto the future, I believe that the logic of cooperation will impose itself on that of a confrontation that can only be catastrophic. However, only European action will contribute to the imposition of that logic, thereby preventing our political and social model from being swept away by the new great duality emerging on the Indo-Pacific frontier.



# 12

## EL MUNDO

7 May 2019

### **THIS TIME, I'M GOING TO VOTE**

«To improve, refine and reform the EU, we must first preserve it»  
«We have the largest single market in the world»

We are clearly at a crossroads, and the decisions made by our citizens when they go to the polls at the end of May will affect Europe's future.

We have held the Presidency of the European Parliament at times that were marked by both unease and optimism. Throughout the continent's history since the Second World War, solidarity has united Europeans and enabled us to face up to our greatest difficulties, even when the clouds of uncertainty have loomed more threatening than ever. We have stopped talking about «old» and «new» member states: We talk about just one Europe, from Helsinki to Nicosia, and from Lisbon to Bucharest and Warsaw.

The old certainties that have wisely guided Europe and the rest of the world since the end of World War II are now reeling under the onslaught of an unprecedented wave of transactional politics and the intensification of geopolitical tensions in a new era of intense competition for power.

As Europeans, we cannot decide on behalf of others. We cannot control what others do. We can only choose what we want for ourselves, making collective decisions to serve our interests and in a manner that is consistent with our values and the needs of both Europe and the rest of the world.

The European Union is far from being as perfect as many would like, or as imperfect as painted by its most strident critics. In order to improve it, refine it, and reform it, we must first preserve it.

Forty years ago, in June 1979, the first elections to the European Parliament were held. Forty years before that, in 1939, a generation of young Europeans had been forced to fight each other. In the end, 55 million people perished in World War II.

Teamwork, standing shoulder to shoulder, to solve problems and differences has been the cornerstone for European peace and unity ever since. This was an extremely costly lesson to learn, and one we should neither forget nor cast aside out of apathy or hostility.

Support for the European Union has risen to record levels in the opinion polls. That support must now be transferred to the ballot box. We have the largest single market in the world. Our values and traditions—the dignity of all persons, freedom, democracy, the legal system, and peace—sustain our way of life.

Now more than ever, Europe needs its European men and women; for this reason, we, the undersigned, the President and the former Presidents of the European Parliament, call on the peoples of Europe to exercise their responsibility and their civic right, and to participate with their vote in the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament.

# 13

EL PAÍS

9 May 2019

## FOR A RELAUNCH OF EUROPE

«The EU was born out of the fear of repeating its past»  
«It is not enough to offer solutions  
if they are not democratically legitimate»

Sixty-nine years ago, with the Schuman Declaration, Europeans thought that by jointly managing coal and steel, they would make war between them impossible. Thus, the EU was born out of the fear of repeating its past.

Despite all its shortcomings and mistakes, European integration may be regarded as positive overall, in historical terms. This is what 68% of Europeans believe. It is the highest percentage since 1983, with Spain (75%) at the higher end of those who are Euro-satisfied. But at the same time, 50% of Europeans feel that the EU is not heading in the right direction. And over 60% view with concern the rise of national populist parties, whose intention is to reverse the integration process.

Today, with peace conceived as the natural state of things, with Germany rehabilitated and the Soviet Union defeated peacefully, we lack reasons for more Europe. However, the world is radically different from the bipolar one of 1950, and also from that of 10 years ago, when the financial crisis erupted. And even from 2014, when Trump was not President, the British had not voted for Brexit, the Syrian refugee crisis had not occurred, and we still did not see China as a «systemic rival».

In today's interdependent and interconnected world, with new geopolitical tensions between countries of continental dimensions, size matters with regard to influence, governance, and security. This is particularly true when we consider that, as we have been warned, Europe can no longer base its security on the American military umbrella. Chancellor Merkel was right in saying that we Europeans have to take the reins of our own destiny.

The conflict in Ukraine has reminded us of Moscow's power within its former sphere of influence. A new era of nuclear proliferation is beginning between Russia and the USA, as well as a hypothetical Iranian nuclear rearmament. China is attempting to project its economic power into the technological and military sphere, expanding its business clout in the Indian Ocean, in Africa, and in some European countries, and aspiring to design tomorrow's world geopolitically with the New Silk Road.

The EU represents today, with its 500 million people, only 7% of the global population. By 2030, our population will not have grown, but aged, while Indians and Chinese will each number around 1.5 billion. In 2050, there will be 2.5 billion Africans, and not a single European economy will be among the world's top seven in terms of GDP.

Against this backdrop, only a more united Europe can influence global governance so that it may be ruled by multilateral cooperation and commonly agreed rules, in order to ensure Europe's identity and its defence, peace, and ecological sustainability, building societies that are open but also cohesive as an antidote to totalitarianism.

It is therefore necessary to define the fields where we will act together more closely, and how we will take decisions on new European initiatives. The latter (institutions) is as important as the former (policies) if our aim is to ensure proper democratic legiti-

zation of the integration project in the wake of the dissatisfaction created by the euro crisis and the acceleration of migration flows since 2015.

We need to strengthen our Common Foreign and Security Policy. This requires setting aside, as far as possible, the rule of unanimity in agreeing common positions, and developing a strategic capacity that is autonomous from and complementary to NATO—in which Europeans must have more influence. Europe must learn to act with the mindset of a great power, and to respond with measures that are proportionate to aggressive unilateral decisions, wherever they may originate, and equip ourselves with common instruments to protect our security and democracy.

This security depends critically on technological capacity in such sensitive areas as 5G, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and quantum computing. Today, no European company is among the top 15 players in the digital revolution. Europe must promote innovation, and an industrial policy that allows our companies to compete with American and Chinese multinationals.

A strong European Asylum Agency is essential within the framework of an effective EU migration policy. When internal borders have been removed, the costs of managing the external border must be shared. We need a Europe that harmonizes the criteria for humanitarian visas and regulates economic immigration, in collaboration with the countries of origin and transit.

To address these external challenges we must consolidate our Union in its monetary, fiscal, and social dimensions. We will not be strong in the world if European integration fails to ensure shared prosperity. Monetary policy cannot solve everything; today's macroeconomic conditions are very different from those of the 1990s, when the Maastricht Treaty was signed. Then, even Germany faced

interest rates of the order of 5%. Today, it is financed at negative real rates, while inflation has been below the 2% target for years.

With such a low cost of borrowing, there is room to invest in long-term projects with high rates of social return. These include a Green Deal that decarbonizes the economy, boosts growth, and creates new jobs. But it is not possible to ask people to worry about the end of the world when too many are worrying about making ends meet. Therefore, Europe must combine climate change policies with those that combat poverty and inequality.

Now that the economy of the eurozone is slowing down, we need a euro budget, financed by common taxes linked to the single market (e.g. on financial transactions, a fraction of the corporate tax base, the profits of major tech companies) and the profits of the European Central Bank.

It is also essential to strengthen the European social dimension, complementing national unemployment insurance, or agreeing on a minimum wage system based on national traditions and collective bargaining. If we want Europe to be perceived as a protector by its citizens, we must put an end to the model in which the EU is responsible for macroeconomic regulation, and fiscal redistribution remains solely in the hands of member states.

However, it is not enough to offer solutions if they lack sufficient democratic legitimacy. We must also address institutional reforms, avoiding purely intergovernmental solutions that convey the idea of a Europe that is technocratic, elitist, and removed from people's everyday problems. The European Parliament, the institution that directly represents us all, must be given co-decision powers with governments on key issues such as taxation, the multiannual budget, or the establishment of the EU's own resources.

The existential question that we Europeans are going to answer with our forthcoming vote is what place we want to have in the

world, given the presence of the new blocs represented by China and the United States. How can we prevent fear of the future from breaking up our Union, leading to the return of an illusory concept of the nation, protected by walls that can never be high enough to isolate us from the rest of the world?





# 14

REPUBLICA

12 May 2019

## THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE CRISIS OF THE LIBERAL ORDER

«Our vision is based on the force of law, not the law of force»

«The EU is the only virtuous triangle uniting democracy,  
progress and solidarity»

The campaign for the European elections is under way . Let's hope for higher participation than in 2014, which marked a historic low. The start of the campaign coincides with Europe Day, and for this reason I am participating in a number of events commemorating the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which signalled the start of European integration.

I also had the honour to take part in the meeting of the Scientific Council of the Elcano Royal Institute, chaired by King Felipe VI at La Granja Palace. This allowed me the opportunity to present my thoughts on the future of the European Union, ones that I would like to share on this digital platform.

Any analysis on the EU's future must start from the realization that we live in a world with a level of volatility uncertainty, and complexity that is unprecedented since the end of the Second World War.

We are in a time that Antonio Gramsci termed *interregnum*: when the old is dying and the new is yet to be born. And we might consider whether we are facing a new «Thucydides trap», a reference to the ancient Greek historian who described the conflict that arises when an emerging power (in this case, China) attempts to displace the dominant one (USA).

The liberal world order established after the Second World War, thanks largely to the leadership of the United States, is being questioned. Of course, this world order has never been perfect, or so orderly, or so liberal, or so worldwide, but it has enabled 70 years of unrivalled global peace and prosperity in large parts of the world.

However, we can no longer take this model for granted. The two most visible challenges that it faces are the weakening of multilateralism, and the loss of the economic weight of the middle class.

Let's start with multilateralism. After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, we witnessed a brief spell of unipolar power exerted by the United States that ended in 2014 with the Russian annexation of Crimea. Since then, we have entered a scenario where there is strategic competition between the United States, Russia, and China.

Beyond the risk that nuclear weapons could be used, the main consequence of this geopolitical competition between great powers is the use of all the political options and instruments available to pursue their aims.

Technology, economic and trading relations, or the imposition of extraterritorial sanctions form an increasing part of the geopolitical equation. In the case of US extraterritorial sanctions, we have recent examples such as the use of the Helms-Burton Act in Cuba, or the country's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran.

The result is that, at a time when we should be working together more than ever to address challenges of a transnational nature such as global warming, the financial crisis, or migration, the mechanisms we have available to do so are being eroded—sometimes deliberately.

The second destabilizing element of the liberal order is the loss of the purchasing power of the middle classes in a context of frenzied global change driven by technology. For the first time,

an increase in productivity has not been accompanied by wage rises or job creation.

The technological revolution and automation in work are causing deep fractures in the social contract:

- In 1970, US industry required 26 workers to make 1 million dollars. Today, it requires 6 employees.

- One in six people with average incomes have jobs that run the risk of automation.

- In the service sector, it is estimated that 47% of jobs are at risk of automation.

The problem is that the added value generated by the increases in productivity linked to automation is not evenly distributed throughout society. And the huge transfer of technology and productive capacity from the West to the East has been accompanied by the transfer of the corresponding jobs.

In the West, we have only retained high-skilled jobs and low-skilled jobs with low salaries, many of which are not exportable because they are jobs in the service sector.

This economic disaggregation has become political disaggregation, with the rise of national populist movements. The EU was built out of fear of the past (of wars between Europeans), and today it could break up out of fear of the future.

Nationalists and populists thrive on the fears and precariousness resulting from an interdependent world and the inability of governments to respond to these changes effectively by offering protection, security, and prosperity.

In this context, people seek refuge in identity. If the campaign slogan «It's the economy, stupid» brought Bill Clinton to the White House in 1992, today's would be «It's identity, stupid.»

There is a growing gap between those of us who worry about the end of the world and those who worry about making ends meet. How can we ask our citizens to be interested in Europe if they feel that Europe does not care about them?

Nationalisms and populisms pose a danger to democracy, both because of their intrinsically exclusionary character (removal of those who are «different», immigrants etc.) and their tendency to distort reality to accommodate their aims (proliferation of fake news/hoaxes, propitiated by the new technologies).

The American Dream, or what we call the European Way of Life, are at risk. Today, a millennial born in 1980 has just a 50% chance of prospering beyond the social position into which they were born. Donald Trump made his entire campaign about the death of the American Dream.

These consequences should serve as a warning. In the USA, 70% of those born in 1940 viewed living in a democracy as necessary. Among those born in 1980, it is only 22%. Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom report similar figures.

To respond to popular expectations, we need to go beyond economic integration and develop a new social contract at the European level: a supranational social and political dimension that ensures inclusion and a fair distribution of wealth.

On a global level, the main aim of EU foreign policy should be to strengthen multilateralism. Multilateralism is part of the DNA of the EU. We are used to working with each other constantly. This long-term commitment favours a shared vision, as well as trust, complementarity, and a certain dose of collaboration to achieve common objectives.

We Europeans probably have the most to lose if the architecture of multilateralism is eroded. Our world vision is based on the

force of law , and not the law of force. Our security is based on partnerships. Our prosperity is based on free and fair trade. Our global influence is built around our Union, which leads us to gain in sovereignty.

However, to exert influence in the world we must ensure our strategic autonomy, complementing what is provided by NATO, as it seems we now lack the protective umbrella of the United States.

We cannot simply trust or expect everyone to follow the rules. If we are an economic powerhouse but a political lightweight, we cannot effectively defend our values and interests, and we may end up seeing our economic position weakened. In the current context, strategic autonomy is not an option; it is a necessity.

The alternative to multilateralism is not only unilateralism or bipolarity. In practical terms, the alternative to multilateralism is confrontation.

In the European Union, we have achieved much together . The EU is the only place in the world where there is a virtuous triangle uniting democracy, economic progress, and solidarity. To preserve it in the new world order , Europeans must unite much more. Because what is at stake is the model of the international community in which our children and grandchildren will live.



# 15

SPEECH DELIVERED AT NUEVA ECONOMÍA

FÓRUM

14 May 2019

## **EUROPEAN UNION: ADVANCE OR DISINTEGRATE**

«We must adopt a European unemployment benefit scheme  
and minimum wage»

«If qualified majority voting is not approved,  
it will be difficult to advance»

What danger could put an end to the European Union? If we asked people in the street, many would surely answer the virus of national populism, which is on the rise in many countries and seeks to rewind history—and, therefore, European integration.

However, in my opinion, the greatest threat to our Union is the growing divide between its member states. Divergences in productivity and specialization have led to a widening gap in standards of living, and a steady shrinking of the middle class. Greece, for example, has only 40% of Germany's per capita GDP. And I believe that these differences between income levels will not be corrected if the EU does not implement risk-sharing mechanisms.

Moreover, social mobility in the EU has declined as a result of the growing polarization of the European labour market over the past 20 years (with a 20% increase in jobs in services with low added value, and a 10% drop in the weight of the manufacturing sector). Those of us who believe in the European project as an instrument for shared and sustainable growth cannot remain indifferent to this reality.

Do we want a more social Europe or a less social Europe? A Europe that has a greater weight in globalization and in the technological race? A Europe that invests more in agriculture or in innovation? A Europe that is more intergovernmental or more federal in its decision-making? These are the questions that we must answer at the outset of this new term of the European Parliament.

National populist parties have succeeded in politicizing European integration; consequently, voting in the latest European Parliament elections has been about Europe itself, and not punishing any particular government. The good news is that we can have a debate that revolves around European issues, and to do so, I propose dividing this speech into ten areas in which we need to advance towards strengthening the utility and legitimacy of the European project.

## **1. The social Europe**

There is growing disenchantment with the European project, resulting from the economic crisis, the precariousness of labour markets, and tax competition. Europe will be social, or it will be nothing at all. Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

In the last term of Parliament some progress was made, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, or the Directive on Posted Workers, which sets a time limit on the application of the country of origin's conditions. But this is not enough.

In the term that is just beginning, we need to approve a European unemployment benefit scheme supplementing national schemes, a proposal defended by the government of Spain. The new Commission must introduce this among its priorities, and European socialists will exert significant pressure to this end. A European minimum wage, adjusted to each country's conditions, must also be adopted.



## **2. Tax harmonization**

We need fresh resources to fund the social Europe.

In the past 20 years, the average corporate tax in EU countries has dropped from 36% to little more than 24%. We have witnessed a downward tax competition between European countries, especially after the accession of countries from Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, corporate tax rates in Europe currently range from 9% to 30%, and levels of social benefits have dropped in many countries.

This unfair competition is deeply anti-social and distorts our single market. Greater social and fiscal coordination is urgently needed. Tax bases must be calculated, and corporate profits must be taxed in the same manner from Lisbon to Tallinn.

The problem is that tax policy decisions are taken unanimously and those benefiting the most from the status quo are blocking harmonization. As in the case of external policy, it will be difficult to advance in this area if qualified majority voting is not approved.

## **3. Immigration**

The refugee crisis has fuelled national populist movements, and has seriously called into question the principle of seeking asylum in the first country of entry.

However, immigration is not a phenomenon linked to the current situation of an armed conflict such as that in Syria. In 2050, Africa will have 2.5 billion inhabitants, whereas Europe will still have the more or less 500 million it has now. This population explosion, combined with the differences in per capita income on both shores of the Mediterranean, may turn out to be a more destructive factor for European unity than the euro crisis.

We need to turn this challenge into an opportunity through legal, safe, and orderly immigration which will help us overcome

our demographic slump. This requires signing agreements with the countries of origin and of transit, creating more channels for economic migration, and designing a European asylum policy. We must create a model for co-development and shared prosperity, so that people no longer have to risk their lives, crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean, in order to have a decent standard of living.

#### **4. Innovation and industrial policy**

Europe is losing the technological race. There is not a single European company among the top 15 of the digital economy. They are all from the USA or China. This is especially problematic for our security and for our economy's long-term productivity.

The technological battle over 5G between China and the USA is, in fact, a dispute over geopolitical dominance.

Most of the savings of Europeans are loaned to the rest of the world, mainly to the USA, instead of being used to fund productive investments for the future. We need more investment in innovation, more joint projects in Europe, and more engineers. The EU's new research programme, Horizon Europe, needs to have an ambitious budget and to be linked to cutting-edge sectors such as biotechnology, hydrogen storage, and quantum computing. Trying to compete with China and the USA in mature technologies is no longer worthwhile. We must prepare to compete in the technologies of the future.

At the same time, we must adapt our competition rules so that European companies may be large enough to compete with Chinese and US multinationals in these technologies.

#### **5. Energy and climate change**

In Europe, we have met the goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% by 2020 ahead of schedule, and we have far fewer emissions

than the USA, China, or India. But this is partly due to having had less economic activity during the recession years.

However, we continue to be 70% dependent on gas, coal, and oil—fossil fuels that are highly polluting and mostly imported. And not all member states have accepted the Commission' s proposal for a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral economy by 2050.

We European Socialists defend a tax on emissions, a border tariff for imports that do not comply with the Paris Agreement, and the promotion of hydrogen batteries and electric cars.

The fact that Italy is funded on the markets at a cost lower than half that of Germany in 1997 means that there is scope for funding a great European plan for green investments—a Green Deal—taking advantage of the low interest rates and low inflation.

## **6. International trade**

Europe is the world' s largest market, larger than the USA or China. We are an exporting power; thus, generally speaking, we support trade agreements.

But these agreements cannot whitewash situations of labour exploitation or social and environmental competition. They must include safeguard clauses, public arbitration courts, and guarantee the transparency and democratic control of parliaments.

## **7. Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)**

To have weight in the world, we Europeans must strengthen our internal union. We cannot sustain an ambitious external agenda if our incomplete monetary union is once again called into question in the next crisis.

The euro has lost ground among the world' s reserve currencies, dropping from 27.26% of the reserves in 2009 to 20.24% in 2019. This situation will not improve if the sovereign bond market con-

tinues to be segmented at the national level and we do not have a safe asset at the European level—a situation that keeps us from using our currency as leverage with extraterritorial impact, as the USA does.

Before the recession, the EU did not pay attention to private and external indebtedness, nor did it have mechanisms to help countries in crisis. Let us not forget that there was a time when Spain had to pay up to 30 billion euros in unemployment insurance.

We have alleviated this situation thanks to the European Stability Mechanism and, especially, thanks to the policies of the European Central Bank, with ultra-low interest rates and the purchase of public bonds. However, these policies benefit those who have wealth in shares and in real estate, thus leading to more inequality

We must also have a euro budget that is counter-cyclical, so that we may address shocks that only affect certain member states.

## **8. Security and defence**

Threats to our security are multiplying and becoming more diverse. They are no longer only territorial in nature, but also hybrid (e.g., cyberattacks and disinformation).

China is seeking to transform its demographic and economic strength into military and geopolitical power. Russia is re-emerging as a power in its neighbourhood. The USA is withdrawing from Afghanistan, from Syria, and from the Nuclear Deal with Iran; it has also declared a lower level of commitment to Europe's security. Instability persists in the southern Mediterranean (Libya).

For all these reasons, it is urgent and essential for the EU to develop its own strategic capacity to supplement NATO. Without it, our external policy and our role in globalization will not have sufficient credibility.

Some important steps have been taken, such as establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) between 25 countries to implement different defence capability projects, and setting up the European Defence Fund, with a budget of 13 billion for projects on research and support for the military industry during the 2021-2027 period. Both initiatives have sparked misgivings in the USA due to the conditions for third-country participation.

Innovation is crucial to have advanced territorial defence systems and critical IT infrastructure.

At the same time, above and beyond traditional territorial defence, we need a common system to counter cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns that undermine our democracies. This is urgent, because information is the fuel of democracy, which is attacked when voters receive contaminated information.

## **9. External policy**

What will it mean for us to be 500 million Europeans, compared with the soon to be nearly 1.5 billion people in China or India? In a world dominated by continent-sized major powers, such as Russia, China, India, or the USA, Europe can only be relevant in global governance if it unites to be stronger.

It is essential that we speak with one voice in the world, even if the message is conveyed by different actors. In this regard, the unanimity rule is a very serious obstacle. It is possible to use qualified majority voting on certain issues without changing the treaties. But the problem is that in order to change the unanimity rule we need a unanimous decision, and to date there does not seem to be sufficient political will to do so.

## **10. Institutional reforms**

The proposals adopted in all these fields must be fully legitimized from a democratic standpoint, without forgetting that the

need to take decisions quickly during the crisis strengthened the European Council, to the detriment of the Commission and the European Parliament.

According to surveys, 70% of Spaniards want the European Parliament to have greater power, as compared with the European average of 54%. A fully democratic Europe requires a Parliament that co-decides, with the Council, on issues of taxation, income and own resources, and the multi-annual budget.

To conclude, all of the challenges we are facing, which I have discussed here, are transnational, not only European. We need a Europe with more resources and capacities, focused on social affairs and on the technologies of the future, a Europe that generates new opportunities. This is the only way to preserve the European social model, because «no Europe» offers no alternatives.

The story goes that Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission, once said, «Europe is like a bicycle: It must keep moving forward or it will fall over» Let us make sure that the EU keeps advancing to consolidate its position as the political project that best combines economic prosperity, political freedom, and social welfare.

## EUROPE IN A WORLD OF GIANTS

«The Indo-Pacific is the setting for a new commercial and technological Cold War»

«The EU possesses the world's largest market, but it has renounced its economic capacities»

The unipolar world that emerged from the end of the Cold War is coming to an end. In challenging the USA, China has appeared as a new geopolitical colossus. Donald Trump and Brexit are raising doubts about the unity of the Western world. The Indo-Pacific is the setting for the front line of a new cold war, which for the time being is solely commercial and technological.

This has nothing in common with when Europe was a destroyed, hungry, and threatened continent, sheltered by the US military umbrella. Today's world is a world of giants, and a country's size —both economic and demographic— is crucial to defending its interests.

This new world confirms the view of former Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, who said: «There are only two types of states in Europe: small states, and small states that have not yet realized they are small.»

Even together, we Europeans are a small part of humanity. We remain a great economic power, but things have become difficult for us from a geopolitical viewpoint.

To the east, Vladimir Putin, even if he is not Stalin, is an awkward neighbour. Imperial Russia has been reborn from the Soviet

ashes, and wants to reaffirm its influence. But Russia, despite having nuclear weapons, has the GDP of Italy, and a host of structural economic problems.

To the west, we have Trump's new attitude. The USA had always backed European integration as a safety net against the USSR, and because it was in the US interest to have a strong ally that could be useful, but not so much as to have its own ideas. However, we can no longer count on unconditional support from the USA. Whether we like it or not, our historical ally is now led by a president who is openly hostile to European integration, just when our Cold War enemy is stirring, and our main supplier of low-priced products has taken on the guise of a «systemic rival».

Indeed, Trump applauds Viktor Orban and Matteo Salvini, considers importing German cars as a risk to his national security, and strongly supports Brexit. And the fear is growing that he will use the dominance of the Chinese giant Huawei in 5G technology for geopolitical purposes.

In truth, the concentration of economic and technological power and of geopolitical weight have always gone hand in hand. The USA deploys an array of unconventional weapons to defend *America First*: extraterritorial sanctions against investors in Cuba (the Helms-Burton Act), the control of foreign direct investments to protect themselves from Chinese technological advantages, and the use of the dollar's pivotal role to impose sanctions on foreign companies that continue to negotiate with Iran.

The EU possesses the world's largest market, which has enabled it to become a benchmark for global standards, and a great regulatory instrument of trade. But it has chosen not to make geopolitical use of its economic capacities, which are often limited by the rules of its competition policy. This explains why we lack global influence capacity.



This geopolitical influence will be determined to a large extent by our economic strength and military capacity. Therefore, it is essential for our competition policy to allow the creation of companies large enough to compete globally while protecting consumers from the potential abuse of the dominant position of giant multinationals. And to develop a strategic autonomy and a complementary defensive capacity that we share in NATO.

By sharing sovereignty within the framework of the EU and co-deciding our future on the new world stage, European states acquire an influence that none of them would ever have on its own. The British will learn this when they wrap up Brexit and «regain control of their destiny», if such a thing ends up happening.

Spain could not have withdrawn its troops from Iraq if we had still been using the peseta, because it would have succumbed to the speculative attacks of the international financial markets like those that hit Mitterrand's franc in 1981. Does anyone believe that Spain alone could impose fines on Google for abuse of its dominant position, as the European Commission has recently done?

At a time when its future is being questioned more than ever, the EU must show its citizens that it can give them better protection and create more opportunities than the retreat of the utopian nationalists and closed economies. This is the great issue of our age.



### **EU ELECTION RUN-UP**

«The EU is today facing an existential risk to its very survival»

«The number of Europeans who support the EU is increasing,  
but so is that of anti-Europeans»

The elections to the European Parliament provided a good opportunity to explain what the European Union represents, and the difficulties it is currently facing.

There are more than a few of these difficulties, because in the past five years many enemies have emerged within and beyond Europe's borders. We might even say that the EU is today facing an existential risk to its very survival. As far as its geostrategic position is concerned, the world has changed a great deal: Europe's great ally (the USA) has turned against it, its former great adversary (Russia) has been reborn, and a new systemic rival (China) has emerged.

Since the last elections, the number of Europeans who support the EU has continued to increase, reaching all-time highs (68%). However, anti-European movements have also grown in many countries, mainly in the form of extreme right-wing parties. Following the difficulties surrounding Brexit, they no longer propose to leave the Union, but to transform it from within by backtracking in the integration process. This situation is what has made these elections especially attractive, in that its campaign provided an opportunity for public debate on an issue that is vital to our future.

As the German philosopher Habermas says, «democracy is a process of collective deliberation», not just voting. Voting is the final phase of a process that contributes to creating a collective intelligence. That is what I have tried to contribute, trying to make political speeches that were not an appeal to the easy vote of those who were already persuaded, but that, in Azaña's words, they made «emotion illuminate reason».

Unfortunately, the debates have not achieved all that they should in presenting ideas, contrasting them, and debating them dialectically, increasing the public's knowledge of the facts that ultimately would decide their vote. For this reason, I would like to share here, in the final hours of this campaign, some of the reflections and proposals to which I have referred over the past fortnight.

The EU was born out of fear of repeating its tragic past (of wars between Europeans), and today it could break up out of fear of the future (of new challenges, concerns, and threats). And what will happen is not written in stone—it will depend on how we address those challenges.

In the 2014 European elections, everyone agreed that more Europe was needed, even if there was disagreement about how the direction of these policies. But now there are political groups that want to backtrack in history: to re-introduce borders, reject immigration, and renationalize the policies that have been communitized.

Eight of the EU's 28 governments already have populist parties in their midst or as part of the parliamentary majority on which the government depends. National populists and Eurosceptics could end up occupying more than a quarter of the seats in the next European Parliament.

This is why, on 26 May, we must decide whether to keep advancing in the creation of shared spaces to address the great challenges of our time, or to buy the arguments of Brexiters and independentists that «we can manage better on our own».

But what is evident is that we Europeans are going to be living in a world of giants, and each country on its own—including the largest, Germany, with its just over 80 million inhabitants—will be totally irrelevant. For this reason, I believe that, in order to survive in the world, we must opt for greater union.

Populists have easy, albeit erroneous, answers to complex problems. Those who support national populist options should not be disparaged. Their reasons should be understood. Because they have plenty of them.

Nor should we be taken in by the «Euro-sanctimonious», who are uncritical and believe that everything that comes out of the EU is just fine. We should acknowledge that the EU has made mistakes, and that in the face of unforeseen situations, such as the euro crisis or the flood of Syrian refugees, it has come up with unsatisfactory responses. And that these have created social pain. Today, after 10 years of austerity, European GDP has returned to the levels of 2008, and the level of unemployment in the EU has fallen back below its pre-crisis figure of 7%. But this decade, lost in economic terms and with its painful adjustments, has left many people behind.

The European middle classes have been weakened, filled with uncertainty, and have lost purchasing power. There has been breakdown of the European social contract by which, with hard work, our children's generations would always live better than those of their parents.

Today, the EU's good unemployment figures (6.4% in March 2019), the lowest since 2000, mask a reality of precariousness and

degradation of working conditions. In 2018, 11.2% of workers between 20 and 64 years had a temporary contract, whereas in 2003 the figure was 9.5%.

Our young people are the main victims: 14.5% in Europe remain unemployed. Among those under 25, temporary contracts have risen from 34% to 41% between 2003 and 2018—and in the case of Spain, 67%.

Under the effects of globalization and the technological revolution, the gap between highly-qualified workers and those less qualified is growing, with the latter more exposed to temporary or precarious contracts.

The European social model has been gradually eroded as a result of fiscal competition between the EU member states. Since 1980, the richest 1% of Europeans have seen their average income grow twice as fast as that of the 50% with the fewest resources. Inequality of access to a job, a home, or social benefits has also persisted.

Unease about the course that our Union has taken has manifested itself in different ways depending on the country: Brexit in the United Kingdom, the yellow vest movement in France, or the vote for Eurosceptic forces in Italy.

To respond to populism, we need proposals that address social problems and generate hope for the future by combating those who only know how to conjure up fear and nostalgia.

The creation of a single market without fiscal and social harmonization has created unfair competition among Europeans. This has caused states to shed economic capacity, and social protection systems to become weaker. The coming legislature needs to be the one to relaunch European integration via the social route: Europe will either be social or it will not be at all.

We need to advance in social and fiscal harmonization; European unemployment insurance, complementary to national schemes; and a European minimum wage linked to the competitiveness of the economy of each of our member states. We have to reconcile Europe with its citizens. The idea that Europe is peace no longer sells. If citizens do not perceive that the EU cares about them, they will not feel involved in its construction. And Europe cannot be built alone.

To defend our model of civilization, we must have weight in the world. We must attend to the great global challenges without forgetting social justice. To do so, we must share the sovereignty of states through EU institutions. We must learn, and be able to explain, that, in practice, having less formal sovereignty means having more real sovereignty.

Europe has to start acting with the mindset of a great power. Until now, the EU has been based on free markets and the force of law: competition, trade relations, and the rule of law. Chastened by its past war experiences, the EU had given up acting as a great power. It had given up using its economic and political clout as a lever to influence the world. But now, the EU has to learn to act as a great power, because «soft power» will not suffice in a world where the major geopolitical agents are willing to act with all the instruments of geopolitical power. The EU has to develop its strategic autonomy, in a way that is complementary to its participation in NATO.

The priorities of the coming legislature should also include stabilizing the euro, completing the Economic and Monetary Union with a euro budget and a European deposit guarantee insurance that protects small savers in all countries equally.

The fight against climate change provides fertile ground for re-launching the union of Europeans, in the same way that the Euro-

pean Coal and Steel Community played a key role at the beginning of the European project. During the campaign, we have set out the main lines of a new Stability and Growth Pact—not just another version of the Pact, but a new «climate-employment pact», to combat climate change and, at the same time, generate employment through a profound transformation of the economic system that decarbonizes our forms of production and consumption.

We must avert both climate catastrophe and a catastrophic future for our young people by providing them with new job opportunities. With our levels of unemployment and underinvestment and with the drama of climate change, a major pact for climate and employment should be one of the great driving forces of Europe's rebirth.

Europe needs a new *raison d'être*. I cannot imagine anything greater or better than combating youth unemployment and climate change simultaneously. But this must be done by considering the social effects of the fiscal measures taken to avoid greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot ask those whose main concern is making it to the end of the month to worry about the end of the world.

Another key issue of the coming legislature will be to develop a safe, orderly, and regular immigration policy. For three years now in Europe, more people have been born than have been born. Increasingly, we are fewer, older, and more dependent.

We need immigrants to cover our demographic shortfall. But, if I am realistic, I do not believe that today, a migration policy common to 27 states can be agreed upon. It is clear that there is a gulf between what the governments of some Eastern European countries, as well as Italy, are saying and what we European Socialists are saying. This is why we must establish a coalition of countries committed to defending European humanist values, given the major challenge presented by immigration and asylum seekers.



Finally, we will also have to negotiate the financial perspective, the EU's budget for the next seven years. We must defend the Common Agricultural Policy and structural funds, as well as future investments that enable us to be at the forefront of technology. This requires allocating more resources at the EU level. Therefore, we advocate increasing the EU's own resources by putting an end to the tax avoidance perpetrated by major digital companies, and creating a financial transaction tax.

The liberal order in which our Union was born is in crisis, and open societies are being questioned. We should not believe that peace is the natural state of things. On the contrary, it is very easy to blow once again on the ashes of a fire that we believed to have been extinguished, and to start a new one. To combat involution, we need a social, green, and digital Europe, which acts as a power in the world to defend a civilization—our European civilization—which is based on political freedom, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion.



# 18

## INTERNAL MEMO FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

July 2019

### **AFTER THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: FOR A MORE POLITICAL EUROPE**

«Citizens are beginning to understand that European integration  
needs their involvement»

«Europeans have rejected options  
that are against advancing on integration»

The European elections of 26 May were, in my opinion, the first that involved pan-European debates—unlike previous ones, which had been centred above all on national policies, and were more a protest vote on the government in power than focused on European issues.

The first thing that must be highlighted about the results of these elections is the increase in voter turnout, especially among young people. I believe that this shows that citizens are beginning to give European affairs their rightful importance, and to understand that European integration needs their involvement.

For the first time since 1979, participation in European elections has risen in 20 out of the 28 member states, and has broken the 50% barrier in the EU as a whole. We have gone from a record low of 42.61% in the 2014 elections to 50.94% (+8%), just above the level in 1999. And all of this despite the fact that in many Eastern European countries, turnout remains very low, at between 20% and 30%.

The rise in participation can be attributed to the fear of losing what unites us as Europeans: the model of civilization that best combines economic prosperity, democracy, and social welfare.

And, more probably, the new awareness that the challenges we are facing (climate change, migration, the fight against terrorism) can only be overcome if Europeans join forces in a world dominated by continent-sized giants.

The second characteristic of these elections' outcome is that they have put the brakes on extremist parties, both right-wing and left-wing.

Europeans have rejected options that are against advancing on integration. The far right's rise has been negligible (from 21% to 23%), whilst far-left European parties have lost 20% of their seats (falling from 52 to 41). The Trojan Horse did not get through the gates.

And this despite the fact that Eurosceptic and Europhobic parties are no longer asking to leave the euro and the EU, and have been forced to join the European dynamic of cooperation, forming transnational alliances to pursue their goal of questioning the EU from within it.

In Greece, Syriza lost 10% of its voters, and was relegated to second place, behind the New Democracy party (PPE), forcing Tsipras to call early elections. In France, Melançon's La France Insoumise came in fifth, with six seats—the worst results since its creation. In Spain, the coalition of Podemos and Izquierda Unida held onto only seven seats, compared with the 11 they won in 2014, when they went to the polls separately. Joining forces did not keep them from losing voters.

This loss was due to two factors: these parties' dependence on the electoral appeal of charismatic leaders and on a voting base—mostly young and urban—known for its volatility and propensity for abstention. In the specific case of Spain, the Spanish Socialists won back practically half of their young ex-voters who had opted for Podemos in the last elections.

Naturally, it is satisfying to see that the Socialist slate of candidates that it was my honour to head won nearly 33% of the vote, going from 14 to 20 seats and becoming the biggest delegation in Europe's Socialist family.

The mobilization of young people is especially noteworthy in these European elections. In France, for example, turnout among voters under 35 rose 13% compared with 2014.

This mobilization has had political consequences. In France and Germany, the traditional parties were incapable of attracting young voters, being beaten by Green parties among those under 35. Young Europeans' *Fridays for Future* climate mobilization had an impact at the ballot box. This led to ecologist parties winning more votes than Socialists, which was another important aspect of these elections' outcome.

This change is crucial if we consider that in the 2014 elections, it was Marine Le Pen's National Front that was the main beneficiary of the youth vote (30%).

The rise in turnout strengthens the legitimacy of the project to build Europe. However, our citizens have not given us a blank cheque. The emergence of a European consciousness means that the EU must respond with a more politically oriented Commission.

We cannot ask our citizens to go out and choose from among different policy priorities to then tell them that the Commission is a technocratic entity that will apply the same policies regardless of the election results.

During the next five years, the EU must offer its citizens public goods that we can only attain through cooperation between Europeans: from clean air to fighting terrorism to guaranteeing financial stability. If it cannot do this, the EU will lose relevance and legitimacy.

Let us make solving global problems the next leitmotiv for promoting the construction of Europe. It is urgent that we respond with specific measures to the good news of our citizens' rising interest in the EU.

# 19

## REPUBLICA

28 June 2019

### EUROPE IN THE WORLD TO COME

«Mental boundaries are more dangerous than physical ones»

«In the world to come, size matters»

Emigration and depopulation, a major and understandable concern for inland Spain, are similar phenomena. Humans have always gone in search of better opportunities. A few months ago, in Seville, during the European electoral campaign, I had occasion to recall the Andalusians who built Catalonia, those who came with hungry faces and cardboard suitcases. I saw them arrive when I was a boy, delivering bread to the taverns of my village in the Pyrenees. They integrated, they prospered, and today they are part of Catalan society, although some people want to turn them into foreigners in their own land.

Many of our compatriots left Spain for America, to countries like Argentina, where they also became driving forces in their societies. It was there, in Mendoza, that my father was born, the son of Catalan emigrants, and he subsequently made the return journey to the Pyrenees. We have an immigrant inside of all of us, one in search of a better life. We are all a potential immigrant. The demographic imbalance between the two sides of the Mediterranean is increasingly evident. When I was born in 1947, the Old Continent and Africa had approximately the same population. Now, Africa is heading towards 2.5 billion inhabitants, compared to 500 million in Europe. Some, of course, want to exploit the fear of the different, whom they portray as invaders. «Let's shut down the ports,» says

Italy's Matteo Salvini, transferring the problem to his neighbours and running the risk of more drownings in the Mediterranean.

Is it possible to shut the world off from interdependence? Is it possible to be disconnected? To leave Europe, the euro? This would incur many costs, it runs contrary to the sense of history, and it is damaging to our interests. We need each other. We do not need to build walls, either between Spaniards, between Europeans, or between human beings in general, even though we cannot ignore the fact that states are defined by their territory, and the Union's external borders must be guaranteed and mobility must be managed in an orderly fashion.

Are we, as some say (Catalonia's Oriol Junqueras among them), so different, the Catalans and the rest of Spaniards, that we cannot live together? Let's have no more backward steps in an action replay of history, no more retreats, no more divisions. But mental boundaries are more dangerous than physical ones. Those that segregate according to race or religion, or gender. We should be unrelenting in combating these borders too. Einstein said that it is harder to smash a prejudice than an atom...

Brexit is another example of the negative effects of nationalism. This has plunged the world's oldest parliamentary democracy into a grave crisis. On the one hand, the British cannot remain in the EU and ignore a referendum, even it was won by only a small margin. But on the other hand, they do not know how to leave without inflicting serious damage on their economy and society. They have not left because they cannot find a way out. But it would not be desirable for them to stay just because they do not know how to leave.

Can anyone really be keen to repeat this experiment—with far more serious consequences—with Catalonia, which is much more integrated in Spain than the United Kingdom in the EU? Unfor-



tunately, it seems so. We live in a new world, where information is instantaneous, but so is falsehood. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish truth from lies. Previously, hoaxes travelled by word of mouth; now they are spread massively on social media, and at a much higher speed.

In Britain, they said that leaving the EU would bring in 350 million pounds a week, just like in Catalonia they said that they would have an extra 16 billion euros by being independent. These were both false assertions, and ones that have not been sufficiently refuted. Hannah Arendt said that the best subject for a totalitarian regime is not the convinced fanatic, but the one who is incapable of distinguishing truth from lies. This lucid affirmation is today, in the communication society in which we live, truer than ever.

Democracy works on the basis of opinions, which should be based on knowledge of the facts; otherwise, it would be running on fumes. Democracy is, above all, a collective deliberation; voting is only the final phase of that process, and makes no sense without it. But we are beginning to build a demagogic and plebiscitary decision-making system, one that deepens social polarization, thus curtailing representation and deliberation.

The case of Brexit is also paradigmatic: A country that by a very small majority decides, as a consequence of false promises, to leave the Union ends up deeply divided internally, paralyzing the rest of Europe to a large degree. The EU has spent three years trying to move forward with our eyes on the rear-view mirror. In the end, the British might need to hold another referendum.

But all these nationalist tendencies in Spain and Europe did not come out of nowhere. Globalization and the euro crisis have certainly created losers in the low-income sectors: They have become impoverished and anxiously face a future that seems not to have room for them, with jobs disappearing and relocating to Asia,

or being replaced by robots. In the 2007-2016 period in Spain, the poorest 40% have lost many percentage points of per capita income (the poorest 20% lost 10 points and the poorest 10% lost 20 points, whilst the richest 1% increased its income by 20%).

Thus, society is increasingly divided between cosmopolitan nomads, who draw full potential from European integration, with free movement, Erasmus, the euro (not having to change currency when crossing borders) and so on, and losers who stay in the same place, not benefiting from the advantages of mobility.

We are in a kind of perfect storm: a loss of the social and economic status of a large part of the working classes, termed globalization's losers, together with a threat, or perception of threat, of the loss of identity by society as a whole.

That is what the emerging national populists are taking advantage of. Faced with real problems, they propose false solutions and a dangerous national retreat, which is also based on identity issues. Consequently, it is not enough to defend open societies; we must also build cohesive societies, otherwise we will move not only towards closed societies, but also increasingly authoritarian ones.

No social conquest is irreversible. We have to focus on a new world of work, digitalization, robotization, and the consequences of the decarbonization of the economy: new challenges for equity in the face of the profound transformations that must be addressed. It is impossible, and even immoral, to ask people to worry about the end of the world when they are worrying about making ends meet.

In this new environment, it is necessary to shape a Europe that can distinguish rights from goods; a social Europe that ensures full employment within the framework of a green master plan for ecological transition, protects the unemployed with insurance that runs

complementary to the national schemes, and ensures a common framework of minimum wages.

We also have to protect new rights, such as those we must possess with regard to our privacy and personal data. Rights are intangible. They have no price, although exercising them has costs. But the neoliberal right still believes that everything can be a product in the market, forgetting what the poet Machado said: «Only a fool confuses value and price.»

Education is a fundamental right, in addition to being the best investment for building equality. I remember that my father's bakery employed a young Andalusian emigrant. He was brighter than me, but I was able to go to school and he was not. When I was Minister of Infrastructure, one day he visited me and explained a lot about road transport: He had become a lorry driver. His intelligence was wasted. Morality and efficiency demand that not a gram of any person's intelligence should be squandered.

A few days ago, at the year-end conference of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez, I took the opportunity to say that the most precious asset is not gold or oil, but neurons greedy for youthful knowledge. It is staggering that the brains of 20% of the world's children will not develop because of the food shortages they suffer. What a terrible waste!

The European project will remain crucial for our future. We can criticize Europe's failings as much as we like, but it is clear that if the EU did not exist, we would have to invent it—particularly in this new world in which great powers seek to assert themselves unreservedly. Because, despite its shortcomings, the EU's success lies in an extensive system that regulates globalization with a dimension appropriate to finding solutions to global challenges that range from migratory flows to the evolution of the dig-

ital economy, through citizen protection in a chaotic globalization, and security in an unstable strategic era.

In the world to come, in the one that it is already here, size matters. Spaak, the father of the Common Market, said that people believed that there were large and small countries in Europe. He replied that they were all small; it was only that some had yet to realize it. Can Germany, with its 80 million inhabitants, compete with China's 1.3 billion, a population that India will also have in a few years?

Europe's Airbus has been able to win its dispute with the American company Boeing at the World Trade Organization, and the EU has imposed several fines on Google and Apple for unfair competition and tax evasion. Could we have done this alone in Spain, Germany, or France? Could Spain have withdrawn our troops from Iraq without the shield of the euro? What would have happened to the peseta? How can we have a balanced relationship with China, if it is not as Europeans?

The great continental powers—such as China, India, the United States, Russia, and Brazil—dominate globalization, due to their demographic weight and productive and technological potential. And also because of their military strength. Meanwhile, Europe would be the main victim of a new arms race between Russia and the USA, just as a global trade war would impact us greatly. To address these, Europe has to show more unity, become stronger and become an actor of globalization. Among other elements, we need European capabilities to reject hybrid threats composed of cyberattacks and fake news, and ones that publicize anti-European movements allied with foreign powers.

Regarding European integration, it is not a matter of giving up sovereignty, but of sharing it, in order to exert greater influence on the world, to be more effective in solving the problems that

exceed the scope of states. Formal sovereignty is of little or no use in the era of globalization.

The European elections of 26 May 2019 were important precisely because the results —fortunately, Eurosceptics and Europhobes have advanced far less than some feared— reflected the kind of Europe we want. More social, more progressive, greener, more digital, more united, and stronger in the global world, capable of acting with the mindset of a great power: What is at stake for Europeans is our survival as a civilization, the one that best combines —despite its shortcomings— political freedom, economic prosperity, and social justice.



## **TOMORROW'S EUROPE: THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW LEGISLATURE**

«Our citizens have not given us a blank cheque»

«I subscribe to these three priorities: a climate pact; completing the economic and monetary union; and strengthening the role of the EU in the world»

On 16 July , Ursula von der Leyen, until now the German Minister of Defence, was narrowly elected the first female President of the European Commission. In a brilliant speech, von der Leyen set out her plans for an ambitious EU capable of using all the instruments at its disposal to address the problems facing Europe in this new legislature. Of course, there is no lack of potential, but great resolve and determination will be required to prevail over the challenges that lie ahead of us.

The increased level of participation in the recent European elections, happily among young people as well (Ms von der Leyen was not a candidate in these elections), and the growing rejection of extremist options both to the left and the right, is a positive development, showing that citizens have a growing awareness of the EU's importance in preserving our model of civilisation. For many of us, the EU is a beacon of economic prosperity political freedom, and social welfare that is unique in the entire world.

However, we have not been given a blank cheque. We cannot ask people to vote for us and then present them with a Commission that appears to be an alien, technocratic force that is in no

way representative of the election results. This is why I believe it is so important that support for Ursula von der Leyen' s investiture was preceded by active negotiations among the political groups in the European Parliament. These negotiations were carried out in a democratic spirit, highlighting the intrinsic quality of our debate, equipping us to successfully address the challenges that will arise in the next five years.

The magnificent speech by the new President of the Commission highlighted three priorities that I would like to discuss a little further: a climate pact; completing economic and monetary union; and strengthening the role of the EU in the world.

## **1. Climate pact**

Von der Leyen stressed Europe' s commitment to leading the transition to a carbon-neutral economy by the target date of 2050. To that end, she proposed a Green New Deal, through a European law to respond to the threat of climate change. These initiatives will be launched during her first hundred days in office.

By taking climate change seriously , we provide a tangible response to the recent massive demonstrations throughout Europe. Under the motto *Fridays for Future*, young people are calling for the new generations of Europeans to confront a problem that is both real and urgent. Achieving an ecological transition, by converting our energy consumption to achieve a carbon-free economy is a daunting challenge that must be addressed in our economic and fiscal policies. Europe must lead this transition.

Von der Leyen reminded us that this turnaround will not come free of charge; that long-term achievements can only be obtained by meeting short-term costs in terms of investment and income redistribution. For example, the carbon-related sectors of the economy, which also tend to affect the more vulnerable members of society, will suffer the impact of this measure. That is the price



of changing our way of life, of changing how we produce and consume. For example, the price of a ton of carbon could rise to 550 euros if no intervention takes place. At present, the emission rights market values a ton of carbon at around 25 euros, while the carbon tax which was the trigger for the «yellow vests» taking to the streets in France is equivalent to 55 euros per ton.

The bill for the ecological transition cannot be paid by those who are most disadvantaged. We cannot ask people to worry about the end of the world tomorrow if they can't make ends meet today. The President of the Commission was quite right in proposing a fund for a transition that is fair to all and which helps support those with most to lose from the ecological transition.

On the other hand, the transition to a low-carbon economy also offers a window of opportunity for fiscal harmonisation and for growth, enabling us to pay for the changes fairly. To do so, we must develop a European tax system that is responsive to the new challenges that will arise, and take advantage of the currently low rates of interest and of inflation to invest in the energy transition.

In her speech in Strasbourg, von der Leyen set out the Socialist parties' financial proposals for the ecological transition, based on three specific instruments: a European plan for sustainable investment; transforming part of the European Investment Bank into a climate bank with low-interest loans; and a border adjustment tax for third countries, to generate new tax revenues. This plan would create about 5 million quality jobs in Europe in the coming years, and enable us to convert the climate crisis into an extraordinary opportunity: to save the planet, increase sustainable growth, and create new jobs.

However, this plan will not be enough unless it is accompanied by active climate diplomacy beyond our borders. While Europeans only generate 10% of the world's carbon emissions, so even eliminating ours completely would not solve the problem. We must in-

volve the rest of the world, too, especially those countries whose development needs prevent them from taking the same approach as in Europe.

Europeans were capable of achieving leadership and control regarding the technologies of the past, such as steel, but we do not seem able to do the same with those of the future, such as 5G. For example, there are no European companies among the top 15 digital companies. We must reverse this trend, because the future will not wait for us. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, technology will be a determining factor in human progress: It will be the heart and soul of the economy, but also of warfare.

In 1950, Europeans pooled our coal and steel resources. In 2050, we must ensure that our children and grandchildren can live in a low-carbon economy. Let us make that our next ideal in working to build a new Europe.

## **2. Completing the Economic and Monetary Union**

In a monetary union lacking political and fiscal integration, traditional stabilising instruments (monetary and fiscal policy) are much less effective in dealing with financial shocks that affect one Member State in particular. As Jacques Delors said, if the EMU has only a monetary pillar and lacks an economic one, it will stumble and stumble until it falls.

Governments cannot be solely responsible for sovereign debt when they do not exercise control over their own currency. And the lack of an economic pillar makes budgetary discipline the only available instrument of fiscal policy.

Mario Draghi warned us of this in his speech in Sintra: ignoring the institutional weaknesses of the EMU may endanger all we have

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<sup>1</sup> Mario Draghi, «Twenty Years of the ECB's Monetary Policy», ECB Forum on Central Banking, Sintra, Portugal, 18 June 2019.

achieved so far. To avoid this, we must move on from a rules-based fiscal policy to one in which fiscal capacity is institutionalised. This will be one of the great challenges to be faced by the incoming Commission: to complete the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union by providing it with a fiscal pillar and equipping it to respond appropriately to new crises.

To do this, the EU must outgrow some of the paradigmatic elements on which its economic policy has traditionally been based. In particular, this means revising the fiscal rules of the euro through formal changes such as greater simplification and flexibility, or through a «more flexible» interpretation of the Stability and Growth Pact. Therefore, it is very positive that in her investiture speech, President von der Leyen opted to employ all the flexibility permitted under current rules.

Until now, the stabilisation function has been performed by the ECB with its policy of quantitative easing and with operations for the purchase of debt and other assets (SMP, OMT and APP<sup>2</sup>).

As a result of the ECB interest rate cuts, the amount of debt interest paid by European families fell from 40 billion euros in 2008 to just 4.3 billion in 2018. However, with current interest rates, the ECB has little room for manoeuvre, and must seek to coordinate monetary and fiscal policies. Thus, in the current context of *secular stagnation*, fiscal policy must complement monetary policy.

The ECB's monetary policy has also produced negative consequences, benefiting banks, raising asset prices, and favouring those who are already well-off.

Regarding the necessary creation of a fiscal union, various options may be considered, including extending the EU budget via new own resources, or creating a system of European unemploy-

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<sup>2</sup> Security Market Programme (SMP), Outright Monetary Transactions (OMT), and Asset Purchase Programme (APP).

ment insurance. The one currently most favoured by experts is the creation of a rainy day fund, that is, an inter-country transfer fund for stabilisation, operating in step with the phases of the economic cycle—something the previous Commission did not manage to achieve, despite the tireless efforts of Spain's Minister of the Economy.

Another possibility is the «golden rule» once suggested by Jacques Delors; that is, removing productive public investments from the deficit calculation, bearing in mind that, since 2007, public investment in the EU has decreased by 0.8%.

In this context, too, President von der Leyen has proposed important initiatives, such as complementary European unemployment insurance. Moreover, she has advocated completing the European semester, which is currently focused on achieving reforms and convergence among European economies, to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals will be met.

### **3. Strengthening the role of the EU in the world**

By population, military strength, and productive and technological capacity, the great continental powers —China, India, the United States, Russia, and Brazil— dominate globalisation. The only way to survive in this world of giants is to unite, in order to become stronger and to compete as a single globalisation actor. By ourselves, we are powerless; if we are to succeed, we must join forces.

In 2030, Africa will have a population of 2.5 billion people, five times more than us. Only a cultural revolution based on the empowerment of women can change this demographic trend. How could we imagine that any single European country might be significant in a world dominated by continental powers?

In tomorrow's world, which in fact is already here, size matters. When Paul-Henri Spaak, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, heard people say that in Europe there were large and small countries, he would reply that in reality they are all small—only some haven't realised it. Can Germany, with its 80 million inhabitants, compete with China's 1.3 billion, the same number that India will have very shortly?

The European Airbus consortium won its case against Boeing at the WTO Dispute Settlement Body. No European country could have done this alone. Moreover, the EU has imposed several fines on Google and Apple for unfair competition and tax evasion. Could we have done this alone in Spain, Germany, or France? Could we have withdrawn our troops from Iraq without European support? If we had not formed part of the euro area, what would have happened to the peseta? How could we have a balanced relationship with China other than as Europeans?

The EU is an enormously strong stabilising force in the world, an incredibly powerful instrument for regulating globalisation, and we cannot survive and prosper without it.

Europe must become even more united, to become stronger, a true actor on the global stage. In so doing, we will be able to face and overcome urgent problems such as migratory flows, the digital economy and public safety and security in this rapidly changing, and sometimes chaotic, globalised world. The present unstable times must be addressed by strategies based on firm resolve and cooperation.

As President von der Leyen remarked in her speech, NATO will always be the main pillar of our collective defence. However, the importance of the transatlantic relationship does not prevent us from developing our own European capabilities to prevent hybrid threats, cyberattacks and fake news that may be propagated

by foreign powers via anti-European movements. We are in the midst of a new messaging war.

This does not mean giving up our sovereignty but rather sharing it, making ourselves more visible in the world, and becoming more efficient in preventing and solving problems whose scope goes beyond national boundaries. This is the true value of the EU: It forms a genuine community; there have been agreements between nations at least since the Peace of Westphalia, but the feeling of union is what really multiplies our power.

The benefits of our European identity are not exclusive to diplomats, technocrats, and governments; they belong to us all, as do the tasks to be fulfilled. Europe cannot build itself; it is the citizens of the Union who have a voice and role in this future.

In response to the defeatism expressed in some quarters, let us recall, as often as may be necessary that the history of the EU represents an extraordinary political and human success, achieving the goal of lasting peace among Europeans. If the European Union did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it. Inevitably problems will arise, but the present difficulties, rather than intra-European, reflect the situation worldwide.

In response, I hope to make a useful contribution as High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the position for which I have been proposed by the European Council, and if, like Ursula von der Leyen before me, I win the confidence of the European Parliament.

# **TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS**





## REFLECTIONS ON THE NATO SUMMIT

«Spain is currently involved in 19 missions with 2,138 troops»  
 «What is at stake is knowing whether we are still part  
 of a transatlantic community»

When historians reflect on the NATO summit in Brussels on 11 and 12 July, they will face the difficulty of interpreting a paradox. As a guarantee of security for its member states, the Atlantic Alliance has been, and continues to be, an unquestionable success. However, never before has it been so divided and insecure about its own significance and survival. The paradox is that this time the sharpest criticism does not come from outside, but from the very inside of the transatlantic community. NATO, so to speak, is being subjected to «friendly fire».

President Trump's remarks at the recent G-7 summit in Canada are well-known. He stated that his country bears a disproportionate cost in protecting partners who were acting like «free riders» in trade relations at the expense of the US economy. A few days later, he added that those NATO members that have not reached 2% of GDP in their defence budgets should do so «immediately», and even double that percentage to 4%. President Trump's sense of urgency and his criticism of allied countries might seem harsh from this side of the Atlantic. But the truth is that US concern about the asymmetry between its contribution to common security and that of its allies is not new. It was already expressed by President Obama, and deserves to be approached reasonably. The question is whether it fully reflects reality. In a way, the debate about sharing

security costs among the members of an alliance is comparable to that of the so-called fiscal balances in a decentralized state. Not everything can be measured in accounting terms, and the results of the analysis may vary according to the method used, which will never seem fair enough for everyone.

It is said, for example, that a country like Spain devotes a low level of resources to its defence budget and, by extension, to allied security. However, this purely accounting-based approach ignores Spain's overall contribution to global security, both through NATO and other multilateral and supranational mechanisms. Spain is currently involved in 19 international missions with 2,138 troops, and numerous material capabilities. We participate in the international coalition against Daesh (Islamic State) in Iraq and train the Afghan security forces, together with other NATO partners. We are involved in all the military and civilian missions deployed by the European Union. In fact, Spain is the country with the most people contributing to them; from Ukraine, in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, to the Sahel, in our Southern Neighbourhood. As well as our strong commitment to the European pillar of defence, our commitment to security and stability in the Mediterranean is firm, and we are ready to take further steps forward. Thus, at the recently-concluded NATO summit, we offered to lead the forthcoming training mission in Tunisia and to provide logistical back-up support for the UN's presence in Libya.

Of course, nobody could suggest that Spain shirks our responsibilities when it comes to contributing to our own security and that of our partners and allies. On the contrary, we consider the two to be closely linked. Security is a global public good, and the Atlantic Alliance is one of its main suppliers. Therefore, it is a mistake to focus the debate on the relevance of the Alliance, or on the contributions made by its members, with an exclusively budgetary short-term approach.

What is now at stake is not so much a question of peremptory numbers and dates, but something far more important. This concerns finding out whether we are still part of a transatlantic community based on shared principles, values, and goals, which are characteristic of Western societies and inspired by humanism and the Enlightenment; verifying whether we still share the same geopolitical vision and a similar estimation of the risks and threats we face. To answer these questions, we must abandon immediacy and frame the current status of the Alliance within a historical timeline and a broader, moral debate.

From this dual perspective, two milestones have marked the evolution of the transatlantic world in the past three decades: 1989 and 2016. In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, and with it the existential enemy of the liberal democracies disappeared soon after, defence against which had been the Atlantic Alliance's principal *raison d'être*. In 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, and Donald Trump won the US presidential election.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the two great English-speaking countries were thus embarking on an uncertain journey, but one that seemed to distance them increasingly from their European partners and allies on the continent. It is tempting to see in the demise of the Soviet Union the origin of the fracture that now threatens the transatlantic community from within. That is, 1989 spawned 2016. Hence, some insist, it remains essential to find a substitute for the Soviet Union in order to provide an external stimulus to the cohesion of the Atlantic world. There has been no shortage of candidates, nor will there be, for that dubious privilege: from jihadist terrorism to neo-authoritarian regimes, including every kind of asymmetric or hybrid threat.

We must take all these threats seriously, and this is indeed the case. But I do not believe this to be the right approach to ensure the long-term survival and adaptation of our Alliance. The search

for threats of all kinds to preserve the unity of weak or fractured communities is a subterfuge often used by totalitarian regimes. It should not be our model. In our open societies, it is right to acknowledge divergences and accept disagreements as a prerequisite to overcoming them or, at least, to reach an understanding without severing links. This is our true challenge. It is obvious that the Trump administration and the European Union—with Great Britain in an uncomfortable limbo—today hold opposing views on key issues such as free trade, combating climate change, the course to be followed by the EU integration project, the resolution of certain regional conflicts, or how to manage relations with Iran as part of non-proliferation efforts. We cannot deny that, even within the EU, cracks have appeared between a nucleus (which includes Spain) that remains faithful to the EU *acquis* in its strictest sense and continues to pursue the ideal of «an increasingly close union», and other countries that enthusiastically deny or ignore basic principles of our political philosophy and practice.

The big question is whether these divergences between allies on fundamental issues are transitory or now constitute structural failures. If the latter were true, and we were unable to repair them, we would run the risk of an Alliance, which has preserved the security of the Western world for over half a century only surviving by inertia—or, even worse, perishing through the impatience of some and the indifference of most, to the delight of the real enemies of freedom and democracy.

We are still in time to avoid this. To do so, we should remember the words of Thucydides, when he stated that there are two ways of maintaining alliances: through law and the communion of values and ideas, or through self-interest and force. The former serve their purpose, and endure over time. The cemeteries of history are replete with the latter.

**LESS SUPPORT FOR TRUMP**

«For Europe, the USA is an ally and an enduring friend,  
despite Trump»

«We still wish to work together and protect our strategic interests»

The recent US elections to renew the entire House of Representatives and a third of the Senate produced a setback for President Donald Trump, with the Democratic Party regaining control of the House, after eight years of a Republican majority, which from its outset in 2010 had obstructed the progressive agenda of President Barack Obama.

The Republicans may retort that they still hold the Senate and have even increased their majority in this chamber, but this was expected since they were defending many fewer seats there than the Democrats, who now «have a place at the table in Washington», as reported in the *Washington Post*. From January 2019, when the new senators take office, it will be easier to thwart Trump's schemes, and even to investigate him.

While it is true that the President's party often loses seats in the mid-term elections (as happened to Obama, who suffered a resounding defeat), the present loss is very significant, for several reasons.

In the first place, with the renewal of all 435 members of the House of Representatives, this election really captures the mood of the country. On the other hand, only a third of the Senate has been renewed, and most of the seats at stake in this case (26 of the 33)

were already controlled by the Democrats, which made it easier for the Republican Party to retain power in the upper house.

In addition, participation in the present elections was high, at almost 50% of the census, which is five points above the usual level in a non-presidential year. This high turnout would seem to reflect a strong mobilization of the progressive electorate, which was not the case during the 2016 presidential elections.

Secondly, Trump had involved himself strongly in the campaign, speaking at multiple rallies nationwide and posting numerous tweets. Once again, he incited anti-immigrant sentiments, exploiting the northerly advance of the migrant caravan from Central America, going so far as to talk about an «invasion» and deploying 5,000 soldiers on the border. He also bragged of America's rapidly expanding economy and claimed the unemployment rate was the lowest since the 1970s. In theory, therefore, the President had everything in his favour, both the headline news and the economy.

Some qualitative aspects of the election result are also striking. There will be more Congresswomen than ever before and the chamber will be the most diverse in its history, from a religious and ethnic standpoint, thus reflecting the plurality of American society. Indeed, the only population group solidly backing Trump is that of white males. For the first time, and in the face of widespread Islamophobia, there will be two elected representatives who profess the Muslim faith. In addition, the nation's first openly gay state governor has been elected.

The Democrats' victory in the House of Representatives will undoubtedly curb, and perhaps bring a definitive halt to, some of Trump's best-known (and radical) initiatives, such as building the famous wall along the border with Mexico and tearing up Obama's health reform—although in fact these projects were not getting very far, even when the House was controlled by the President's

party. A relevant consideration is that for these laws to be passed there must be a majority in both Houses of Congress.

Of course, the President may decide to work with the opposition, moderating the most aggressive elements of his agenda, including international policy. The truth is that global governance is poorer without the active, constructive participation of the USA in such vital areas as international trade, security, climate change, and disarmament.

In any case, for Spain and Europe, the United States remains an ally and an enduring friend, despite the distance that has opened up between us since the start of the Trump administration. Therefore, we hope to carry on working together in support of our shared values, such as freedom and democracy, to further strengthen our close trading relationships and to protect our strategic interests. However, it is good news that the American people have turned left, voting for a more balanced distribution of political power in their country.





# 23

REPUBLICA  
5 December 2018

## **NATO, THE USA, AND EUROPEAN SECURITY**

«Russian militarization represents a serious threat»  
«The idea of creating a European army  
has been floated several times»

On 4-5 December in Brussels, the North Atlantic Council convened the Foreign Ministers of the 29 NATO countries to analyse security and defence issues on the international agenda. A few hours earlier, the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, vented harsh criticism of the EU, the UN and other multilateral organizations, in another sign of the fissures appearing in the transatlantic relationship.

In addition to the 29 allies, another seven countries, including Ukraine and Georgia, attended as guests and observers. Due to the dispute between Hungary and Ukraine over its new education law, Budapest is vetoing direct NATO-Ukraine meetings, and so Georgia, too, was included in the guest list. Thus, various security issues on NATO's eastern flank, and in particular the recent worrying events in the Azov Sea, were jointly tabled for discussion.

The Atlantic Council reiterated its view that Russia's progressive militarization of Crimea, the Black Sea and the Azov Sea pose a serious threat to the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and to the stability of the region. The Council called for détente and a de-escalation of the conflict, and stated once again that the Minsk agreements are the only political solution to the con-

conflict in eastern Ukraine. At the G20 Summit on 2 December, Spain expressed its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and demanded that Russia comply with its international obligations and release the Ukrainian ships and their crews that have been detained.

This conflict forms the backdrop to the current debate on the framework of transatlantic security and the roles of NATO and the EU in this regard. Since last August, when President Macron indicated the need for Europe to consider reducing its dependence on the USA for security, and after Chancellor Merkel, speaking in the European Parliament, openly supported the idea of a European army, these questions have been raised on several occasions. The issue is related to the distribution of defence costs, about which President Trump is becoming increasingly demanding, and to the responsibilities undertaken to ensure Europe's defence in a scenario that is now quite different from that of the Cold War (although some are trying to persuade us back down that path).

Spain is firmly committed to the EU and believes Europe should be ambitious regarding its security and defence capabilities, equipping itself to deal with any crisis affecting its own security and thus contributing to a more balanced division of burdens and responsibilities among the Atlantic partners. Moreover, this shifting balance can be achieved as a complement to our NATO membership and without denying the validity of the transatlantic link. It is our firm conviction that a stronger EU will make NATO stronger, too.

A major item on the current agenda is the status of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which was signed in 1987 between the then leaders of the USA and the USSR, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. Under this agreement, an arms control system was implemented in both countries, leading to the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons with a range of 500 to 5,500 km and to the establishment of a mutual verification system.

However, during the Obama administration, the USA detected that Russia had developed a missile system, termed 9M739, which violated the INF Treaty. Although it was almost certainly aimed more at China than at Europe, the creation of this system violated the Treaty obligations. In response, and rather surprisingly, President Trump announced America's withdrawal from this agreement last October, in a move that represented a major change in the global security structure and which has been strongly criticized in Europe.

The other NATO countries argued that the USA should postpone its withdrawal from the INF Treaty, in compliance with the notice periods and schedules established in the Treaty document. After arduous negotiations, the Atlantic Council approved a statement that included a unanimous condemnation of Russia's treaty violations, justified the US decision to withdraw from the Treaty and presented the call made by a group of European countries, together with Canada, for the preservation of an effective weapons control and non-proliferation system. To achieve this, the Council emphasized the need to negotiate a new instrument, maintaining or even extending the scope of the INF Treaty.

Spain is a Mediterranean country, and therefore has a direct and self-evident interest in the problems affecting southern Europe. Here, security threats are of a different nature: they are asymmetrical, presenting unconventional formats, and are more difficult to combat than «traditional» conflicts between nation states. One such threat is that of terrorism, which NATO must be prepared to address.

In the Mediterranean region, governments are not adversaries but partners. To promote this partnership, Spain recently organized in Alicante a Group Meeting for Analysis and Dialogue to address problems of mutual concern. In our strategic neighbourhood, there are two points of special interest: on the one hand, the chronic

instability of Libya and possible assistance from NATO in strengthening its institutions of security and defence; and on the other , NATO's contribution to the fight against terrorism and to training security forces in Iraq, an area in which Spain has long played an active role.

Spain has also been deeply involved in the Western Balkans since 1992, first when it subscribed to the arms and materiel embargo imposed by the UN on the countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia, and subsequently with its participation in UN-sponsored humanitarian missions.

Almost 30 years later , the work of Spain's armed forces has contributed to very substantial results being achieved. With their input and hard work, there is now a radically different context in which to contemplate the progress made in Euro-Atlantic relations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Finally, and unavoidably, we must consider the situation in Afghanistan. The Resolute Support mission deployed in that country is NATO's largest. One item of good news is that last October the first parliamentary elections were held in Afghanistan, organized and administered by the Afghans themselves, although only in the part of the country not controlled by the Taliban. Even so, the elections were marred by violence and by attacks at many polling stations. But despite all the problems, votes were cast by 4 million of the 9 million Afghans registered to vote, which is a very considerable total by comparison with electoral participation in established democracies, where voting is a much simpler matter.

At present, the insurgency controls almost 60% of the country and its numbers are growing, although it is composed of very diverse groups and lacks internal cohesion. Its actions coincide with the renewed presence of Daesh and its indiscriminate attacks.

Public safety has deteriorated and the numbers of civilian victims have increased since the ISAF Missions forces left the country . According to UN data, the number of civilian victims during the first six months of 2018 was the highest ever. In this terrible history, the Afghan government estimates that 30,000 people have been killed in combat since 2015.

Spain is actively participating in training the Afghan armed forces and has recently expanded its military contingent. At the same time, it is encouraging its regional partners to become more constructively involved in stabilizing the country.

Spain is profoundly committed to Europe and works as a proactive partner both in the EU and in NATO. We are resolute advocates of the Euro-Atlantic alliance and have demonstrated the utmost solidarity with our allies and partners. Our country has participated in diverse missions, in the East and in the South, in response to threats to public safety , at a time that is politically complex and ever-changing, in which the dynamic equilibrium of international politics is becoming less balanced and less stable.



## THE MUNICH SYNDROME

«There is no shared strategy between the Atlantic partners»  
«Too many breaches have been opened  
for there to be an easy solution»

The 55<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference, held last weekend (on 16-17 February), brought together some 30 Heads of State and Government and dozens of ministers, from around the world. The title chosen for the occasion —*The Great Puzzle: Who Will Pick Up the Pieces?*— seemed designed to challenge the United States, Russia, and China to define their roles in the world. Primarily, however, the Conference led us to rethink the geopolitical status of the European Union. And this is something to be welcomed.

Once again, the US government defended its «America First» posture, while also insisting that Europe should share America's aggressive position towards Iran. In this respect, Vice President Mike Pence largely repeated the speech given by Secretary of State Pompeo in Brussels last December. Nevertheless, reality is stubborn: America First is not good for Europe, nor is it good for the USA. What America is achieving is the extraordinary feat of turning the traditionally Atlanticist Germans into Gaullists, as observed by Roger Cohen in *The New York Times*.

The *Munich syndrome* is the term habitually used to describe the spectre of Nazi expansionism, in the manner of 1938. But in 2019, Munich appears to be giving rise to a new and very different syndrome. This time, Europe is faced with the dangers of nationalism and unilateralism within the USA. And too many breaches

have been opened in the transatlantic relationship for there to be an easy solution. As was made apparent in Munich, the litany of disagreements and grievances is endless, with multilateralism, trade, climate change, Iran and Syria just for starters.

In a memorable response to Pence, Chancellor Merkel said that going it alone is not tenable in a world that requires multilateral solutions. And that NATO, the backbone of the Atlantic Alliance, is not only a military alliance, but incorporates values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, holding these elements to be inseparable. She also argued that international trade must take place within a predictable and rules-based world order.

But this is precisely what is being called into question by Washington. And the path proposed by Merkel for Europe, in her Munich speech, is the right one: to continue the process of integration, in the political sphere, too; to be patient, awaiting a more favourable tide from the other side of the Atlantic; and to minimize the pain of Brexit.

In this respect, too, the EU's High Representative, Federica Mogherini, insisted that the best way to reinforce NATO and global security is to strengthen Europe's self-defence capability, making it a full member of the world's four great powers.

Europe's fear of the impact that would be produced by a far-reaching US withdrawal is more than justified. Examples of such a retrograde step include the US announcement of its renunciation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed in 1987 by America and the USSR. Undeniably, this arose from Moscow's breaches of the Treaty, which put Europe, but not the USA, within range of Russian missiles. Other fears are that the New START Treaty might be allowed to expire in 2021, thereby generating a severe and unjustified asymmetry between the USA and its allies, or that US troops could be withdrawn from Syria,



leaving Europe exposed to the danger of jihadism. All of these issues directly affect our safety, expose us to the cross fire of other antagonists and exclude us from contention.

The disagreement over the multilateral nuclear pact on Iran (JCPOA) has been aggravated by constant US pressure, such as Washington's application of extraterritorial laws to underpin trade sanctions, which has directly led to several European companies being forced out of Tehran. It remains to be seen whether INSTEX, the financing mechanism devised to help companies sidestep the US sanctions, will be effective, but in any case it demonstrates Europe's resolve not to meekly accept US impositions.

Similar considerations apply to a trade war that is aimed at China, but which has a direct impact on us. In the words of Angela Merkel's bitter rhetorical question, What can we expect from a US administration which views cars made by BMW—whose largest factory is in South Carolina—as posing a threat to its national security?

For Europe, however, just saying «No» to Mike Pence is not enough, because Europe and the USA are not the only players at the table. As well as Moscow, which is playing its authoritarian, revisionist cards, there is China, and the Europeans have yet to reach an accommodation with Beijing. In Munich, the Chinese representatives once again sought to present themselves as champions of multilateralism and cooperation, versus an America that is no longer an example to be upheld. However, Europe is not comfortable with China's record on human rights or its treatment of ethnic minorities. The multilateral system has many flaws and, for our Western tastes, China does not offer a satisfactory alternative model.

We have reached a moment at which there is no shared strategy between the two shores of the Atlantic; indeed, there is not even

a fluid dialogue. To dispel this new Munich syndrome —Europe's fear of becoming irrelevant in the new world order— we must take care to avoid two possible missteps. One is to fall prey to nostalgia for a transatlantic «golden age» that may never return, even if Trump is not re-elected. The other is to merely criticize Trump, but otherwise take no action. In addition, we must work with others who profess greater empathy with our values and interests. This includes the Democrats in the new US Congress, some of whom were present at the Munich meetings, starting with Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives. Come what may, it is time for Europe to blaze its own trail in world geopolitics.

**IBERO-AMERICA**



**25**

ABC

14 November 2018

## **ON THE IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT**

«The Latino Barometer reveals discomfort  
with the performance of democracy»

«The 26<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit is useful  
for regional integration»

It has become a cliché to affirm that the world has been in transformation for at least a decade, since Lehman Brothers crashed and the international economy fell into the Great Recession. But in addition to the financial upheaval and its aftershocks in Europe and Latin America, other landmark events such as the technological revolution, migratory flows and renewed geopolitical tensions have swept us into a new scenario, one that has yet to be properly defined. In this novel context, rather than a succession of «black swans», there have been paradigm shifts, forcing us to acknowledge that the world is no longer what it used to be. Just a few years ago, nobody would have credited the possibility of Brexit, of American withdrawal into protectionism, or of Europe lurching from one crisis—the euro—to another, even thornier one: that of immigration.

Meanwhile, initiatives to promote integration in the Americas, such as CELAC, OAS, Unasur and Mercosur, are running into problems, due to domestic crises, to an excess of ideology or to the fragility of institutional fabrics. There has also been a sociocultural backlash, with the growing rejection of pluralism and diversity by new arrivals on the political scene. And these phenomena affect and should concern us all in Europe, too. However, this is no

time for doom and gloom, for a «Marie Antoinette moment», as Wolfgang Münchau described the attitude of elites on both sides of the Atlantic. As with the USA and Europe, it would also have been difficult to predict the rising degree of public dissatisfaction in Latin America, which might yet converge with the illiberal, exclusivist and nationalist tendencies currently being manifested worldwide.

Latin America also presents symptoms of ideological polarization and populist leaderships, threatening the stability of the region. Surveys conducted in 2017 showed that 94% of Mexicans, 81% of Brazilians, and 72% of Peruvians believed that economic rules were rigged in favour of the rich and powerful (in Spain, the corresponding figure was 85%). In mid-2018, on the eve of the electoral upsets in Brazil and Mexico, another poll reported that about 90% of the population in each country believed their government was heading in the wrong direction.

The 2018 Latino Barometer revealed a widespread malaise and lack of faith in democracy; not so much in the concept, but in its performance. Thus, the number of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Latin America rose from 51% to 71% between 2009 and 2018, while the share of the population that remained satisfied fell from 44% to 24%, the lowest level in over 20 years. These trends are partly due to the frustration of the newly emergent middle classes, who feel their progress has come to a sudden halt. Nevertheless, the situation is reversible. Despite the vulnerabilities of the present, the middle income trap can be avoided with redistribution policies that drive growth and at the same time ensure no one is left behind. Social unrest also contains an element of hope, as society demands more of its rulers and becomes less tolerant of corruption. Citizens are calling for accountability, better public services, greater public safety and much more. In short, they will no longer accept being governed as they have been in the past.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit, held on this occasion in Guatemala, provides the opportunity for renewed dialogue on these issues. For many governments, it will be the first such opportunity to engage with each other in political and economic issues. In addition, an explicit commitment will be made to support the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the Latin American community can form part of a new paradigm, involving a notion of prosperity that combines growth, redistribution, well-being, innovation, institutionality, and ecological transition. For the sake of future generations, convincing answers are needed in all these areas.

In Ibero-America, in order to achieve stable, legitimate democracies, we must redefine the social contract and rebuild trust between governors and governed, at all levels of society appealing to the common values of pluralism, justice and social inclusion. A society will only be truly open if it is both inclusive and socially cohesive. The Ibero-American Summit, via the 2030 Agenda, addresses these issues directly. And internationally, in an era of heightening nationalist withdrawal, supremacism and unilateralism, the Summit makes the case for multilateralism, dialogue and cooperation.

In this regard, Spain's position is very clear. Latin America is once again a priority area within our foreign policy, in which we are working to reach a new balance in our ways and means of collaboration, with fresh goals in addition to the traditional activities of development cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, security and culture. These changes will be made in order to intensify dialogue and to listen more—in the fields of business and science, as well—so that we may learn from each other and, working in conjunction with the EU, create an institutional framework resting upon the ideals of justice, trust and social inclusion, and applying the universalist, progressive narrative of the 2030 Agenda.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit, focused especially on the implementation of this Agenda, is an opportunity to advance the Ibero-American system and a useful mechanism for promoting and revitalizing projects for regional integration.



## 26

LA VANGUARDIA

14 November 2018

EL UNIVERSAL

15 November 2018

### **THE 26<sup>th</sup> IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT: MULTILATERALISM AND THE NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT**

«The goal of a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable  
Latin America is not mere rhetoric»

«In Latin America, dissatisfaction with democracy rose  
from 51% to 71% between 2009 and 2018»

On Friday 16 November , the 26<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government will be inaugurated in Antigua (Guatemala) and the goal of achieving «a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable Ibero-America» will be proclaimed.

This aspiration is not merely rhetorical. The Summit has been preceded by political changes that reflect widespread popular unrest and dissatisfaction with the ruling elites. According to various surveys conducted in 2017, 94% of Mexicans, 81% of Brazilians, and 72% of Peruvians believe the economic rules are rigged in favour of the rich and the powerful (in Spain, this belief is shared by 85% of the population). In mid-2018, prior to the electoral upsets in Brazil and Mexico, another poll reported that about 90% of the population in each case believed their country was heading in the wrong direction.

The 2018 Latino Barometer revealed a widespread malaise and lack of faith, not in democracy itself, but in its performance.

Thus, the number of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Latin America rose from 51% to 71% between 2009 and 2018, while the share of the population that remained satisfied fell from 44% to 24%, the lowest level in over 20 years.

These data reflect societies in which the middle classes are growing and seeking decent employment and social mobility, but whose aspirations are still blocked by the world's worst rates of violence and inequality, by regressive tax systems, and by ethnic and gender discrimination. They no longer consent to being governed as before; they are outraged by corruption, and reject elites that take over policies and institutions in their own interest; they demand better public services, more public safety, and more participation, transparency, and accountability. And their values are changing, with the growing recognition of social diversity and women's rights.

The political scenario is characterized by severe threats to democracy, for example in Venezuela and Nicaragua, while regional organizations are failing to respond adequately to the challenges posed. In each of these countries, there are options for Spain to play a constructive role, responding to humanitarian and human rights imperatives, and working within the framework of the EU to facilitate dialogue and negotiation, thus preventing a violent outcome. Another area of concern is Brazil, where the recent election was won by those who were able to capitalize on public unrest, reminding us that the spectre of radical populism is not unique to Europe or the USA.

In Ibero-America, if we wish to have stable, legitimate democracies we must redefine the social contract and rebuild trust between governments and all levels of society based on the common values of pluralism, justice, and inclusion.

The Ibero-American Summit addresses these objectives directly, via implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. At the international level, the Summit is a powerful call for multilateralism, dialogue and cooperation to resist the strengthening currents of nationalist insularism, supremacism, and unilateralism.

Spanish companies have traditionally played a major role in our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting investment and high-quality employment, creating infrastructure and enabling technology transfers. Between 2010 and 2017, the EU, with Spain in the lead in many areas, accounted for 39% of direct investment in the region, ahead of the USA (31%) and Asia (16%)—including China. European business is also a world leader in sectors such as renewable energies.

Ibero-America has aligned itself with the EU in upholding an open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral system, at a time when globalization is questioned and the shadows of protectionism and financial instability are again looming. But, beyond trade and investment, Spain must once again develop a real foreign policy to engage with Latin America and the Caribbean, with more political dialogue and development cooperation, working hand-in-hand with social agents and migrants to create a fairer relationship, this time between equals. And we must do so in a multidimensional way, strengthening the Ibero-American space of knowledge and higher education, fostering cooperation in science, technology and innovation and supporting the cultural dimension.

If more active policies are to be adopted, we must take on board their bilateral dimensions, both the Ibero-American relationship and also the EU perspective, within multilateral frameworks such as the G20.

We are aware of the difficulties being experienced by regional organizations in the Americas, such as CELAC, the OAS, Unasur,

and Mercosur. Problems have arisen from national crises, in some cases, or ideological excesses or institutional fragility. These phenomena also affect Europe, and therefore we must continue to support regional integration, with political dialogue and new or renewed association agreements with Mexico, Mercosur, or Chile.

We must also reinvigorate our development cooperation policy, reversing the decline of recent years, which has left Spain absent from the international map, almost extinguishing a public policy that had expressed solidarity and the European, Mediterranean, Ibero-American, and cosmopolitan identity of our country and its people.

In the Ibero-American community, Spain has unparalleled experience regarding South-South and triangular cooperation. In this area, the best framework for us to work together is that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a universalist narrative of progress, with a solid commitment to multilateralism. This is the goal of the Summit in Antigua, Guatemala.

## TOWARDS A NEW MEXICO

«Corruption and violence brought us to the point of no return»

«Corruption costs an average household 14% of its income»

On 1 December , accompanying His Majesty the King at the inauguration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known to all as AMLO) as the new President of Mexico, I was once again witness to the respect and goodwill inspired by King Felipe VI. I also observed a presidential transition which, in the words of the incoming President, was destined to effect a change of political regime.

AMLO's victory was overwhelming. With a 53% share, over 30 million votes from all levels of society , winning in every state except one and gaining control of both chambers of Congress, he has ample political capital with which to implement his programme. Since the inauguration, he has worked tirelessly , presenting the budget and visiting all parts of the country , well aware that this historical opportunity must be seized.

But Peña Nieto also began with great promise and carried out important reforms. Why then, six years later, such an unchallengeable victory for his rival? Mexicans all gave me the same answer: We couldn't go on like this, we had reached our limit.

The two main factors driving Mexico to this point of no return were violence and corruption. In the latter case, not just that generated by companies and public authorities; corruption had spread into the private sphere, too and, in the words of the political scientist María Amparo Casar, had «reached the level of a social norm».

According to her data, corruption costs an average Mexican household 14% of its income, a figure that rises to 33% for households surviving on the minimum wage, which makes corruption «a regressive tax». And the statistics on violence in Mexico are almost beyond belief. According to official figures, more than 70 murders were committed every day in 2017. Other factors propelling the demand for change included weak economic growth and extreme inequality within society.

AMLO made two speeches on his inauguration day, or during his protest, as they say in Mexico: first, in the Congress, and then in Plaza del Zócalo to the indigenous communities and thousands of his supporters. In each address, he announced a reform programme, with three major priorities on which his victory had been based: fighting corruption, reducing insecurity and tackling inequality.

He proposed many specific projects, including a new national security force (similar to the Spanish Civil Guard) to reduce crime, a programme of austerity as part of which governmental salaries would be reduced, the sale of state assets, and major infrastructure projects such as the Mayan Train.

AMLO also referred to the question of migration, highlighted by the presence of thousands of Central Americans who had crossed the country heading for Mexico's northern border. The incoming President announced that many new projects would be initiated in the south of the country to provide employment for migrants, and that a comprehensive development plan would be implemented with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to tackle the main problems spurring migration: lack of work, fear, and insecurity.

The new President has demonstrated his willingness to exercise strong personal leadership, and also to undertake popular consultations, such as the very controversial one about the fate

of the new airport under construction in the capital. At the same time, however, analysts are unanimous that Mexico's institutions must be strengthened. Whether AMLO can resolve this three-way challenge of providing strong personal leadership, employing popular consultations and strengthening institutions will determine the success or otherwise of his presidency.

Another vital issue for the President is that of obtaining the resources necessary to carry out his ambitious programme. AMLO has already announced that he will not increase taxes or public borrowing, because he believes the announced programme of austerity, together with the sale of assets and the resources freed up by the reduction in corruption, will be sufficient for this purpose, although others have questioned this optimism. In any case, national resources will have to be complemented by the resolute support of private investment, which in turn requires a climate of legal certainty, guaranteeing clear, respected rules for the suppliers of capital.

On viewing the change taking place in Mexico, which coincides with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the modern Spanish Constitution, let us recall that 80 years have now passed since the massive arrival of Republican exiles in this country, defeated in the Spanish Civil War. I was reminded of this during my visit to the Athenaeum, an institution created by Spaniards who were forced to leave their own country. The Athenaeum's doors remain open today, thanks to the determination of its members, the few remaining survivors of that time, together with their children and grandchildren, who are working so hard to preserve this legacy. It was deeply moving to hear the personal testimonies and to see the archive of contemporary documents and books. Therefore, I welcome Mexico's continuing solidarity, this time with the migrants entering from the south, and on behalf of Spain wish the new President every success in this new stage of Mexico's history.





**AFRICA**



## THE AFRICAN OPPORTUNITY

«In Spain, most people are unaware of our ties with Africa»  
«Spain is the only EU country that has a land border with Africa»

The first European to reach the source of the Blue Nile, in 1618, was a Spanish Jesuit, Pedro Páez. However, over 200 years were to pass before any books about this quest were published, after British adventurers like Livingstone and Burton explored the continent. Most people in Spain are probably unaware of the ties that have bound us to Africa for centuries.

Spain is the only country in the European Union that has a land border with Africa. More than 2 million Spanish nationals live in the Canary Islands, a part of Spain which is acutely aware that its geographical situation, just off the African mainland, has the potential to become a valuable asset, boosting economic growth and the well-being of its inhabitants.

Economically, Africa is expanding rapidly . In 2019, six of the countries with the fastest-rising GDP will be African, and this growth will create a burgeoning middle class and reduce poverty . Africa's population will increase from the current 1.2 billion to 2.5 billion in 2050. Obviously, this growth will pose important challenges, but at the same time it presents a great opportunity , primarily for the Africans themselves, but also for Spain and its people.

This is the background to Spain' s 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa Plan. This Plan is based on an ambitious but realistic analysis of where Spain can

make a significant impact, attracting further investment into Africa. And this cannot be done relying solely on public resources: in addressing the challenges we face, the contribution of private investment will be essential. The World Bank has estimated that 902 million jobs will need to be created during the next 30 years. Such a task cannot be undertaken by governments acting alone, but they must show the way. Spain has embassies in 28 of Africa's 54 countries, making us one of the European countries most extensively represented in the continent.

Private investment, from Africa and elsewhere, may create the necessary jobs but government action can help ensure that this investment and the resulting employment give rise to fairer, more cohesive societies, as called for in the 2030 Agenda. The Spanish Development Cooperation Agency is working in Africa in various crucial sectors, including democratic governance, health, rural development, the modernization of agriculture, and food security. Programmes have been established to support women's equality, while others focus on young people, providing training and boosting employment.

When they talk about Africa, the first idea that comes to many people is that of migratory pressures. Although the Africa Plan does not specifically focus on migrants, accomplishing its goals would greatly contribute to alleviating these pressures.

Another important consideration is that 80% of African migrants go to other African countries. Some, like Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, South Africa, and Ethiopia, are poles of growth, attracting flows of workers from neighbouring regions. We should prioritize the consolidation of these countries as exporters of prosperity and stability towards their neighbours.

Because the only way to relieve migratory pressure is to create opportunities for young African men and women in their own conti-

ment, and this is the goal of our Africa Plan. Nevertheless, we must be aware of new threats appearing, such as the effects of climate change. We are particularly concerned about the risk of advancing desertification, since the loss of arable land and the resulting pressure on dwindling resources, including water, is perhaps Africa's biggest challenge and the potential source of major conflicts. Fortunately, democracy is now becoming well rooted in the continent. Only a few days ago, democratic elections were held in Senegal and in Nigeria, the continent's most populous country. But democracy and human rights have not yet reached every corner of Africa and the struggle to achieve these goals must go on. The number of violent conflicts in Africa is also falling, but threats to peace remain. Spain is strongly committed to the cause of peace, in this continent and elsewhere, and over 1,000 Spanish soldiers are working every day in support of the African Union's goal of stopping all fighting in Africa by 2020. The promotion of peace and security is the first of the four strategic objectives defined in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa Plan: for without peace and security, there can be nothing else.

A new Africa is emerging, bringing hope to all Africans and to those of us who, from the start, have shown we wish to be their partners. That is why I have travelled to The Gambia and Ethiopia, two examples of the new Africa that is coming. The Gambia is making an exemplary transition to democracy after 22 years of dictatorship, finally defeated at the polls, while Ethiopia has taken the path to peace after a long war with Eritrea. Peace and democracy open up exciting possibilities, and Spain must be a participant.



## **MOROCCO, BECOMING OUR GLOBAL STRATEGIC PARTNER**

«Morocco has always had a special relationship with Europe»  
«The EU must support Morocco's efforts to project its external influence towards the Maghreb and Africa»

Morocco has long been one of Europe's crucial partners. The time has come for this situation to be fully reflected in our relationship at every level, through heightened policy ambitions, deeper cooperation in every key sector, and a stable level of financing consonant with our goals. The Association Council's June meeting must incorporate this level of ambition into a policy declaration that leaves no room for doubt with regard to our common determination to take a major step forward in our relationship.

Without giving up its own identity and its key role in the Maghreb and the rest of Africa, Morocco is moving closer to Europe. This is a country which, under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, is focused on achieving a multiparty democracy and a market economy, on pragmatic and moderate solutions to religious tensions, and on modernization. All of these aspects form part of its identity, which has been called «the Moroccan exception». Morocco has always expressed the highest ambitions for its relations with the European Union, and it is the only country in the Southern Neighbourhood to have held a summit with the EU, in 2010 in Granada.

As far as Morocco is concerned, «the sky is the limit». I believe that the EU would be making a mistake by falling short of this goal. It is entirely

in our interest for Morocco to become our «strategic global partner». The truth is inescapable. Morocco, an Atlantic power, also controls the gateway to the Mediterranean, and the routes to Sub-Saharan Africa. Its strategic importance is of the highest order within a Southern Mediterranean in upheaval and an Africa in the midst of a demographic explosion. Its foreign policy in Africa is active and responsible, and it has combined generosity with effectiveness in the face of the challenges posed by migration. This has been the case here and in so many other areas, such as security—an area in which Morocco has shown itself to be a reliable and effective EU partner. The time has come for a major step forward, as demanded by the new situations and challenges we can already see on the horizon: We need a new framework and fresh content for our relations.

Morocco has always had a special relationship with Europe, one that goes beyond that of mere neighbourliness. If we want to deepen this relationship, we must begin by thinking beyond the current Association Agreement, to address the issue of a more comprehensive framework for the future. This includes the current reform process in Europe, also encompassing the impact of Brexit and our future relationship with the United Kingdom. The EU must launch a reflection on its international organization and the extent of its associations with its neighbours and closest allies. Morocco is an ideal candidate for such reflection.

Concerning its content, the same ambition must guide our efforts. Morocco should, and must, make urgent progress in many areas to advance on its European policy and to be able to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is in the EU's best interests to support and accompany Morocco on this journey. This is a global relationship, which has an impact on every political and socio-economic area. I would like to highlight a few that are par-



ticularly important, which have been addressed in European and Moroccan policy documents.

Firstly, everything concerning education, training, and job creation—the three are closely related. Cooperation, for its part, must be backed by capacity-building in the Moroccan administration. Spain's experiences with administrative twinning are highly positive, and I believe that a lot of new ground can be broken here. In this and other socio-economic areas, Spain has begun an inter-ministerial reflection to assert, on a European scale, its bilateral cooperation experience with Morocco. We stand ready to present concrete proposals when the time is right to go into more detail on programming.

Secondly, foreign policy. The EU must support Morocco's efforts to project its external influence towards the Maghreb and Africa—because to a certain extent, they mirror our own. Instability and radicalization in the Sahel, demographic pressure in Africa, tensions of transitioning to modernity in the Southern Mediterranean countries are all common problems that we should solve together.

This leads me to migration policy, which has a cross-cutting influence on our relations. Europe and Morocco are both facing heightened migration pressure. Africa will have 2.5 billion inhabitants by 2050, and its economies are struggling to grow at the same rate. This is a deeply rooted challenge that is not temporary, and it must be tackled with a combination of caution and ambition.

In this area, Morocco is already a solid EU partner. Spanish and Moroccan officials work hand in hand every day to control our common border. Meanwhile, Morocco is making a great effort to manage its borders with other countries in the region. To my eyes, the situation is crystal clear: Europe must make an urgent effort to provide much more support in this area, reaching the level of assistance provided to other countries.

Now is the time to talk about funding. We need a level of funding in consonance with the partnership that we are forging, and with the targets that we mutually demand of each other. Funding that is robust and, above all, predictable and well-targeted. We urgently need funding for the next two years, as well as a solid, predictable horizon for the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

To rethink cooperation does not necessarily mean starting from scratch. There is already an impressive body of experience on which we should draw. We should consider the untapped potential of the «Advanced Status» document of 2008, or unlock the promise of existing initiatives, such as those on cross-border cooperation and the Mid-Atlantic programme. It is equally essential for us to understand that we are deploying a collective effort comprising many stakeholders: Morocco, the different EU institutions, and the entirety of member states, with their different administrative structures. This bilateral and intergovernmental work can be combined with EU actions, determining which is most effective case by case, and seeking synergies among the different actors. Finally, and above all, we must not forget the importance of communication. Our peoples must be aware of our common endeavours to reach common goals, and this requires an effort to raise awareness and educate the public. We must all take ownership of these ambitions, and internalize them on both shores of the Mediterranean. The Association Council must approve a declaration to provide political momentum and strategic vision, as well as the essential aspects of the new relationship that we are going to forge. This new framework for the Association must aim to build a space of co-prosperity, a space of convergence towards our common future.

## DESERT GATEWAY, DESTINATION EUROPE

«Niger is the gateway for the 80% of sub-Saharanans who wish to reach the Mediterranean and Europe»

«The future of Niger lies in its ability to manage the thousands of kilometres of its porous borders»

Niger is a huge country, with a surface area of 1.2 million sq km, two and a half times that of Spain, although 80% of its land is desert or semi-desert. The city of Agadez, which was a strategic hub for the gold and salt caravans of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, is the last stop between sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahara proper, and it is now the jumping-off point for the caravans of migrants seeking to reach the Mediterranean and Europe.

Eighty percent of the sub-Saharan travellers risking their lives on the hazardous journey pass through this desert gateway. A few days after my own visit, the media reported the rescue of 400 men, women and children lost in the expanse of sand, abandoned by the organizers of their journey. We call them «people smugglers», but for the natives of Agadez, organizing the desert crossing is an ancestral activity, part of their way of life. Today, Niger is an unavoidable stage of the central Mediterranean route, connecting sub-Saharan Africa with Libya, and thousands of young people (334,000 in 2016) from The Gambia, Cameroon, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali venture north each year in search of the European dream. There are no data on how many perish along the way, but according to the International Organization for Migration those lost in the desert may be comparable in number with those who drown in the seas.

Organizing this flow of humanity is a lucrative occupation whose impact leaves none untouched. What was once small scale and widely accepted is now classed as criminal activity , against which the government has just enacted legislation that may have far-reaching consequences. Among other aspects, the new law —for the first time in Niger— tightens controls to fight police corruption.

However, this legislative measure is contrary to the principle of free movement currently accepted within the Community of West African States. Furthermore, it is opposed by the Tuareg tribes whose business of organizing the transfer of migrants to Libya was hit hard after the terrorist attacks of 2011 and the collapse of tourism in North Africa.

To address the daunting task of controlling this extensive, porous border , Spanish security forces have been invited to form part of a joint investigation team with French gendarmes and the National Police of Niger , which has created a specialized unit to fight people traffickers. Between 2016 and 2019, thanks to Spain's National Police and Civil Guard, 300 vehicles were seized and 500 traffickers arrested. This successful model may be extended to other sub-Saharan countries, but it would require a much larger force to control the immense areas involved.

And Niger is a poor country , lacking the resources to perform this task alone. Moreover , the government of Niger does not see this as a priority. Security spending has multiplied by 15 in the past five years, and now accounts for more than 10% of the national budget, a level of commitment that greatly limits the country's own development.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the sight on entering the capital, Niamey, speaks volumes about the sensations aroused by this country, which ranks 187<sup>th</sup> on the UN Human Development Index. The maternity hospital in Niamey , built years ago by the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency, when we dedicated

far more resources to development assistance than is now the case, illustrates the city's acute deficiencies in health care. The unpaved streets are congested with food stalls and vendors of all kinds, offering their goods to crowds of passers-by talking on mobile phones in a country where only the privileged have access to electricity or running water.

Those phones are the windows through which Nigeriens view another world, where other lives are possible. Lives very different from those endured in the poverty-struck heart of Africa, the poorest continent. But Nigeriens are not especially disposed to emigrate. They seem anchored to their land and loath to leave it as they watch others pass by, heading for Europe; and many of those emigrants come from countries that are not exactly comfortable neighbours—Mali and Burkina Faso to the west, in which Tuareg and jihadist rebels roam freely; to the east, Chad; and Boko Haram has its operational base in Nigeria, just across the southern border. To the north lie the migrants' destinations, Algeria and Libya, with whom Niger shares much of the Sahara, the vast expanse that also shelters insurgent groups.

Sixty percent of Niger's 19 million inhabitants live on less than one dollar a day, and 82% on less than two. They have a life expectancy of 60 years and the highest birth rate in the world, with an average of 7.14 children per woman; in consequence, the majority of the population is under 14 years old. Niger also suffers the curse of mineral resources, its people subsisting above some of the world's largest uranium reserves. The country is the world's fourth producer, and the first in Africa. These reserves are exploited, above all, by nuclear power plants in France, where 75% of all electricity supply depends on Niger's uranium. Meanwhile, 90% of homes in Niger have no electricity.

International NGOs have been working in Niger since 2005 and have contributed to saving lives, but poverty continues. Due

to climate difficulties and the dependence on agriculture, the situation is one of structural food crisis. Among the total population of 19 million, some 4.3 million are vulnerable and 42.5% suffer chronic malnutrition.

But climate change is not the only cause of Niger's problems. The difficulties of food production and supply are increased by a lack of skills and inadequate resources. Spanish Cooperation helps combat these deficiencies through agricultural training projects and animal husbandry centres. Of course, these activities are worthy and useful, but to make a real impact, assistance on a much larger scale is needed, involving other European countries.

In this difficult context, an important initiative is that known as the 3N («Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens»), promoted by the current government and headed by a High Commissioner who impressed me with his technical skills and commitment to this mission. This programme, supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), aims to promote local food production through the creation of agricultural jobs for young people and by constructing an irrigation network, with water from the Niger River. The project has garnered wide support, and the High Commissioner summarized its impact saying «The 6<sup>th</sup> Republic brought peace to the country, and the 3N Initiative seeks to return their dignity to the people of Niger».

The future of Niger also depends on its ability to manage its thousands of kilometres of porous borders, currently subjected to the migratory pressure of its neighbours. Because without control of its physical space, the country will not achieve stability.

Spain is also contributing to this goal, by creating, training and equipping Rapid Action Groups (whom I also had the opportunity to visit), led by security personnel from Spain, France, Italy and Portugal. These Groups are active in the G5 Sahel countries and also in Senegal, working to strengthen surveillance capabilities and to

combat crime in rural areas, supporting an operational battalion in each country. This aspect of Spanish cooperation, too, is of enormous importance but needs to be developed on a much larger scale, both for Niger and, perhaps even more, for our own sake.

Population control is the greatest priority now facing the Sahel countries. In 1960, the average number of children per woman was 7.5. Today it is little changed, at 7.2. In the next 20 years, if this pattern is not reversed the population will double, bringing another 18 million people to live in a country which is and will continue to be ranked at the very bottom of the human development index, because this same demographic growth is what prevents Niger from developing.

Europe must look to Africa, not with a paternal-colonialist attitude but seeking to implement a policy of shared development. In this respect, the Spanish government has contributed by drafting its 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa Plan, with four basic pillars: peace and security; economic growth to generate employment; institutional strengthening; and regularized, orderly mobility.

But Spain and the rest of Europe must both invest in Africa and take a much closer interest in the continent. Although, let us be clear, there are in fact several «Africas», and the Sahel, while causing us the most concern, is just one of them. Only when we realize that our own future is linked to that of countries like Niger will we overcome the challenges facing us all, including those of peace and security.





**ASIA**



## INDIA, AT THE FOREFRONT OF GLOBALIZATION

«In the 21st century, the centre of gravity is in Asia»  
«Together with Australia, Japan and the USA, India is promoting  
the geostrategic concept of the Indo-Pacific»

Imagine a country geostrategically located on a peninsula, with seven major rivers and a lofty mountain range separating it from a culturally diverse northern neighbour, and that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this country developed a decentralized democratic system. We might be talking about Spain.

But if we change the Ebro for the Ganges, and the Pyrenees for the Himalayas, charge up the superlatives (and realize there are, in fact, enormous differences between the two cases), that description might apply equally to Spain and to India. This crude analogy, nevertheless, illustrates the close understanding with which I was received during my official visit to India, my first to Asia. Today, this proximity will be reciprocated in the visit to Spain by India's Foreign Minister, who will be awarded the Order of Civil Merit in recognition of her government's help to the Spanish community in Nepal following the 2015 earthquake.

India's geopolitical importance continues to grow. Following the official visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in October and the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in November, our understanding of the world would not be complete without paying close attention to India, a regional power whose development is making ever greater impact worldwide.

Moreover, India is excellently qualified to be considered a player of global importance. First, because it is the fastest growing economy in the world, with its GDP rising by 7.4% in 2019, and by 7.7% in 2020. Second, due to its exponential population growth, which will very soon lead it to surpass China. In 2018, India had 1.37 billion inhabitants (while China had 1.39 billion), but sometime between 2030 and 2040 the Indian population will exceed that of its neighbour by 8%, and between 2050 and 2060 India will have 25% more inhabitants.

Its third asset is the existence of a thriving middle class, which in 2018 made up 20% of the population, and is forecast to reach 37% by 2050. These professional sectors, having grown up with access to higher education, are far less tolerant of corruption, which has been at the centre of recent political debate. And in this era of telecommunications, India is a class leader in ICT, with a bright future in technological development.

But India is not only a population giant and a manufacturing powerhouse. It is also a firmly-established democracy, the most populous in the world, capably balancing its enormous linguistic, religious and cultural variety and making diversity a source of wealth, not division (although not without difficulties). India has over 400 languages (of which two, English and Hindi, have official status nationwide and 20 are co-official at the state level). Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Jainism are traditional religions, and the country has a very sizeable Muslim population. So, let no one say that Europe, or Spain, cannot be united because it is «too diverse».

These assets, together with its privileged geographical location (jutting into the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the trading route for 90% of the world's commerce), place India firmly in the world's geopolitical vanguard.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, life in Asia was strongly shaped by Eurocentric geopolitics. But no longer. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world's centre of gravity lies in Asia, and this is where Spanish business must strengthen commercial relations, for example in the naval, aerospace and railway sectors. Spain's politicians, too, must redirect their attention, securing our presence in the principal forums on international relations and security, such as the Raisina Dialogue, a meeting promoted by the Indian Government, under Prime Minister Modi. I had the opportunity to participate in the latest edition of this Dialogue, which enabled me to obtain a first-hand impression of our Asian partners' worldview.

Together with Australia, Japan and the USA, India is promoting the geostrategic concept of the Indo-Pacific, a space encompassing the two great oceans and which its promoters seek to maintain «free and open» for trade and navigation, to uphold the safety of sea routes. The initiative also has a political slant (all its members are democracies) and can be seen as a response to China, a continental economic power that overshadows this region and whose influence extends to Africa. Thus, China's «New Silk Road» (which despite its name is not purely terrestrial) is viewed by some observers as reflecting hegemonic ambitions.

Spain and Europe must pay close attention to the alliances and alignments being formed in the Asian basin. The European Community project, an exemplary success story, has produced the longest period of peace in our recent history and has always been cooperative in nature. This approach is what we can propose to our Asian partners.

The European Union has also acknowledged India's global potential. On 20 November, the European Commission and the High Representative published their joint communication, «Elements for an EU Strategy on India», in which it was proposed that the annual dialogue should be raised to the level of regular strategic dialogue,

in recognition of India's growing specific weight. Reflecting this importance, the EU is India's largest trading partner (closely followed by China), while India is the EU's ninth trading partner. Moreover, the EU is the second largest investor in India (with a cumulative stock of about 55 billion euros) and the EU is the main recipient of Indian foreign investment.

For all these reasons, negotiations to reach an EU-India free trade agreement and an agreement to protect EU investments in India must be undertaken jointly and without delay. These initiatives and agreements will further strengthen the ties between the world's two great democratic unions, in Europe and India, facilitating a meeting of minds between the Asian lion and the European bull and boosting the progress and welfare of the two peninsulas of greatest geostrategic importance in the Eurasian landmass.

## FROM THE CAMPAIGN TO THE ROAD

«The New Silk Roads refers to the Han dynasty's network of exchange with the rest of the world»

«Think of China as a world player, as a country reclaiming its 'Middle Kingdom' outlook»

After following the second televised debate of the Spanish election campaign, I'm flying to Beijing, where I'll have the satisfaction of representing Spain at the great conference being organized by the Chinese government on the Belt and Road Initiative, colloquially known as the New Silk Road.

During the long flight, I'd like to reconnect with these digital pages. Writing helps me kill the time and is invaluable, moreover, in times such as these, when cool, calm reflection is called for.

As far as the campaign is concerned, the debate on Spain's *La Sexta* channel was more of a slugging match than the previous one hosted by the public broadcaster RTVE. We were offered the spectacle of a confrontation between Mr Casado and Mr Rivera for the leadership of the right (in the absence of the non-invited Vox party), while on the left it appeared that Podemos might add their votes to provide the PSOE with a working majority. Once again, the PP and Citizens accused Mr Sánchez of having done a deal with the breakaway Catalans, allowing him to become Prime Minister with their support for the no-confidence motion; in this, they were untroubled by concerns of consistency, having relied on the votes of the same Catalan groups to keep Sánchez out of power when the proposed budget was rejected—seeming to forget that when

two sides act in their shared interest, on a given occasion, this does not make them firm allies against a third party.

If, like Habermas, we look on democracy as a process of social deliberation, in which counting the votes on election day is only the final phase, we must inquire as to the usefulness of electoral debates as instruments of that process. In the *La Sexta* debate, each participant had little over 30 minutes to present their proposals on all the issues comprising an election platform and to contrast them with those of their adversaries. An impossible task. Even when the debate managers did not consider it necessary to address questions of international politics or the problems facing the European Union!

There must be a more efficient way of conducting a political debate, one that would properly inform voters about their choices at the polling booth. Party rallies do not do so; their main point is to keep the faith and to keep the voters faithful, as speakers preach to the converted. And head-to-head debates are inadequate in time and in format. These questions represent a serious problem that liberal democracy must address, at times such as these when communication and interactivity, facilitated by information technology, have starkly revealed growing disaffection with the mechanisms of our democracy, and when «national populism», epitomized by Brexit and Trump, is becoming resurgent in Europe, the USA, and elsewhere.

Let us all take good note of the importance of these elections; they are quite different from the previous ones and, indeed, may be considered «existential» for our political system.

In the meantime, I hope to experience something of the rising new China. To illustrate its fascination, let me recommend Peter Frankopan's *The New Silk Roads*, which explains how the term «Silk Road» was first used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the German geographer Ferdinand Richthofen to refer to the network of ex-



change created between China and the rest of the world during the Han dynasty.

Now, suddenly, we are confronted with the true economic, technological, political, and military dimensions of China. This has been acknowledged by the EU, whose recent Commission communication considered China a «systemic rival», and by NATO, which for the first time has dedicated a working session to discuss China, doing so at the Washington Conference held to celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Under President Donald Trump, the USA has become increasingly antagonistic towards China, while Beijing is asserting itself in diplomatic, technological, and military spheres, investing aggressively and seeking to play an active geopolitical role worldwide.

Despite Europe's self-absorption with Brexit, the strategic relationship between the EU and China was discussed at the European Council meeting held last March, for the first time since 1989, when the then 12 Member States imposed sanctions following the events in Tiananmen. It is surprising that this renewed interest has taken so long, because in the last 40 years China's economic rise has transformed global geopolitics.

One reason for this is, probably, that in the last ten years we have been preoccupied with our own crises in Europe, focusing only on the economic advantages of the rapid growth of China, which is our major trading partner (especially for Germany; for example, Volkswagen sold 40% of its production there in 2018), but we have failed to consider other consequences of China's rise.

Now, this has changed, and in the future the change will take place at an ever faster rate. Trade wars, whether or not China is a target of the conflict, the competition for new technologies, industrial policies, and cybersecurity, among other issues, have put China firmly on the European political and strategic agenda. For

this reason, when we were preparing the March meeting of the European Council, the EU foreign ministers sat down face-to-face with their Chinese colleague. This was the first such occasion in 30 years. Very few leaders in international politics have not taken part in a luncheon of this kind, with direct dialogue between the participants, with a subsequent report of calculated vagueness, attributing no opinions and glossing over the issues addressed.

Why this extended and studied neglect, even though China's rise to global power has been the subject of innumerable comments, essays and analyses? I believe it is because, as China grew at a spectacular rate, strengthening its international influence and taking up strategic positions, first in the Asia-Pacific region, then in Africa, then in Latin America, and ultimately within the economic and business fabric of Europe, here at home, we have allowed local issues—the euro, the refugee crisis, Brexit—to absorb the attention and political energies of our institutions, including those of the European Council.

With the question of Brexit seemingly interminable, we had been contemplating the future in the rear-view mirror, but a collective evaluation of the challenges posed by the new China could no longer be postponed. Finally, and inescapably, our attention was drawn to the elephant in the room. And the trigger for this was very probably the leadership China had acquired in 5G technology.

The communication presented by the Commission reflected three fundamental changes during the last 30 years in Europe's outlook on China.

Firstly, we cannot continue viewing China as a developing country, a status that might afford it a competitive advantage. This consideration hardly applies to a country whose per capita GDP is higher than that of some EU Member States and which is about to rival the USA in the number of companies it has among the world's 500 largest.

Second, whilst remaining a potential key partner, China is also a competitor. And not only in the technological and industrial spheres. It is also a strategic competitor, having added political ascendancy, diplomatic influence and military power to its already considerable economic capacity. In Brussels, this is termed a systemic rival.

Third, in assessing the current situation vis-à-vis China, a broader focus is needed, taking into account geostrategic and national security considerations as well as the effects of its economic expansion. We must learn to think of China as a world player a country that is reclaiming its centuries-old «Middle Kingdom» outlook, with the consequent implications for our European peninsula at the western tip of Eurasia. China is no longer a mere opportunity. It is a substantial, indeed an existential challenge, and cannot be ignored. We must grasp this new opportunity to re-create our continent, to fashion the Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And China is playing its part in alerting us to this historic opportunity.

The first consequence of China's extraordinary foreign and military outreach is the conclusion of the so-called «peaceful ascent», which until the present has characterized its re-joining the international system. Since the time of Deng Xiaoping, Chinese leaders, acting with a commendable strategic vision, have accumulated power and influence while avoiding conflict, acutely aware of the need to avoid raising fears and to inspire confidence. Except in matters that touch close to home, such as Taiwan and territorial integrity, Beijing has avoided taking a hard line on any issue. The foundations for global power status were laid with an ongoing message of cooperation, goodwill and harmony, as Chinese diplomats describe it, drawing from the Taoist tradition. Or in the words of Deng Xiaoping, «Hide your strength, bide your time.» Well, China's time has come.

But there is a limit to how far a country can grow, within a finite space, without making its presence all too obvious and without

treading on someone's toes. Especially when this growth is accompanied by the ambition to prevail, at least in the regional framework. China has now outstepped that bound, and its leaders are looking to throw off Deng's cautious approach.

In view of these developments, Europe must take stock and not deceive itself regarding the real possibilities of our bilateral relationship. China advocates a model of society and has a vision of international relations that are quite different from our own. Our open societies, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, diverge considerably from the Chinese model. Nor does our social market economy bear any resemblance to the profound inequalities that characterize State capitalism. None of this prevents us from working together, of course. But it does advise us of the need to manage a relationship that will inevitably be subject to considerable tension. Times have changed. We are now faced with a new situation: not a new Soviet Union or a new cold war but something much more complex that will be played out in fields far removed from the military sphere; technology will be a key priority. In this endeavour, Europe must act in harmony or be condemned to irrelevance. However, the problem lies, precisely, in the fact that in its relations with China, Europe is not sufficiently united.

I believe consideration of these questions should lead us to draw two main conclusions. On the one hand, let us be clear, no EU Member State alone can aspire to have a balanced relationship with China. The relationship will always be asymmetric.

Only as a union of European States can we hope to attain such a balance. Here, as in so many issues, Europe is not an option. It is a necessity if we wish to preserve our model of society.

On the other hand, I am convinced that although the relationship between Europe and China will be complex, it may profit both parties and, given the global responsibilities of each one, ultimately

benefit the entire planet. In recent years, voices have been raised claiming that the rise of China has brought us to a new «Thucydides moment». The Greek historian masterfully described the conflict that arises when an emerging power tries to displace the previously dominant one. However, I hope and believe that the logic of cooperation will prevail over that of confrontation, which could only be catastrophic for us all.

But only Europe-wide perspective and action will enable this logic to be put into practice. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the EU was founded on coal and steel. Today, in the 21<sup>st</sup>, we must re-found it on technology. Only thus can we be globally competitive, gain strategic autonomy and successfully address the challenges presented, whether from the east or from the west. Only thus can we prevent our socio-political model from being dragged, by one force or the other, into a zero-sum game in which we would all be losers.



## **THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF THE INDO-PACIFIC: COMPETITION AND COOPERATION**

«We are witnessing a shift in global geostrategic focus  
from the North Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific region»

«Cooperation between Beijing and Brussels is being promoted  
through the Connectivity Platform»

Over the past few years, and at an ever-quickening pace, we have been witnessing a shift in the centre of gravity of global geostrategy from the North Atlantic to the oceans of the Indo-Pacific region. As early as 2007, while on a visit to India during his first term in office, the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, announced the «Initiative for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific». Free in that its goal is to guarantee freedom in decision-making throughout the coastal States, and open in that it seeks to preserve free trade based on international law, in particular on the United Nations 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Since October 2017, the Trump administration has adopted the «Indo-Pacific region» as a strategic concept of its own, and one that serves as an alternative to that of «Asia-Pacific». The latter referred to the common interests shared by the USA and East Asia. By endorsing the new concept, Washington has broadened this community of interests to include India and Australia—the other two members of the initiative to date. If China created its «string

of pearls» in these Indo-Pacific waters through the New Silk Road, the four Asian democracies have come together through this initiative to create what has been dubbed the «democratic security diamond». The EU must follow this process closely. For the time being each country is investing separately in its own projects—the organizational initiative and founding documents which could bring the countries' separate paths closer together are still lacking. Moreover, the member countries still have somewhat different perspectives: while Japan appears to view the initiative as being regulatory in purpose, for the USA its function is, instead, geopolitical, focused on containing China's growing assertiveness.

In the Manila Declaration of 2017 the four participants expressed their commitment to the rule of law and to the promotion of freedom. If the USA is seeking to strengthen its commitment to freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific, it would seemingly only need to take the following two steps.

Firstly, it must ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the «Constitution of the Seas». Maintaining the rules-based multilateral order, which is the cornerstone of a stable and prosperous international society, requires underpinning the international standards that the majority of us share.

Secondly, the United States could re-join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which it so precipitously departed, leaving not a few countries in the region feeling abandoned. Thanks to Prime Minister Abe's determination, the remaining 11 countries did not follow suit. The British would do well to take heed: a vessel does not sink because someone jumps ship—on the contrary, it continues to travel the seas, but with a lighter cargo.

For its part, at the ASEM Summit held in October 2018, the European Union presented its own strategy for connecting Europe and Asia. If the fundamental principle of the Japanese initiative is the construction of «quality infrastructure», in Europe we are in-



sisting upon the « financial, labour, social and environmental sustainability» of projects, to effectively facilitate the development of the recipient States.

The countries of the region can no longer say that they do not have any alternatives: the Chinese pearls, the Indo-Pacific diamond, and —if you will allow me to extend the metaphor to us too— the European sapphire (for the colour of our flag).

But there is not only competition in this region. In October 2018, the Japanese Prime Minister, Abe, and the Chinese President, Xi, signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding cooperation on 50 infrastructure projects in third countries. Cooperation between States is written into the foundational DNA of the EU, and the Union has taken cooperation to its utmost limits. That is why it has also presented this European strategy to China, and why the Connectivity Platform is beginning to include projects promoting cooperation between Beijing and Brussels, subject in all cases to EU principles on connectivity.

In Madrid, on 16-17 December 2019, we will continue talking about connectivity between Asia and Europe, at the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting, at which we will have the honour of welcoming 51 European and Asian ministers, the EU and ASEAN. Perhaps the time has come for the members of the Indo-Pacific diamond and of the European sapphire to consider combining our strengths to cooperate on joint projects to benefit the democratic development of the recipient countries. At the end of the day, our political, social and economic model has given our citizens the highest levels of freedom, economic progress and well-being that humanity has ever known.



**UNITED NATIONS**



**SPAIN: 2030 HORIZON**

«It's about a vision of a country: a common project»  
«The 2030 Agenda is at the very heart of our political action»

Since my appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation just under two months ago, I have been absent from this website for the obvious reasons arising from my unscheduled arrival in an institution as complex and with as many responsibilities as this Ministry . Since becoming Minister , I have had many more things to say , and many more experiences to share, but I have also had much less time in which to do so. However, I shall continue to surface from time to time to address the readers of *La República de las Ideas*, so that some of these issues are not forgotten.

And one of them, which has received little media attention, but which is of the utmost importance, is the 2030Agenda. Having just returned from New York, where it all began three years ago, and where I travelled to present Spain's report on compliance with the Agenda to the UN and to go through the Voluntary National Review process, I would like to give the Agenda the recognition that it deserves. In completing the Voluntary National Review, Spain's new government has endeavoured to present an accurate portrayal of the extent to which we have achieved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Review can be consulted at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>. Above all, we wished to show our fellow citizens and the international community that Spain

does have a common project and a shared roadmap for building a better country by 2030, which is nearer than it seems.

The work that lies ahead of us if we are to comply with the 2030 Agenda could form part of the collective narrative that we have so often complained —with good reason— is absent from our country «Spain has no story; we lack a common project, a roadmap, such as the Transition to democracy and the return to Europe were in their day.» How many times have we heard this lament in the past few years? If there is a cliché shared by both the left and the right, by both the older and younger generations of Spaniards, it is that Spain lacks an ideal capable of mobilizing us as a society and of offering us a vision for the future.

I have also discovered, in these busy days in which I have been occupied with affairs outside Spain's borders, that this opinion is also widespread in other countries. It may well be that this hopelessness, this sense of aimlessness is fostering a large number of the ills currently blighting many European and Western societies, societies concerned about their ageing populations, their relative loss of power, and the arrival of immigrants used by some to stir up fear and xenophobia.

But we must not accept this state of affairs, nor these defeatist attitudes. It is not true that Spain lacks objectives. It is not true that we are condemned to wander blindly without knowing what fate has in store for us. It is important to highlight that the 2030 Agenda which I have just recently been discussing at the UN, together with other members of the Government, currently proposes 17 goals to be met in little over a decade and, to achieve these goals, we must meet 169 duly defined targets which affect the entire structure of our economy and society.

To ensure that our collective action is guided by a single narrative, it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. And here we have our single narrative, it is called the 2030 Agenda. The goals

to inspire our collective existence have already been set in place: they are called the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And let me tell you, they are ambitious, and they will not be easy to achieve. To end poverty; to achieve food security; to ensure inclusive, quality education; to achieve effective gender equality; to promote inclusive economic growth that seeks to create sustainable jobs and foster equality; to combat climate change; to build resilient infrastructure; and to offer decent work to all. To achieve these goals we need to promote innovation; to transform our cities into models of co-existence, where harmony reigns both between inhabitants and between the cities themselves and their surrounding environments; we need to heal the oceans, forests, and ecosystems damaged by human activity; and to do all of this, we will need the full collaboration of both public and private actors, and to mobilize resources in every country, regardless of their levels of development.

The 2030 Agenda, with the 17 SDGs summarized above, is universal and transformative in its intent. It was approved by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, and Spain's commitment to it was unequivocally expressed by King Felipe VI on that occasion.

Spain's Members of Parliament support it, as demonstrated by the approval in Congress of Motion 161/001253, with the consensus of all parliamentary groups, on 12 September 2017.

That said, we would do well to be self-critical regarding our efforts. The above notwithstanding, we need to step up our levels of collective mobilization, to bolster our public policy, if we want to meet the 17 SDGs on time, as we have set out to do. We are already behind schedule. That is why Spain's current Socialist administration has placed the 2030 Agenda at the very heart of its political action. The first step was to strengthen the governance structures and the existing Action Plan for achieving the SDGs. To this end, Cristina Gallach, who has extensive international experi-

ence in the United Nations and in the European Union, has been appointed as High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda. We have also reinstated the Ministry of Equality , and created the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, as well as the Ministry of Ecological Transition, which has responsibilities in the areas of energy, the environment, climate change and water, which were previously separate. We have adopted more ambitious positions in respect of EU commitments to comply with the Paris Climate Change Agreement. We have extended access to universal healthcare to undocumented immigrants. Employment policy must be adapted to ensure that economic growth does not exacerbate inequalities. We have put children at the centre of our fight against inequality by creating a High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty; it is unacceptable that 2.1 million children are at risk of falling into poverty in this country. And Spain showed its solidarity at the height of the refugee crisis by allowing the rescue ship *Aquarius* to dock at a Spanish port.

Ultimately, these are not isolated measures; they form part of a vision for our country: a common project. We must set to work immediately to prepare and to present, in the near future, a Sustainable Development Strategy based on realistic objectives that will enable us to meet the requirements of the 2030 Agenda; and, in so doing, we must involve all key stakeholders in order to put specific actions into practice at the different levels of the Administration and of society, so that we can start 2030 with our chores done. And thanks to these efforts we will have built a better society



### THE TORTURE TRADE

«Torture is designed to destroy the human soul»  
«Prohibiting the trade of torture goods would provide  
a binding framework»

Torture is a crime under international law and cannot be justified under any circumstance. The systematic use of torture is a crime against humanity. And, while an ever-growing number of countries have decided to stop applying the death penalty, thousands of people remain on death row awaiting execution. In addition to being inhumane, degrading and immoral, these two types of punishment are totally ineffective, given that, quite simply, they do nothing to reduce crime.

While world leaders frequently express their support for the abolition of these methods, paradoxically, the products that are used to torture and execute people are being freely traded across borders, from seller to buyer. They are truly horrible instruments: barbed truncheons, belts that deliver electric shocks, devices that restrain individuals while they are being electrocuted, and chemical products that are used for executions, as well as, inter alia, gas chambers, and electric chairs. In short: goods that are used exclusively to inflict pain and to kill. If the international community is sincere in denouncing these practices, it must end this trade; in fact, action is being taken in this regard. Last autumn, during the UN General Assembly in New York, almost 60 countries came together to launch the Global Alliance for Torture-Free Trade. An initiative of Argentina, the European Union, and Mongolia, its pur-

pose is to go beyond vague promises and make it much more difficult for companies and countries to dispatch these goods across the globe.

The countries of the Alliance have undertaken to pursue several specific objectives: to control and restrict exports, by introducing export bans, among other measures; to create a platform for customs authorities to monitor trade flows and to identify new products on the market; to ensure the availability of technical assistance to help countries to introduce legislation; and to share practices to ensure effective compliance with the law.

The Alliance has already set to work. At the beginning of the summer, for example, experts from 38 countries met in Brussels to discuss how they would share knowledge and resources with those countries that wish to introduce rigorous export controls. The meeting was a step along the path towards creating an international network of national customs authorities to combat this scourge.

In recent years, largely as a result of the introduction of export bans, the culprits are facing greater difficulties, and are having to pay higher prices, to obtain instruments of execution and torture. However, the manufacturers and sellers of these products are trying to evade these laws; for example, by diverting their shipments, making it even more urgent that international efforts be strengthened.

Obviously, incipient cooperation within the Global Alliance for Torture-Free Trade constitutes a first—and necessary—step, but there is a great deal more to be done. This is why, at the first ministerial meeting, next week, on 24 September, the Alliance will decide to further its development: more countries will accede with a view to extending the Alliance.

And, what is more important, we will discuss the commencement of consultations aimed at the introduction of a binding, universal instrument: a UN convention prohibiting the trade of goods used to inflict torture and to apply the death penalty. The signing of this agreement by a critical mass of countries would provide the world with a practical instrument to put an end to this scourge, clearly prohibiting the import and export of goods that have no legitimate use.

Experiences with other multilateral trade agreements are encouraging. CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, was created to ensure that international trade in species of wild fauna and flora does not endanger their survival. Currently, with 183 countries and other actors as members, the Treaty offers protection to thousands of endangered plant and animal species.

Another inspiring milestone was the adoption, in April 2013, of the emblematic Arms Trade Treaty, or ATT, by an overwhelming majority in the UN General Assembly. The ATT was conceived to prevent irresponsible and unregulated arms transfers that intensify and prolong conflicts, and to promote responsibility, transparency and accountability in the international arms trade.

Like these two instruments, a treaty prohibiting the trade of goods used to inflict torture and to apply the death penalty would provide a binding framework. When the Alliance for Torture-Free Trade was launched last year, the victims of torture recounted their experiences. «Torture isn't designed to kill you, or even to obtain information,» said one of them. «It's designed to destroy the human soul.» Fortunately, many survivors have succeeded in overcoming their trauma. But, given that torture and the death penalty continue to exist the world over, the international community must do a great deal more to prevent those responsible for this trade from having access to these terrible instruments.



## THE HUNGRY AND THE OBESE

«The number of hungry people in the world continues to rise»  
«The agricultural and rural policies of every country  
must be transformed»

Casting an eye on the most immediate, everyday issues that affect us as a country sometimes we have the chance to address one of the key structural problems affecting humankind. Among these is malnutrition, or, to say it more clearly and directly, hunger—and more than advancing towards solving it, we are moving backwards.

A recent event has highlighted the seriousness of this problem and the difficulty of solving it: the Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, held in the Spanish Senate in Madrid with the participation of the Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and representatives from the legislatures of 80 countries. The harsh reality is that, after the achievement of reducing the number of hungry people in the world, in recent years it has risen steadily: from 945 million in 2005, it dropped to 783 million in 2014, but then after 2015 it went up again, to 821 million in 2017. Moreover, the greatest improvement was in one country, China, which has seen a spectacular drop in malnutrition. Without China's contribution, global figures would be much worse. If we focus on child malnutrition, the figures are devastating: 151 million children under 5 years old with stunted growth, and 51 million children who have lost 10% of their body mass.

But this setback is not only a problem in developing countries. The situation in Spain also gives cause for concern: In 2017 there

were 600,000 people in a situation of serious food insecurity , up 20% in a single year. The problem of poverty and hunger in Spain is beginning to be a structural one, with a third of the population struggling to make ends meet, and half a million households unable to guarantee adequate food.

There can be no sustainable development, no peace and security in the world, whilst there are still 821 million people suffering hunger. A country that suffers hunger affects its neighbouring countries and can destabilize an entire region. Moral questions aside, the entire international community' s obligation to fight hunger is also vital in geopolitical terms, because it is a factor on which global peace, development and security depend.

The response to the problem of hunger and malnutrition requires partnership at every level, a multi-pronged strategy , and a new way of working. Comprehensively fulfilling the right to food means fulfilling a large part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. If we are able to eradicate hunger and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, we will very probably have achieved all of the other SDGs. It is encouraging that the Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition has sent a clear message defending food as a human right. Even though many conferences have already been held to address this problem (I particularly remember a 2008 Rome conference in the midst of the severe food crisis triggered by a spike in food prices), at which all governments set forth goals and commitments that later remain unmet, it was important in Madrid to see the participation of legislators, because at the end of the day their legislatures will be the ones to approve national budgets and control their governments.

A crucial element for eradicating hunger is the transformation of agricultural and rural policies in every country , due to their key role in managing natural resources, the impact of climate change, and, above all, due to their vital role of satisfying the basic need of

every human being to have access to food. An ecological transition is also necessary in these agricultural and rural policies, in keeping with policies on the environment, social cohesion, territorial development, and research and innovation. We must double the global funding for sustainable agriculture and food security—responsible, sustainable investment.

However, at the same time that we are falling behind in the fight against hunger, overweight and obesity is growing at a concerning rate. Approximately 670 million adults worldwide—one in eight—is obese. And 41 million children are already obese by the age of 5 years. Experts forecast that by 2030, overweight and obesity will affect one third of the world's population. The health impact of this is terrible: now, many noncommunicable diseases associated with overweight constitute major challenges to public health.

The increase in obesity is actually faster than the decrease in hunger around the world. It especially affects developed countries, and is related to unsustainable forms of consumption and unhealthy habits. Here, Spain has also gotten worse. The number of obese adults rose from 9.6 million in 2012 to 10.5 million in 2016—a 10 % jump in just four years. Here, issues enter into play that affect health policies, education strategies, and the agri-food industry.

Moreover, one third of the food that we produce worldwide winds up in garbage cans, landfills, or simply left to rot in the fields when it fails to meet marketing criteria. Here, the inequalities between countries are also very large: In Europe we generate 100 kg of food waste per person annually, whereas in Africa the figure is 6 to 11 kg. With just one fourth of the world's current food waste, we would be able to solve the problem of hunger. Ending food waste has become a question of equity and dignity.

The road towards eradicating hunger is not an easy one; therefore, we need a strong, robust global governance system. An example is the reform of the Food Security Committee, which has

contributed to uniting all of the stakeholders in a single integrated platform within the UN system. Spain has a long history of commitment to food security, as reflected in our international cooperation policy. Despite the Spanish public sector's current financial difficulties—which will be even greater if we cannot have a budget for 2019—we must get back on track with a cooperation policy that is crucial to achieving an effective right to food on a worldwide scale. This policy's starting point must be that every person who suffers from hunger or malnutrition represents a violation of human rights, in order to avoid both the hunger of some and the obesity of others.



**REFORM, STRENGTHEN  
AND—YES—VINDICATE  
THE UNITED NATIONS**

«The Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
is more relevant than ever»

«What is the alternative to multilateralism? There isn't one»

The title of this article reflects neither naiveté, nor quixotic idealism. In fact, it appears in the Foreign Policy Action Strategy that Spain approved in 2015, which echoes the letter and spirit of the European Union Global Strategy: «A multilateral order grounded in international law, including the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the only guarantee for peace and security at home and abroad.» Today, the Universal Declaration is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Although the Declaration has aged, its approach remains valid, and is more relevant than ever. And now, as we venture forth into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Declaration's fundamental concept of multilateralism is of strategic importance; it is, indeed, vital for the very survival of humanity.

In fact, tomorrow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, will visit Madrid to participate in an event celebrating both the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Spanish Constitution—whose Article 10.2 explicitly incorporates the Declaration. The promotion and protection of human rights are, therefore, cor-

nerstones of Spain's legal system and our vision of society and the joint celebration made crystal clear how events in our own country are intimately linked to world affairs.

So many of today's challenges have transnational impacts: the persistence of poverty and rising inequality in a world that keeps getting richer; climate change as a scientific fact; population movements; armed conflicts in which tens of thousands of people continue to die year after year; new and old forms of violence and insecurity; and global value chains in an increasingly integrated economy.

How are we to address these phenomena if not collectively, through regional integration, multilateralism, dialogue, cooperation, and respect for the rules and institutions that form the backbone of the international community? What is the alternative to multilateralism? There isn't one—other than international relations based on a «Me First» attitude, on the law of the jungle, and on the use of force. We have seen the results of this model in the past: It led to the darkest chapters in human history. We cannot address global problems while wearing local blinders.

On 11 November, the centenary of the end of the First World War, one of the most tragic events in history, was commemorated in Paris. It was called the «war to end all wars», but it gave rise to another, even more deadly conflict, a mere two decades later. During those inter-war years, we failed to establish effective institutions for defusing hostilities.

Prosperous, peaceful societies cannot be built in isolation, turning our backs on other regions where violence and injustice reign. Our response to such situations cannot be to entrench ourselves behind national sovereignty (much less to fabricate new, illusory micro-sovereignties) or to reject everything that comes from beyond our borders, branding it a threat. This attitude is unproductive, provides no solutions, and defies all historical logic.

Rather, such trends and phenomena must be managed collectively to benefit the majority. We would, therefore, do well to remember three milestones that underscore the vitality of the multilateral approach. The first of these milestones was when the UN launched the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals, which set clear and quantifiable targets for all countries and in every sector, from education to inclusive growth. Spain has taken these goals very seriously: It has created a High Commission, and is preparing a national strategy, to ensure that they are met.

The second milestone was marked earlier this month by the gathering of the international community in Katowice, the heart of a coal-mining region, to step up the fight against climate change. And this is crucial, because, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out, «Climate change is running faster than we are.» Joint action by all stakeholders is becoming ever more urgent.

The third milestone was the intergovernmental conference recently held in Marrakesh to adopt the Global Compact for Migration. This Compact presents a shared vision of migration, in which countries of origin, countries of transit, and host countries all have responsibilities. The Compact, which is not legally binding, will not be signed by every country. Regrettably, it will not even be signed by every EU Member State. Nevertheless, it represents recognition — at the highest political level — that the challenges and opportunities of migration can only be successfully addressed through a concerted effort. We keep hearing that multilateralism is in crisis.

The UN and the EU stand accused of being bloated bureaucracies that are out of touch with the public. Such a view was reiterated not long ago in Brussels by the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. There is some degree of truth in such criticisms. The question is how we should respond to them.

For Spain, it is crucial not only to vindicate these institutions (if they did not exist, we would have to invent them) but also to reform them for the purpose of strengthening world governance. This is why we support the Secretary-General's initiatives to make the UN more effective in achieving its goals.

We are not alone in this endeavour. During the opening of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York, 126 Heads of State and of Government —an extraordinary number— reiterated their support for the United Nations.

In 2020 the UN will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This presents an ideal moment for a summit to analyse certain institutional changes required to strengthen its legitimacy and effectiveness. These include Security Council reform to make it more representative and to limit the use of vetoes by major powers, and the creation of a parliamentary assembly to strengthen the role of civil society and the democratic dimension of the multilateral system.

## THE MARRAKECH MIGRATION COMPACT

«Down the centuries, population movements have been a natural, structural phenomenon»

«Migration nowadays involves 260 million people»

The world is a global common, in which constant interconnection through communication and transport technologies generates flows of people, goods, information, and ideas on a scale that until recently was unimaginable. This situation demands a multilateral system of governance, which is why the UN was born at the end of the Second World War, when nationalisms had fallen into discredit—although even today, they have yet to leave the scene.

Down the centuries, population movements have been a natural, structural phenomenon—not an anomaly or a threat. This is why the issue will remain on the policy agenda in coming decades. This is a challenge that can only be addressed through international cooperation. No single country, not even a single region, can manage it alone. Its nature is intrinsically transnational, as is that of the challenge of climate change, which is in itself a factor having an impact on the displacement of persons due to desertification, along with insecurity, poverty, or simply a lack of opportunities. And, as the UN Secretary-General recently said, no one can really be surprised if human beings seek a better future for themselves and their families.

The facts on the ground contradict the view brandished by xenophobic movements and their leaders, which talk about massive

waves of immigrants, predicting that they will impoverish our societies and cause countless problems.

We should look at things as they really are. Today, the figures on migration represent only 3.4% of the world population, or about 260 million people, which is certainly a moderate proportion, albeit one higher than the rate of demographic growth. However this is also because emigration tends to rise during the first phase of countries' development; that is, when they make the transition from low- to middle-income status. Furthermore, two thirds of international migrants move within the same region (as high as 80% in Africa and Asia)—and it is important to note that 90% of mobility worldwide is legal migration.

We must also be aware of migration's contribution to the economy, to revitalizing labour markets, to the cultural effervescence of the host countries, and to the reduction of their demographic deficit. A prime example of this is how Africa's population will grow from today's 1.25 billion to 2.5 billion by 2050, with an increase in the working-age population of 800 million; in the meantime, Europe's workforce will lose 80 million people.

All of this bearing in mind such problems as downward wage pressure in certain sectors, which should be corrected through collective bargaining and the unionization of all workers—whether native-born or immigrants—while addressing the challenge of managing diversity and reducing inequalities. If we fail to do so, defensive identity politics will only get worse, becoming a corrosive factor undermining EU policy: today, migration is perceived as a greater threat to European integration than the euro crisis.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, was adopted in Marrakech on 10 December by 160 countries. These included Spain, represented by its head of government, as were Germany, Portugal, Greece, and Belgium—the latter after right-wing Flemish nationalists left the government. This Global

Compact is based precisely on the premise that overall, it is possible to maximize the advantages of migrations for the countries of origin, transit, and destination.

The Compact is to be formally adopted as a resolution of the UN General Assembly on 19 December . It will be the first major United Nations initiative regarding this issue, creating a model for mutually beneficial, shared responsibility concerning 23 objectives covering every aspect of migration.

Firstly, the Compact addresses safeguarding human rights, eradicating the vulnerabilities of migrants throughout the migration cycle and guaranteeing their access to basic social services, avoiding separating or detaining minors, combating the many networks that smuggle migrants and traffic in human beings, and managing borders pursuant to international law.

Furthermore, the Compact seeks to optimize the impact of migration on development; generate new regular migration channels, thereby facilitating labour mobility; and, above all, to improve the living conditions in countries of origin so that emigration may be one of a set of options from which to choose rather than the only alternative, especially for young people. Moreover, countries of origin must facilitate readmission.

In any case, this initiative will have to overcome two challenges. The first is to ensure that the Compact is implemented by the different countries, because this is the only way for migration to become safe for migrants and more orderly and regular for the countries of origin, transit, and destination.

To this end, a migration network has been proposed, comprising all of the relevant UN agencies working in this field, whilst the International Organization for Migration will periodically evaluate the Compact's implementation by the different states. Spain, of course,

intends to play a leadership role in this this implementation phase, as it has during the Compact's negotiation.

In fact, Spain is already implementing a national policy based on the acceptance of migration as a something that is here to stay and on respect for human rights and human dignity, which will include a strategic plan involving the country's regional administrations and town councils. In spite of the challenges to our systems for migration reception and management— challenges often shared by other EU member states— the Spanish model is seen by most of our EU partners as an example of good practice in migratory management and cooperation with third countries.

Furthermore, we have been proposing a migration agenda within the framework of the European Union. All Europeans share a common external border, and therefore managing the flow of migrants and refugees can only be done together. This is why Spain supports the European Humanitarian Visa initiative proposed yesterday by the European Parliament, as well as a system of permanent quotas for refugees and strengthening the European Agency for Asylum. Furthermore, Spain is also committed to saving the lives of those who are at risk every day in the Straits of Gibraltar and the Alboran Sea, and even to taking on the responsibilities of other countries —we all know which ones— from different parts of the Mediterranean.

The second challenge comprises reducing the bafflingly wide gap between the reality of migration and its perception by the public—something which is especially obvious in Europe, as seen in the very process of adopting the Compact. For example, we must regret that despite the support expressed by the European Commission and by the Parliament, some member states have distanced themselves from it, similar to their attitude within the EU itself as regards migration policy.



Nor has it helped that the government of the United States not only stayed out of the negotiations entirely from the beginning, but also campaigned against the Compact, criticizing its efforts to create global governance for migrations (which is true, and necessary) and its supposed efforts to erode the sovereign rights of states (which is completely false).

An enormous public education effort will be needed to debunk the abusive, xenophobic, populist narratives that have been propagated in recent years with regard to migration and which have found resonance in some EU countries—fortunately not so much in Spain, at least not until now.



**SPAIN / CATALONIA**



## CITIZENS OF CATALONIA

- «We have seen the glorification of a handful of stereotypes,  
wrapped up in nostalgia for the past»
- «Independentists believe that considering themselves a nation  
gives them the right to secession»

Spain's Congress of Deputies has witnessed a tense debate on two serious issues: Brexit and Catalan secessionism. As President of the Government Pedro Sánchez said, both of them are «travelling parallel roads and using similar rhetoric», with an invented narrative of grievances that are magnified through manipulation. In both cases, the aim is to force the population to make binary decisions... Both here in Spain and over there in the UK, we have seen the glorification of a handful of clichés, wrapped up in nostalgia for the past. And always at the service of the rhetoric of «us versus them».

In contrast, I can remember Josep Tarradellas, upon his return from exile, proclaiming from the Generalitat balcony: « *Ciudadans de Catalunya, ja sóc aquí!*» («Citizens of Catalonia, I am here!»). The Catalan President said «citizens», an inclusive concept that was a foundational idea of the French Revolution. Citizens: free, equal and fraternal. Citizens by choice. Citizens of Catalonia.

The concept comes from the creation of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* and from the intellectual debate that was the basis of the concept of *Catalanism*, which encompassed the different sensibilities of Catalan society. An idea summarized in a call to « *un*

*sol poble*» («a single people»), which is now used to refer to only some Catalans.

Catalanism has had a majority presence in Catalan politics until 2012. According to the tenets of Catalanism, the nation comprises citizens who share a community of values, the civic and inclusive nation imbued with solidarity, whereas independentists believe that considering themselves a nation gives them the right to secession, and this is not recognized by any legal system: not by Spain's Constitution, EU law, or international law.

Catalan independentism has been successful in conveying an idea, a message, a form of communication, a set of arguments without any apparent flaws, at least not until now. Far from going mainstream, it has spread its mantle over 47% of the population, and excluded the rest. By contrast, non-independentists have continued with their ideological differences and diverse traditions. Four messages, four party platforms, which in political communication is tantamount to mumbled noise.

In order to achieve secession, independentism needed to blow up the bridges of mainstream Catalanism. And it has worked tirelessly on doing so in recent years.

And politics as confrontation becomes binary: There are no possible nuances. Black or white, independentist or unionist, win or lose—in other words, confrontation. This strategy has had consequences, the most serious of which has been a social divide.

The weakening of Catalanism as a political force has led us to the current situation; we must prevent the independentist idea of Catalonia from taking firm roots in people's hearts, making peaceful coexistence impossible.

Fortunately, if we take a step back from those who shout and those who keep silent, the core of Catalanism exists, persists, and needs to recover its social majority in Catalan politics. Of the

2 million voters for independentist options, many are one-off independentists who could change their minds if they were offered the possibility of a reform of Spain with the participation of Catalonia.

To achieve this, the key word is, and will always be, dialogue. Only through dialogue will it be possible to build agreements between those of us with different positions regarding the future we want for our country. However, we have witnessed an increase in tension to avoid the dialogue opened up by Spain's new Socialist Government, which aimed to maintain the cohesion of a space that was becoming fragmented within the sovereigntist bloc. And making absurd comparisons with the Slovenian experience, which the Slovenian Prime Minister himself has rejected, and a futile insistence on a unilateral road to nowhere. Some of those who now acknowledge that they do not even have a social majority, at one time enthusiastically supported that road. Others continue advocating it all over Europe.

Furthermore, as President of the Government Sánchez said, «A third party is being blamed, while overlooking their own responsibilities as regards cuts in education and in healthcare that have deteriorated social cohesion and trust in institutions»—as they seek to reject a national budget that would contribute to reversing those cuts.

For independentists to recognize the Catalonia that does not share their views would be the first step towards restoring peaceful coexistence and dialogue between Catalonia and the rest of Spain.

And towards going back to « *Ciutadans de Catalunya* ». And once again becoming « *un sol poble* » in a « *Catalunya gran, oberta e inclusiva* » (« a great, open, and inclusive Catalonia »).





## TWO NOT QUITE SO OPPOSITE POLES

«Fake news and heavy-handed insults have been going full tilt»  
 «Identitarian nationalism calls for the unity of the 'people', but usually leads to division and social confrontation»

Spanish politics has been intense these days: the confusion of a fake narrative regarding negotiations between parties about the Catalan problem; the disproportionate —and scarcely followed— call to protest in defence of the unity of Spain; more fake news about the alleged acceptance of the famous «Torra 21 points»; the most socially-oriented national budget in the past decade that was scrapped due to partisan interests; and as a consequence, a call for elections.

The fake news mill and heavy-handed insults have been going full tilt. It would have been possible to discuss, in a reasonable way, the usefulness, advisability or functions of a «rapporteur/co-ordinator» of meetings between political groups, but nothing can justify calling that «the most serious thing to happen in Spain since the 1981 coup attempt». All of a sudden, facts like decades of combating terrorism or the terrorist attacks of 11 March 2004 —the most serious on European territory— are forgotten, and the President of the Government is accused of no less than «high treason». This is a very serious accusation, one that is defined in the Criminal Code, and it must be supported by legal instruments, such as Article 102 of the Constitutions, which enables opposition leader Mr Casado to act with the MPs that his party —the People's Party— has in the Congress of Deputies.

Michael Faraday, the British scientist who studied electromagnetism, said: «A lecturer falls deeply beneath the dignity of his character when he descends so low as to angle for claps and ask for commendation.»

As they do in physics, opposite poles attract in these political times. What underlies the points being made by the right wing, shouting at the top of their lungs from their seats in Parliament, is intolerance towards those who do not share their views. The problem does not seem to be how the Socialists are running the government, but the fact that the Socialists are in government. I am too often reminded of Antonio Machado's poetic work, *Campos de Castilla*, in which he said that in Spain, out of every ten heads, nine charge and one thinks... and now it is sometimes difficult to identify which one is thinking.

At the other pole, it is tiresome to hear the lame pleas by the Catalan independentists for the national government to «be brave», to «not be afraid of the right wing», and to «have the courage» to recognize the «state of self-determination», demanding that the administration fulfil the Constitution to approve its National Budget. These independentists cannot speak on behalf of the Catalan people when they are excluding the more than half of Catalonia's citizens who did not vote for them. Identity-based nationalism appeals to the sacred unity of the «people», but it usually leads to division and social confrontation.

There is a language of two reactive forms of nationalism: us and them, Catalans and Spaniards, patriots and traitors, and this language seeks to separate us. There is not really such a great distance between those who believe that the worse things are, the better for them.

Secessionists seek to achieve international mediation to facilitate negotiation on equal footing between the Government of Spain

and the Government of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia. To do so, they disparage the quality of our democracy and of our legal system, and present Spain as a repressive country that systematically violates human rights. But indeed, Spain is not South Yemen, or Bosnia, or Kosovo, or Slovenia at its worst times—and neither the European Union nor any government in the world accepts that false narrative.

The two opposing poles end up becoming allies in the same strategies, one of them due to manoeuvring, the other due to disloyalty. Neither of them has a sense of statesmanship or of the general interest. In this equation, there is no «people's real needs» variable. The proposed National Budget represented the greatest growth in public expenditure since 2010, and sought to reverse the cuts caused by the economic crisis, allocating greater expenditure to pensions, dependent persons, school grants, and combating gender violence and child poverty . It also included measures to incentivize growth and employment. It strengthened policies of paramount importance to boost our economy' s competitiveness and growth potential, such as investment in research, development and innovation, infrastructure, and human capital.

The investment planned for Catalonia was 2.25 billion euros, 16.8% of the allocation for all of Spain's Autonomous Communities, a figure that does not reach its share in GDP, but that represented an 18.5% increase. It is worth pointing out here that the last budget that Catalonia had was that of 2016, approved precisely with the support of the CUP coalition. Since then, in Catalonia there has been no budget and, therefore, no government action.

These accusations from the two poles are in the language of two reactive forms of nationalism: us and them, Catalans and Spaniards, patriots and traitors, a language that seeks to separate us. There is not really such a great distance between those who believe that the worse things are, the better for them.



8 July 2019

## **YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT THAT SPAIN IS A STATE UNDER THE RULE OF LAW**

Recently named the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Catalan Josep Borrell—until now Spain's Foreign Minister— has addressed this open letter to Jean-Paul Carteron, founder of the Crans Montana Forum.

I am writing this letter in shock at how you introduced Carles Puigdemont on June 26—an introduction that demonstrates a surprising lack of knowledge, coming from someone who heads an organization like the Crans Montana Forum. You expressed surprise at the judicial proceedings opened against someone who, in your words, has done nothing other than make decisions considered «politically incorrect». In addition, you added that those people who are currently awaiting a court decision for having participated in the events that occurred during the autumn of 2017 in Catalonia «are in jail because they do not think like the central power». The use of such expressions denotes a levity that probably explains the meaning of your brief remarks. Neither one thing nor the other are in keeping with the accuracy to be expected from a forum like the one you head, in which, at your invitation, I have had the opportunity to participate in the past. Who is this evil «central power» to which you refer? Well, it seems that it is, in this case, Spain's Supreme Court.

With these words, you refuse to accept that Spain is a state under the rule of law. These remarks, despite your deliberate am-

biguity, have only one interpretation: that of a supposed political persecution by judges who were following orders from the Spanish government. Such an assumption is insulting.

In this regard, allow me to remind you that, in its latest report on Spain published in June, the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (GRECO) found that, contrary to the repeated statements of Carles Puigdemont, the independence and impartiality of Spanish judges is unquestionable. You seem unaware that in Catalonia, there are many political leaders and others who think like Mr Puigdemont and who defend their ideas publicly, with absolute freedom. To begin with, members of the current Catalan regional government, led by its president, Quim Torra. How can you explain that these people have not been prosecuted by the Spanish justice system? The answer is simple: expressing political opinions, no matter what they may be, is not a punishable act in Spain—no more than in any other democratic country.

What differentiates these people from others is not their opinions, but their actions. I am not a legal expert. You are. You should know better than I do. Mr Puigdemont—like the other Catalan leaders who are currently awaiting a court decision—allegedly participated in the execution of a plan whose goal was, through malfeasance and against any kind of law (Catalan, Spanish, or international), to create a new state in the territory of the current autonomous community of Catalonia and repeal the Spanish Constitution in that territory. It is the courts that must rule on the basis of these serious accusations. As far as I am concerned, I respect the separation of powers.

Regardless of personal opinions, I believe that no one should doubt the seriousness of what happened in Barcelona, particularly on 6 and 7 September 2017. During those two days, the independentist majority in the Catalan parliament, contravening that chamber's own internal regulations, the provisions of the Catalan

Statute of Autonomy, and the Spanish Constitution, approved a «law of legal transition» that involved repealing both the Spanish Constitution and the Catalan Statute of Autonomy in the territory of that region. This law was published in the *Official Gazette of Catalonia*. Were you aware of that? Because you said nothing about it.

With regard to the day of the illegal «referendum» on 1 October the charges against the defendants have nothing to do with the fact that they «put out ballot boxes», but with their being held in contempt of the Spanish Constitutional Court, which had ruled that it would be illegal to organize that vote as it would take place outside the existing legal framework. As you know, the hearings of the criminal proceedings against the Catalan officials, which were held from February to June of this year, were all public and broadcast live. I think it is difficult to do better in terms of transparency. Spain has nothing to hide.

Your words seem to suggest that the President of the European Parliament has arbitrarily decided to prevent Mr Puigdemont from taking up his duties as an MEP. But the reality is quite different.

First, the President of the European Parliament only acts according to the guidelines of his legal services. The European Parliament can only recognize as MEPs those elected candidates whose names are reported to it by the competent national authority (once the conditions set forth in the legislation of each member state have been met). The president of the General Court of the European Union has already stated in this regard that there are not sufficient grounds for taking provisional measures so that Mr Puigdemont could be recognized as an MEP.

I would think that a person of your renown would not approve of the idea (so dear to Mr Puigdemont and his followers) that democracy is above the law. I hope you will agree with me that, in a state under rule of law, claims such as these make no sense. In a state under rule of law, laws are what safeguard democracy.

To conclude, I would like to remind you that on 28 May , the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) dismissed the appeal against the decision of the Spanish Constitutional Court to suspend a plenary session of the Catalan Parliament during which it was planned to declare the independence of Catalonia. As the ECHR stated, laws can be amended, but only through legal and democratic procedures: trying to overthrow the constitutional order of a democratic state, such as Spain, can never be lawful.



# MISCELLANEOUS



## TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

«We will have to make use of the professional capacity  
of all diplomats»

«It is necessary to define a procedure for assessing merits  
for appointment as Heads of Mission»

On 25 July, this newspaper published an article titled «Josep Borrell's Night of the Long Knives», whose author, Ramón Pérez-Maura, claimed that «Borrell's team has crushed the careers of 50 diplomats who have been at their postings for a year or a year and a half.» He found it surprising that such things could happen under such an experienced minister, and warned of the risk that Spain's Foreign Service was running in this new term of government.

Obviously, any of the normal changes in ambassadors whenever there is a change in government may be subject to criticism. However, such criticism should be based on proven facts. Otherwise, citizens/readers cannot have an informed opinion about the political decisions that are being commented upon.

Having been directly alluded to, and because I believe that it is necessary to respond when the information used is not borne out by reality, I must point out that the statement «crushed the careers of 50 diplomats who have been at their postings for a year or a year and a half» is not true. Please allow me to explain this in detail.

Before the change in government, which happened unexpectedly due to a vote of no confidence, Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis had planned to appoint 46 ambassadors. Six of them had

already been appointed, and were at their postings when the new administration took office. As for the other 40, 20 of them have had the same appointments to embassies as planned by the outgoing team; nine of them have been appointed to other embassies or have been appointed as directors-general on the incoming Ministry team; two candidates gave up their postings voluntarily; and only nine have not been appointed as ambassadors this year, because they had reached the usual term of their mandates; they are not 50 in number, but 12. Moreover, two of them —Mr Wert, appointed to the OECD, and Mr Morenés, appointed to the USA, whom I must once again thank for his exemplary conduct regarding Mr Torra's attacks against Spain in Washington— were political appointees, not career diplomats, and had the elegance to hand in their resignations immediately after the change in government.

So, in only 10 —not 50— embassies have there been changes before the normal end of an ambassador's term; partly, because these were considered embassies of particular political relevance for the new administration, or because senior officials from the outgoing government have been appointed in their place, as is the case of the embassies in Italy and Brazil. However, unlike other occasions, there have not been much more extensive and expeditious changes in foreign missions, because heads of missions in significant postings —including France, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Argentina— have not been changed.

There have only been three appointments of ambassadors who are not career diplomats: to the OECD, to Andorra, and to UNESCO. Furthermore, practically all of the outgoing senior officials have been appointed as ambassadors, or the necessary agrément has been requested, which I do not think occurred in previous «Nights of Long Knives». This is the case of Minister Alfonso Dastis in Italy; three Secretaries of State in Japan, Ireland, and Brazil; the Under-Secretary in Belgium; the Director for Inter-

national Affairs of the Office of the President of the Government in Luxemburg; the Director of AECID in Finland; and the Director of the Diplomatic School in Egypt. In addition, the former Secretary of State for the Presidency of the Government, Jorge Moragas, who had very recently been appointed Ambassador to the UN, has been appointed to the Spanish Embassy in the Philippines. The outgoing directors-general, senior officials on the former team, are also being proposed for heads of mission. This is the case, for example, of the Director for International Organizations in Korea.

I believe that this has rarely if ever, been the procedure followed for the outgoing team, and in view of the cited figures and cases, neither is it true that the former Minister García-Margallo's entire team has been «crushed», although it is true that there have been certain changes. But things must be viewed in their proper dimension, and with the figures and reasons that I have just mentioned, is it really possible to accuse us of having «crushed the careers of 50 diplomats who have been at their postings for a year or a year and a half»? Barely 10 does not seem to be the same as 50...

This does not detract from the fact that they have been removed from an embassy, or that they are legitimately awaiting appointment, or that they are at the Ministry's central services, where their experience and knowledge will be highly useful, and where many services are very short of staff. And, of course, it is necessary and urgent to define a regulatory procedure, and also a system to evaluate performance making it possible for each candidate's merits to be assessed as objectively as possible when appointing them as heads of mission, so that all administrations may exercise their appointment capacity as efficiently as possible. I hope I will be able to contribute to this.



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## EXPANSIÓN

29 January 2019

### **FORTY YEARS LATER, LOOKING AHEAD**

«The 40 years with this Constitution have been the best  
since Trafalgar»

«For the first time, our economy is oriented towards  
the international market»

At the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Spain Investors Day I had the honour of participating in its closing dinner, analysing our country's situation and prospect, just as the British Parliament was dealing Prime Minister May the greatest blow since 1924 by firmly rejecting the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU.

I was able to use this British reference to recall that the 40 years with the Constitution of 1978 have been the best in Spain's modern history since the Battle of Trafalgar. If we look back and focus on what Spain was like 40 years ago, we can see that we were starting with a clear disadvantage in comparison with our European partners.

Back then, after nearly four decades of dictatorship, Spain's political transition —now so vilified by the Podemos party and by Catalan independentism— reset our meter in a context of economic weakness and in the midst of the oil crisis.

The 1978 Spanish Constitution enshrined the social market economy as the economic development model for our country. And that has enabled us to take a giant leap forward: between 1975 and 2000, GDP grew in real terms by 89%, and in the past 20 years, it has grown by 142.5%. And all of this with a 26% population growth,

and doubling the rate of women in paid work. Translating these figures into words leads us to a simple conclusion: We have gone from being one of Western Europe's most closed and protectionist economies to becoming one of the most open, competitive, and dynamic countries in the world.

I am not saying that the Constitution was perfect, nor that it was not approved under circumstances that conditioned it, but that tends to be the case at any historic moment. Nonetheless, it has been the cornerstone supporting Spain's recent success story, which has also been an economic success story. In fact, very few countries have been able to improve their standard of living at the speed that Spain has in recent decades. After overcoming a financial crisis that has transformed our world, creating a convulsed scenario—Brexit, the election of President Trump, the surge of national populism, and a globalization that is even being contested at Davos due to the rise in inequality—Spain's economy has been growing, for four years straight, above the EU average in terms of job creation and current account surplus. In aggregate terms, our economy has grown by more than 1.1 points in these past years, and will continue to grow, according to the estimates of the IMF, the European Commission, and the OECD.

However, the trees of a purely macroeconomic approach should not prevent us from seeing the forest watered by a long and protracted recession; i.e., a decade in which we lost one-tenth of our wealth and 3.8 million jobs. This was undoubtedly the most dreadful aspect of Spain's deepest recession in the past half century.

If we are now growing in a strong, balanced, and sustainable manner, it is thanks to the huge efforts made by Spanish society. Tens of thousands of people who were thrown into the gutter of unemployment, or who had to work under precarious conditions, suffered difficulties in accessing housing first-hand, creating a severe



shortfall for their future. The improvement of our macroeconomic figures cannot ignore these adverse circumstances, which today's recovery has not erased from the collective memory. Much still remains to be improved, especially in reducing unemployment and the public deficit, and improving levels of well-being and income distribution. These are unrelinquishable goals for Spain's current administration, and we have stated them in black and white in the General State Budget for 2019, which was conceived with the aim of achieving fair and sustainable development and creating quality jobs.

We must also point out this country's great potential: Spain is the eurozone's fourth largest economy, the EU's fifth, and ranks 14<sup>th</sup> worldwide, in terms of GDP. Our privileged geographical location has given us a key role: In addition to being a member state of the European Union, Spain is a bridge between Africa and Europe, and Europe's priority partner for Latin America. And this latter aspect leads us to another one of our assets: our language. Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world, and it is also the second language of international communication and on the internet.

Today, our economy is one of the most competitive internationally: We are the world's 16<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of goods, according to the World Trade Organization. For the first time in our history, we are an economy that is oriented towards the international market; we have undergone a radical and promising change in our growth model, which was always choking in foreign deficit when growth picked up, leading to what are known as stop-and-go situations.

Spain's main exports include capital goods, the agri-food industry, the automotive industry, and chemical products, and their technological component is increasing year after year. Our companies are present worldwide in the most diverse production and services sectors. In 2017 alone, 67.7% of the IBEX 35 companies'

turnover was generated abroad, amounting to 22 points more than 11 years ago. Despite the aggressive competition of emerging economies, Spain is one of the few among the EU's major economies that is gaining market share in world trade. In 2017, we were the world's 16<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of goods, and the 1<sup>st</sup> largest exporter of services, with a world market share of 1.7% and 2.7%, respectively.

We are also a very attractive destination for foreign investment. Nearly 13,000 foreign companies present in Spain are providing jobs for 1.25 million people (approximately 7% of all those in work). This trust in Spain makes us rank 14<sup>th</sup> worldwide among recipient countries of investment stock, and seventh in Europe. It also contributes to making us the world's ninth most open country to foreign investment.

This brief selection of figures defines Spain's current economy, and constitutes the most solid guarantee that Spain can boast in order to lead, together with Germany and France, the challenge of making Europe more united so that it may be stronger. At this moment in time, when doubt is being cast on the European integration process and there is a surge of xenophobic and Eurosceptic movements that are calling into question our model of prosperity, social justice, and freedoms, it must be very clear to us that the European project is crucial. The great cultural battle of our times is that of building societies that are open to the world, with competitive economies, but without hindering justice and cohesion in the process. After 40 years of freedom and progress, this is the new battle we are waging in Spain.

## FAKE NEWS: FREEDOM IN TIMES OF DISINFORMATION

«Threats of disinformation seek to undermine democracy  
and the European project»

«Human beings are not free individuals, but hackable animals»

Information is the fuel of democracy. Knowledge of reality enables voters to form their opinions about government action and the alternatives. Today we are receiving a constant flow of information, together with a lot of disinformation. In the digital age, truth is the first victim. And if citizens can no longer distinguish the truth from fake news—formerly known as hoaxes—democracy founders.

Upon the signing of the new friendship treaty between France and Germany, Le Pen's party flooded the internet, accusing France of «high treason» for having surrendered sovereignty over Alsace. Coincidentally, in Spain the government has also been falsely accused of assuming «Torra's 21 points»—a falsehood stated before a multitude rallying for the unity of Spain.

The Belgian Government fell because the Flemish nationalists, friends of Puigdemont, used the fake news that the Marrakech pact, a non-binding text, would deprive countries of their sovereignty over migration policy. Videos were doctored, such as that of Macron wiping his hands after greeting workers, when it was really because he had caught an eel. And Brexit stories have become viral, like the story about the 350 million pounds per week that the British supposedly would have if Brussels was not stealing it from them, which was debunked after the vote. Here in

Spain we have also seen examples of manipulation, with stories being told about fiscal accounts.

It is necessary to fact-check fake news and debunk its sources. This is no easy task. According to author Yuval Noah Harari, technological advances represent a much more profound challenge for the fundamental liberal ideal —human freedom— than any other past threat.

The underlying problem, according to Harari, is not that information technologies are eroding our free will, but rather , that the margin of freedom left to us between chance and necessity has not increased with progress, to use the words of Jacques Monod. It is time to accept, as Harari claims, that we humans are not free individuals, but «hackable animals». Take Hitler, for example. And the possibility of hacking our brain increases with social networks. Messages are tailored to each individual thanks to the information about ourselves that we reveal on social networks.

These threats of disinformation, often generated by extremist movements and authoritarian or nationalist-populist governments, sometimes in cahoots with each other , seek to undermine liberal democracy and the European project, exacerbating divisions in societies and interfering in elections.

We saw examples of this in Spain, namely in 2017 in Catalonia. And this trend is not going to be reversed, especially during the current electoral cycle in Europe. There is a growing fear that toxic disinformation with fake news will besmirch the forthcoming European elections of 26 May, and perhaps even Spain's general elections of 28 April. The European Council has approved an Action Plan to combat disinformation campaigns in the EU and outside its borders. A Rapid Alert System has been created to facilitate responses to cyberattacks involving disinformation. France has approved an anti-fake-news act, which envisions fact-checking,

similar to the systems used by private initiatives. After all, one of the greatest threats to democracy has arisen from the information society.

The paradox is that freedom of expression provides the utmost protection for the perpetrators of fake news. Article 20 of the Spanish Constitution states that the right to freely express and disseminate thoughts, ideas, and opinions is limited by respect for fundamental rights, but it also stipulates the right to receive *accurate* information. It is not acceptable to allow the dissemination of fake news without any consequences, just as it would not be acceptable for supermarkets to «freely» offer rotten meat.

It is essential for governments, institutions, media companies, and civil society—which organizes itself so admirably to combat fake news—to work together in partnership. Faced with disinformation, we cannot be dragged into inaction; the health of our democracy depends on our action. As Walter Lippmann warned us in *Liberty and the News*, «There can be no liberty for a community which lacks the information by which to detect lies.»



DIARIO DE CÁDIZ  
DIARIO DE SEVILLA

10 March 2019

## IN PRAISE OF SANITY

«Men like Pérez-Lorca make it possible to look towards  
the future with hope»

«Now is not the time for reforming our Constitution,  
concluded Pérez-Llorca»

José Pedro Pérez-Llorca (1940-2019) died on 6 March. With his passing, we have lost a moral and political reference in recent Spanish history. A legal scholar, politician, diplomat, and patron and promoter of the fine arts, Pérez-Llorca incarnated the motto of Terence: Nothing human was alien to him. This can be seen in his enthusiasm as Chairman of the Royal Board of Trustees of the Prado Museum, a two-century-old institution and backbone of national culture, to which he devoted the last years of his life, and to whose renovation and expansion he contributed so much.

With all of his accomplishments, Pérez-Llorca's name will always be associated—as shown by the many, unanimously laudatory, obituaries published in the aftermath of this death—with two milestones of Spain's democratic Transition, both on the domestic and on the international level. These achievements are what I would like to address here, since I believe it is essential for all of us, as well as future generations, neither to forget nor underestimate them.

The first was, obviously, the Spanish Constitution of 1978: Pérez-Llorca was one of its seven drafters, and during the recent commemorations marking its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he made several

noteworthy speeches. Far from a navel-gazing panegyric on the text he assisted in creating, but also avoiding the kind of blanket criticism that is so widespread today, his appearance early last year before the Parliamentary Committee on the modernization of Spain's regional governance model was a textbook example of sane realism in the midst of the general immoderation currently dominating Spanish politics.

His diagnosis pointed out design flaws on the part of the first legislators when addressing inequalities between persons and territories—aggravated, he added, by the increasing disloyalty of certain forms of nationalism—and then immediately highlighted the powerful potential for integration of the constitutional text when duly interpreted and implemented in its totality. Now is not the time for reforming our Constitution, he concluded, because that would require a consensus for which the sufficient conditions are currently lacking.

What is necessary is to improve governance, and self-governance, not of each part of the nation, but of the nation as a whole with a view to the general interest. A general interest whose ultimate welfare was the guiding light of those who led Spain's Transition—also as far as our foreign policy was concerned. As Spain's current Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, and as an active member of that generation, I am in a position to value and vindicate the sustained effort, supported across the political spectrum (with our logical discrepancies), that led to the full international acceptance of our nascent democracy. This is no trivial matter, and time is putting that achievement into its proper perspective.

Those of us who have had to deal with the attempts of Catalan secessionists to export their endeavour and obtain international recognition are very aware of the importance of being able to count on the support of Spain's European and Atlantic partners.



Our integration into what was then the European Community , now the European Union, and into NA TO, are things that we now practically take for granted, but which during the Transition required a delicate exercise in diplomatic engineering. It was up to Pérez-Llorca, following the lead of his predecessors, to play a key role in bringing all this to a successful conclusion.

A career diplomat, educated in English- and German-speaking circles, he was convinced from the very beginning that Spain had to leave behind its old status, whether outside of or subordinate to, Western integration systems for policy and security cooperation, if we wanted to prosper as a nation and attain a higher profile on the international scene.

Pérez-Llorca served as Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1980 and 1982: from the final period in office of Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez through the term of his successor, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo. As Foreign Minister , he gave special importance to moving beyond the bilateral nature of Spain's defence relationship with the United States, which represented, in his own words, «subservient concessions» inherited from the Franco era, rather than equitable burden-sharing between allies. The way to remedy this situation, he believed, was for Spain to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. After some ups and downs, this finally came to pass on 29 May 1982.

It is well known that the Socialist government which shortly afterwards took power in Spain had principled discrepancies with this decision, and finally submitted it to a high-profile referendum which resulted in continued NA TO membership. Worth noting is that Pérez-Llorca himself, rather than digging in his heels, sought every opportunity for dialogue with the opposition, who accepted it despite the sound and fury of a hotly contested vote. Although not immediately, the opposing forces wound up meeting in the middle, finding an equilibrium position that benefited the entire country and

paved the way for achieving their shared goal—which was, as I just indicated, none other than Spain’s full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. A fitting lesson for our current situation.

A situation —and I will end with this reflection— that Pérez-Llorca, in one of his last articles, compared unfavourably with that of the Transition, reminding us of a hit song at that time, «*Libertad sin ira*», or «Freedom without Anger». He regretted that today’s predominance of anger could ultimately call into question our common commitment to building, in freedom, a country where all Spaniards have their place. In the face of such an unpromising prospect, the example of men like Pérez-Llorca —who, true to Tacitus’s maxim, lived «without hatred and without partiality»— enables me to look towards the future with hope.

## SPANISH IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD

«The history of the Spanish language narrates the stories of millions of people»

«Use of Spanish is growing and becoming consolidated in the United States»

Languages tell stories. The history of Spanish tells the stories of hundreds of millions of people in dozens of countries, and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century Spanish represents one of the great pillars of identity in our world. A world in which the Spanish language ranks second internationally in terms of native speakers (nearly 600 million), third in total speakers, and fourth in presence on the internet; a language being studied by 21 million people, and with geographical strongholds on several continents.

Over the two decades of the International Congress of the Spanish Language (CILE, in its Spanish acronym), Argentina is the first country to have hosted it twice, after the 2004 edition held in the city of Rosario.

Now Cordoba, nicknamed *La Docta* («The Wise»), which since 1613 has been home to one of the most prestigious universities in the Americas, is organizing the eighth edition of CILE, bringing together more than 200 participants from 32 countries in North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Under the title, «The Americas and the Future of Spanish: Culture and Education, Technology and Entrepreneurship», it has been inaugurated by Spain's King Felipe VI.

This title has special resonance. First, because the future of our language is tied to the Americas. And secondly, because there can be no doubt that Spanish will become whatever the Americas want it to be. Ours is, indeed, primordially an American language, and the demographic, economic, social, political, and cultural development of the Hispano-American countries will be decisive for its future.

But equally decisive will be the growth and consolidation of Spanish in the United States, where the language is becoming increasingly prestigious. The big news here is that despite evidence of an apparently unfavourable situation for linguistic diversity in the USA, the strength of Spanish is clearly blazing a trail towards bilingualism, as shown by census data and sociological studies.

Another noteworthy event is that China recently announced a new curriculum for secondary education, which makes Spanish an optional language at this level, including more than 60 million students every year.

Since its creation in 1991, the Madrid-based Instituto Cervantes, which organizes the CILE, has played a crucial role in the expansion of Spanish around the world, and in disseminating a vision of culture in Spanish—not only from Spain, but from every Spanish-speaking country. Although Instituto Cervantes is a Spanish institution, it encompasses everything Hispano-American, as well, promoting a heritage that is not unique to Spain. One could even say that our language policy has been one of the most successful areas of our foreign policy in a world where English clearly dominates—with everything that implies from the standpoint of creating ideological dominance, as well.

Now is the time to craft a cultural diplomacy involving all of the Spanish-speaking countries, and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digitalization to promote research and innovation

conducted in the Spanish language. Precisely at the event in Argentina, Instituto Cervantes and other Latin American institutions plan to announce the most ambitious and exciting Ibero-American cultural project in decades: the creation of major network contributing to the internationalization of culture in Spanish.

Having said that, language unity does not mean uniformity. Spanish is, in the end, a commingled language, thanks to which all Spanish-speakers can understand each other, while expressing themselves with their own accents and modulations. Undoubtedly, the Association of Academies of the Spanish language, created in Mexico City in 1951, and which also participates in CILE, has been carrying out important pan-Hispanic linguistic work.

There are currently 23 Academies, with a 24<sup>th</sup> expected to be formally created this year: the National Academy of Judaeo-Spanish, the language of the Sephardim, Jews expelled from Spain in that emblematic year of 1492. The North American Academies—including that of the United States, which just turned 40—are joined on other continents by that of the Philippines, created in 1924, and of Equatorial Guinea.

The most important characteristic of any language is its capacity to generate and transmit a culture, which in the case of Spanish has always been open to interculturality. The meeting in Cordoba will, therefore, be the perfect opportunity for hundreds of citizens and specialists to analyse a future bright with promise. Because, as Miguel de Cervantes himself wrote: «Many eyes see more than two; the venom of injustice cannot so soon lay hold on many hearts as on one alone.»