

Minutes of the SI Council meeting in Barcelona

24-25 November 2017

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Friday 24 November 2017 – first day of the Council

Opening

Luis Ayala (SI Secretary General) opened the meeting by first thanking Pedro Sánchez, leader of the SI member party in Spain and an SI Vice-President, and the PSOE and the Socialist Party of Cataluña for hosting this meeting. He underlined the determinism of the SI to meet in Barcelona in the context of recent developments, to put forward the politics of principles and values, and searching for the common good. The parties and organisations represented at our meeting were the political forces committed to construct a society with more democracy, more equality and more solidarity.

The work of the SI since the XXV Congress has reflected our commitment to build a future with those principles and values, and the Council would hear from those leading this struggle in different countries and continents. The SI would continue to work with its members on different fronts, on conflict resolution such as in the Sahel and the Middle East, or on democracy with our comrades present here from Belarus and Venezuela. We will also hear from those affected by humanitarian crises, serving as a platform for the Rohingya people, and we would put our attention on matters of peace and security, as on the Korean peninsula. The Council would equally undertake practical work, moving forward on its commitment to gender equality within the SI.

Miquel Iceta (Socialist Party of Cataluña, PSC) welcomed all delegates to Barcelona, considering it a great honour to address the SI Council. He reflected on the founding of the SI and the Declaration of Frankfurt that had laid the foundations of democratic socialism, and the inspiring leaders through its history. Throughout this time the SI had maintained itself by staying faithful to its principles. Socialists believed in joint action, solidarity and international cooperation to face global challenges. Together they could fight inequality, climate change and terrorism to secure social welfare, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Socialists should unite to address the root of problems, not simply the consequences. In Barcelona, they had come to a bastion of internationalism, a diverse and cosmopolitan place that looked at the Mediterranean as a single shore. Socialists there were opposed to creating a new frontier and further fracturing Catalan society, as it was in the DNA of the city to welcome people from all over the world. He offered Catalans a country in which there would be neither winners nor losers, but the objective of reconciliation, which was, as Willy Brandt had taught, the most powerful weapon to win the battle against intolerance and prejudice.

George Papandreou (SI President) extended his gratitude to the hosts and underlined that the SI was in Barcelona to listen, understand and support the efforts of the socialist in Catalonia and Spain to provide solutions to the current crisis, which was significant for Spain, Europe and progressive forces around the world.

He added that people around the world were right to want to change the concentration of wealth among the richest few, profits made by exploitation of the planet and the developed world, invasions of privacy in the digital sphere, unaccountable use of technology and the concentration of power through corrupt

practices. The question for the socialist movement was how to respond and one way was to cultivate fear by dividing society and building up animosity. He chose another way, not to resign or hide but to unite forces, understand and communicate in a spirit of solidarity, building on basic values. He understood the need for empowerment that people felt in Catalonia but urged that Spain, Europe and socialist and progressive forces needed to work together, as this was the only way to bring about the change that people were demanding,

First working session of the Council

Adoption of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting

First main theme: Building the future with the left: democracy, equality and solidarity

Mikalai Statkevich (BSDP-NH, Belarus) reflected that national governments and international organisations were unable to keep up with fast changes in the world, with nationalism preventing the solving of mankind's common problems. The SI had for over 100 years worked to bring countries and peoples closer together through their shared values, leading coordinated campaigns and influencing national governments and global organisations, and it had to use its assets to promote social democratic values in a concerted way and advance solutions to global problems. He regretted that some European parties were no longer part of this joint work, focusing on economic interests to the detriment of basic human values, but thanked the SI leadership and its members for their support and solidarity.

Andrés Esono Ondo (CPDS, Equatorial Guinea) reported that during elections in his country access to the internet had been blocked, completely isolating them from the outside world for three weeks. After forty years in power, the General Obiang was using elections every four years to legitimise his dictatorship, and the most recent had been the worst yet. Oppression, misery and desperation could lead to conflicts, and the situation could lead to violence, so he called for international solidarity to fight against oppression and for democracy.

Mani Shankar Aiyar (INC, India) explained that both his country and party had included socialism as the key objective of nation building. Though India had raised 140 million people above the poverty line in a decade, the problems of the poor were not being prioritised and the left was needed to correct this balance. Freedom of the nation was not enough, what was essential was freedom of the people from inequality, poverty, disease and homelessness. He described humanity as a single family, part and parcel of a global process, and recognised that the SI gave the poor and deprived the opportunity to get their voices heard.

Antonio Ledezma (ABP, Venezuela) considered that the crisis in Venezuela could be a danger or an opportunity, hoping that it could eventually bring about a deepening of democracy. He called on the SI to reclaim the concept of socialism that was being discredited by a government that was limiting freedom and criminalising dissent. He expressed his belief that Venezuelans would unite, showing strength against an authoritarian regime and belief in the vote. He denounced the scandal of a Venezuelan dying every 16 minutes, of 300,000 malnourished children in the country with the world's largest oil reserves and a regime that collude with drug trafficking, terrorism and corruption. The task of the SI was to wash the face of socialism and help to liberate Venezuela, with a priority on humanitarian assistance, the separation of

powers the release of political prisoners and free elections. He hoped that the SI could soon hold a Council meeting in a free and democratic Venezuela.

The chair added that three weeks prior to the Council, SICLAC had adopted a resolution demanding the same things as Ledezma: the release of political prisoners, respect for the constitution and separation of powers, and elections with a new electoral council under international supervision.

Kornelia Ninova (BSP, Bulgaria) outlined the choices faced by Europe, which was at a crossroads confronted by financial, economic and migrant crises and the exit of Britain from the EU. In Bulgaria, which was at the point of chairing the EU, she had been evicted from the parliament as the leader of the opposition due to her insistence on the principles of law and democracy, causing a political crisis. The Bulgarian socialists wanted a united Europe that exists for its citizens, with a social agenda based on solidarity and overcoming inequalities, which could be a model for the whole world.

Saleem Mandviwalla (PPP, Pakistan) communicated his pride at representing the party of Benazir Bhutto at the SI. He reflected that the only way terrorism could be overcome was through the socialist agenda and needed discussing within the SI. He further called for action to secure the finances of the SI and stated that as was the case in Venezuela, the SI needed to raise its voice for any country where people were imprisoned for political reasons.

Ouafa Hajji (Socialist International Women) reported on the SIW Council, underlining that the question of women was intimately linked to the advance of democracy, the state of law and the advancement of rights, in particular those of women. Women should be at the heart of democracy, she added, remarking that parliamentary democracy was being supplanted in many societies and populism was on the rise. She recommended what social democrat women could do to address these problems, and called for encouragement for women to claim their place in politics.

Jesús Rodríguez (UCR, Argentina) recalled the founding principles of freedom, equality and solidarity that guided the SI and today meant a commitment to human, political, economic and social rights in a broad sense, combined with the achievement of sustainable progress. Recent decades had been characterised by democratisation and globalisation, but also the growth of inequality, despite a reduction in poverty. Social dissatisfaction had opened the doors to populism, and it was time to reaffirm the ideals of the SI and be willing to update them.

Hella Ben Youssef (Ettakatol, Tunisia) invited all delegates to reflect on their future and a society with equality, equity and justice and suggested that there was a crisis of social democracy that demanded contemplation and maybe transformation. She identified four essential points for meeting the challenges of the new generation: mobilisation of the masses and construction of alliances, firmly held and consistent principles, compromise, negotiation and consultation in pursuit of the regulation of conflicts, and active cooperation on an international level in face of globalisation.

End of the first session of the Council

Second working session of the Council

First main theme (continued)

Rafael Michelini (NE, Uruguay) stated that the principles of freedom, equality and solidarity had been a part of the SI since its founding. Freedom referred not only to freedom of speech, but also human rights. Though all issues were important, the changing environment had the potential to wipe out everyone. There were now sectors of the economy that generated profit and value through technology without creating jobs, and a future shortage of work would create turbulence. The SI needed to address the coming storms, by sticking to its principles and being guided by the citizens.

Elsa Espinosa (PRI, Mexico) spoke about the changing balance of power between left and right wing governments in Latin America, in the context of important presidential elections in many countries in 2018. Democracy in Latin America had been discredited, as it was working in some countries but not others. In Mexico, the left would be tested in forthcoming elections, where an alliance was formed against the PRI, which nonetheless had high expectations. She underlined the success of the PRI in having women as half of the candidates for each electoral process, including its leadership.

Isadora Zubillaga (VP, Venezuela) thanked the SI and those present who had supported the struggle against the dictatorship in Venezuela. She spoke as a political exile whose party was the most persecuted in Venezuela, where a humanitarian crisis was also developing on a magnitude they had never known. She called for urgent humanitarian assistance to the country, and demanded free and transparent elections with qualified international observation, underlining that the pressure of the international community on the regime must continue.

Aidar Alibayev (Kazakhstan, OSDP) spoke of the totalitarian regime in Kazakhstan, which controlled not only the political process but also the economic interests of the country, while maintaining a façade of democracy. He considered that only through the values of liberty and justice could the full development of Kazakhstan and central Asia be assured. The authoritarian regime needed replacing but it must be through the reestablishment of democracy, and his party aspired to be the base upon which Kazakhstan's democratic forces could consolidate.

Pia Locatelli (PSI, Italy) reflected on how PSOE had built and supported democracy for 40 years and was together with the PSC now defending democracy, equality and solidarity in the current crisis. The poor functioning of democratic systems and institutions could be traced back to the financial and economic crisis of 2008, which had become social and political. Social democrats needed to ensure they were guided by democracy, equality and solidarity to counter populism, which was a contagious illness. She called for the SI to underline its commitment to zero tolerance of violence against women.

Timoteo Zambrano (UNT, Venezuela) thanked the SI for the solidarity it had always shown with Venezuela. He was part of the opposition negotiating team which had three objectives – the opening of a humanitarian channel for food and medicine, a presidential election with transparent electoral conditions and the release of political prisoners, cessation of persecution and reinstatement of disqualified Venezuelan politicians. It was not an easy process and had no guarantee of success, but had the support of democratic countries in the region and the world.

Milciades Ochoa (APRA, Peru) expressed his grave concern at attacks on democracy and terrorism, which had struck Egypt in the preceding hours. Peru had lived through terrorism and it was his view that the SI

needed to assume a more prominent role in reversing the advance of terrorism and underlining the importance of democracy, not only in terms of participation in free elections but also pacification.

Second main theme: Working for stability and peace in a world of multiple conflicts

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) considered that peace was the first condition of everything, embodied in the charter and declaration of principles of the SI. In a complex world, the effects of the financial crisis remained, terrorism was multiplying and world peace was threatened. Common to conflicts was a deficit of democratic culture and adherence to international law. Angola had resolved its internal conflicts, allowing a broad programme of reconstruction and national reconciliation, and was pursuing regional peace and an end to the persisting Great Lakes conflict.

Carlos Lupi (Brazil, PDT) stated that there had been a civil coup against the president in Brazil, a country that did not need to have more conflicts. He identified a new phenomenon where politicians on all sides were constantly condemned on social media, making politics more dishonest. In a world of conflicts it was necessary to fight against misinformation, and convince society that dictatorship was worse than any party or politician presently in power. He considered the great conflict of society to be a lack of left-wing people and social justice, and a financial system that was destroying human values.

Kalla Ankouraou (PNDS, Niger) underlined that stability and peace were essential for a state to exist and to develop, and it was due to various conflicts that African countries had lagged behind other continents in development. A new threat to security had emerged in recent years in the form of Islamic terrorism, accentuated by a crisis of democracy and inability to fight poverty. Niger was not at war but had suffered the collateral effects of neighbouring conflicts, and President Issoufou had for this reason made security questions a priority. She called on those present to maintain and reinforce their support for those facing terrorism.

Daban Shadala (PUK, Iraq) delivered the bad news that Jalal Talabani had recently died, having played a key role in establishing peace in Iraq and keeping the country together. During the current conflict the Kurds, having defeated ISIS as part of the international coalition against terrorism, had opened their hearts to two million refugees. He considered that the Iraqi government was in violation of the constitution by using its military in an ethnic and religious conflict, and called for the SI to be more engaged in the peace process to work for a healthy dialogue between the Kurdistan region and Iraq.

Mostafa Shalmashi (KDP, Iran) denounced the Islamic regime in Iran for supporting international terrorism, seeking to access the atomic bomb and violating the basic human rights of the Iranian people. He outlined how Iranian forces were newly in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Kurdistan, destabilising the entire region. Despite suppression by the Iranian government, the Kurds were key fighters against terrorism, fighting for stability, peace, pluralism and a democratic system. He called for international support for Kurdish groups in their battle for independence.

Alexander Romanovich (SR, Russia) stated that Russia was working for a political settlement of the Transnistria problem, within the internationally acclaimed "5+2" framework, and that non-observance of the 1992 agreement on peaceful settlement could lead to a new crisis situation. He stressed that Russian troops present in the region were peacekeeping forces. He considered that a solution depended on the parties' willingness to agree, and that within the SI there was an opportunity to facilitate settlement using the contacts between member parties in Russia and Moldova.

Johnson Asiedu Nketiah (NDC, Ghana) referred to the phenomenon of political vigilantism in Ghana, where attacks on government offices and civil servants had taken place in the name of the parties of power. These attacks had grown in magnitude, targeting security services, police stations and sitting courts in order to release suspects belonging to the ruling party. Despite condemnations from religious leaders, traditional chiefs and former presidents the situation had worsened, and he called on the SI to condemn all acts of political vigilantism in Ghana, which were similar to the antecedents of Boko Haram.

Samad Alizada (SDP, Azerbaijan) stated that the biggest problem of his country had not been resolved for over 25 years despite 4 UNSC resolutions. He dismissed the ability of the Minsk Group to resolve the conflict, accusing the co-chair of openly supporting Armenia, which he considered the aggressor. Azerbaijan was ready for peace but would not consider the concession of Karabakh. Social democrats were willing to work for peace, but not at any cost.

Mario Nalpatian (ARF-D, Armenia) welcomed the signing of a cooperation agreement between the EU and Armenia, which despite the difficulties of its geographic situation had growing institutional support. He considered that Nagorno-Karabakh had never formed a part of the territory of Azerbaijan, and that the right to self-determination needed to be recognised. The Armenians accepted the negotiations in the Minsk Group as a valid instrument and necessary in the search for definitive peace in the region.

The chair appealed to all speakers to keep to the substance of issues in exchanges, paying tribute to the unique ability in the SI to bring people on opposing sides of an argument together. All those present shared that they were social democrats and needed to listen and find points of contact, addressing each other from their common identity.

End of the first day

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Saturday 25 November 2017 – second day of the Council

Third working session of the Council

Report of the Ethics Committee

Ariane Fontenelle (PS, Belgium), Chair of the Committee, thanked the members of the committee for electing her as its new chair. The committee had taken decisions on applications for membership in accordance with adherence to the Ethical Charter of the SI, a political analysis of the country, representativeness within the country and alignment with the values of the SI. The committee recommended the rejection of applications by Independent Social Alliance, ASI, of Colombia and the Union of Centrists of Greece. The committee would continue working on other applications for membership and change of status at its next meeting.

The chair added that there were a large number of applications, with each party needing to respond to a questionnaire. Due to the number of responses received an extraordinary meeting of the committee would be necessary before the next Council to continue to advance with the work of the committee.

Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The chair announced that SIFAC had re-elected Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD) and Janos Veres (Hungary, MSzP) as its co-chairs, and Marcio Bins (Brazil, PDT) as its vice-chair.

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD), co-Chair of the Committee, announced that the committee had approved a budget for 2018. He noted that the SI had been very active since the previous Council notwithstanding its limited budget, and asked those present to ensure fees were paid. Within SIFAC there was a team who would be responsible for helping the parties that had problems with their membership fees. In accordance with the statutes, a number of parties that had not paid their membership fees had ceased to be members.

The chair noted that 12 parties with 3-5 years of outstanding debts had been removed from the membership list. About two million pounds of unrecoverable debts had been written off, and it was a priority to get the money that was in the budget for 2018, in order to deliver on the objectives and goals of the organisation.

The Council adopted the report of the Ethics Committee and the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Second main theme (continued)

Nabil Malaeb (PSP, Lebanon) referred to conflicts between global, regional and local forces for the control of natural resources. Conflicts in the Arabian Gulf and Iran were affecting life in Lebanon, with the latest crisis prompted by the resignation of the Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri while in Saudi Arabia. The PSP was working to maintain links between all ethnic groups in Lebanon. Exceptional solutions were required to the current crisis, and he called on international forces to exert their influence on the Lebanese state and Hezbollah.

Osman Faruk Logoglu (CHP, Turkey) raised the question of secularism as the ultimate equaliser, the idea of respecting all human beings without reference to religion, gender or ethnicity. He considered that secularism sustained and nourished democracy, equality and solidarity, which are the pillars of social democracy. He called for the SI to spend more time promoting the notion of secularism across the globe.

Faraj Zayoud (Fatah, Palestine) spoke about Palestinian reconciliation, and the signing of a unity agreement between Fatah and Hamas. The Palestinian leadership wanted to bring Hamas on board as part of the PLO and prevent extremism. The Fatah general congress had adopted four pillars regarding the way to face the military occupation: no state in the Gaza strip controlled by Hamas, no Palestinian state without Gaza, the right to self-determination and an end to the Israeli occupation. He considered that Likud and other right wing parties were not partners for peace or any future negotiations.

Colette Avital (Meretz, Israel) recalled the Barcelona Process launched 22 years earlier as a wonderful political initiative to foster partnership between the north and south of the Mediterranean, and a direct outcome of the Oslo Agreement. Though the right-wing government in Israel did not accept the idea of a Palestinian state, the left in Israel was proud to continue to meet with Palestinian partners to fight for

peace, and needed solidarity. She hoped to see the PSOE back in power in Spain and a new initiative like the Barcelona Process with force and determination.

The chair reaffirmed the commitment of the SI to the Middle East and confirmed the intention to launch an initiative in Palestine and Israel based on the good proposals heard by the Council.

Chantal Kambiwa (SDF, Cameroon) described the Anglophone crisis in her country, where those in the two English-speaking regions had felt progressively isolated, which had created frustration. She reported that following calls made by the SI and the UN, some but not all of the prisoners incarcerated during this crisis had been released and she asked for continued solidarity and attention to the situation in Cameroon. It was also the day for the elimination of violence against women, and the SI wanted a world in peace, and women in peace with the rights respected.

Abidine Buchraya (Polisario Front, Western Sahara) stated that the conflict in Western Sahara remained subject to the principle of decolonisation. The status quo imposed by Morocco in the territory was feeding all the risk factors in the region and a dialogue to bring to an end the human drama experienced by the Saharawis was necessary. The Polisario Front was committed to working for peace, democracy and stability, believing that it was possible to apply international law and guarantee self-determination for the Sahrawi population.

Abdesselam Eddebbbarh (USFP, Morocco) considered that the Western Sahara conflict was a result of the Cold War and a proxy conflict. A mission of the SI had visited the provinces in question, and the report subsequently adopted unanimously contained all the fundamental arguments on the issue. Morocco only wanted reconciliation and peace, and the USFP would work for regional integration with the contribution of Algeria and Tunisia, to investigate all possibilities in the framework of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Shazia Marri (PPP, Pakistan) reaffirmed her commitment as SI vice-president to the ideals of the organisation. She noted that Pakistan was a key player in peacekeeping that had paid a massive price for its commitment to peace, with the loss of thousands of lives and huge steps backwards in terms of economy and development, and reflected that the world was not a safe place as incidents of terror continued to happen. She urged the US and the international community to recognise the contributions of Pakistan to peace and called on the SI to stand by the people of Pakistan against extremism.

Third main theme: Promoting human responses to humanitarian crises

Maung Tun Khin, (Burmese Rohingya Organisation) reported on the situation for Rohingya in Burma, who were denied citizenship, deprived of opportunities, stripped of land and kept under military control. Since 2012, there had been state organised violence against Rohingyas, who were subsequently excluded from the census and deprived of the vote. Recent military attacks had led to the fleeing of 700,000 to Bangladesh in three months, with many killed and raped and houses burned. He described a systematic intentional destruction of the whole Rohingya community, which amounted to genocide and a terrible example of ethnic cleansing. He asked the international community to take action, bring those responsible to the ICC and protect the Rohingyas in Burma.

The chair thanked Maung Tun Khin for his testimony and assured him that the SI would continue to support a just and prompt response to the expectations of the Rohingya people, who had suffered ethnic cleansing.

Ousseini Hadizatou Yacouba (PNDS, Niger) wished to raise the case of Niger, which faced humanitarian challenges, as a landlocked country at the heart of the Sahel. Niger was suffering the effects of climate change, such as drought and was surrounded by several conflicts at its borders. Of particular concern was the situation in the Chad basin, which had once been a centre for development, commerce and cultural exchange but was now threatened by water shortages, leading to the displacement of more than 2.5 million people and a humanitarian crisis that required a multidisciplinary solution.

Sandra Torres (UNE, Guatemala) described a general humanitarian crisis in Guatemala, where 60% of the population lived in poverty, exacerbated by government policies since 2012. Guatemala was also profoundly affected by emigration and political crises of corruption, which had become a threat to democracy. The deep humanitarian crisis in Guatemala urgently needed addressing and elections in 2019 could be an opportunity to recover the lost path of development.

José Francisco Rosales (FSLN, Nicaragua) considered that suppliers of weapons were responsible for instability in the world, and called for consistency and a brake on the war industry. Peace needed true economic and social democracy, and was fundamental for development. Nicaragua was a partner for dialogue in the search for stability and peace in Venezuela and equally supported a process of dialogue in Catalonia.

Mustapha Ben Jaafar (Ettakatol, Tunisia) addressed the need to strengthen the global social democratic movement faced with the neoliberal right. He expressed solidarity with those facing daily tragedies of war, conflict and ethnic cleansing and considered that the retreat of Daesh was a source of hope. On Tunisia, he outlined recent political developments and the need to consolidate the democratic process, calling on social democrats to support the country, as a failure of democracy there would have repercussions outside its borders.

Adoption of resolutions and statements of the Council

Resolution on the establishment of the equality committee

The chair presented a text agreed together with SIW on the formation of the Committee on Gender Equality, as part of a process launched at the Congress to introduce gender parity within the SI.

The **resolution on the establishment of the equality committee** was adopted.

Declaration on Catalonia:

The **declaration on Catalonia** was adopted.

Declaration on the Rohingya people

The **declaration on the Rohingya people** was adopted

Declaration on Yemen

The **declaration on Yemen** was adopted.

Declaration on slavery and migration

The **declaration on slavery and migration** was adopted.

Declaration on North Korea

Alexander Romanovich (Russia, SR) proposed to amend the declaration by adding that the military activities of the USA in the region harmed the situation.

The chair suggested that it would be better to turn this into a positive sentiment, reflecting that the SI wanted all elements to reduce tension, and proposed that the secretary general and president could work with Romanovich to find words to that effect.

The **declaration on North Korea** was adopted

Resolution on the elections in Nicaragua

The **resolution on the elections In Nicaragua** was adopted.

Resolution on the situation in Venezuela

The **resolution on the situation in Venezuela** was adopted.

Resolution on Equatorial Guinea

The **resolution on Equatorial Guinea** was adopted.

Declaration on Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti

Victor Benoit (Haiti, USFP) proposed the inclusion of text calling for permanent residence to be granted in the USA for Haitian migrants.

The chair stated that it would not be a problem to incorporate this into the declaration.

The **declaration on Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti** was adopted.

Resolution on the Kurdish people

Umut Oran (Turkey, CHP) asked that member parties should in future contact parties whose countries were the subject of a resolution, as a way to show solidarity and cooperation.

The chair stated that this was the first time such a situation had arisen, and that the Kurdish parties had been asked to discuss these important new elements with Turkey. The Kurdistan problem affected the

whole region and the more parties that were involved in this, as part of the SI, the more powerful the message would be.

The **resolution on the Kurdish people** was adopted.

Closure

Luis Ayala expressed gratitude for the hospitality of the hosts in Barcelona, and his pleasure to see the commitment of Pedro Sanchez to the SI. He briefly outlined the upcoming activities and initiatives of the SI, and reflected that the two days had been spent listening to those who could provide solutions to the crises in the world.

Pedro Sánchez (PSOE, Spain) declared that 25 November, the International day for the elimination of violence against women, was special for all of social democracy, and dedicated his words to the eradication of gender violence. He noted that Barcelona would continue to be the home of foreigners, a plural and dynamic capital and a city of solidarity. As general secretary of PSOE he had absolute confidence that the city would once again achieve great things in the hands of the socialists, who would not give in to a separatism that fractured the coexistence between Catalans and threatened livelihoods.

The cause of secessionism was not of the left. The socialists believed that Spain was all of its people, without exclusion. In Catalonia, the best way to defend the Spanish constitution was to reform it in a pact of coexistence and not react with blindness to the secessionist challenge as the right had, by seeking to impose uniformity in a diverse country. PSOE wanted a new constitution, not independence; an autonomous Spain, not recentralisation. The left knew that in the face of global challenges, they needed global answers that could not be provided by nationalism, which was a promise of a return to a false reality of years gone by. Only through multilateralism could the challenges of tax havens, migration, climate change and asymmetric wars be addressed, as these threats do not respect geopolitical boundaries.

Secessionism was occurring in the context of the economic crisis and the silence of conservative governments in the face of great inequality. He was not talking about reversing globalisation, but channelling it. Without social democracy the challenges of the future could not be met. He underlined the need for an efficient, intelligent state, a social market economy that addressed social imbalances and tackled corruption, aware of its limitations and the imperative of multilateralism. He concluded that the only mission of this and every generation should be to temporarily administer humanity such that those to come would inherit a better world.

The meeting was declared closed.

End of the Council

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