

The DECLARATION of BARCELONA

on the Defence of Democracy

At the First Catalonia Progressive Forum, 11 June 2022

Preamble

In the midst of the 21st century, our democratic systems face challenges and onslaughts from both within and without, threatening their integrity and eroding the quality of the institutions and of democratic governance. Alongside this democratic regression, we are seeing significant erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms through increasingly restrictive legislation and practice. This backsliding is coupled with an ever weakening rule of law, with dangerous politicisation of justice.

Rising inequalities and declining social cohesion caused by decades of neoliberal policies have led to an increase in individualism that makes any response based on collective action difficult. Disinformation strategies and the ever shrinking space dedicated to civil society also enfeebles essential public and democratic debate. Furthermore, the lack of response and proposals from many political parties -including the traditional left- to meet all of these challenges, along with the assumption of the right's storytelling and policies, have together created the ideal conditions for the far-and extreme right to grow and gain support among the alienated in a poorly cohesive society.

In the face of these threats, and after debating how to defend our democracies through progressive and internationalist positions in the mid-21st century, the signatories **DECLARE** the following commitments to the defence of democracy:

- We shall not allow any backsliding regarding the democratic and social conquests gained through years of struggle. Social Europe must be defended by conquering further citizens' rights. Democratic transformative processes throughout the world shall receive our support.
- Our fight for democracy and its defence requires cohesive and inclusive societies with high levels of education for our citizens, with transparency and honesty of political representatives and in government, as well as the exercise of active citizenship by society as a whole.
- There can be no full democracy if there is no effective equality between men and women, if there is any discrimination whatsoever, if there is not full social justice and a symmetric relationship between the Global North and the Global South.

- Democracies must be able to provide democratic outcomes for the demands of self-determination of peoples. We thus reject the repression and criminalization of legitimate and democratic political movements.
- We shall jointly coordinate contention of the growth of the far right and populism in our respective countries and global regions, offering the people an alternative that will address the causes of social discontent with specific measures to improve living conditions and the dignity of all our citizens.

Signatory parties:

The Scottish National Party Syriza

Unión por la Esperanza

Sinn Féin

Plaid Cymru

Bloco de Esquerda

Unión Patriótica

Colombia Humana

Die Linke

Bloque Nacionalista Galego Eh Bildu

Halkların Demokratik Partisi

Bloc Québécois

Esquerra Republicana