



IED seminar Europe and Latin America: Protests and upheavals in the global era of social and political crises

Intervention of Juan M^a Atutxa Mendiola President of Sabino Arana Fundazioa

Bilbao, 31 January 2020

Good morning

Good morning to you all. And I particularly would like to welcome the person who is here today as the presenter and moderator, Izaskun Bilbao, and all the speakers. A heartfelt welcome and our sincere thanks for being here this morning with us.

And a special good morning to the chair of the EEB of the Basque National Party and Deputy Chair of the PDE, Andoni Ortuzar, and to Mikel Burzako, the Managing Director of the IED. There will also be the speech recorded by Francesco Rutelli, CEO of the Institute of European Democrats and to whom we also send our regards, as it was not possible for him to be here with us today.

Bilbao 5 June 2008. We held the first ever Bilbao Dialogues on the theme of “A World in Transformation”. 31 January 2020. Eleven and a half years later, we are gathered here today for the 12th edition of those same “Bilbao Dialogues: Europe and Latin America”. And the theme today is “Protests and upheavals in the global era of social and political crises” 12 years. 12 editions.

Two quick points.

The first: a proposition that is being held for the twelfth time is a valuable proposition. Twelve editions are not held just by inertia. The Bilbao Dialogues shoot is young, but it has already taken root and, what is most important, bears fruit every year. Without boasting, we can say loud and clear that the Bilbao Dialogues are a valuable proposition.



And the second consideration. **The world has changed radically over these last nearly twelve years. We have all changed. Yet, the same initial proposal remains. We share a common denominator: putting on the table, reflecting on and discussing some of the large challenges that we have to face on both sides of the Atlantic in this global era. The relationship between politics and economics, climate change or sovereignty in the 21st century have been discussed by successive Bilbao Dialogues. Today we will consider protests and upheavals in the global era of social and political crises. And we will do so from our Christian Democrat DNA, from the principles and values that we share, from a humanist view of life and politics, from a non-defeatist and proactive attitude, and from a firm and decisive desire to be active subjects of that world in transformation. Change, –ongoing, accelerated, disruptive–, is the sign of our time. Future is synonymous with uncertainty. And change and uncertainty today generate instability. We are running out of benchmark models, out of ethical benchmark models; in politics, in the economy, in so many orders of life. And this all makes us feel orphans, unsecure, overwhelmed, at the mercy of the free-for-all and of the strongest power. Some of the protests and upheavals around the world reflect that reality. We are rebels with a cause, because the cause of a fairer, more humane and more sustainable world is always worthwhile.**

This is my last speech as Chair of the Sabino Arana Fundazioa. I would just like to say a couple of things more.

Thank you, thank you so much, to everyone, to the thousands of people that, like you all today, have taken part in the Foundation's activities and seminars down through the years. I want to believe that we have played our small part in reflecting on all those aspects that involve and concern us as Basques and as citizens of the world. I am delighted, particularly delighted, that my final words are at this forum and as part of our Reflection and Discussion Tribune. Dialogue. Free and open dialogue. Dialogue between different approaches. Dialogue with a constructive and proactive spirit.



Dialogue, human rights, peace and coexistence. These are our principles. These have also been my principles in life and as Chair of Sabino Arana Fundazioa.

And my sincere gratitude must go to my party, the Basque National Party, represented here by the EBB Chair. Many thanks, Andoni, and also through you to the Party, for having trusted me with different responsibilities that have marked my life. It has been a real honour and a privilege, because serving your country –the Basque Country– is the most that one can unassumingly aspire.

This house is everyone's home. And it has been since the Foundation was set up. As has been the case down through these years. There is no question in my mind: the Sabino Arana Foundation, this house, will continue to be everyone's home in the coming years.

Farewell!