



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

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Good morning,

Let me start by assuring you that I am going to keep this brief. Just a few words. I would first like to reiterate the recognition and gratitude that Juan Mari Atutxa deserves and which have already been expressed. On Sunday, he said, to a packed theatre, that when your heart tells you to speak, it is better to keep quiet. Well, I cannot keep quiet and I want to summarise in ten seconds what I feel in my heart. And my heart says that you have been and continue to be its compass. You have improved everything you have touched. Renouncing the path of hate, you left your peace on one side to immerse yourself in the work of constructing our peace. Thanks to your great endeavour, with all your skills and with total dignity, you brought us the dawn. The dawn that vanquishes the darkest night, Juan Mari. And that is why you will always be our guiding star.

Thank you so much.

Thank you Juan Mari.

This tribute is born from feeling, but also from reason and offers us **some clues on how to face the challenges that we are going to discuss at these Bilbao Dialogues. Because what we are looking for are formulas to end the disrepute, to stop in their tracks opportunists and the populism that tries to sell easy solutions and damaged goods as being valid for complex problems.**

The violence that shook this country was a problem of those. So much so, that we are still dealing with its aftermath. Yet Juan Mari confronted it by thinking outside the box when addressing the problem. And that improved the situation. And the citizens saw that what was being done was useful and worked. Thus, the spectators in a bullring spontaneously applauded one day, in a democratic country, the chief of police. The anti-disrepute. Let's think about it. **Service, usefulness are the key words to confront oversimplification, opportunism and populism.**

I am today experiencing disrepute just like you. When the problem is discussed in Europe, I always recall the same. People became pro-European when they saw that an idea, a project, could frighten the fear of war away forever, consolidate



democracy and better distribute prosperity: in other words, it was useful. Scepticism is today growing because such a clear response and such a consistent result is not perceived given the threats discussed in the presentation to these sessions.

I therefore believe that we must apply this lesson to reverse that wave of disrepute. And I am going to put forward, as talking points, three ideas that I find in all successful models.

People, humanity, reason and emotion. We have to reset politics. Many of its stakeholders seem more concerned with their social media performance than with solving people's problems. They encourage a modern Plato's cave, the screen where many people believe they perceive reality, because they have bought the arguments of the prophets of the Apocalypse, which they interestedly defend, that the only point of politics is for them to be in command. Returning people to the heart of politics and acting consequently is the first lever to change the situation. Democracy, fundamental rights and fair distribution that fosters equal opportunities are the bases that we must never forget. The politics of emotion also needs reason.

Lateral thinking, commitment and participation

Political managers usually come up all too often against a "not possible". Their obligation is to resist, oppose creativity and innovation to the routine. And therefore, energise and consolidating the great social knowledge accumulated by citizens who want to return to the certainty of a rule-based world is very positive. That is participation today. When participation is thus oriented, commitment is generated.

Dimension. Politics needs dimension to address global problems. However, the plan that must produce it is not based on unity, on unconditional or forced adherence. The dimension that works needs the union that is the active and convinced sum of people, societies, culture and institutions who want to work together. Because opportunity is in that sum of diversity and of knowledge.

The voracity of financial capitalism, climate change, the transformation of our mobility model or the production system, other labour relations need global standards and rules because they are global problems. Yet the actions, the attitudes, the ways of coexisting and working, of being educated, which turn the rules and values into act, which are going to overturn the threats, are implemented at ground level. Because where we coexist, we know, love, respect and recognise each other is in the cities, in the regions and in human scale spaces. Therefore, that convinced whole needs to start from the bottom.



These sessions have been structured in three blocks to reflect on these matters. The introduction will go further into the diagnosis. We will then think about how this situation affects the politics and what we can do to drive the social knowledge that can help us put people back at the heart of political action.

Finally, we are going to reflect on a new more inclusive and participative economic model. We will talk about the mechanics that can break the “not possible” where it seems that is more difficult. The Basque Country is a good place to recall that a great deal can be done from grassroots level. Today, when the social economy is beginning to be noted as a tool for change, it is worth recalling the most powerful cooperative group in the world started in the Basque Country and that Brussels is looking with interest at the unanimous agreement of the Basque and Navarra parliaments regarding labour-managed enterprises.

Acting locally while thinking globally, consolidating bottom up, understanding diversity as opportunity is the way forward.

Without further ado, let us get on with the first discussion by giving the floor to Fuad Chahín, leader of the Christian Democrat Party of Chile.