



INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

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First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of the VI World Congress of Families for inviting me to participate in this International Forum of Parliamentarians.

Family has always been in Spain a fundamental institution, an institution very much appreciated - above ideological differences - by the Spanish people, as it is confirmed by every opinion poll. An institution that in the present moment – as in other previous periods of economic difficulties – has proved to be the best network of social protection, as well as the most efficient one and the less costly to the taxpayer. Without family help to people that became unemployed, or to youngsters that could not find their first job, social unrest would have escalated to unbearable levels or public administrations would have had to increase substantially their expenses in social protection.

That very high appreciation for the family by the Spaniards has not resulted in an equivalent public and budgetary support for it. Public expenditure in Spain devotes to the family 1,2 % of our GDP, while the average in the European Union is 2,1% of GDP, although the most voted political parties include family as one of the priorities in their programs. And now, economic crisis does not allow, in principle, a radical change in the situation in order to get closer to that European Union average. I say in principle, because precisely the economic crisis justifies, in my opinion, an increase in public support to the family, the most efficient institution when it comes to help children, youngsters, elders, unemployed and dependent persons more affected by economic recession.



In 2004 the Socialist party, headed by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, acceded to the Government of Spain and started a series of legislative initiatives very harmful for the family, from the “Education for Citizenship” subject – that in many cases occasioned ideological indoctrinations not allowed by the families of students – and the “express divorce” law to the Abortion Law of March 3, 2010. A law that considers abortion up to 14 weeks a woman’s right, as well as allows even longer periods for eugenic abortion, something unbelievable in this 21st Century and that goes against the United Nations Treaty on the Rights of Handicapped Persons, signed by Spain. The Popular Party appealed against the Abortion Law to the Constitutional Court, arguing that such law violates nine articles of the Spanish Constitution.

In November 2011, the Popular Party won the General Elections with a program that includes, among other compromises, the following ones: “Maternity must be protected and supported. We will promote a law for the protection of maternity with measures to support pregnant women, specially those in difficult situations. We will change the present regulation of abortion to reinforce the protection of the right to life and of minors.” The Popular Party will fulfil this electoral compromise. So has announced the Minister of Justice.

A change in public opinion has started in Spain. For many years, Spanish society and politicians (with the exceptions of some minorities that deserve every praise) have been uncommitted before the drama of abortion. Reality has been concealed and not enough was made known of the fraud in the application of the abortion law of 1985, the outrageous business of abortion clinics and the eugenic use of the legal provision that allowed the abortion of unborn children with risk of being handicapped, something that has lead to a drastic reduction in the birth of children with Down syndrome.

But step by step and thanks to the tenacity and to the effort of a committed minority of persons – that have not yielded before incomprehension, contempt and, in some cases, even physical and psychic personal aggressions – public opinion is experiencing a change.

Abortion is no longer a taboo subject, something protected under a cover of silence, something that was inappropriate to mention in public or social life and in the media. More and more persons, and increasingly younger persons, have dared to speak about the problem, about the fraud of abortion clinics, about the aggression to the woman that abortion means.



And they have gone to the streets in massive – but at the same time peaceful, respectful and happy – demonstrations. In face of this new reality the defenders of abortion look more and more old, more reactionary and less capable of attracting the citizenship.

One of the more significant signs of that change are the Popular Legislative Initiatives that, gathering the signatures of hundreds of thousands of citizens, have promoted that regional parliaments debate proposals of laws to support pregnant women. Those initiatives have become laws in seven autonomous regions: Castilla-La Mancha (with the socialist party voting for), Galicia, Valencia Region, Murcia, Canary Islands and Madrid Region. All of these initiatives, born in the civil society and supported by several regional governments, constitute, in my opinion, a very valuable proof of the change that has started in Spanish public opinion in the appreciation of the right of life and of maternity. A new appreciation that will in the end triumph over the moral relativism of the last decades and against the laws promoted by gender radicalism.

All this has demonstrated that a sustained, firm and demanding stance from civil society and from its more committed entities can involve political representatives in the change of laws and in new government initiatives, as has also happened with the “Education for Citizenship” subject that is going to be substituted by the one of “Civic and Constitutional Education”, a subject without contents that could be used for ideological indoctrination.

Meanwhile, we should not miss every occasion to be grateful for the courage, the commitment and the determination in face of adversity of so many exemplary persons that since a long time ago have fought everyday to help pregnant women and their children, overcoming incomprehension and deceptions, with very little resources but with a great enthusiasm, the enthusiasm of great souls. I want to give them here my testimony of admiration and gratitude.

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