

Spain: Sánchez announces new measures against the crisis

Debate on the State of the Nation

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USPA NEWS - The Spanish Parliament held the Debate on the State of the Nation on Tuesday, June 12, the first to be held since 2015. The debate began with the intervention of the Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, who stressed that he is "fully aware" of the daily difficulties that most citizens suffer due to the rise in prices, a consequence of the chain of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine that has made energy and basic food more expensive, above all. And he stated that neither inflation nor rising prices are the government's fault.

Inflation, he explained, is now the main challenge facing Spain and most world economies. Regarding the prospects for the coming months, Sánchez pointed out that they will depend on the duration of the war, the progress of economies such as China and the supply of gas from Russia to Europe, as well as the effectiveness of the measures adopted to avoid an inflationary spiral. The Spanish president called not to fall into catastrophism since, although the Spanish economy is going to grow less than expected, it is creating quality employment, the most strategic sectors are already operating almost at full capacity, European funds are having a real impact and the measures adopted, such as the cap on gas, will help cool prices.

Sánchez assured that the Government is going to go "for all" in the defense of the social majority, of the middle and working class, so that the consequences of the war are distributed in a fair and equitable way and do not fall on the most vulnerable. And, at the same time, it will continue to modernize the country: "We are building the future, looking forward and we are not going to stop," he said.

New anti-crisis measures

In addition to the measures initially contained in the National Plan in response to the consequences of the war in Ukraine, extended and expanded - fuel discounts, limitation of rent increases, discounts on electricity taxes that represent a total reduction of 80 % of the receipt or the aid of 200 euros for vulnerable people -, the president announced the 100 % discount on all subscriptions for several trips for the public service trains of Cercanías, Rodalies and medium-distance operated by Renfe. Subscriptions for several trips will be free from September 1 to December 31. This initiative is added to the 30 % reduction for subscriptions for the rest of urban and metropolitan transport, which regional governments can supplement up to 50 % or 60 %.

Second, a tax will be put in place on large electricity, gas and oil companies. Of an exceptional and temporary nature, it will tax the extraordinary profits obtained in 2022 and 2023. An annual collection of 2,000 million euros per year is estimated. An exceptional and temporary tax on banking entities will also be approved. It will last for two years, over the 2022-2023 financial years, and it is estimated that it will raise around 1,500 million euros per year.

The Government will also continue to encourage the social agents to reach a dividend and income pact, which will make it possible to contain the rise in prices and fairly distribute the costs and benefits of the current crisis. In this sense, Sánchez thanked the representatives of civil society, social agents, groups, NGOs and sectoral organizations for their willingness to reach agreements, which has allowed the adoption of measures and the promotion of important laws, such as the Labor Reform.

Sánchez insisted that the Spaniards must come out of the crisis better than they entered it, with an economy and a Welfare State that are more prosperous, sustainable and resilient than before. The pillars of this transformation, he pointed out, are education, health, the ecological transition and digitization. In this sense, other specific measures, announced by the president in his speech, will be the creation of a complementary scholarship of 100 euros per month for all students over 16 years of age who already enjoy a scholarship, with the aim that no young person be forced to drop out of school out of necessity. Nearly a million students will receive it from September to December.

The Spanish Government will also create the State Public Health Center to improve the management of health emergencies, present a new Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) and advance Spain's energy independence by promoting collective self-consumption and in public buildings and access to vehicles electrical. Likewise, a new basic state regulatory framework for fire prevention and extinction

personnel will be established, in collaboration with all the administrations involved.

Other imminent bills will be those related to the protection of informants, official secrets, the regulation of the activity of lobbies and those against the trafficking and exploitation of human beings and against racial discrimination.

Defense of democracy

Sánchez reiterated his commitment to Ukraine where, he said, not only the fate of the Ukrainian people is being decided, but also that of Europe: "The future of our sovereignty and our rights, our security and our democracy is decided. Precisely for this reason, the other European nations have a duty to fulfill."

The president also defended the validity of Title VIII of the Constitution dedicated to territorial organization and defined co-governance between administrations as an unbeatable instrument to provide effective responses to citizen problems. Finally, Sánchez called for dialogue and reiterated his willingness to reach basic consensus for the functioning of democracy, such as reforming article 49 of the Constitution or completing the renewal of the constitutional bodies.

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