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# Political Principles

PODEMOS





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# CHALLENGES AND DECISIONS IN THE FACE OF AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

This document constitutes a proposal for a strategic road map as a guide for Podemos in the big decisions it has to make during the crucial political-electoral cycle we are facing.

It will try to clarify the main challenges and to provide a coherent decision-making process to address them. Podemos needs to make the most of the present open window of opportunity for political change and the creation of popular sovereignty.

At the present time, the electoral process is far from being just an internal dispute between parties of the 1978 regime. It is providing the opportunity to deal with the crisis in a constitutive and openly public rather than oligarchic manner. The electoral process is currently at the epicenter of political confrontation. Podemos is the active agent and electoral tool that has disrupted the political map and it represents the chance for the change, with a suffering majority of people playing a leading role. This goes some way to explaining the fierce campaign of attacks, stigmatization, criminalization and discredit that our young organization and its representatives are suffering. For the first time in three decades, those who have monopolized power for their own benefit and that of the most privileged citizens, are aware that they could lose this power and are experiencing serious difficulties in managing the situation and recovering from their loss of confidence.

This is a process that will not occur all at once: there will be several stages, but in the context of accelerated, jumbled and complex political dynamics Podemos must rise to the challenge and make coherent and adequate decisions in order to reach its goals. To achieve this, it is vital to abandon reasoning based on making concessions to other parties, on merely satisfying the wider group or avoiding controversy. Neither should we deal with specific situations independently based on our good intentions. We need to view the cycle ahead as a whole and adopt strategic decisions focusing on our main goals.

## 1. CONTEXT: CRISIS OF THE REGIME, OLIGARCHIC OFFENSIVE AND HISTORICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The Spanish state is undergoing a crisis that goes beyond the loss of legitimacy of its political elite. This crisis affects central components of the political system and its institutions, the state's territorial distribution, the development model and the balance of social groups under the supremacy of dominant sectors. Some people call this crisis the «Crisis of the 1978 regime». This term has been coined to account for the situation of inherent exhaustion that has become apparent in an increasingly accelerated manner in the political and moral decomposition of the traditional elite, with corruption being the key element within the political and economic machinery of the dominant sector, the spearhead of its discredit.

The 15M Movement helped to articulate a measure of dissatisfaction of those who felt themselves to be political orphans or who were otherwise isolated and depoliticized until that moment. Therefore, the movement contributed decisively by introducing elements of protest into the current social and political landscape. These elements pointed to the social elite as being responsible for the situation, grouping them symbolically and eliminating differences to focus

on where limited pluralism and the strength of the regime rested. The official narrative of the elite looked worn out after 15M, revealing the exhaustion of their union, their certainties and the networks used to share out positions and to explain each person's role in the social context and to channel ordinary people's claims. All in all, this accumulation of smaller cultural transformations did not have the same effect everywhere in the country and it did not alter the institutional and electoral balance of power.

Initially, the PP (People's Party) was the greatest beneficiary of this social earthquake that shook mainly left wing voters and, paradoxically, although it placed conservative forces in the line of defence, it allowed the PP to win the elections with an absolute majority. This was despite the fact that they received fewer votes than those obtained by the PSOE in the 2008 election. The 15M movement was, at the same time, weakening electoral legitimacy: winning an election was no longer the only element of political legitimization, and, of course, it does not constitute a blank cheque. Above all, disaffection has overwhelmed the social and cultural landscape, fragmented by 30 years of neo-liberalism. This has eroded collective identities (mainly class identities but also traditional ideological narratives) which are no longer able to define or articulate various kinds of discontent with the status quo.

While in the streets voices of protest and social mobilization were on the increase, the right-wing PP party was accumulating an unprecedented amount of power that served as a basis for a tough and ambitious policy of state-controlled oligarchic reform. The PSOE party, situated in the centre-left of the political spectrum, with a significant lack of political imagination, barely made any move that would enable it to relate to the new political climate. Furthermore, it was firmly committed to the maintenance of the status quo and the program of cutbacks imposed by the Troika that led them to accept a subordinate role to the PP. Since then they have been punished in the ballot boxes. A number of IU elite leaders, generationally and culturally linked to the 1978 regime, have reacted timidly and conservatively, with a few significant exceptions. They had relied on the parameters established previous to the institutional crisis and had been confident in receiving the support that the PSOE was gradually and progressively losing, since they situated themselves to the left of the PSOE.

In the midst of this political crisis, left-wing nationalist forces have come to the conclusion in general, and specifically in Catalunya, that this is the right moment for mobilization in favour of regional sovereignty. In general, this has been carried out with a unilateral approach; a strategy which may be worthwhile in the short term but may also lead them into a cul-de-sac, as we saw on the occasion of the consultation celebrated in Catalunya on 9th November. The general constitutional question would then reappear with its complex vision of several nations within one state. On the other hand, the «movementist» hypothesis (shared by the majority of the left wing), initiated a mechanism whereby the «social» always has to precede the «political». This has proved useless in solving the impotence caused by delay and in proposing specific steps beyond more or less demonstrative mobilizations.

All this has been happening while the dominant sectors have been activating a broad and far-reaching offensive on the social and political pact of 1978. This deconstructive offensive seeks to render meaningless or to invalidate the most progressive parties in constitutional agreements, trample over popular or democratic counterweights in the balance of the state and open a regressive redistribution of power and money even more favourable to the dominant minority. The strategic political dilemma now is most probably located between oligarchic restoration and the opening up to a popular democratic process.

Therefore, an over-optimistic analysis of the organic crisis of the 1978 regime must be tempered by at least two assertions:

**1.** This crisis is occurring within the framework of a Northern State, integrated into the European Union and NATO that has not seen its capacity to organize its territory and monopolize violence reduced, nor its capacity to organize behaviour and reinforce certainty and habits. It is a state that is not experiencing important breaches within its apparatus and that does not seem to be affected by more or less disruptive social mobilization.

**2.** The political crisis may be much shorter than the economic one. A considerable amount of the social opposition we are now seeing derives from a «crisis of expectation» that may not be repeated in future generations. This could be deeply affected by the controlling effects of fear and impoverishment; including social exclusion which is already threatening a third of the population and which could remain at these levels. At the same time, the exile and destruction of the social and professional groups that nurture this opposition (voluntary sector and NGOs, university, public services, trade unions, etc.) is a torpedo against the lifeline of left wing militancy. After a series of austerity measures which are experienced as a political victory with a high degree of symbolic content over the subordinate classes, the oligarchy may manage to stabilize an already disciplined country that accepts as normal the impoverishment and exclusion of broad social layers and a narrowing down of democratic options. The examples of United States and UK after Margaret Thatcher need to be taken as warnings: neo-liberalism destroys but it is possible to build new orders and agreements on top of the pillar of the defeated classes of people. If the economic crisis is prolonged then the open window of opportunity may close a lot sooner, if the oligarchic offensive is carried out with a subordinate repositioning from a somehow revived PSOE and if the elite class proceeds with a restoration at the top that takes on board the more inoffensive of citizen demands that do not have a place nowadays in the 1978 order and the semi colonial role of the European Union.

## 2. THE 25TH MAY 2014 ELECTIONS AND THE NEW POLITICAL SCENE

The European elections on 25h May 2014 were not a routine event, but in fact created a small earthquake in the political scene which demonstrated to some people their precarious state of balance and the precariousness of positions which seemed well-established.

The most relevant statistic is that the Partido Popular, which lost 2.6 million votes, and the PSOE which lost 2.5 million votes, together scarcely reached 49% of the total votes cast. This is not simply a case of «losing» the elections for the first time in the history of our party system (when in the European elections of 2009 they jointly obtained 81% of the vote) but also, and more importantly, the game of two communicating vessels, by which whatever the first alternating party loses goes over to the other, in a movement which stimulates internal plurality at the same time as it closes the door to any alternative and safeguards systematic consensus which is shared by the two dynastic parties.

The fundamental element of this erosion of the two main parties of the regime (not all of the parties - one should not confuse the regime with «bi-party politics» as some do) is the exhaustion and internal crisis of the PSOE. The Socialist Party (after the initial role played by the PCE and CCOO) was the architect of the integration of the subordinate classes into the state in 1978 (and therefore also of the subordinate social conquests within this party) and a subsequent key element in its incorporation into the neoliberal social pact. It is the element that seals the political space «for the left» and it is this crisis which is opening up political opportunities for a new majority. If it were able to recover, even partially, from its loss of prestige and its internal problems, and put forward a new leader with few symbolic links to the past, it could recover part

of the lost terrain and thus narrow down the options for a force of democratic break-through, relatively broad-based within the discourse of popular citizens' unity.

The other threat to the expansion of the break-through would be if the government tries to present initial evidence that the worst of their austerity measures has passed and that recovery is round the corner, even when we are still aware that this is simply a mirage and that we are still subject to a possible future worsening of the crisis in a scenario of political and economic immobility. However false and remote it might be, the narrative that the most difficult homework has now been done and now we are approaching the time of reaping the benefits of this effort, is very dangerous because of the apparent revival of fortunes that it suggests.

Together with this breaking down of the movement between two communicating vessels, the myth of the impossibility of a majority that is not either the PP or the PSOE has also been torn up, and along with it the need to place oneself on one or the other of these ideological sides. The 25 May elections have demonstrated that there are possibilities for a new majority, and this crack in the collective imagination of the established order allows the most daring and audacious hypotheses to advance, as they now do not seem impossible to society as a whole.

Podemos, with its 1,245,000 votes, 8% at state level, has erupted as a political force with much more strength than that which is reflected in these figures. It is no exaggeration to say that we are now at the centre of Spanish political debate: we are the principle target for attack on the part of the PP and of the PSOE and the media oligopoly. The «caste» has clearly gone on the defensive, using our vocabulary and rushing to justify itself, to insult us or to dress themselves up in new clothing. The creators of opinion of the regime are involved in a massive operation of realignment to focus public discussion, not on the problems within Spain but on situations or actors of other periods of time or who are thousands of kilometres away; at the same time, they try to force Podemos to only speak to defend itself, so that discussions are not about what Podemos says and does, but about the continual «controversy» that surrounds Podemos, which, apart from whether it is true or not, generates an effect of noise and distancing and of fencing in to a symbolic position of «extreme left-wing», ignoring the diversity of its voters and followers.

Podemos has had to confront this fencing manoeuvre with which the caste attempts to return to the certainties that existed before the political crisis, but the main spokespeople of this offensive do not have the prestige nor the credibility today that they had before the organic crisis, and this hinders their task and opens up the possibility of a boomerang effect on various fronts. The excessiveness of the attacks has also shown in the eyes of many people the fear which Podemos has awoken amongst the most conservative sectors of the 78 regime.

With all of this in mind, the results achieved on 25th May and their impact on the Spanish political scene demonstrate the validity of the hypothesis of popular and broad-based unity and the correctness of our decision to offer a platform for registering and participating and articulation, using new language and new ways, for something that was in society but which had not previously expressed itself politically: despite our still fragile organization - understandable in a new-born movement - we have opened up a crack which today has accelerated Spanish political timing, has shaken old balances, has caused resignations and hurried repositioning and has shown a possible way forward to build a political majority for change in Spain's popular psyche. Our challenge now is to live up to the immense wave of expectation and hope that we have generated, because the present moment presents different elements which make up a political opportunity which would be difficult to improve on: the relative political weakness of the government, the absence of positive indicators - even partial ones - with which to renew confidence in austerity measures, a crisis in the main alternative party within the system of turn-taking, the spreading of discontent, the growing spiral of popular optimism for the possibility of change which is principally focused on Podemos, and the lack of cultural and symbolic



elements with which the old elite class can relaunch some version of the story in order to recover part of its lost confidence and prestige.

In a context of acute discredit of the political and institutional framework of the regime - which does not cease to show signs of decay, even though this may have been relatively under control until now - Podemos appears as an outside force, without being indebted to anyone (which explains the effort of the regime's media to fabricate some extremist ideological baggage) and in the best position to reap the benefit of the discredit of the establishment. This position, which the guardians of the «old/new» dichotomy have given us, obliges us to be enormously vigilant and to have great collective responsibility in the face of any behaviour which could lessen our commitment to regeneration, transparency and the defence of the interests of the majority of society.

In other, more direct, words: the moment is now, the moment in which the main actors and the financial and media apparatus and the apparatus of the state are having difficulties in repairing part of their lost legitimacy and their brutal campaign against Podemos is not having the success they were expecting. The moment is now, also, because in a modern state with an inter-connected civil society - which in our case is overwhelmingly controlled by conservative forces - the mere passing of time could play in favour of what already exists, wearing us now, containing the people's eruption in official politics, normalizing a system of reconstituted parties and leading to a strategy of slow growth within an already established scenario, in which it would be difficult to compete with the big political parties which represent the dominant powers. It is now, in the moment of decomposition, when Podemos can be a lever which subverts given positions, which today consist of floating and fragile balances and identities, and reach government by putting forward an exceptional discourse for an exceptional situation: everything falls, the old has lost its confidence and sense of shame, let them all go away, a new government is needed at the service of the people; Podemos is that force because of its ability, honesty and will.

This manoeuvre may not occur immediately or alone, but it is the kind of orientation, style and perspective which can allow us to win. The kind of organization, the political of alliances and strategic framework in which different political initiatives are engaged should be adapted to this end.

From this analytical framework we can put forward more clearly the necessary, crucial debate about the tasks and challenges which Podemos has to confront in this accelerated, and doubtlessly decisive, political cycle. We need to think about the next steps to be taken, on an institutional level: municipal, regional and general elections, as well as on an organizational level: which organization is up to the task and what challenges it has, which tool is needed to contribute to, articulate and form a new majority with the will and capacity for political power.

We have before us a year and a half which are going to be decisive in the history of our country. Because of the political calendar itself and the development of the political crisis, electoral issues are and will continue to be at the centre of the political debate in this accelerated cycle, although it is not the only political terrain. Podemos will have to supply itself with the tools which will allow it to fight these battles effectively. The priority on an organizational level which is derived from an analysis of the challenges outlined here is therefore to build in the first instance a political, discursive and electoral machine - which is not limited to the structure of Podemos and which reaches out to other actors - which is capable of taking advantage of the window of opportunity of the crisis of the 1978 regime in a context of enormous hostility and manoeuvres which at best distract or stigmatize and in the extreme lead to political destruction. We have before us the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute decisively to the construction of a new popular will for political change in favour of social majorities.

### 3. DARE TO WIN: DECISIONS IN THE FACE OF THE POLITICAL-ELECTORAL CYCLE

We are talking about a «political-electoral» cycle because it is evident and generally clear that the various elections that are going to take place during the intensive 2014/15 electoral year are not a succession of isolated elections but rather a chain of events which in fact have no sense when fragmented or only considered as exclusively electoral, but rather have a central political meaning which we must insist on and reinforce: we are facing a decisive year for the history of Spain and in the different elections, political power is going to be settled and the direction which the country takes and the direction of the organic crisis through which it is passing: if as until now in favour of a privileged minority or in favour of social majorities and their needs and desires.

However, although we are before an imminent national-state cycle, the dates of the different elections can help, depending on how they are dealt with, to reinforce or dissipate this idea. Not all terrains of dispute are equally fertile for us and it is no secret to anybody that we have to be careful and astute to respond to the order of elections which do not necessarily work in our favour. First of all, in May 2015 are the municipal and regional elections in 13 communities (Canaries, Balearics, Murcia, Valencian community, Castilla-La Mancha, Madrid, Castilla y León, Aragón, La Rioja, Mavarra, Extremadura, Cantabrá and Asturias) without ruling out that the date of elections in Andalucía and Cataluña may be brought forward, and, after this, in November 2015, the general elections.

Our priority must be the general elections and participation in the previous elections which ensures that the presence of Podemos, the continuity of the wave of growth and hope and its articulation in the political and cultural scene, and a new collective national, popular will. For this we must take decisions which minimize risks and maximize opportunities, which concentrate our strength in the most favourable points and terrains, not necessarily where our adversaries would like to meet us.

It is not a problem for us to recognize difficulties and obstacles. We have learnt that citizens' politics do not hide complexities but expose them and reinforces them with public discussion. Our commitment is not to a political machine but to a change which is led by the majorities in our country. This is the inspiration behind our proposal.

It is possible that we do not have to fight on all fronts nor in the same way. Our greatest strength lies in our flexibility and our capacity for innovation. This proposal suggests the decisions which confront this political cycle in a coherent way and with a central objective: to make the most of the opportunity which presents itself for change in Spain.

#### Municipal elections

The municipal context constitutes an institutional space in which ordinary people can establish relation of greater proximity with political decision-making. Precisely because of this, the process whereby similar local elites have taken position of local political-institutional spaces is even more incomprehensible and inadmissible. In many of the towns in which large budgets are managed, citizens are impotent before the reproduction of old and new repertoires of local dictatorships and corruption.

The proximity of local administration explains the considerable awareness which most people have of the hows, whats and whos of their local council and at the same time leaves a deliberate gap between citizens and the areas of political representation. The explosion of 15M gave way

to a cycle of collective building in towns, villages and neighbourhoods. People started to organize themselves, getting together, getting to know each other and building networks. These have been years characterized by the work of many people and many organizations; years of identification of problems and formation of proposals, of accumulation of experiences and know-how. The municipal elections in 2015 come just in time so that these citizens' spaces can manage to transfer the projects and proposals that people have formulated, debated and endorsed during these years to the political-institutional arena.

It is also true that the municipal elections are coming rather soon for Podemos. We are still building up our structures and connections in quite a number of territories, growing and organizing ourselves better. We would have difficulty presenting reliable candidates who can fully guarantee to represent the spirit of Podemos in all 8177 municipalities in the country. We all know examples of difficulty in the organization and also the different speeds with which Podemos is being constructed in all the territories underlining its heterogeneity. This is quite normal; we are confronting an overflowing of hope and people who come from very different backgrounds. We are proud that this is the case, this is the energy with produces great changes, but it also obliges us to be cautious and to manage the contradictions which are starting to appear. We must therefore be responsible.

The task is more arduous for us, since for us it is not an option to build these candidacies via networks of personal contacts, personally motivated appointments, impositions or undercover agreements. We are here to bring an end to local dictatorships, personal connections and the kidnapping of democracy and to usher in transparency and honesty: we should recognize to citizens that we would prefer not to run in local elections since if they did so, we could not guarantee their trust and vote. Our task is not to occupy positions but to take effective and irreversible steps towards change.

Even if in just two or three of these 8177 municipalities there were inappropriate behaviour, councillors who broke away from Podemos or went back on promises to local people, whilst remaining in their seats, as happens in so many towns - a large proportion of the media would make sure they became a icon of the «Podemos brand» in order to sow doubts about us and to thus impede a growth which is urgently calling on the majorities of our country. We are not going to repeat the errors of the parties of the «caste» and sometimes building with people goes at a different pace from traditional machinery.

We should be responsible and not leave open a flank which could debilitate the most powerful political instrument which exists today to achieve the recovery of people's sovereignty. Neither can their decisions depend on individual circles, although they constitute the nucleus and the sap of the organization. On the one hand, because Podemos is also made up of a lot of people who are not in circles but who trust us, only a political tool which they continue to feel is their own and which is effective is valid. On the other hand, because the Podemos «brand», the result of hard work and of the impulse of many hopes, has a prestige which cannot be put at risk in battles and contexts which are difficult to evaluate case by case. The symbolic capital generated does not belong to anybody, but rather to all, and in a political-electoral cycle, such as the one we are facing, dominated by the general elections, we must look up and make a cold-headed analysis: In what battles are our adversaries most comfortable and are waiting for us? How should we react?

In various municipalities local initiatives are being put together to fill the same breach opened up by Podemos in the European elections. Many of these initiatives are being guided by a similar spirit: to recover politics for the people and to construct tools in order to renew institutions for the service of the common good. Because of this we honestly and enthusiastically welcome these candidacies. We have never been interested in party names, but rather in building power for the majority who are suffering impoverishment and the kidnapping of democracy. This is in common with those who are working in citizens' candidacies of popular unity in the municipalities.

So, our proposal for the municipal elections consists of putting our political capacity into the field, supporting and getting involved in municipal initiatives which strictly fulfill the requirements of new politics, transparency, regeneration and the possibility of victory and change and to do this with all our potential in each territory and on a national scale. Popular unity for us is not a fancy name in itself, and much less a mixture of party initials or of negotiations between parties. The candidacies who wish to reproduce the practices of old politics - regardless of their name, be it «Ganemos» or any other - are not candidacies to whom we offer our work or our support.

Podemos can offer support in the electoral battle, with its most active members in circles and other types of participation, with its spokespeople, its media presence or its communicative ability and likewise members of Podemos can form part of the electoral lists of these formations - different candidacies which are judged by us to be in line with the political wave of hope which was generated on 25th May 2014 and which will take citizens into positions of power in our country. We propose some criteria to make these decisions:

- ▶ All the positions in the electoral lists must be open and decided by the people. The opposite of this would return us to the old logic of pacts between parties which often promotes candidates less able to stimulate popular support. This is not transparency nor the will to win.
- ▶ These candidacies of popular unity are intended to transform the current situation not merely to make small changes. Local contexts are varied and complex and do not always operate with the same logic as at state or regional level but it is fundamental to understand that occasional pacts «against nature» in municipal politics can in no way compromise the general strategy of change for the country.
- ▶ The candidacies of popular citizens' unity generate a new identity open to all. They are not «the past dressed up in new clothes», but steps forward of a popular formation which wishes to recover the institutions from the hands of the mafia and put them at the service of the social majority. Therefore they cannot be a collection of party initials.
- ▶ The candidacies of popular citizens unity know that there is already a majority of our people who want change and the breaking up of the caste and its regime. This majority does not necessarily share symbols and labels but it is the energy and opportunity for change. Only broad-based discourses which aspire to beat out a new rhythm and reorder loyalties are useful for the historical objective which we have before us. The candidacies of popular citizen unity are not intended to situate themselves to the left of the spectrum but to occupy the centre. Neither are they candidacies of activists and movements engaged in aesthetic politics for its own sake. They are candidacies of majorities and they speak in layman's terms and are going on the offensive. They take up the terrain of political electoral struggle and its parameters and want to win in order to turn weariness into hope and discontent into power for the people.
- ▶ The candidacies of popular unity combat corruption in municipalities and put integral plans into action to eradicate it from the management of town halls and local public companies. They further a model of municipal government which is transparent and honest in its management of economic resources.

The municipal elections must serve to make us visible, especially in the big cities, with possibilities of strong support and of a new majority, as well as to strengthen communication and make alliances with many sectors of a mobilized citizenship, with various names, in order to recover the institutions. They are the first step forward in the breaking-down and building-up process and breaking through into the democratic process.

It will be within this framework that members of Podemos in each municipality, and the citizens who wish to participate in processes opened up by Podemos, decide whether to incorporate already existing formulas to add our DNA to their processes, or on the contrary, invest all their human resources of hope in the construction of a yet more powerful independent candidacy.

## Regional elections

In the regional elections, which will take place in 13 autonomous communities, we propose the formation of Podemos candidacies based on the articulation of incontestable abilities and the establishment of clear democratic control. The regional elections are a privileged space in which we can represent at a regional level what our European candidates represented on 25th May. They can and must be the best way for Podemos to be present and show its force in the elections of May 2015, with our sights set on the general elections anticipated in November 2015.

On 25th May we started to change the political scene, its terms and pace. One year later we have the opportunity to show that change is irreversible.

These candidacies have to respond to the will of party members, those registered and supporters of Podemos in each territory, and at the same time go under the same umbrella which will give citizens in all autonomous regions the chance to vote for Podemos as a vote for change in their regions, but also as a vote put forward for political change in Spain. They are candidacies of Podemos, which represent at a regional level a state-level political force. To do this they must conform to and be in political harmony with Podemos as a whole.

In accordance with the particular circumstances of each region, mechanisms must be put in place so that the decision to go forward for election in our own name is adapted to specific conditions and even, in some cases if specific conditions dictate, make participating in broader-based groups possible. In no case would this be a group of parties but citizens candidacies of popular unity with the broad-based will of the majority. We propose therefore that, at the request of at least 10% of those registered with Podemos in each territory, whether we participate under our own brand or as part of a more diverse group can be decided by open vote.

In Podemos there is no party «patriotism», but rather the will to participate in change in our country. We do not have before us a task of reconstructing one part, but of constructing a sovereign people, and for that we need everybody.

We must be generous with all those people who, until now, have not shared the path with us but who, without renouncing their identity, want to take on board that ours is the best method to work for change and that our discourse can best articulate a new popular majority. The candidacies of Podemos must be open to all those who have demonstrated their commitment to change and the breaking up of the democratic system without looking at what membership card they hold or carry in their wallet, but rather at their loyalty and honesty in working with Podemos.

In any case, the candidate lists of Podemos to the regional elections should be drawn up via primary elections with a commitment not to uphold the traditional parties with their policies of impoverishment and plunder, but to be aligned with the hypothesis, the methods, the contents and objectives of Podemos in the country as a whole. Our endeavour will be to form a connection between them and to connect local matters with general issues, thereby creating via regional elections a landslide of citizens in order to recover our institutions.

The regional elections must be used to show the rising power of Podemos, to demonstrate that what happened on 25th May was not a freak incident but the first warning and one more step

towards political change, to belie the story of PP and PSOE centralism and to make Podemos a force of citizen's opposition to the 1978 regime and its caste.

## General elections

If the regional elections are a second and most decisive step in the strategy of political change in favour of the people, it is because they can change the political map of the country irreversibly, making change inevitable and opening the doors of the general elections with the brand and tools of Podemos leading the way. In these elections people will confront with willingness and the chance of victory those who are leading the massive operation of plunder, impoverishment, the giving-up of sovereignty and kidnapping of democracy which we are still suffering.

We will be up to the task. It is very evident that the birth of Podemos is causing a revolution of the political system of our country. On the part of the caste, they wish to give an answer based on cosmetic changes and as has always been the case since the Transition, with alternate turn-taking between the two big parties. As Rousseau would say, they are parties that paint spring in the winter. Their promises from the opposition, their announcements of renovations always turn into disappointment when they govern. That is why we are so necessary. And our hope rests in the fact that we know that «of course We can!».

# ANNEX: GUIDE FOR THE BUILDING OF CANDIDATURES OF POPULAR UNITY

## Context

The explosion of 15M led to a new cycle of collective building in cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods. People started to get organized, to come together, to get to know each other, and to build networks. The work of many years of people and organizations has been involved - some of these have formed part of Podemos and others haven't - years of identification of problems, forming of proposals and the accumulation of experiences and knowledge.

The municipal elections in 2015 have come just in time for these groups of citizens to be able to transfer people's projects and proposals, which have been debated and supported throughout these years, to a political-institutional context.

In various towns, both municipal and citizens' initiatives are being formed which are occupying the same open gap filled by Podemos in the European elections: to recover politics for the people and to build tools to put institutions back into service for the common good. Our priority has never been the names of political parties, but to build power for the majority who are suffering impoverishment and the kidnapping of democracy. That is also what those who are working for citizens' and popular unity candidatures are doing in local areas.

So, our municipal proposal consists of bringing our political skills into play, getting involved in those municipal initiatives that closely fulfill the requirements of new politics: participation, transparency, regeneration and the chance of victory and change, and to be a leading force of these initiatives with all our potential at a local and national level.

## How do you get started?

### **a) Municipalities where there are already local initiatives and experience**

In many municipalities, as we have said, genuine, local, honest citizens' municipal initiatives already exist with various other initials. Formulas of this type are being experienced in many places in Spain under various names, Mareas, Somos, Sí se Puede, Guanyem, IKUNE etc.

In these cases we propose that those of us who participate in Podemos circles support these candidates with our effort, participating as candidates, as spokespeople, making use of our media presence and with our communicative skills.

But this does not mean to support in a subordinate way. Podemos is already a symbol of change in the country and as such carries the message of political regeneration to the people.

In order that these candidacies can count on our human, symbolic, media and active support, they will have to be - or to become - a faithful reflection of what citizens today demand of those who aspire to represent them, the DNA of Podemos.

- ▶ All the positions in the electoral lists must be open to vote by citizens.
- ▶ Local contexts are varied and complex and they do not always operate with the same logic as at a state or regional level, but it is fundamental to understand that any occasional pacts «against nature» in municipal politics can not compromise the overall strategy of change in the country.

► The candidacies of popular unity cannot be a list of party initials and therefore their formal expression must preferably be as a group of voters.

► The candidacies of popular and citizens' unity do not seek a place on the left of the political spectrum but to occupy the centre. Also they should not be candidacies of activists and movements conducting aesthetic politics for its own sake. They are candidacies of majorities which want to win in order to turn weariness into hope and discontent into power for the people.

These are our arms for demanding with determination conditions of political democracy (our DNA) of these candidacies, as a prerequisite to the incorporation of our people and the use of our aesthetic symbols by these projects of Popular Unity. It should be made clear to those who wish Podemos to join an already established project, that Podemos brings with it the fulfillment of the conditions that citizens demand.

Furthermore we understand that our participation in these candidacies will bring with it an enormous symbolic weight («they are Podemos people») which in many cases, without doubt, will be accompanied by aesthetic and semantic references to our signs of identity, all of which have enormous electoral potential.

On the other hand, colours, symbols and aesthetic references which even partially usurp our identity will not be permitted in those projects which do not fulfill our political DNA.

#### **b) Municipalities where citizens' candidacies do not already exist**

In these cases it is a question of making the most of the opportunity which the municipal elections give us to call to the general public which has many forms of expression - from Neighbourhood Associations to cultural organizations - to win back our town. We will do this without the difficulties implied by asking for political commitment to established party names, but rather with a new instrument, inherited from some identifiable labels - those of 15M and Podemos - genuinely coming from the people and appropriate to each locality.

The idea therefore is to follow a sequence of actions which may include the following:

**1.** Establish interaction with civil society, inviting it to recover its town, not participating in a rigid pre-conceived and closed structure, but rather in a new, open and participative formula.

**2.** Call on the general public, especially those individuals who identify with Podemos and which will be particularly prominent, to a constitutive assembly of a Voters Group. In this assembly some minimum commitments must be established for the group which, in order to guarantee the possibility of future support from Podemos media and communication department at state level should be:

► All the positions in the electoral lists must be open to be decided by the public.

► Local contexts are varied and complex and do not always operate with the same logic at a state or regional level, but it is fundamental to understand that any occasional «unnatural» pacts in municipal politics cannot compromise the general strategy for change in the country.

► The candidacies of popular unity cannot be a collection of party names and therefore their formal expression should preferably be that of a group of voters and not an electoral coalition. If companions from other political organizations ask us to join with



them, they will have to do so as individual citizens, without renouncing their heritage but without imposing their party name.

► The candidacies of popular and citizens' unity do not seek to place themselves on the left of the political spectrum but to occupy the centre. Also they should not be candidacies of activists and movements conducting aesthetic politics for its own sake. They are candidacies of majorities which want to win in order to turn weariness into hope and discontent into power for the people.

**3.** To choose a formula which fits in with local feeling and which potentiates to the idea of an open citizens' movement; Open XXX, Yes we can, We are XXX...

**4.** We will then proceed to collect signatures for the constitution of the group of voters. This is a simple process which is detailed in the Annexe of this document. The campaign of collecting signatures is part of the electoral campaign itself, as it allows us to make ourselves known and increase the possibility of incorporating companions to the exciting process of recovering our town for the people.

**5.** We will initiate the process of collecting citizens' demands to incorporate them into a future municipal electoral programme.

**6.** We will call for an open, citizens' procedure with sufficient guarantees for the election of our candidates by open primaries. In this process, Podemos will put its IT resources at the free disposal of the people to make this possible.

**7.** We will present the candidates to the local electoral committee.

### **c) Fundamental tools for the transformation, development and democratization of municipalities**

As well as these minimum commitments, the participation of the members of Podemos in citizens candidacies - already in existence or which arise over the following months - will have to propose the study and establishment of at least three fundamental tools for transformation, development and democratization of towns, making citizens participants in the process. These three tools will thus become the axis of prioritized work for the action of the members of Podemos in the local area:

#### **1. Citizens auditing of municipal debt**

The socialization of private debt was first done by the state but little by little has passed to local administration. Debt does not only impede and restrict, it also is an instrument of social and political control. For this reason it is our responsibility to develop the tools and mechanisms to make it visible. The Citizen's Audit of Municipal debt is not a new tool. In fact, it has been applied already in other countries and also in various municipalities in our country. It will be responsibility and commitment of the Citizen's Councils and members of Podemos to cooperate and incorporate themselves into already existing initiatives for the carrying out of these audits, sharing knowledge and strengths or trying to set in motion these initiatives via networks of cooperation already in existence or which will have to be set in motion.

#### **2. Participative municipal budgets**

This tool would be the indispensable and essential axis of the principles of Podemos in relation to public municipal policies, since they represent an absolutely positive impact in relation to public management. For this reason, it will be necessary to establish some basic rules, built

up and accepted publicly, which guarantee the good functioning of the process and via which citizens can participate, vote and control budgets, guaranteeing the inclusion of everybody. Following the principal of «to represent by obeying» the governors will have to respond before the public about employment and the use of public funds, thus being a measure of transparency which acts upon and brakes possible cases of corruption, favouritism and patronage. We should work towards a model which allows, after its study and collective evaluation, for this mechanism to become binding.

### **3. New model of municipal financing**

The municipal citizens' candidacies must promote an initiative for the study of new Basic Local Rules, which turns round the old municipal model based on bricks and mortar and connections, and is legitimized by a constitutive process of change, with specific proposals which derive from local issues. A new model of financing adapted to a social and sustainable economy (respecting the environment) which is based on local resources, and which produces the necessary financing to put these initiatives into action.

# LEGAL ANNEXE

## What is a group of voters?

Group of voters are political formations that constitute the endorsement of a variable number of voter signatures only and exclusively to submit a candidate list in a defined and specific electoral process.

These groups are not formed to be permanent, nor do they have the nature of an association and it is not necessary for them to register in the Spanish Register of Political Parties.

Each grouping of voters is autonomous and independent from any other. Their territorial scope of action is their electoral circumscription; however collective candidacies, candidacies covering more than one circumscription, federations or coalitions between groups, are not allowed. Their temporal scope of validity is the specific electoral process which was formed, and it is not allowed to extend their duration beyond that electoral process.

## How is a group of voters formed?

To form a candidate list from a group of voters a number of registered signatures are needed in the municipal electoral census. Those signatures must be authenticated by a notary or certified by the secretary of the municipal corporation of the local circumscription, according to the following scale:

- ▶ In the towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants, not less than 1% of the census providing that the number of signatories is more than double of the councillors to be elected.
- ▶ In those between 5,001 and 10,000 inhabitants at least 100 signatures.
- ▶ In those between 10,001 and 50,000 inhabitants at least 500 signatures.
- ▶ In those between 50,001 and 150,000 inhabitants at least 3,000 signatures.
- ▶ In those between 150,001 and 300,000 inhabitants at least 3,000 signatures.
- ▶ In those between 300,001 and 1,000,000 inhabitants at least 5,000 signatures.
- ▶ In other cases at least 8,000 signatures.

No voter or elected official can put his/her signature to the submissions of more than one candidate list. This is important because, if not fulfilled, it would invalidate the entire sheet of signatures.

## To whom and when the candidacies are presented in local elections

The competent Electoral Board for all procedures relating to the submission and proclamation of candidates in local elections is the Electoral Area Board.

The deadline for the submission of candidate lists is published in the Official Provincial Bulletin where there is a call for elections, and shall state the name, acronym and symbol of the group of voters clearly and the name and surname of the candidates included in them.

The Secretary of the Electoral Board will grant a serial number in order of presentation for each candidate list submitted and this order is maintained in all publications (Article 46.9 of the Organic Law 5/1985 of 19 June, of the General Electoral System).

When the candidate list is submitted (on the forms which can be downloaded from the Ministry of the Interior website) it must be accompanied by documentation contained in the Instruction of the Central Electoral Board, on March 15, 1999. This instruction establishes the following:

The Central Electoral Board has issued instructions about the documentation that must necessarily accompany the candidate list, regarding the eligibility status of candidates, including the documents required, written acceptance of the candidature, certificate evidencing the registration of candidates in the census lists, or, if any candidate does not appear in the lists, negative certification of criminal records, thus certifying that the candidate is fully entitled to their civil and political rights. Supporting documents should also be provided for groups of voters with the number of signatures required by law to participate in elections.

At the time of submission of the candidature, a general representative of the candidature will be designated, who will accept at the same time.

More information:

- ▶ Articles 44, 46, 177, 186, 187, 187 bis Organic Law 5/1985 of 19 June, the General Electoral System.
- ▶ Instruction of March 15, 1999, the Central Electoral Board (BOE No. 67 of 19 March 1999). About the documentation that must be provided with the candidature.

## What is the electoral parity?

Electoral parity is the balanced representation of women and men in the sphere of political representation.

The Organic Law on General Elections demands the balanced composition of the electoral list submitted to the Congress elections, local elections, Island Council, Canary Island Governors, European Parliament and Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Communities.

This balanced composition assumes the following:

In the whole list, and in any case in each section of five places, candidates of either sex may not be represented by less than 40%, except in the case of towns under of 3,000 inhabitants and islands of under 5,000 inhabitants.

**More information:** Instruction 5/2007 12th April, the Central Electoral Board, upon application of Articles 44 bis and 187.2 of LOREG as amended by Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March, for effective equality of women and men.