



ILRS Declaration on COVID Pandemic

After more than two years of world-wide management with the COVID pandemic, the ILRS approves the following declaration at the Helsinki Congress on March 18-19, 2022:

The COVID pandemic is a milestone in our recent history. A global experience of vulnerability, suffering and death. Its effects will be with us for years to come. This unprecedented crisis has revealed and increased the perverse effects of some economic, political and social dynamics that already existed and has highlighted others that offer opportunities to promote care for life. We are on the verge of making a part of humanity immune to this virus and we run the risk of letting ourselves be carried away by the desire to quickly turn the page to forget this bad dream.

1. COVID has called into question the paradigm of self-sufficiency. It has brought us back to the human condition: we are vulnerable. We are ecodependent and interdependent organisms within a biosphere where everything is connected to everything else. The eco-interdependence that forms our backbone makes us all responsible for the rest of humanity and the planet.

2. The pandemic has meant a setback in the fight against poverty reduction and an increase in inequalities. It has exacerbated these inequalities even with regard to the distribution of death in relation to our social organization. The distribution of wealth clearly explains the impact of the virus and its unequal impact by geographical area. We see it the same way in the distribution of vaccines globally. It has shown the limitations that our economic system has to guarantee the basic rights of all people, especially those who are in a situation of vulnerability.

3. The pandemic has brought about an explosion in the complexity of politics: public health or economic recovery; social control or individual freedom; where the policy of reducing expenses prevailed, now it is time to increase them; Given the difficulties experienced to guarantee food sovereignty, protectionism is promoted where free trade was previously advocated, etc. Politics faces a problem that is epistemological rather than epidemiological. Politics needs new thinking prepared to deal with complexity.

4. Uncertainty is the sign of these current times and it extends before a panorama that does not call for optimism. Likewise, individualistic dynamics, selfishness and isolation are increased; suspicion about the "other" increases; emotions prevail over knowledge and the community sense of belonging, key to participation and democracy, diminishes. The media promote a dynamic of "permanent excitement" that contributes to further promoting social alarm and fear. Security appears as a great emerging value of the pandemic. With it, the social rise of far-right populist political movements.

5. It is necessary to have a State capable of guaranteeing basic universal rights to the entire population. We cannot subordinate the management of basic services and the guarantee of rights to the dynamics of the free market. To this end, it is urgent to implement a tax reform that contributes to a redistribution of wealth and a review of public policies and the participation of social agents to guarantee their orientation towards the common good. The dynamics of empowerment of the administration and reorientation to the common good of the economic dynamics of the market must be accompanied by an increase in the role of participation and control by citizens. We need a strong state and a strong civil society.

6. Although the European Union reacted to the Global Recession of 2008 with austerity policies that widened inequality between countries and social classes, it has reacted to Covid-19 by increasing public spending, reinforcing solidarity between countries by committing to social cohesion. The European vaccine purchase policy has also had great symbolic force. This European Union does give confidence to citizens.

President:	María Ángeles Sanz del Moral (Spain).
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