

BARCELONA DECLARATION on Health

The Foundation L'Alternativa, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, the party of European Left, in collaboration with “*DEMPEUS per la Salut Pública Salut*”, have met in Barcelona to do a conference on the subject “HEALTH AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IN EUROPE”.

The workshop occurred in a collective method, adding and taking care of the diverse contributed experiences; with the motivation of homogenizing the languages and arriving to common proposals for, and from, the real and social Europe where we are comprised. The present text is the product, in a brief and concise form, of the elaboration of an annexed academic work (1) that allows us to give, with the hope of a better Europe in health, scientific fundamentals. That document is entitled “*the Public Health and the fairness of health in Europe*” and constitutes a rigorous and exhaustively bases that fundamentals the political vindications that are expressed in this declaration.

The conclusions of the debate were the argument of the present DECLARATION:

- a) “We have been able to evaluate, with a great coincidence of contributions of the different geographic, cultural and historical European territories, the present situation of degradation with regard to the right to health, quality and accessibility losses and the increase of the inequalities. There is a flagrant merchandising of the sector, the quantitative and qualitative increase of the health sector privatizations; and the more and more aggressive presence of the corporative interests and profit with the consequent loss of quality of public services.
- b) Our position is based, and thus revealed, in the agreement and pursuit of the legislation of international and European norms that promote governmental action, universality, the promotion quality, and the protection and the attention to health and to all its determinants: United Nations Charter of Human rights, Declaration of Alma-Ata, Ottawa Charter, European Social Charter... or the last recommendations of WHO denouncing this

merchandising. Or even the Charter of Barcelona on “Precariedad y Salud” that we made and published in this city in June of 2007.

- c) The health comes determined by all the elements from social, economic and political character. The approach in health must be intersectorial and interdisciplinary following the recommendation of the WHO Commission of Social Determinants in Health.

As a collective position, we vindicate justice and the necessity of the viability of the following points:

1. - **The health, as it is defined by the WHO, is a right and not merchandise.** When interests or interpretations of the binomial “Health right - Health market” are confronted, the exercise of the right must prevail legitimately and in all cases.
2. - We are then, considering the health as a right, a value, a fundamental and indispensable social objective that contributes to greater protection, promotion and guarantees of taking care of all the people. **This is an inexcusable obligation of the governments.** This is particularly certain and valid for Europe and, for the EU that we want to construct.
3. - We have confirmed an objective **lack of information systems and evaluation in the matter of health at a European territory level.** Today we do not have a true tool of work, essential to a resisted diagnosis and a later action on an EU scale, especially if we consider the complexity added by the national heterogeneity. It will be a basic necessity equipping all countries with a European system/observatory to guarantee rigor and trustworthy, that monitors the health, the set of its social determinants and the inequalities in the sector, able to measure what it really illustrates, and to facilitate a high level of information on excellent parameters, with public and democratic control. From an instrumental instance of this type, YES it would be possible to study and to evaluate the evident “Impact in Health” of all the actions and all the policies developed in the European scope, impact that would be due to annex in all European proposals, directives and regulations, of this range.

4. - We vindicated the guarantee of the health protection and the **universal access to the health services in all territories of the UE**. In order to make a **careful and worthy assistance to any person who needs it**. This benefit has to be guaranteed and carried out by the **National and Public health System** in every country - the only form that therefore guarantees it - and has to be integral and of quality. At the moment, emergent pathologies deserve special attention, as well as the infrequent diseases or of insufficient knowledge and treatment. In these cases it will have to be approached with more public support, including the assistance, the formation, the information and the investigation, maintained and guaranteed by the public Administrations.

5. - The financing should be necessarily generated by the diverse **sources of the fiscal system of each country and of the EU**. **We deny that the public sector of health is not sustainable**. Every citizen also has the right to receive financing from the rents of financial capital insufficiently taxed and specially protagonist and impeller of the neoliberal globalization.

6. - **We frontally rejected all the forms of merchandising of the health system** under deceits of Co-payments and complementariness's that are anything but Re-payments.

7. - In the amplest and valuable conception of the health, that defines it as a well-being and harmony state with the person and her social and environmental surroundings, we speak by the necessary and pertinent interventions in all and each one of its determinants, without forgetting the social ones that are, finally, the cause and effect of the state of health of a society. The work, the gender, the origin, the environment, the incapacity, the culture, the social protection, the socioeconomic level, the urbanism, the home, are the true definers of the public health, and this supposes the inescapable necessity to considerer the subject as transversal, intersectorial and with greater participation and disciplinary amplitude. In this sense the WHO is prominent when it requests and it proposes the objective **“to eliminate the inequalities in health, in one generation”** anywhere in the world, and also in Europe. We consider the inequalities in health as an indicating key of the social inequality, a damage that we must and we can surpass.

8. - To develop these objectives the **social participation is essential**. We talk about a new and active form to participate, of the **empowerment**, to take responsibility, with the democratic respect of the differences, with the commitment of transparency, pursuit and sum of the citizenship. The citizens acting in health and its determinants are the essential agent, are the socio-sanitary and fundamental health agent, but they are more than that, the agent of identity in the dynamic construction of the social Europe that we want and that we are constructing.

9. - **Health does not have borders**, as the ecological and economic diseases and aggressions of the neoliberal policies do not have either. It is the entire planet that will globally emerge ahead or succumb in the company. Also in health we demanded analysis and practices that assume the situations on international scale with the precedence of justice, fairness and solidarity between territories, but also between people.

Because of all this, **WE PROPOSE** to transfer and to use as a tool, as a concrete instrument, this declaration:

A) On an European scale, making possible the transaction and the management adapted in the pertinent institutions, and in particular in the European Parliament, where we have the support showed by MEP's represented in the GUE/NGL group, that will be able to use it for the interpellation of the rest of represented Groups, **for a rising level of the conquers reached in all European territories.**

B) Competent diffusion at all the levels of estates, institutions and organizations in the matter of health. Or to professional, academic, or local, regional, national and European Governments.

C) To extend this Declaration (BCN.Salud) to the entire social base. To make diffusion, in the diverse languages of the EU, between all citizens, for its knowledge, uprising and support.

Recovering an active form to make society “In DEMPEUS” since the independent empowerment and the democratic exigency, exploring the perspective of mobilizations at all the possible levels, studying the viability of promotion of Legislative Initiatives also from the population, retaking those practices of implication of “*Europe partisana*”, closing up in the defense of the public health character and protecting it from privatizations and mercantilists policies of current neoliberal and capitalist Europe.

We can! Of course we can, and in addition it is our duty!

Barcelona, 27th February 2010