

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPANISH CONSTITUTION

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends. I would like to welcome you at the Embassy of Spain, for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of our Constitution.

First, allow me to introduce myself and my family, as we have just arrived to Malaysia ten days ago. My name is José Miguel Corvinos Lafuente and my latest assignments were Ambassador of Spain to Cape Verde, from 2011 to 2014, and Director General for Fisheries, from 2015 to 2017. This is my wife Jandira and this is my daughter Masha.

To cut a long story short, we will summarize those last 40 years in a brief presentation. We could see also some visuals made in Madrid for this important occasion and, we'll move on to the reading of the Preamble and, for the sake of brevity, of 10 sections or articles of the Constitution. I think that all in all it will take no more than 20/25 minutes. I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have, more or less, volunteered to read some paragraphs of our Constitution.

Let's get started. On 6th December we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the approval of the Spanish Constitution, which was ratified in a referendum in 1978 by a large majority of the Spanish population. This commemoration belongs to all Spanish citizens and highlights the value and significance of this pact among Spaniards.

I believe that we can proudly state that our Constitution is the milestone that marks the beginning of Spain's journey as a fair and inclusive country. So, today we can reaffirm our commitment to our Constitution and to a modern and cosmopolitan Spain, a Spain of rights, freedom, development and pluralism.

In fact, over these last four decades, Spain has established itself as a democratic State under the Rule of Law; as a country fully committed to the European project, since joining the European Union in 1986; as a welfare State with universal healthcare and education systems, and as a world leader in equality, human rights and solidarity.

Therefore, we have many reasons to be proud. Today, Spain is a full and mature democracy, one of the countries with the highest levels of democratic quality in the world. Spain also

stands out worldwide as one of the countries with the greatest territorial decentralisation and regional self-governance. We are fortunate to have different cultures and co-official languages that reflect the rich diversity of our society and our Constitution recognizes as well the essential internal plurality of Spain, within its unity as a nation.

Likewise, it is worth stressing the open nature of Spain to the world, reflected in its foreign policy over the last forty years. There is no doubt that Spain has gained in terms of global presence, in reputation and credibility, participating very actively on the international stage and keeping a firm commitment to multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations. Spain has played an international role much more important than that which it had back in 1978. After all, our foreign policy has been based on the practice of the values, principles and provisions established in the constitutional text.

Spain has overcome difficult times and, in a nutshell, today is a modern, advanced, European, plural and open country. This is largely due to the Spanish Constitution, since it epitomizes the highest values, principles and commitments of a society that in the last forty years has built the most stable and thriving period of our history.

And now we move on to the (READING OF THE PREAMBLE AND 10 SELECTED SECTIONS)

Now, allow me to address a few words in Spanish to my fellow Spaniards: Quería daros de nuevo la bienvenida a la Embajada y reiteraros, como bien sabéis, que tanto yo como la Segunda Jefatura y Encargado de la Sección Consular, Luis Cacho, el Jefe de la Oficina Económica y Comercial, Rafael Matos, el Agregado de Defensa, Capitán Juan José Moreno, y el resto de personal, estamos a vuestra disposición en todos aquellos asuntos en que nuestra actuación pueda seros de utilidad.

Thank you all for your kind attention and, to conclude, let me propose a toast to the democracy and the prosperity of Spain and to the friendship between Spain and Malaysia.