
64^{ÈME} SÉSSION DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES NATIONS UNIES
64^A SESIÓN DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS
64TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

DISCOURS DE S.E. M. XAVIER ESPOT MIRÓ
MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
ET DES RELATIONS INSTITUTIONNELLES
DE LA PRINCIPAUTÉ D'ANDORRE

DISCURSO DEL EXCMO. SR. XAVIER ESPOT MIRÓ
MINISTRO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES Y RELACIONES INSTITUCIONALES
DEL PRINCIPADO DE ANDORRA

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. XAVIER ESPOT MIRÓ
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS OF THE
PRINCIPALITY OF ANDORRA

New York, samedi 26 septembre 2009
Nueva York, sábado 26 de septiembre de 2009
New York, Saturday 26 September 2009

*Original in Catalan
Text in French, Spanish and English*

*Verifier à l'audition
Check against delivery*

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First, I must apologize for the absence of the head of Government, Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany who, due to his institutional agenda, has been unable to attend this general debate.

It is a great honour for the Principality of Andorra and the Government that I represent, to speak before this auditorium.

We Andorrans are well aware of the significance of being a small State part of the United Nations. We are not trying to make our mark on international politics but we want to make clear our intention to respect and defend international law, standards of good neighbourly relations and the principle of solidarity between peoples.

In our natural European framework, we want to be recognised not only for reasons of cultural and historical affinity, but also in the legal and economic fields. In short, our conception of solidarity, both domestically and internationally, and our notion of international relations are not different from that of the rest of Europe.

Since 1993 we already have the constitutional framework that allows us to translate all these principles into practice and to transform them into a reality.

It is supported by this constitutional framework that on 10 August we presented a *Law for the Exchange of Information on Fiscal Matters* which, once debated and amended, was approved by the Parliament on 7 September of this year.

We have always been certain of the international loyalty of Andorra; yet, we thought appropriate to dispel any doubts and to follow literally the OECD and the international community recommendations, as expressed in meetings of the G20.

This has been a first example, but others will follow. Indeed, for our Government the priority is to disperse any doubts on our determination to adapt to the demands and expectations of our European neighbours and the international community.

We are convinced that this and the steps that will follow will be appreciated and will find the understanding of all the international actors that may have doubted at any time of our community spirit towards the rest of the world.

We are also confident that this new era that our country is starting will unite us even more to Europe and the other continents by strengthening our international bonds and our economic and human presence.

Following the aforementioned legislation, our country has already been in contact and, sometimes, signed agreements with European countries. From now on, we will do it with others like the United States of America, Australia, and Argentina.

Needless to say, that the priority has been to negotiate with France, Spain and Portugal, our closest neighbours.

Incidentally, I will add that in Andorra a structural crisis has been dragging along for at least four years alongside with the world economic crisis. And the world cannot solve this particular crisis for us; we alone must manage it for ourselves.

To concentrate on the idea that interests us, I will assure you that our Government's action focuses on demonstrating clearly to the international community that we are fulfilling our duties. Accordingly, the country has a strong wish to cooperate and to stimulate international ties and instil confidence.

The exchange of fiscal information will undoubtedly result in the signature of double taxation agreements. As a result we will increase our relations with countries with whom our previous contacts were loose.

Isn't this one of the funding objectives of the United Nations?

The legislation I am talking about develops issues that for the last months have been at the core of OECD discussions. It will affect the requests for information done after the entry into force of the tax information exchange agreements or the double taxation agreements.

Let's be clear: Tax havens and fiscal opacity – signalled and denounced as two of the major financial evils of the 20th century – are matters that all Andorrans would like to overcome soon.

The strategic position is clear and our commitment is strong.

At the same time, we propose a tax reform that will allocate resources according to general interest priorities; furthermore, it will provide guarantees to Europe and to the world that we want clear, transparent and responsible relations.

This reform will offer businessmen and professionals the opportunity to export goods and services from Andorra on an equal foot. Only then, will international companies seriously consider the possibility of investing in Andorra in a stable juridical environment.

I hope sincerely that there will be no doubts on the desire of my Government to face the economic issues that have been at the core of international debates these months

This need to move forward towards Andorra's greater financial transparency, brings us to claim the same standards from the international community.

We have understood and seen that the system governing the world economy that was valid in the 20th century has become obsolete. A transparency effort is needed from international organizations, as well as from all the political economical and social actors.

We believe that reform of the international economic system should be immediate, rigorous and credible.

It should be led by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

However, to confront this and other challenges, we need to modernize this organization, revitalize the General Assembly and reform the Security Council.

These objectives, together with the so-called System Wide Coherence, have to include the right to gender equality.

Consequently, in Andorra we understand that we need fair, clear and internationally recognised standards and regulations to instil confidence to Andorrans, businessmen and workers. But also we ought to consider the requirements generated by the international financial situation, as well as in the need to promote transparency and regulatory mechanisms for financial activities.

To solve the international financial crisis is one of our main priorities. However, we need to tackle other issues affecting the international community. I am referring to climate change.

As already mentioned in this Assembly, this is one of the most serious challenges humanity has faced.

We, in the Principality of Andorra, recognize the efforts of the United Nations in trying to mobilize the international community. As the French Head of State and Co-prince of Andorra, Nicolas Sarkozy, has reminded us in this Assembly, it's time each State strongly commits to solve this issue.

Andorra's commitment to the fight against the effects of climate change is real and progress can already be seen in actions such as our ratification of the *Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer*.

We hope that this December, in Copenhagen, it will be possible to adopt a new climate agreement that will be equitable, efficient and ambitious from a scientific point of view.

We believe that to achieve a positive result at this conference, it is essential to involve all the society, and specially the young generations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We consider that health is a fundamental right, necessary to attain a sustainable development in Europe and the world.

We are facing new challenges on the health sector.

The New Influenza Virus is a current topic. The Andorran Government has decided to fight it by making vaccination available to most of our population.

This decision has been taken in cooperation with our neighbours and the World Health Organization.

On another matter, the Principalities of Monaco and Andorra have joined forces to finance a project, over a period of four years, to reduce the vulnerability of women of reproductive age due to the food crisis affecting Madagascar.

These are two examples of fruitful and successful cooperation among international actors.

The Responsibility to Protect populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity remind us, once more, the need for responsible cooperation.

World powers, middle-sized and small countries cannot abandon cooperation. We all are necessary because we all are inhabitants of this Earth.

Thank you for your attention.