

JAIME VERA SUMMER COURSES

Gabilondo: “Spain and the PSOE have been successful in making education universal and now we have the challenge of committing to quality”

Pedro Zerolo: “European countries governed by the left are suffering from attacks by the snipers of the market”

The Minister of Education, Ángel Gabilondo, affirmed today at the summer courses of the Jaime Vera School that “once Spain and the PSOE have succeeded in make education universal, now we have the challenge to commit to quality”, for which he demanded “the capacity to generate spaces of ethics, freedom and justice, where people who are different as well as those with convictions can fit, although they do not coincide with dominant values.”

Gabilondo, who gave the conference on “Equality of opportunities and education”, explained that University and education” do not have to adapt to society because they are part of the society and must aim to transform the society”.

In this sense, the Minister of Education noted that “University and education must leave our neighborhood, make us international, make us move, go out to meet other cultures, other ways of living. The Erasmus program has done more for education that many speeches and many politicians.”

Gabilondo added that “in periods of crisis which is not only economic crisis but a crisis of values, it is more necessary than ever to invest in education, an education that takes care of the word, that promotes curiosity and welcomes ideas”. For the Minister, “another valued apart from education that we must coin is sustainability and sustainability is humanity; a humanity we must take into account and which is made up by those of us who are here, those who are not here anymore and those who are not here yet”. Based on this thesis, he showed “his opposition to short term education projects, to short term political projects which only think about the coming elections although we must win the elections to change things”.

To finish, Gabilondo reminded that “in 2020, 85% of employment in Europe must be qualified” and he explained that this percentage “cannot be achieved only through University”. We have enough university students, only in Madrid there are more law students than in the whole United Kingdom. Nevertheless, we must socially value Vocational Training as higher education because it actually is.”

Pedro Zerolo

During the evening session the Secretary for Social Movements and Relations with NGOs of the PSOE, Pedro Zerolo, spoke at a conference entitled “For diversity, against discrimination”. Zerolo explained that, in the middle of the 21st century, Social democracy “does not consist only in fighting to redistribute wealth but we must guarantee diversity by fighting in from our sphere of influence against any form of discrimination”.

Zerolo reminded that during the Zapatero Government “new rights for homosexuals and immigrants have been acknowledged, but the important commitment has been to guarantee effective equality between men and women.”

For the socialist leader, “it is necessary to make progress in the economic distribution as well as the extension of social rights” and he regretted that “currently in Europe more importance is being given to economy than to politics itself while politics must always be above economy.”

In his opinion, the failure of the European left is partly due “to the fact that it is not being courageous. If the left is not courageous, it is not the left. Nevertheless, when we are brave, we gain approval from the society”.

For Zerolo, it is significant that the only countries governed by the European left “are being attacked by snipers of the market” and regretted that “nowadays, once again in Europe, hearing the discourse of the extreme right we thought we would never hear again”.

In order to continue being “the retaining wall” of conservative ideas in Europe, and if we mean to “expand social democratic ideas to Latin America”, the Secretary for Social Movements of the Federal Executive Committee has announced the intention to continue working “to create a network of progressive ideas, because in Latin America, Spain is the political reference of progress in social rights”.

In his opinion, Spain is having influence in the world through its culture, its values, by keeping, especially at European level, progressive ideas, since some

European countries are experiencing a real period of lack of ideas and values of the left.”

Roundtables

Apart from the morning conference by Gabilondo, and that of the afternoon by Zerolo, there were two roundtables. The first one, chaired by the director of IDEAS Foundation, Carlos Mulas, saw the participation of Isabel Martínez, General Secretary for Equality Policies and Enrique Guerrero, Euro MP for the PSOE, and was devoted to the renovation of progressive values. Martínez defended equality as “a factor of social cohesion”, and denounced that “we must continue making progress in work-life balance, because up till now, the percentage of women at universities is not reflected on the labor market”. As for Guerrero, he pointed at the fact “of having domesticated capitalism, having created a network of protection and social cohesion” as a great progressive value for Europe, which he said “is a great conquest that needs to be maintained with the effort from states and which prevents us from growing at the same rhythm as emerging countries”.

The second roundtable was on sustainable economy with the participation of Johannes Von Stritzky, researcher in the area of Economics and Sustainability of IDEAS Foundation, Cristina Menéndez, Head of the Forest Stewardship Council of Spain and Carlos Bravo, head of campaigns on nuclear energy of Greenpeace. All of them agreed on the need to move toward a economically, socially and environmentally sustainable model for which they pointed at the importance of developing new employment sources (renewable, biotechnology, ecoindustries, etc.).