

*Europe is suffering the greatest crisis since the Second World War. In 1945, reconstruction was carried out thanks to the boost given by the welfare state that led to 30 glorious years. At that time the threat was the growing power of the USSR and its satellite countries. The situation today, being just as serious as 75 years ago, now has endogenous threats: climate change, populism, inequality or austerity policies that cut rights.*

*But it also contrasts with the situation in 1945, when technological advances since then have placed us at levels of productivity that ensure that there is sufficient wealth generation capacity for everyone to have their basic needs covered, provided that there are effective mechanisms for redistributing the income generated.*

*Some rich countries see their poor or indebted neighbours as failures in the overall functioning. But these countries do not realize that part of their wealth also comes from the differential exploitation of their specificities. The same is true at the city level. Large cities can be the best places to live because that is where the best opportunities are generated for talented and hard-working people. But they can also be a vulnerability trap for less advantaged segments of the population. This has become more evident with the COVID, when the social protection system has revealed gaps in cities such as Barcelona, one of Europe's great metropolitan areas.*

*The city of Barcelona needs to work in the very short term on three essential challenges for an equitable recovery and one in the medium term.*

*In the short term: first at all we need to guarantee the basic needs of all our citizens, including those who do not have residence and work permits, which paradoxically includes a huge quantity of citizens from countries in the east of the European Union. These citizens are not eligible for any kind of State or regional income protection scheme and only are receiving municipal emergency or ONG aid which will collapse our budget. The free movement of people is an EU standard and therefore the EU must share responsibility for its costs during this crisis.*

*In this line, a fundamental contribution could be to recover Anthony B. Atkinson's idea of a universal basic income for European children. In his words in 2010: In our judgment, a significant advance in reducing poverty EU-wide requires concerted action. Under subsidiarity, such actions would be implemented by Member States but the EU as a whole can set the guidelines for the actions. The concrete proposal made here is that the EU introduce a Basic Income for Children. Each Member State would be required to guarantee unconditionally to every child a basic income, defined as a percentage of the Member State median equivalised income (and possibly age-related).*

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5722557/KS-31-10-555-EN.PDF>

*Secondly, we have a housing emergency. Spanish laws do not protect or help people living in rented rooms. We need a European directive that obliges states to give these people the same rights than regular renters. We also need European aid to develop a strong social housing stock going directly to the cities that are suffering most from housing pressure.*

*Thirdly, the temporary closure of schools has led to the emergence of a digital divide among poor students without computers or internet connections. There is an urgent need for EU legislation that guarantees the universal free right to internet for vulnerable families. Furthermore, the transformation of the productive model towards teleworking requires the digital inclusion of 100% of adults.*

*And finally, in the medium term, we need to recover our city as a leader in sustainable business and cultural tourism. Our visitors are mainly European, like the visitors from Paris, Rome, Prague and so many other European cities. Between the saturation that we were suffering a few months ago and the zero tourists model like last month, there is an intermediate point that we must recover with a pan-European support plan and by promoting the use of the train and other sustainable means of transport.*