



PRESIDENCIA
DEL GOBIERNO

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE COMUNICACIÓN

TRANSCRIPCIÓN

**DECLARACIÓN ANTE LOS MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN DEL
PRESIDENTE DE GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ, JUNTO CON LA
PRESIDENTA DE LA COMISIÓN EUROPEA, URSULA VON DER
LEYEN Y EL PRESIDENTE DE MAURITANIA, MOHAMED OULD
GHAZOUANI**

Nuakchott, Mauritania, 8 de febrero de 2024

INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ

Good morning,

First of all, I want to begin by thanking President Ghazouani for his hospitality and welcome today on this very important visit for the Spanish delegation.

Dear President, it is an honour for me to be in Mauritania once again.

President von der Leyen and I are here today in Nouakchott with one clear goal which is to strengthen the cooperation with Mauritania, a country that is of strategic importance for Spain and for the European Union as a whole.

As I have told President Ghazouani in our meeting this morning, Mauritania plays a fundamental role as a democratic reference for the stability in the Sahel, a crucial region for Spain and for Europe. Increasing political instability, conflict and the lack of security in this neighbourhood are having a direct impact on Mauritania and on all of us. We are witnessing the fall of democratic governments, rise of terrorist attacks, a spike in refugees and internally displaced people, and the worsening of an already acute food security crisis.

And I am well aware that Mauritania is at the frontline of all the consequences driven by such a difficult situation. For those reasons, we need to work together and with a comprehensive strategy if we want to address these challenges successfully.

My country, Spain and Mauritania have been close partners on many fronts for a long time, and our commitment has deepened in recent years. We share many common objectives such as fighting terrorism, and ensuring orderly, regular and safe migration. And our countries are working together to address the impact of the climate emergency, especially droughts and desertification, including through the International Drought Resilience Alliance.

I am glad to see that the European Union is developing a framework to enable a strategic engagement of the Union in the coming years. The Team Europe Initiative on green hydrogen and related infrastructure projects hold great potential to transform the energy and economic outlook of this country. The European Union also plays a fundamental role in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. The upcoming joint declaration to launch a migration partnership and dialogue will be, in my opinion, instrumental for this purpose.



Our common goal must be promoting sustainable and inclusive development in Mauritania. That should also be a primary goal for the European Union and for my country, Spain, because prosperity in Mauritania is the best investment towards stability and security in the broader region.

With that objective in mind, Spain is undertaking new specific commitments in our cooperation with Mauritania on several fronts.

First, we are boosting our development cooperation instruments. That is why today we will sign a new Country Framework Agreement, Mr. President, fully aligned with Mauritania's Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity. Our new bilateral framework agreement foresees 60 million euros for development projects over the next four years. Additionally, we will open up financial cooperation of up to 50 million euros.

We are already working with the World Bank to identify specific projects to co-finance in the fields of renewable energies and infrastructures, and we hope to make progress soon in this regard.

Second, we are promoting the collaboration between Spanish companies and the Mauritanian administration. Thanks to the progress achieved by Mauritania over the years, as reflected by the positive evolution in the credit qualification by the IMF and the World Bank in 2023, Spain will be able to use a range of financial instruments for projects in Mauritania.

Specifically, over the next 5 years, we will make up to 200 million euros available for feasibility studies, project financing and in credit insurance, with a specific emphasis on green projects and renewable energy investments.

Third, we are going to double our humanitarian aid. The impact of conflicts in Mali and Niger are resulting in a significant increase in the arrival of refugees and the situation is worrisome. So we will continue supporting Mauritania in its efforts.

Fourth, we will reinforce our cooperation to address migratory pressure that affects our countries, and, of course, specially Mauritania and Spain. We will strengthen our already existing collaboration in this area through border control. And we will explore possible pathways to enable regular migration. In that sense, our Governments are already in discussions to promote circular migration programs already implemented with other countries successfully.

Finally, we truly believe, Mr. President, that cultural cooperation is fundamental to continue deepening the human bonds between our peoples. That is why I am glad to

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announce that Spain will open an extension of the Cervantes Institute here, in the capital, in Nouakchott, following the request of the Mauritanian authorities.

So President Von der Leyen and President Ghazouani,

I can assure you that you can count, Mauritania, on Spain as a friend and as a strategic partner for the long term.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

(Transcripción editada por la Secretaría de Estado de Comunicación)
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