



PRESIDENCIA  
DEL GOBIERNO

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE COMUNICACIÓN

# TRANSCRIPCIÓN

**COMPARECENCIA CONJUNTA ANTE LOS MEDIOS DE  
COMUNICACIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO  
SÁNCHEZ, Y EL PRIMER MINISTRO DE FINLANDIA, PETTERI  
ORPO**

Helsinki, 12 de marzo de 2025

## **INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ**

Thank you very much, Petteri, and thank you for the Finnish hospitality.

It is an honour to be here in Helsinki with Prime Minister Orpo. Afterwards I will also meet with President Stubb.

Finland is a leading member of the European Union. A country with an impressive welfare system, a vibrant innovation system or ecosystem and leader in education. So, Finland is also a friend and a close ally of Spain.

That is why I am here today. Because, as friends, we do not only share European membership. Above all, we share values. And what is at stake right now? Our values.

So, your border, dear Prime Minister, which represents more than half of the EU's entire border with Russia, is our border. Your security is our security. Your defence is our defence.

The NATO Summit we held in Madrid in 2022 opened the door for Finland to join NATO, which materialized almost two years ago. And thanks to that, we are now stronger.

But, however strong we are, the international order is changing very fast. And this requires us to provide trust and certainties together. To our people, to our citizens.

Spain is thousands of kilometres away from Finland. In fact, there is no larger continental distance in the EU than the 5,000 kilometres that separate Tarifa, in Southern Spain, from Nourgam, in the north of your country.

But we could not be closer, and this is my principal message. We feel your concerns as if they were our own. Because they are. Because any threat to a Member State is a threat to the European Union as a whole. Because nothing protects us more than the strength of our Union. And today I want to make it clear that the Spanish government and the Spanish citizens are holding your back in this critical moment.

During, of course, our meeting today we discussed first about Ukraine. As I landed in Finland yesterday evening the news had broken that Ukraine "has accepted the US proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire subject to the acceptance and concurrent implementation by Russia".

I think these are of course positive news coming from Jeddah. Now Russian reciprocity is key. We still don't know what their reply will be.



What I can tell you for sure, because we have been saying this from day one, is that the EU is ready to play its part in the peace negotiations, since Ukraine's security is our own security.

This is an existential issue for Europe, as Prime Minister has said. Ukrainian security and European security are two sides of the same coin.

It has been more than three years of heroic resistance by the Ukrainian people.

Putin, let's remind it always, the aggressor, has not achieved his goal. And he has not succeeded because of the support we provided: military, financial, political and humanitarian. An unconditional support that we will uphold for as long as it is needed.

In fact, my country, Spain we have understood this very well. Consequently, my country has been actively engaged and has provided critical bilateral support to Ukraine.

Let me just name the main components:

Spain has been the 4th Member State hosting Ukrainians fleeing their country. More than 230.000 Ukrainian citizens are in fact living in Spain as a result of the Russian aggression.

In 2024 we signed a bilateral security agreement through which we sent lethal and non-lethal material totalling 1.1 billion EURO. This commitment has been renewed for 2025 with an additional package of military aid of 1 bn EUR.

And last, but not least, we have also trained more than 7.000 Ukrainian soldiers in Spain.

Now, looking forward and after the news yesterday, we reiterate that our objective is straight forward. We said it loud and clear at the last European Council: we need a just and lasting peace. A peace that respects Ukraine's independence and sovereignty, based on international law. A peace through strength based on security guarantees.

And on top of this discussion, Ukraine, we have also addressed European security and defence, as Prime Minister has explained. Last week we convened in Brussels to discuss this. Spain's vision is clear: defence and security are European public goods. In the face of common challenges, we must deliver joint responses. Our Union has gone through different crises in the last years. And we learnt something: the more united we are in our response, the stronger we emerge.

We understand security with a 360-degree approach. We want a European Union that protects us on all fronts. From open conflicts to cyber-attacks, energy crisis and climate catastrophes. It does not matter whether the threats come from the North or the South, because Europe is capable of dealing with them all.

And, in this context, we must also deliver to our citizens by driving the dynamics of innovation and competitiveness of our defence industry. Today we also discussed opportunities for Finnish and Spanish companies.

I know Finland and Spain, my dear friend Petteri, are fully united and aligned in this determination.

I thank you, Prime Minister Orpo, for your invitation. For your hospitality, for hosting us so warmly.

It was very important for me to come today to Helsinki and I'm looking forward to taking together that sauna.

Thank you very much.

**P.- [Carlota Núñez, Cuatro] Good morning, President. Spain is asking for different mechanisms for financing that increase in defence spending.**

**If there are no direct transfers from Europe and without enough supports inside our country, how can Spain fulfill its this commitment with Europe?**

**Thank you.**

**Presidente.-** Thank you very much for your question.

First of all, let me remember one thing, which is that Spain has increased our defence expenditure over the last seven years and we are ready to fulfill our commitment on investing 2% of our GDP.

Second, it is also very important to remember that, besides the 2%, we have other two commitments coming from the Wales Agreement on NATO, which are the capabilities and commitments. And we are fulfilling and well above the commitments reached in the Wales Summit of NATO back in 2014.

When it comes to capabilities and commitments, but rest assured that we are ready to fulfil that 2% of our GDP and we will deliver.

Second, when it comes to how do we finance from the European level these new challenges coming from defence and security. And I was sharing also with the Prime Minister Orpo what I think. My feeling is that Finland has been leading the idea of engaging the EIB, and this is very much welcomed from Spain.

And I thank Prime Minister Orpo for this idea and this proposal.



Second, I think is very good for all countries that we have this escape rule close for the fiscal, let's say, rules and consolidation. And this is fine. We are ready also to use this tool on our national budget.

Spain is growing very strongly. It represents 50% of the economic growth of the whole European Union, the Spanish economic growth. So, we are ready to use this tool.

And when it comes to this new financial instrument, what I tabled in the Council is that we have to think not only on loans but also grants, and perhaps there will be some Finnish people that say, well, someone coming from the South, of course, is always a very vocal on grants and not on loans.

But I am not asking for grants for the southern countries. I'm asking for grants for the eastern flank of Europe, as we did during the Covid crisis for the countries that were very much harmed by the Covid and the situation we faced back in 2020.

So, what I'm saying is that we need to have a more balanced approach when it comes to these new financial instruments, not only in loans but also grants, and these grants will go, this is my proposal, this is the Spanish proposal, mainly to the Baltics and the Nordics, the countries that are closer to the Russian border.

So, they need also to feel that solidarity from the European Union as a whole.

This is my proposal. This is, you know, the idea that I shared with Prime Minister Orpo and, and of course, I think at the end of the day that we, we need also to consider seriously that defence and security are European public goods. And for that, we need also common resources.

**P.- [Helsingin Sanomat] To continue with the last question, when do you think you will be able to meet the 2% goal?**

**And is there support amongst the Spanish people to an even higher goal that is now discussed in NATO?**

**Presidente.-** So, thank you very much for your questions.

We are ready to fulfill this obligation of 2% and now, of course, if you allow me, I will explain to my citizens in Spain, not here, when we will reach that goal.

But I have to tell you that one thing is important, to fulfill this obligation of 2% of our GDP? To face the most important debate, which is the one that the Prime Minister has stated which means: do we or do we not need to spend better?

And I think that we need to spend better. And for that, we need to define what are our real threats coming from the eastern flank, also from the southern flank. What are the capabilities that we need to face those threats? And last but not least, how do we finance those capabilities?

And this is the exercise that we are commonly doing, all of us, the Commission, member states at the domestic level, but also at the European level also, taking into account what is happening in NATO and how do we need to strengthen that European pillar of NATO as the Prime Minister has said.

So, these are the most important questions that we need to ask, not only the 2% of our GDP, but also where are those challenges and the capabilities we need to face those challenges. And I think that, regarding, for instance, coming from Spain, but I think is also a common threat that you are facing here in Finland, we need to strengthen our cyber security. Last weekend we faced a very important cyber attack coming from Russia in Spain.

So, we know and the Spanish people knows quite well the real threat that represents Russia also for Europe as a whole, and also for a member state like Spain, which is in the southern flank of Europe.

And I'm really, really grateful with Finland, that understands these "360 degree" approach of our security.

Finland has been engaged with us and other countries like Portugal preparing this "non paper" of the situation in the Sahel, which is close to Spain, and is a very fragile part of the region of Africa.

We need also to face that reality. Russia presence in the Sahel is real. And we need also to face that security concerns coming from Africa to the southern flank of Europe.

So, you know, I'm really grateful. I respect the commitment of Finland when it comes to security and defence concerns of countries like Spain.

That is why we feel that solidarity from Finland, and we are very committed with Finland on its security concerns.

And last but not least, I think that we want to learn a lot when it comes to innovation and digitalization on cyber from Finland, and that is why we are looking forward to strengthening that bilateral cooperation between Finland and Spain when it comes to cyber security.

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