



TRANSCRIPCIÓN

**INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO
SÁNCHEZ, EN LA REUNIÓN ANUAL DEL WORLD GOVERNMENTS
SUMMIT**

Dubái, 3 de febrero de 2026

INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ

Your Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I could stand here and speak about the outstanding performance of the Spanish economy and all the investment opportunities it offers.

About a country whose economy grew by 2.8% in 2025, almost twice the euro area average. Whose GDP has just exceeded 2 trillion dollars. That created almost 600,000 jobs last year, about half of all new employment in the EU.

I could also speak about our new sovereign wealth fund, “España Crece”, launched with the ambition to mobilise up to 120 billion euros in public and private investment in areas such as artificial intelligence, clean energy or quantum computing.

Yes: you probably expect me to sing the praises of an economy that has constantly ranked among the world’s top performers over the past few years. But I won’t do so. For a simple reason: others do it for us.

Just open the Financial Times or The Economist, turn on CNN or Bloomberg, and you will hear about the excellence of the Spanish model. A model where the “4 Gs” — growth, green, generosity and global—go together. Because we grow at record level while sharing the benefits, cutting emissions, and remaining open.

While others look inwards, we look outwards. Finding new partners, in new regions. And welcoming those who come from abroad. Spain builds bridges, not fences. It looks to the future, not to the past. It embraces cooperation, not fragmentation.

But, your Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen. today, I want to talk about something else. Something that is at the core of the values of good governance and balanced progress that define this unique forum. A problem that no country can face alone: it is digital governance.

I have been Prime Minister of Spain for almost 8 years. And throughout this time, I have defended the same vision of the world. A vision where peace comes first. Where people are at the centre of the economy. Where progress doesn’t come at the expense of the most vulnerable or the planet.

That vision hasn’t changed in all these years. But the world has. Drastically. And for the worst. Not only in the physical world of economies, borders and institutions. But also, in the digital world we have built.

It is there, in that virtual space, where the foundations that once held us together are being undermined. Where social bonds are being turned upside down, into a kind of



zero-sum competition without rules. Where the values of equality and fairness are being openly attacked.

We were told that social media would become a tool for global understanding and cooperation. A vehicle for freedom, transparency and accountability. A space where feeds and algorithms would help improve our societies. And our lives.

But the opposite has happened.

Social media has become a failed state. A place where laws are ignored and crime is endured. Where disinformation is worth more than truth, and half of users suffer hate speech. A failed state in which algorithms distort the public conversation and our data and images are defied and sold.

Just in the last year alone, TikTok has been accused of tolerating malicious accounts that shared AI-generated child abuse materials. The faces of real kids put in fake nude bodies.

And just last week, the owner of X –a migrant himself– used his personal account to amplify disinformation about a sovereign decision by my government: the regularisation of 500,000 migrants that live, work and contribute to the success of our country.

The same platform that has allowed its AI –Grok– to generate illegal sexual content.

Meanwhile, Instagram has been accused of spying on millions of Android users around the world.

Facebook has been used to deploy hundreds of misinformation and foreign interference campaigns during national and regional elections.

All these cases are real and fresh. And represent just the tip of the iceberg. A small sample of the many crimes and misconducts that are taking place every day on social media.

Some may say that if we do not like social media platforms, we can simply leave them. That no one is forced to use X or TikTok. And they are right. For many of us, this is still an option.

But we know that our children and many citizens do not have that choice. Social media has become an integral part of their lives. Of their reality. So, if we want to protect them, there is only one thing we can do: take back control.

We need to make sure that these platforms comply with the rules, like everybody else.

I know that it will not be easy. Social media companies are wealthier and more powerful than many nations, including mine. But their might and power should not scare us. Because our determination is greater than their pockets.

Last year, I went to Davos to warn governments about the dangers of social media.

Now, I am here in Dubai to tell you and explain that Spain is walking the talk. We are fighting back. And we will continue to do so.

Starting next week, my government will implement the following actions.

First: we will change the law in Spain to hold platform executives legally accountable for many infringements taking place on their sites. This means that CEOs of these technoplatforms will face criminal liability for failing to remove illegal or hateful content. And for that, we, governments, need to stop turning a blind eye to the toxic content shared under their watch.

Second: we will turn algorithmic manipulation and amplification of illegal content into a new criminal offense. Disinformation doesn't appear by itself. It is created, promoted, and spread by certain actors. We will go after them as well as after the platforms whose algorithms amplify that disinformation for profit. No more hiding behind code. No more pretending that technology is neutral.

Third: we will implement a "Hate and Polarization Footprint." A system to track, quantify, and expose how digital platforms fuel division and amplify hate. For too long, hate has been treated as invisible and untraceable. But we will change that, developing a tool that will provide the basis for undertaking future penalties. Because spreading hate must come at a cost. A legal cost of course. A financial cost. And a moral cost that platforms can no longer afford to ignore.

Fourth: Spain will ban access to social media for minors under the age of 16. Platforms will be required to implement effective age verification systems — not just checkboxes, but real barriers that work. Today, our children are exposed to a space they were never meant to navigate alone. A space of addiction, abuse, pornography, manipulation, violence. We will no longer accept that. We will protect them from the digital Wild West.

Fifth and last: my government will work with our public prosecutor to investigate and pursue the infringements committed by Grok, TikTok and Instagram. We will have zero tolerance on this matter. And we will defend our digital sovereignty against any form of foreign coercion.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are the five measures that my government will implement to turn social media into the healthy and democratic space it should be. The good social media that we were promised, more than 20 years ago.



Of course, we are well aware of our limitations. We know that this is a battle that far exceeds the boundaries of any country. That is why I want to inform you that Spain has joined forces with five other European countries in a Coalition of the Digital Willing, committed to enforcing stricter, faster, and more effective regulation of social media platforms. A Coalition that will hold its first meeting in the coming days and will advance coordinated action at a multinational scale.

Some think that, in the current context, when the sovereignty of Ukraine, Palestine or Greenland is at stake, it would be a mistake to devote such efforts to a peripheral conflict that affects no physical territory.

But make no mistake. What we are facing is the convergence of two failures: a digital space without responsibility, weakening us from within. And a global order under strain from the outside. Both demand governance, not resignation.

That is why we must act. With courage, with unity and with hope.

Because moments like this define generations. And generations like us, define the future for the generations to come.

So, let's rise to the task: let's choose governance over resignation; cooperation over fragmentation; responsibility over silence.

Let's return social media to the promised land that it should have never abandoned.

Shukran. Thank you very much.

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(Intervención original en inglés)