

01. June 2024

**Ursula von der Leyen, the EPP lead candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission, at a campaign rally in Galicia, Spain.**

Buenas tardes Galicia! Thank you for inviting me! I am happy to be here with you.

Thank you, Alberto, for inviting me to your home, Galicia. I am delighted to be here dear Alberto, in your region which was transformed under your leadership for almost 14 years, after winning 4 times in regional elections.

Galicia is a success story. Your success story.

Dear Alfonso, congratulations on winning the presidency of Galicia three months ago. And thank you both for showing me the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela! This is the place where Europe began. For centuries this Cathedral and the pilgrimage is at the heart of Europe.

And I told Alberto, that I cannot run for second mandate as President of the European Commission without visiting El Camino de Santiago. And now I am here! Muchas gracias!

For centuries Santiago de Compostela has been the route followed by millions of pilgrims, millions of Europeans, who embarked on El Camino.

El Camino de Santiago, the route of Saint James, was the path of all who were seeking hope for their life. The pilgrims not only wanted to reach Santiago. The journey was to have inspiration. To rediscover the values within. El Camino was the way to follow to reach this destination.

Today Europe represents a similar journey. A journey of peace, a journey of hope, a journey based on our common values which are the bedrock of our societies.



Being here today I sense the powerful strength of what Europe is all about. Of what Europe represents for so many citizens on our continent and across the world.

To complete the route, “el camino,” you need courage, you need faith, you need resilience, and you need good companions who support you along this road. I am proud of following this route and doing this journey with all of you.

Today these values are at stake again. Take Peace. Look at Ukraine.

Ukraine is fighting for freedom and peace. And we are supporting Ukraine. Ukraine is fighting on their soil and for our security. We can never match the sacrifice of the Ukrainian people. But we can and what we will do is stand by their side for as long as it takes. Until they have peace in their country again.

Dear friends, This is what Europe is about – ensuring a safe and secure future for Europeans.

And that also means protecting those who provide for all of us. And this is why we have to support our farmers. They are the first to get up in the morning. They work hard for the high-quality food that we all enjoy. And at this point I want to pay respect to our farmers and thank them for their hard work.

Their costs for seeds, fertilizer and energy rise from year to year. But the prices they receive for milk, meat and grain are volatile. The big players in the food chain are putting pressure on them.

My friends, it cannot be right that farmers have to sell their food below production-cost. That is neither acceptable nor is it sustainable.

We also believe that fair competition with third countries need to be guaranteed. We need to put the system back on a solid footing.



The hard work of our farmers must pay off! And farmers are the best care-taker of nature, if the incentives are right. And this is our task for the next European budget.

And dear friends,

The exact same principle must apply to our fisher men and women. They work on our seas and oceans from morning to night. Coastal communities may be at the edge of our countries, but they are at the heart of our economies, our cultures and our way of life.

And this is particularly true in Galicia. From the picturesque beauty of O Barqueiro to the small fishing villages of Rinlo or Redes. Fisheries is a craft and a skill, a vocation and a profession passed down through generations of Galicians.

For decades, men and women in this region have helped to ensure food security. They provided a healthy and nutritious supply of seafood in local, national and even international markets.

Galicia accounts for around half of Spain's fishing fleet. And it is a perfect mix of tradition and progress. And it is our job to listen. And to ensure that fishing continues to be passed down through generations and continues to be an important provider of jobs.

This is why, if I am elected for a second term, I will task a full-time fisheries' commissioner to ensure fisheries remains a sustainable living for generations.

Dear friends, if I had to summarize in one word what Europe is all about I would say it is above all about our values. Europe is based on fundamental principles which define our common identity.

Europe has grown into a union founded on values in which we stand together: The defence of fundamental rights, equality, freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

**MORE THAN  
A UNION** ★  
**OUR HOME** ★



This is what keep us together. This is what we stand for and this what we will defend at all times.

I know there are concerns in Europe about the rule of law. Let me be very clear: The Commission, as a guardian of the treaties, has the task to uphold those values. And Member States have to respect these common values on which our society is built, so that all citizens can fully enjoy the rights granted to them by the Union. And the Commission has always acted and will act to protect our citizens when these values are at stake. After all, we are a community of law. And the duty of the European Union is to protect against any threats. This is the foundation of everything we have achieved and everything we will do. It is Europe's hallmark.

Spain, like all Member States, can trust Europe.

Dear friends,

One of the greatest threats to the European Union is that we have gotten so used to it that we take it for granted.

Think of the pandemic.

Nobody expected Europe to be able to provide vaccines. But together we did it.

Nobody expected Europe to create the €800 billion recovery fund NextGenEU. But together we did it.

Nobody expected Europe to withstand Putin's blackmail and to overcome a massive energy crisis. But together we did it.

We did it because we stood together, united: 450 million people in 27 member states.



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We have to take good care of our Europe!

And here in Galicia, you know this. Galicia is a true leader in Europe - from your dynamic and innovative SMEs, to the young entrepreneurs who seek a better future, to the students who participate in the Erasmus programme. This is Europe. This is our home!

Now - European elections are in 7 days from today.

Your vote is your ticket to the future.

So use it.

Don't let others decide for you.

If you want a strong Europe.

A Europe that cares for people.

A Europe that protects our values.

A Europe that can defend itself.

Then vote for EPP on the 9th of June.

Long live Galicia,

Long live Europe!

