

4th Internal Workshop of Democratic Solidarity: **OPPOSITION**

October 9, 2018

Goethe-Institute, Prague, Czech Republic

The workshop examined the strategies and weaknesses of the democratic opposition in Latin America. The discussion focused on the difficulties in articulating democratic and effective oppositions, at both the domestic and global level. It also highlighted the need to analyze the internal capacity of the democratic oppositions in Latin American countries. The panelists focused in particular on the cases of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia. The main restrictions imposed by governments, as well as possible assistance the international community could provide to increase the efficiency of Latin American democratic oppositions, were analyzed.

Restrictions and limitations:

1. **The division of the democratic opposition** in the Latin American.
2. **A lack of a unified vision** of the opposition.
3. The authoritarian regimes' strategies of **disarticulating the democratic oppositions**.
4. The governments' strategy of **eliminating opposition leaders** as a tool of undermining and dividing the opposition.
5. **An absence of an open, free, fair and transparent electoral process** recognized at the domestic and international level.
6. **A deficiency of trust in the electoral institutions** because of their connection with the authoritarian regimes.
7. **A loss of motivation** in the electoral process.
8. **A lack of government interest to sustain a dialogue** with the opposition and the **impossibility of building a negotiation process**.
9. The governments' strategy of **fragmenting the civic platforms** opposing them.

Recommendations:

1. Achieve **unity of the democratic opposition**.
2. Make **unity** a fundamental - but not unique - condition for overcoming authoritarian regimes.
3. Create a **strategic vision** including an adequate characterization of the regime, the strategies of resisting it, and the articulation of its potential strengths and weaknesses.
4. Craft a **strategy to hinder the functioning of the dictatorial regimes**.
5. Prevent increasing opposition actions without the **insurgence of leadership** – such actions are likely to fail (i.e. the case of Guatemala).
6. **Activate domestic actors** to achieve the attention and reaction of the international community.
7. Concentrate more **pressure and denunciation in the international arena**.
8. Establish more effective interaction with the **international community**, in order to maintain interaction with countries facing similar conditions.
9. Elaborate a more coherent strategy of **international communication**.



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10. **Foster effective connections** between the political leadership and the population, and between the political leadership and the international community.
11. **Prevent the normalization** of this situation in the international community.¹

¹ Conclusions were issued in the workshop 'Democratic Unity and the Role of Opposition in Latin America' organized in the framework of the Democratic Solidarity project during the 22nd annual conference of the Forum 2000 Foundation.