



Declaration for Political Action



Preamble

Liberalism is a set of principles, values, doctrines, and methods that have proven throughout history to be the most appropriate and effective in promoting peace, human rights, the rule of law, and prosperity. For liberals, individuals are endowed with rights that both precede and supersede the very existence of the State as a political institution. They include the right to life, the right to liberty, and the right to own property. Those rights stem from human nature and are universal, equal for all human beings, and do not depend on affiliation to any group, be it by nationality, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

Every moment in history brings new challenges to liberty, and liberals must face the issues of their time, renewing and advancing liberalism around the world.

In the post-war context of 1947, the Oxford Manifesto was drawn up to lay down the liberal principles and set the path for a return to liberal democracy. In 2017, in the political, economic, and social context of the twenty-first century, Liberal International reaffirmed the commitment it made in the Oxford Manifesto and signed the Andorra Manifesto, building upon previous declarations to address the challenges facing liberals in this century.





The Liberal organizations in Latin America that have been brought together by RELIAL uphold the principles of liberalism and respond to the challenges described in the Oxford and Andorra Manifestos. In 2014, considering the region's distinctive characteristics, they drew up and signed the Liberal Charter of Human Rights, a document that reaffirms their commitment to respect for life, freedom, private property, and the inherent rights of all human beings.

Today Latin America is seeing a proliferation of authoritarian and populist regimes, as well as growing statism, undermining individual freedom, weakening institutions, and, consequently, the rule of law, and giving way to corruption, impunity, inefficiency, and abuse of power.

That is further compounded by problems of insecurity and a citizenry that is calling for effective measures to curb drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism, which are compromising the fundamental principles of liberal democracy and undermining the region's economies, and in some cases even permeating institutional structures and eroding the Rule of Law.





In addition, there is an ongoing attack on and lack of protection of property rights and free enterprise, which contributes to a lack of competition and low productivity. All these factors result in institutional weaknesses that hinder development, well-being, and prosperity, and citizens perceive an increase in poverty, inequality, and injustice.

Migration is a phenomenon that has historically contributed to the development of societies. The current political and economic realities in some Latin American countries have forced citizens to migrate in search of opportunities. Authoritarian and populist regimes trigger forced migration due to all the human rights violations they commit. The integration of these migrants creates significant challenges for receiving countries in areas of healthcare, education, labor markets and public security.

Latin America should aspire to be an example of democratic government, upholding the Rule of Law and respect for human rights, the rights to life and private property, and building dynamic and competitive economies that rely on sustainable production processes by adopting best practices for managing natural resources and the environment.



It is only in liberal democracies, with rulers who adhere to the principles of freedom and respect for individual rights, that we will be able to eliminate extreme poverty, reduce poverty and inequality, level the playing field, and provide the necessary conditions to ensure that everyone enjoys access to education, health care, and decent employment.

As members of **RELIAL**, we reject any form of dictatorship and populism, regardless of their ideological leanings. The reality facing Latin America calls for a vindication of the tenets of liberal democracy. The region offers great cultural diversity and natural wealth that, under conditions of democracy and freedom, provides ample opportunities for prosperity and well-being to the entire population.



Therefore, the organizations that constitute RELIAL, the Liberal Network for Latin America, hereby declare the following:

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Political Issues

1. Guaranteeing the Rule of Law

The separation and independence of powers, especially as regards the Judiciary, is necessary to ensure freedom in all dimensions. It is essential to have a justice system that is not influenced by the interference of the Executive and Legislative powers. Transparency and impartiality must be ensured in appointing judicial authorities, who must demonstrate suitability and probity. Access to justice is a fundamental right of citizens and may not be limited for any political, ideological, or economic reason. Institutions must safeguard the rights of victims.

The State must guarantee the life, physical integrity, and property of its citizens. Its security and defense forces must be professionalized and depoliticized and must always act with respect for human rights. Furthermore, effective measures must be taken to combat institutional corruption, ensuring the existence of an appropriate legal framework.

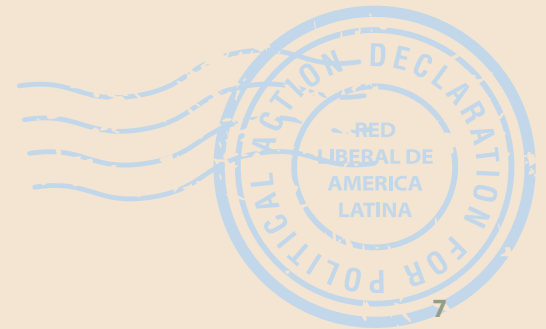





2. Ensuring democratic, free, fair, transparent and pluralistic elections

Elections must be conducted by an independent body that will carry out the process with absolute transparency and guarantee people's freedom of choice. Electoral processes must follow clear and impartial rules, creating a setting in which the various political parties can put forward their proposals so that citizens can consider them in a truly competitive environment.

Strengthening democracy requires the free participation of citizens. In elections and the designation or appointment of electoral authorities, procedures must be in place to ensure effective oversight of the associated processes. The results of any electoral vote must unequivocally reflect the will of the citizens who went to the polls. Mechanisms must be established to prevent the permanent continuation in power of any given political party.





3. Strengthening the political party system

In democratic systems, political parties constitute a fundamental means for society to represent the diversity of views on public affairs and social problems. It is necessary to have organizations that follow ideological programs, are transparent in the management of resources, and look after the training of their members, among other aspects, in order to strengthen the democratic culture.

4. Protecting freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the right of access to public information.

Freedom of thought and expression are vital elements of a liberal democracy. The free flow of ideas and a pluralistic press contribute to the exercise of citizen rights, including the right to demonstrate.

Every citizen has the right to access public information and expect timely accountability from government officials, and the exercise of such right must be enshrined by law. Governments must guarantee access to public information by use of technology, especially information concerning the use of state resources.

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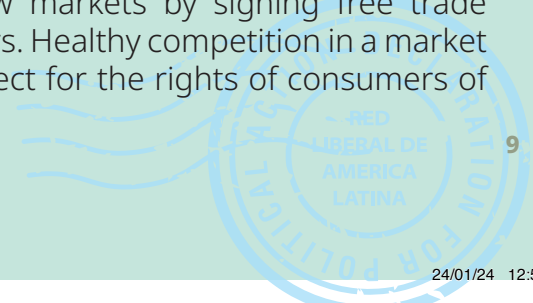
Economic Issues

5. Promoting a market economy to enable each person to live a better life.

Greater economic freedom in Latin American countries will enable the generation of employment, wealth, and well-being for citizens, contributing to the reduction of social gaps and poverty. The role of the State is to make sure that the legal framework is stable, protects property rights, and promotes competition, benefiting everyone and not just certain privileged groups, as is the case with crony capitalism. The corrosive effects of capital must be repelled in order to safeguard the economic and financial integrity of capital.

Price stability and price freedom are essential components of a free economy, and it is thus necessary to ensure a healthy currency and avoid rampant inflation. Considering that inflation is a monetary phenomenon of fiscal origin, fiscal and monetary order must be maintained. Similarly, we need a rational tax system, where taxes are few, simple, and low. Bureaucracy must be reduced, and procedures must be simplified in order to promote new business initiatives.

The creative power of economic freedom is enhanced by the emergence of new trade destinations. Policies must be adopted to promote connections with new markets by signing free trade agreements, thus providing new opportunities for entrepreneurs. Healthy competition in a market economy goes hand in hand with freedom of choice and respect for the rights of consumers of goods and services.





6. Facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy

Eliminating barriers to business activities should be a priority. Policies must be implemented to facilitate access to formality for those working in the informal sector. Credits, capital funds, and financial inclusion initiatives are examples of incentives for those who are engaged in the informal economy. Another element that must be considered for an easier transition into the formal sector is the flexibilization of employment regulations. The State must facilitate the conditions that favor business growth as part of the policies aimed at promoting employment. A system that imposes high tax and regulatory burdens constitutes an obstacle to entrepreneurship. Regularization of property rights must be promoted as a means of capital generation.

7. Ensuring an environmentally responsible economy and urban planning

Both citizens and businesses have a responsibility to avoid irreparable environmental damage that may affect the productive capacity of the environment and the natural resources used in production processes. Production models must follow best practices to maintain natural capital in the very long term, ensuring sustainable production and intergenerational wealth.

Urbanization and metropolization processes undertaken as part of modernization efforts in various Latin American cities must include standards and guidelines to ensure that development is environmentally sensitive.



Social Issues



8. Respect for the dignity of every individual

Each individual has the right to pursue his or her own life path. The State should not interfere but rather create the conditions to guarantee respect for the dignity of every person and equality before the law. We support and defend the rights of those who are vulnerable to discrimination, whether they are members of ethnic or indigenous groups, people with disabilities, children, the elderly, and LGBTIQ+ people, among others. We reject all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

9. Access to quality education and health care

Because of the inequalities that exist in Latin America due to the poverty suffered by millions of people, access to quality education that is responsive to local, regional, and national needs is a fundamental pillar on the road to prosperity for families and countries. Quality education is the path to excellence in education systems.





Such systems must be open, allowing for freedom of education, and draw from the best global experiences to guide the course of education in achieving social mobility. Educational programs must include an ethical framework of coexistence that considers the obligations associated with life in society. We reject all forms of educational indoctrination as contrary to freedom of thought. No education process can ever achieve its goal without health.

Policies must be adopted to address child malnutrition, which is a major factor affecting people's early education. Citizens should have access to health care services that prioritize prevention and provide timely care in cases of illness, contributing to the well-being of individuals, regardless of their status as active or retired workers.

Every human being can develop his or her capabilities if the basic conditions for education, health, and safety are in place. Public-private partnerships may prove to be an efficient and effective mechanism to provide such services to citizens at a lower cost and greater effectiveness. Pension systems in Latin American countries must guarantee that citizens receive a pension amount that will allow them to live a decent life during retirement.





10. Organized and safe migration

Any society that claims to be free must be open to migration. Freedom is enhanced when every person has the possibility of moving within and outside his or her country. Migration translates into cultural exchange, innovative business development, and labor market dynamism.

To ensure proper and orderly migration, important variables such as the size and the economic and social capabilities of the receiving nation must be considered. This requires a regulatory framework that can adapt to the challenges of migration, along with actions to prevent, mitigate, and control illicit immigration channels.

Concerning forced and massive migration for political reasons from countries with authoritarian regimes, actions must be undertaken to guarantee the right to asylum and refuge as mechanisms for the protection of migrants.





For all the above reasons, the Latin American liberals have gathered in Guatemala to raise our voices and defend liberal, plural, and tolerant democracy, the right to property, and legal security as necessary for the creation of opportunities for all people. We support integration into the global economy, allowing the free movement of people, goods, and capital. We believe in the free market as an environment conducive to freedom in economic activity.

We support the Rule of Law, which imposes limits on the exercise of power and promotes the separation of powers and strong institutions. We reaffirm that freedom of thought, belief, and expression are the foundations of liberalism and democracy and we support the free expression of thought.



We support equal rights and opportunities for all human beings, regardless of their identity or the fact that they belong to any ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender, or sexual orientation group. The law must be equal for all, and each human being is different.

We uphold tolerance and plurality as enshrined liberal principles and believe in freedom as a catalyst of human capabilities.

We will fight populism in all its forms. We uphold the rule of law and do not believe in messianic leaders.

October 2023





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* Translation of the approved version in Spanish