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## Podemos as a response to the crisis

Podemos has emerged as a sound political alternative willing to contest the mandate of the financial and political elites through new, radically democratic means.

In keeping with its agenda to activate inclusive and horizontal channels of political participation, Podemos does not merely address the concerns of ordinary people but provides a public sphere in which these demands can be voiced, debated and collectively influence political decisions on a government level.

## Círculos and Podemos London

Linked from its origins to grass-roots social movements such as 15-M, Podemos is a direct response to dominant political class in Spain, and instead seeks to empower citizens through its nearly 1000 “círculos” or local groups, which are based on popular assembly structures.

The purview has extended further afield as thousands of men and women have been forced to move abroad by the dismal work situation in Spain, and are now setting up their own “círculos”.

Podemos London is one among the many “círculos” to have been constituted abroad, and we are eager to continue the pedagogical and activist work initiated in Spain and establish a dialogue with other grassroots movements across the UK.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/circulopodemoslondres?fref=ts>

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## Rethinking Ourselves: Podemos as a part of a new construction of democracy in Europe

The event invites a number of political representatives, cultural commentators, grassroots organisations and researchers to reflect on the political alternatives that are emerging in the 21st century in Europe and beyond, and consider their place within the predominantly neoliberal political make-up of the EU. Our objectives are:

- To address the emergence and rise of Podemos and its unique position in the Spanish national and regional political scene, but also within the wider framework of the EU, where new political alternatives are much needed
- To prompt a debate about the need of alternative economic programmes that reverse austerity
- To generate a dialogue among various grassroots movements, social and political movements in the UK, and lay the foundation for further cooperation and joint activism
- To debate and shed light on the use of new tools, structures and ways of doing more citizen-oriented politics and how these may facilitate participatory democratic engagement across the different layers of society.

To these ends, we have invited a number of social groups and associations, among them Sinistra, Ecologia, Libertà (SEL), 15M, Front Gauche, RS21, ANTarsya, Syriza, Unite the Union, Stop the War Coalition.

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/PodemosGB>

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## Our speakers

**Íñigo Errejón** holds a PhD in Political Sciences and Business from the Universidad Complutense (Madrid) about the rise to hegemony of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia. He is a visiting researcher to various universities in Latin America, North America and Europe. Currently he is a postdoctoral fellow at the Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (Madrid) and researcher for the GIS XXI Foundation (Caracas). Among his research interests feature the analysis of discourse and hegemony, processes of political change and the transformation of state governance in Latin America. He has an ongoing collaboration with a range of media, both audiovisual formats and the press, in Spain and Latin America. Errejón was the director of Podemos’s campaign for the 2014 EU elections.



**Cristina Flesher Fominaya** has a PhD in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. She is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) at the University of Aberdeen and Senior Marie Curie Fellow at National University Ireland, Maynooth. She has been researching and participating in European social movements since the early 1990s, exploring the dynamics of digital media use, deliberative cultures, and collective identity formation in autonomous movements. Her latest book is *Social Movements and Globalization: How protests, occupations and uprisings are changing the world*, available from Palgrave MacMillan <http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=513046>.

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## Our Speakers

**Tania González Peñas** (Avilés, 1983) is a social activist for a number of social movements in Spain. She holds a BA in Political Sciences, and has cultivated a special interest in subjects concerning gender, social equality and employment. She is one of the 5 MEPs of Podemos in the European Parliament, and her daily work is focused now on her role as spokeswoman on behalf of different social movements as well as communicating the demands of Spanish citizens to the European government in Brussels.

**Owen Jones** is a columnist for the Guardian and a frequent broadcaster. His first book, *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, was published by Verso in June 2011 to considerable acclaim and attention, and became the bestselling political book of 2011. *Chavs* was longlisted for the Guardian First Book Award and picked by the New York Times as one of their Top 10 Non-fiction Books of 2011. Owen has been named one of the Daily Telegraph's Most Influential People on the Left, and won Left Foot Forward's poll for Most Influential Left-Wing Thinker of the Year, and Young Writer of the Year at the 2013 Political Book Awards.. His second book, *The Establishment And How They Get Away With It*, was published in 2014 by Allen Lane/ Penguin Press.

**Ken Loach** was born in 1936 in Nuneaton. He attended King Edward VI Grammar School and went on to study law at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford. After a brief spell in the theatre, Loach was recruited by the BBC in 1963 as a television director. This launched a long career directing films for television and the cinema, from *Cathy Come Home* and *Kes* in the sixties to *Land And Freedom*, *Sweet Sixteen* and *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* in recent years. His 2013 documentary film *The Spirit of '45* has examined the pivotal socio-political changes under the Labour government of Clement Attlee which reshaped post-war Britain.

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## Programme

10:00 - 10:15  
Press Conference

10:30  
London Welsh Centre (LWC) opens to the public

11:00  
Introduction (Luke Stobart, Podemos London)

11:10 - 12:00  
**Cristina Flesher** "ICTs, (Digital) Media and Democratic Participation and Communication"  
**Íñigo Errejón** "Politics since the crisis: the attack from above and the possibility of articulating popular discontent from below"

**Owen Jones**

12:00 - 12:15  
Short pause

12:15 - 12:50

**Tania González** "Podemos and the Emergence of an Alternative Left in Europe"

**Ken Loach**

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12:50 - 13:10  
Coffee break

13:10  
Open debate among the speakers, associations and the public.

13:55  
The event closes. Acknowledgments to the speakers and moderator.

14:00  
The event ends.