



## **The Mexican Institute of Competitiveness was recognized with the Templeton Freedom Award**

### **Speech by Juan E. Pardinas, General Director of the organization.**

- Thank you to the Templeton Foundation for this award.
- Thank you to the Atlas Network for believing in the largest citizen driven initiative against corruption in North America.
- To be honest this is not a reward only to the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness IMCO but to the network of NGOs, think tanks and business organizations that put all their energies to harvest 650,000 signatures to enforce the transparency of asset declaration, conflict of interest declaration plus the tax records of high ranking public officials.
- That is why is called 3 de 3 (3 out of 3) 1) Asset declaration, 2) Conflict of Interest Declaration and 3) Tax Records.
- I understand that the nature of the Atlas Network is to learn or replicate experiences and projects from its peers all over the world.
- From what I have seen recently in Washington, I feel that there might the need for a USA version of the 3 de 3 Legislation and we are ready to help.
- Corruption is the worst kind of tax because it not only diverts public resources but also erodes the trust of civic institutions.
- We are going through difficult times.
- If the magnificent force of free trade is being stopped by nationalism and economic illiteracy, there is a threat to freedom.
- If taxes are being used to build a wall between two neighbors, there is a threat to freedom.

- If every small business or every great enterprise started as a dream, and dreamers are treated as criminals, there is a threat against freedom.
- The Bible clearly states that “the truth shall set you free”, but the when alternative facts reign over public debate then we become the willing subjects of our own lies.
- The English Philosopher John Stuart Mill said that:
- “A person may cause evil to others, not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for injury”
- I do not want to cause injury to no one.
- So I shall state very basic certainties that in a more rational world would be a tautology:
- If you are against free trade, then you are against freedom.
- If you use the language of fear and victimization, instead of the words of prosperity and opportunity, then you are against freedom.
- But we are lucky, because tonight we are here to celebrate the conviction that free will and individual accomplishment can create a better world, not only for our children but also for ourselves.
- In this world governments can do a lot of harm, but we individuals that believe in freedom have the force to build bridges, partnerships and friendships, where the narrative of hate and isolation, cannot imagine anything beyond a wall.
- THANK YOU VERY MUCH.