



## **Official Statement by the President of the Catalan Government on the occasion of the National Day of Catalonia 2015**

Dear compatriots,

This year's National Day of Catalonia is particularly special because, in a short while, the campaign leading to the celebration of the upcoming September 27 elections will begin.

Before I refer to this electoral contest, allow me to remind you of the distinctive civic nature of our national holiday; a celebration where the people have always been the protagonists. A prominence that is reflected in the laying of the wreaths just as much as it is in the various events that take place across the country and which, since 2012, is clearly marked by the mass and peaceful demonstrations that have occurred affirming Catalonia's character as a nation while expressing a longing for liberty.

This year will be no different. It will be a *Diada* by all and for all where the people will once again be protagonists in all villages, towns and cities. This year, the most notable event will be the one in Barcelona's Meridiana, and will ensue with the same pacific and multitudinous quality as it has done in the last few years.

It will have been four years with scores of people out on the streets. One must always listen to the voice of the citizenry, but when this voice is persistent and constant, despite that some may want to continue ignoring it, the demand cannot be delayed any further. Therefore, there can be no institutional representative, no democrat, who can avoid this peaceful outcry and one has the responsibility to find the way so that it can be expressed democratically. Thus, may it be the democratic mandate that marks the Nation's future. Such was the case in the 2012 elections and will be the case once again on September 27.

Today, I would also like to remind you what the first law approved by the Parliament of Catalonia states. The law, approved by unanimity in the June of 1980, declaring the eleventh of September National Holiday of Catalonia.

I wanted to remember this because I believe it is severe that at present, by appealing to the Constitution and to the spirit of '78, the desire of many Catalans to vote on their country's political future is belittled, distorted and even affronted; and our condition as a Nation is denied in such a partisan and careless way. I feel it is fitting to remember this because during that time, 35 years ago, all the political tendencies of our Parliament, with that dark living memory of the many years of dictatorship, had no problems in recognising what their successors are denying today.

That law states: “In times of strife, the Catalan people marked a day, eleventh of September, as the Fête of Catalonia. A Day, that meant remembering the painful loss of liberties in 1714, and an attitude of vindication and active resistance against oppression, and also, above all, the embodiment of hope of total national recovery. Now, in resuming Catalonia’s road to freedom, the People’s representatives believe that the Legislative Chamber must sanction that which the Nation has already unanimously assumed”.

Notice that this is what it said in the year 1980. A magnificent synthesis of what September 11 is, voted by unanimity in the year 1980; it is worth remembering in light of those who wish to detract its purpose. The Parliament which was chosen by the people of Catalonia, after 40 years of dictatorship and oppression, manifested the hope of total national recovery and explicitly expressed that Parliament had to sanction that which the Nation assumed with a large majority.

You know that my disposition has been, since the beginning, to find the best way for the people to express in a clear and unequivocal way their aspirations regarding to the political future of Catalonia. The institutions of the State, especially the State government, have not wanted to make this possible in any way. In fact, they did not even want to talk about it. Thus leaving the only instrument they cannot forbid: elections to the Parliament of Catalonia.

These elections, which in form are the same as all those which have been celebrated since 1980 are not the same in nature. And they are not the same because a large number of our country’s citizens have persistently demanded it. Now, finally, the voice through the vote reaches all; every woman and man in this country, and every youth in the country. In their hands, in your hands, lie the power and the tool which will shape the political future of this Nation: the vote.

For this reason, and despite the interests and sentiments that rise in these transcendent moments, I ask in a clear and plain manner for serene debate during these elections. Let us relish with normalcy the democratic riches that come from making decisions though ballots, opposing viewpoints, presenting proposals, let us debate them. Let’s not shun the diverse opinions that enrich and will continue to enrich this country.

And once the people have spoken through the vote, let us accept the decision of the majority. And, on the next day, whatever the decision is, the concord and unequivocal will to be one single nation must continue being the North that guides our collective future. The elections can be lost or they can be won, but the future must be won by the 7.5 million men and women of Catalonia.

Like every year, I wish you a happy *Diada*. A *Diada* with our sights set on the ones that precede us, on the ones that maintained the flame of Catalanity alive during many generations; a *Diada* with sights fixed on our present, tough and full of passion;

a present that challenges us and constantly tests us; and a *Diada* with sights set especially on our future, on the children and the youths, and on those whom are yet to come.

A *Diada* that, once more, reveals to the world a Catalonia with its best expression: convivial and open, cultured and civil, committed to justice, lover of liberty, sensitive and sympathetic to the suffering and hopes of so many people who at this moment are forced to cross the blue sea bridge of the Mediterranean, evading war and barbarity, to find a better and more dignified world.

*Visca Catalunya!*  
(Long live Catalonia!)