



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

*Barcelona, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2016*

Dear compatriots,

Allow me to address you all for the first time as President of the Generalitat on our National Holiday to express my gratitude for this responsibility and commitment that is expected of me as president. A commitment to govern openly and through dialogue, qualities that have always defined our way of doing things as a country, which I will always use in order to reach the objectives that the citizens have called for in this legislature. The Government that I preside over governs for all Catalans without distinction of any sort, to ensure progress, welfare, cohesion and social harmony.

This year's National Day comes at a good time for the country, despite the uncertainties of the current situation, some that not only affect Catalonia but Europe in its entirety as well. The European Union is going through a delicate moment on account of the refugee crisis and rising populisms, which will require it to strengthen its founding principles, based on freedom, democracy and human rights. Europe will also have to reconsider its internal functioning after the Brexit referendum. Europe is changing but it is also demonstrating flexibility and pragmatism when it needs to, leaving behind rigid discourse. The Europe of the future will have to strengthen the role of the Union and reduce the obstacles posed by the old statisms of the previous century.

Catalonia is and wishes to remain part of this Europe, with its flaws and virtues, but it wants to play its role as an actor and not as a mere spectator. The talent and strength of Catalan society, which at individual and business levels is felt around the world, must also be felt at the institutional level, both within the EU and in other international organizations. Catalonia is the region that receives more foreign investment and exports the most, with its dynamic economy that is just beginning to emerge from the economic crisis thanks to the enormous effort of the people, employers, employees, the self-employed, and a government, the Generalitat, which aims to help entrepreneurs while avoiding the risk of breaking away from social



policies that ensure our society's cohesion. The crisis is still present in many homes in Catalonia, but we are re-emerging through the collective effort of everyone

And we do all of this without the support of the Spanish government, which continues to ignore the needs of the Catalan people. In recent months this has been evidenced by chronic disinvestment in infrastructure. This does not only affect our economy but it also affects people's everyday life, such as the unacceptable service provided by Rodalies, in addition to the chronic neglect of the Mediterranean Corridor. The state has removed itself from its commitments and its obligations to Catalonia, neglecting the services that by law it is obliged to provide the citizens with, regardless of the political situation –and all of this without having solved the premeditated financial asphyxiation that we have been enduring for decades.

Alongside this unchanging situation, the institutional and political paralysis continues in Spain, where parties are unable to reach agreement for the formation of government. Without politics dialogue is difficult, especially with those who do not want to talk and will use courts to resolve political problems. Those who should speak are silenced and those who are speaking should keep silent.

Fortunately, Catalonia is a country that has a project to build on and we will build it through dialogue and the social harmony that has always defined us. Catalans have never refused to enter into dialogue and it has been shown throughout history that we can agree on the most diverse ideological options for the advancement of the country. In the decisive moments, from the transition until now, we have managed to create a climate of confidence to complete the objectives that have been set.

This National Day is important not only to reaffirm our desire to become a nation but to address a political year in which decisions must be taken to ensure that Catalonia can freely choose its path. And we will do this through our Government and Parliament, by talking, negotiating and voting, always on side of the people. Therefore, as president of the Generalitat, I encourage you to actively celebrate this day with a civic spirit and joy that defines us, demonstrating once again the best side this country has.

Long live Catalonia!