



Barcelona, 6 February 2017

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT ON THE 9N TRIAL

Today, in a short while, the 129th President of the Government of Catalonia, Artur Mas; his Vice President at the time, Joana Ortega, and the then Minister of Education, Irene Rigau, will be put on trial for something that never should have reached the courts. On November 9th of 2014, more than 2.3 million people participated in a consultation to express their opinion on the relations between Catalonia and Spain, and one which fulfilled a commitment between citizens and institutions, between the people and their representatives.

On the 9th of November 2014, Catalonia sent a message, one of many sent in over a decade since the party governing today in Spain began collecting signatures against the Statute of Catalonia. It was a day of joy and democratic strengthening, filled with hope for a nation that won a well-deserved victory, by working hard and contributing like no other to bolster our society as well as the State as a whole. If democracy is to fear every time there is disconnection with the citizens, what happened on November 9 is just the right cure for such perversion. A country capable of carrying out the 9N has a healthier democracy than a country that sends the leaders who made it possible to the courtroom.

It is because of this that many people feel represented by President Mas, Vice President Ortega and Minister Rigau. Many of us today feel judged, and it is for this reason that a very significant representation of those who made the 9N possible will express our indignation for taking what is a political affair to the courts. Those responsible for judicialising political claims and those who have committed all sorts of abuses to prosecute beliefs will find the same answer they found after that campaign to gather signatures against the Statute, often signatures against Catalonia. It is the answer of a nation that, with all its differences, nuances and diversities, will maintain its dignity.

It is the same dignity that will today, with a noble and loyal attitude, defend Artur Mas, Joana Ortega and Irene Rigau before the court. Not on our knees, but standing tall.

**Carles Puigdemont Casamajó**

President of the Government of Catalonia