

## **Official Statement by the President on the Catalan Referendum**

*Barcelona, 1 October 2017*

My fellow citizens,

At this moment of great importance for Catalonia, now that we have managed to celebrate the referendum on self-determination, one which the State strived to prevent but that was carried out anyway thanks to the commitment, courage and bravery of millions of Catalans who made it possible, I would like to address this message to you all. A message to all democrats from all over the State, Europe and the world who are also shocked by the unjustified, abusive and severe police violence committed by the Spanish government. To you and to all who today made this democratic victory possible, to all who have expressed their support, to the prime ministers and presidents of Europe's democratic governments who have conveyed messages of concern, to the dozens of parliamentarians from all countries who have expressed their indignation regarding the brutal repression unleashed by the government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, we are deeply and sincerely grateful.

I would like to address especially the close to 800 people who had to be treated as a result of police brutality. Some of you have suffered serious injuries, humiliation and clear human rights violations that cannot go unpunished. My heartfelt gratitude to all of you who resisted provocations and showed the world the civility of a peaceful nation wanting to vote, you have succeeded in making this vote possible for the people. Your anonymous and exemplary deed of solidarity will be recorded in our memory.

Today the Spanish state has written a shameful page in its history regarding Catalonia. Sadly not the first one; too often has repression and violence been the response by the State to Catalan aspirations. Today, although we are in the European Union, even though we are in the 21st century, an age of globalisation and freedom of information, the State's response has been to return towards violence and repression. When will it end? Today we have said that this is over.

The course we must now take should be done together, as we have done with the path that has taken us here. We must continue in civility and peace, because it is the will of this country. We must make it open to dialogue and mediation in order to respect the will of the Catalan people so that this journey is carried out with the utmost efficiency.

On this path, I must appeal directly to Europe. Catalans have won the right to be respected in Europe. The European Union can no longer continue looking the other way. We are European citizens suffering a violation of rights and freedoms, direct violations of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Union should reinforce its founding principles when in danger by the abuses of a State that behaves in an authoritative manner. It is necessary to act



quickly to maintain the moral authority in and outside of the continent especially when these abuses outrage men and women from all over the world.

The situation created in Catalonia has been the result of intransigence and repression, of an absolute denial of reality, and evident hostility when dealing with our citizens' democratic demands. It is no longer an internal affair. It is an issue of European concern, which calls upon the founding values of the project of peace, freedom, harmony and democracy we have been building for decades with a broad range of voices.

Today, Catalonia has won many referendums. We have earned the right to be heard, to be respected and to be recognized. Today, millions of people facing all sorts of difficulties and threats took to the streets, they spoke loud and clear and addressed a message to the world: We have the right to decide our own future, the right to freedom and we want to live peacefully, without violence and outside a state that is not capable of offering any convincing reason other than the use of brute force.

For this reason, after a day full of hope, but also of suffering, the citizens of Catalonia have won the right to have an independent State to be established in the form of a republic. Consequently, the Government that I preside over will present today's results to the Parliament of Catalonia, where the sovereignty of our people resides, so it can proceed in accordance with the Referendum law.

Today, after a day marked by the dignity of the millions of people who made it possible, Catalonia has gained its sovereignty and respect. The Catalan institutions have the duty to respect and implement the choice citizens have made and to honour it with the commitment to collectively build a free, peaceful and democratic country with dignity.

**Carles Puigdemont Casamajó**  
President de la Generalitat de Catalunya