

Official Statement by the President on the political situation in Catalonia

Barcelona, 4 October 2017

Dear compatriots,

We come from a few especially intense days, full of emotions and experiences that will be recorded in our minds. Once again, the people of Catalonia showed yesterday that we are united, we are a single nation, unified to uphold the values of democracy; and we did it in the way we always do and want to do things: with civility and peace. There were very symbolic images that help to understand this idea of fraternity and transversality with which Catalonia faces its national challenges: people with flags of Spain and *estalada* flags sharing the same cause together. The rejection of violence, the rejection of the unjustifiable charges of police forces against the peacefully concentrated civilian population and the defense of civil rights that are elemental.

In this sense, I would like to emphasize and value the attitude of the hundreds of thousands of Catalans that yesterday marched and brought the country to an unprecedented stop never seen before. You did it without incidents, overcoming fears and threats and above all being faithful to the peaceful attitude with which we always want to express ourselves.

That is why we have to feel strong if we are united and we remain in this attitude. For the more violence some want to bring, a violence which is unacceptable anywhere and that has been met with great concern in Europe, we must keep ourselves as one nation. With differences, with discrepancies, with errors and sometimes, because we also have to tell ourselves, with great triumphs. Do not let them squander it, those who, for helplessness, fear or cowardice, would like us to be another way. You are not aware of the admiration that as a nation we are generating from around the world because of such civic and committed attitude.

Unfortunately, not everyone wishes things to go well for us. Some claim to present the Catalan claim as illegitimate, illegal and criminal. Some people think that hunting down polls, ballots and voters is an unavoidable requirement of the rule of law, and that everything is allowed in preventing a nation from expressing itself and deciding. We should be all very calm and serene, and above all, very comforted: what we have done, what we are doing and what we are going to do is what other nations have already done and other nations will do in the future. We follow a path democratically drawn by the will of the citizens, and this instead of being fought against, it should begin to be understood and respected.

That is why I want to address the Spanish citizens who in these days have expressed their commitment to the demands of the Catalans; citizens who have sent us their friendship and their very valuable solidarity in these times we are living in. Surely the Spanish authorities should explain better what is happening in Catalonia, with more pondered views that help to understand a political problem that we know is complex. However, I am grateful for the effort of many people that join the Catalan people in their claim. We are one nation, that loves the

languages it speaks, that has no problem with identities, nationalities and cultures, that wants to continue contributing to the development of the Spanish state and will never dispense with the enormous wealth represented by plurality.

We are, in effect, a society that is enormously united in its diversity. That is why we cannot share nor accept the message that the head of the State addressed to one part of the population. The King praises the discourse and policies of Rajoy's government, which have been catastrophic in relation to Catalonia, deliberately ignoring the millions of Catalans who do not think like them. Deliberately ignoring the Catalans who have been victims of police violence that struck half of the world's hearts. The king yesterday missed an opportunity to address all the citizens to whom he owes the crown, and to whom he owes respect because the constitution so demands. A constitution that gives it a moderating role that he has not played in any case, and that yesterday he declined with harshness. He has not had any interest in knowing the opinion and the vision of the Government of the Generalitat at any time during this crisis, and he has accepted to assume an inadequate role that only seeks to flatten the decisions that the Spanish Government has long studied in order to liquidate the aspirations of sovereignty of the Catalan people. Aspirations that the Spanish government does not hesitate to treat as criminal and illegitimate, and against which uses resources without limit.

I would like to address myself directly to His Majesty, in the language I know he knows and speaks: not in this way. With your decision yesterday, you disappointed many people in Catalonia who appreciate you and have helped you in difficult times for the institution. People who expected another tone from you and an appeal to dialogue and harmony.

As president of the Generalitat, I think it is necessary to address the general public, to everyone, whatever their way of thinking is, in order to guarantee the commitment of the government that I preside over to protect all citizens and ensure their rights to express themselves freely and to respect their decisions.

We will do it with the commitment that we assumed at the beginning of our mandate. A commitment to do so always with an open door to dialogue and respect towards each other. We will not move away from this, and I want to assure the citizens that are listening to me that my government will not give an inch from the commitment of peace and serenity, but at the same time with the firmness, with which we want to do things.

That is why I reiterate what I said on Monday: this moment demands mediation. We have received several proposals in the last hours, and we will receive more: all of them know first-hand my willingness to undertake a mediation process. We will reiterate it as many times as is needed. Peace, dialogue and agreement are part of the political culture of our people. However, we have never received any positive response from the State to any of the mediation options that are already on the table, and I believe, with all sincerity, that it is again a serious irresponsibility not to attend the requests sent by people from within and outside of Catalonia and the State so that this conflict is directed by politics and not by the police.

Today we are closer to our historical wish than yesterday. On Sunday, we were able to make a referendum in the midst of an ocean of unprecedented difficulties and repression; yesterday we gave an example in the compliance of the general strike; and I am sure that in the coming



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days we will return to show our best side when the institutions of Catalonia implement the results of the referendum.

Meanwhile, let's maintain the confidence and isolate all provocations and intents of violence. We do not want it at home nor do we want it anywhere else. Stay united in dignity and we will be a nation capable of making possible the dream that it sets itself.

Carles Puigdemont Casamajó

President of the Catalan Government