



Statement by the President of Catalonia at the opening reception of Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Washington, June 27th, 2018

Bari Yereko, bona tarda,

His Excellency President Sarkissian, authorities, Ladies and gentlemen

Today we are here to celebrate Catalonia's and Armenia's participation in the prestigious Smithsonian Folklife Festival. It is a meeting point for the three elements that define us as a nation: freedom, culture and talent. Because what is folk culture really? It's one of the most decisive factors for social cohesion that peoples have to help them succeed in their projects for welfare and progress.

In Catalonia, organisations and groups related to Folk culture are the best mechanisms we have as a society for welcoming and integrating people.

I feel privileged to be here now alongside a nation as exciting as Armenia. Knowing the history of the Armenians, the cultural roots of their ambitions for their country and the suffering they have undergone throughout their history—including a genocide—and now seeing their fulfilment as a nation is an example that encourages all of us who love freedom and democracy.

We, the Catalan people, have been subject as well to relentless political, linguistic and cultural persecution along the last few centuries, and the example of Armenia and many other nations provides hope for us, now more than ever, as our country is facing the most difficult times in recent years.

Today, we, in the Government of Catalonia, are fighting against the state of emergency and denouncing the injustices suffered by people such as President Puigdemont himself, who is now living in forced exile, as well as all the political prisoners. This yellow ribbon is for them.

The right to self-determination is essential for us. On October 1st we exercised this right and now we must make effective that democratic mandate. In Catalonia, the concepts of Republic, freedom and democracy have ceased to be complementary concepts but to be synonymous.

The best contribution Catalonia can make to the world is to preserve and promote culture and language, to encourage and share its human talent and never to falter in defending freedom. Because the freedom of one nation is part of the freedom of all other nations.



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament de la Presidència

Oficina del President

Gabinet de Comunicació del President

I do not want to finish without thanking the organisers of the festival for the generosity they have shown towards Catalonia. I also want to thank the sponsors who have made this exciting get-together possible. Thank you very much.

This evening, I'm honoured to be here, in the capital of the United States of America, where you value above all freedom and dignity of the people. One more time, thank you Smithsonian. In the name of Catalonia we wish you the best of success.

Good night.

Quim Torra i Pla

President of the Government of Catalonia