

Institutional message commemorating the fifth anniversary of 1 October

Citizens of Catalonia.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of 1 October. We all remember where we were and what we did that day. Bringing in the ballot boxes, spending the night in the polling stations, defending the schools, voting... We know that we lived through a historic day.

One that forms part of the country's collective memory, as a day on which we demonstrated our wholehearted democratic commitment. All our desire to be ourselves and all our love for freedom. On 1 October 2017 we expressed our immense collective desire to freely decide the future of Catalonia.

A great victory indeed. A great lesson in democratic values in the face of State repression, that has taught us that the path towards a Catalan Republic is one of rights and freedoms. It is the path of democracy.

What made 1 October 2017 possible was the great alliance between institutions, civil society and citizens. An unbreakable alliance where everyone played their part. Working together With trust. With complicity.

That is how we were able to bring in the ballot boxes and ballots. That is how we created a universal census. That is how we opened and defended the schools. That is how we overcame the fear of police repression. In the face of the police beatings of free citizens who only wanted to vote, Catalonia defended itself with ballot boxes and votes. And this is what makes us unstoppable.

Every member of the government of the Generalitat at the time, starting with President Carles Puigdemont and Vice-President Oriol Junqueras, is paying a heavy price. And with them, the president of the Parliament, Carme Forcadell. Civil society leaders. Members of parliament. Mayors. Civil servants. And many anonymous citizens.

Imprisonment, exile, fines and disqualifications. The suspension of our institutions. The judicial threat that still hangs over us. The personal cost of 1 October for many of the people behind 1 October is very high.

People who gave everything so that we could vote and who deserve not only collective recognition, but also our full support. We must continue to support them. We must never abandon them. And we must do everything in our power to end all forms of repression. Because if we want to win – and we will win – we can't leave anyone behind. And that is why we are working to obtain an amnesty.

Today, the eagerness and hope of 1 October provides us with many lessons learned. We must rally again. We must go back to working constructively on what unquestionably unites us. What still fills us with pride today.

We must re-unite under a broad consensus that Catalonia must freely, collectively and peacefully decide what the political future of the country should be.

It is an inalienable democratic right that we must succeed in exercising once again, ensuring that everyone feels compelled to vote and by ensuring that we have the support of the international community and that all parties involved accept the outcome.

That is why I want to propose a Clarity Act to determine when and how Catalonia should be able to exercise the right to decide again. We managed to hold the 1-O referendum and we will ensure that Catalonia votes once again.

We will make it happen again, in order to respond to the broad, solid and cross-cutting majority of citizens of Catalonia who want to freely decide the future of the country.

And we will make it happen again because this is the way to resolve the political conflict with Spain. We will make it happen again because there are many of us who want Catalonia to be a free country. Because we know that this is how we will build a fairer and more prosperous country.

That is why we must go back to talking about democracy. We must refocus on the right to vote, on the rights and freedoms that we all have and which we want to exercise fully.

Because when we have done so in the past, we have moved forward as never before.

Citizens of Catalonia. We must go back to defending democracy.

Out of conviction for collective rights and freedoms. And because the more democracy we have, the closer we will be to independence.

Many thanks to everyone who made 1 October possible. Those of you in institutions and civil society, but also those in each and every one of the country's schools.

Thank you to all the citizens who went out to vote on that day. Those who voted yes and those who voted no.

Thank you for defending democracy. For defending the right to decide collectively what the political future of the country should be.

Good afternoon to you all.

Long live Catalonia and long live freedom.