

Institutional statement on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of 1 October

CatSalut Central Services. Barcelona

Hope, pride, unease, determination and, above all, a sense of belonging, a feeling of community. These are just some of the emotions that most of us Catalans went through in the minutes leading up to 9 am on the morning of 1 October 2017. Just at that moment when the Catalan people were about to exercise their right to vote and as ballot boxes, some of which are still being searched for today, arrived from all around.

Citizens from every corner of the country, through sheer will, took part in one way or another in this major collective challenge, this major success for the people.

Our country was to experience one of the most important moments in its history. The founding moment of the Catalan Republic. The seed of victory and of our freedom. An unprecedented democratic act, which took place despite a Spain obsessed with preventing it. A Spain that underestimated the strength of the Catalan people, driven by their democratic conviction, by years of struggle.

The 1st of October represents a turning point in the history of Catalonia and the reaffirmation of the Catalan people's sovereignty and defence of democracy. It is a point of no return. A majority of our country's citizens took to the streets to exercise their right to vote, no matter what.

It is the day on which the people of Catalonia decided that they had the right to decide their future at the polls.

It was the day on which the people of Catalonia placed their future in the hands of democracy, achieving a milestone which would not have been possible without communal strength.

The response was violence. Repression, prosecution, imprisonment and forced exile. Spain's impotence was translated into the beatings of citizens who wanted to vote. But neither violence nor intimidation were able to stop us, a people who had decided to exercise democracy. And today it is up to us to continue, drawing on that strength, that uncontrollable energy, to complete the journey we have begun. And we must do it with all the resources we have, and more. With the strength generated by that energy and complicity with which we opened the polling stations at 9 in the morning.

Catalonia will vote again. A referendum is the inevitable solution. We Catalans know it and Spain knows it. The only option that allows everyone to express themselves freely.

Now it is time to recapture the spirit of the First of October. Knowing that when we work together, when we achieve that communion as seen on those early days in October, this country is unstoppable. The 1st of October was possible thanks

to the consensus between political parties and social movements, the complicity of institutions and citizens. And this must be one of the lessons learned. We can only move forward when we agree on a goal, we can only move forward when we generate major consensus.

And today these goals are very clear: an end to repression and a referendum. Self-determination and amnesty. This is what Catalonia advocates, the inevitable proposal if the political conflict is to be resolved.

On this fourth anniversary, this Government once again recognises the strength of the citizens of Catalonia, who made the success of the referendum of 1 October possible. And this government declares itself, meanwhile, to be the heir to the 1 October referendum and pledges to continue this journey towards independence.

Firstly, by forcing a negotiation with Spain. But not only that, a negotiation in which we give up nothing.

This Government declares itself proud of the referendum of the First of October and vows to work to make the culmination of Catalonia's independence possible.

We want to make Catalonia a Republic at the service of all citizens, to guarantee them a better life. And that's what we're going to do.

Long live free Catalonia!