

Speech by the President Pere Aragonès at his inauguration ceremony

Palau de la Generalitat, 24 May 2021

A fair, prosperous, green, feminist and fully free Catalonia.

A country that values its people and whose main priority, whose ineluctable priority, is the happiness of its citizens. Every single one. Without neglecting anyone. Without excluding anyone. Without leaving anyone behind.

This was the pledge I undertook last Friday in Parliament, the seat of popular sovereignty in Catalonia: I made a pledge to all Catalans to promote the social, green, feminist and democratic transformation that Catalonia needs.

I made a pledge to shake up the country, which needs to move forward again, with all the strength, with all the energy and with all the determination needed for a future of prosperity, well-being, freedom and happiness for all.

I made a pledge to make amnesty and self-determination inevitable.

I made a pledge and today I will start to fulfil this pledge, as I have always tried to do: with humility, empathy and determination. Listening to everyone, working for everyone. And with an unwavering commitment to transformation and the future, as is the duty of the leading public servant.

I am well aware of the momentous time we are living through as a country and the situation is enormously complicated. At all levels: health, social, economic, in terms of democracy... Even at the linguistic level. Even on an emotional level for so many people.

The Honourable President Torra knows this well. I would like to thank him for his dedication to the country during some extremely difficult years, in which he had to undertake the challenge of recovering the Catalan institutions, following the application of article 155, and also tackle a pandemic unprecedented in the history of humanity. He even ended up suffering an unjust disqualification from politics.

The slump has been severe and for too long it has prevented us from moving forward. That is why the country needs to raise its head again, and begin a new era. Urgently and without delay.

We need to clear the path, aware that it is often those who clear the way who get the dirtiest. But it's time to roll up our sleeves without fear of scratches. It's time to knuckle down, to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way and to recover, once again, the broad path that allows everyone to move forward together towards the prosperous, fair, green, feminist and fully free Catalonia we want to be.

Don't be fooled. In all honesty, the challenge we face is enormous. It is immense. We know the difficulties that lie ahead. We are fully aware of the difficulties we have to overcome, starting with a social and economic crisis that is suffocating us, jeopardising the cohesion of the country and accentuating the inequalities that divide our society.

Economic inequalities. Social inequalities. Territorial inequalities. Inequalities in terms of linguistic rights. Inequalities due to our origin, our gender, our beliefs, our age... Because of our administrative situation, because of the colour of our skin. Inequalities because of the way we choose to love. This is what is dividing us as a people. And this is what weakens us as a nation. And this is what we must reinforce to ensure that the entire country, to ensure that the country as a whole, moves towards full freedom.

We need to move forward once again, based on the search for the common good. For shared prosperity, for well-being for all.

Relying on the experience of the generations that have preceded us and, above all, on all the energy and the transformative desire of the young people in our country.

Thinking of everyone. Thinking of all the towns, villages, neighbourhoods and cities around the country. Without leaving anyone behind. Without neglecting any region.

We must move forward once again, promoting greater social rights and strengthening the welfare state. One that serves all citizens. Always. One that binds us together. One that generates economic prosperity for everyone. One that brings about fundamental changes and transformations. One that the whole country, the whole of Catalonia, wishes for. One that is truly transformative. One that is truly revolutionary.

We must move forward once again, with an approach based on social rights, the welfare state and a productive model at the service of people. A path forward that inevitably must lead to a republic: the Catalan Republic. A republic that is not only European but also pro-European. Open to the world and committed to tackling global challenges. And a republic that stands with its people. At the service of its people. At the service of the happiness of all citizens.

This was the commitment that compelled me, when I was a teenager, to get involved, together with many of my peers, in the struggle for social justice and for the national freedom of Catalonia. For me, these two struggles are inseparable, and as of today I will continue to address them from the Presidency of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

I take on this responsibility very much aware of the weight of history, including recent history. Very much aware of the generations that have gone before us. But, above all, I take on this responsibility with the will to drive this country forward into the future.

The first step is to urgently transform the new republican Generalitat in these four ways. And to do so with the hope of regaining that trust between citizens and institutions that makes us so strong and that, in the past, has enabled us to move forward as a country.

Today we start again. Today we are entering a new phase. A new Generalitat, that of this term of office, is taking its first steps today. It must be non-conformist, innovative, transformative, imaginative, creative, republican. One that is forward-thinking and steadfastly committed to making the lives of each and every citizen of Catalonia easier, kinder and happier.

Personally, I will give my all to make this possible, and, based on this pledge, I invite you to join me in building this path towards the prosperous, fair, green, feminist and fully free Catalonia that we want for our sons and daughters.

Thank you all very much. I am at your service.

Long live free Catalonia!