



For true democracy in Catalonia

During 2015, Catalans will be called to the polls on various occasions. In a modern state, elections are the main source of legitimizing our political representatives. Therefore, it is essential that they be developed in a context of respect for a number of guarantees inherent to democratic order. Among them, institutional neutrality, without which citizens could find their rights of participating in political life curtailed and/or distorted.

Today, these democratic conditions do not fully exist in Catalonia. As of late, too many government officials and public employees and various local corporations have confused their political preferences with institutions and have placed them in the service of the independence cause. This behavior, absolutely anomalous in the European context, violates democratic rules and seriously affects equal opportunity as well as the freedom to elect and to be elected.

Officially, one can exercise free, universal, secret and direct suffrage. In Catalonia however, participatory processes are being conditioned and mediated by the actions of certain public institutions. Some of the many examples include: the display of lone star separatists flags on the facades of the municipal buildings and regional agencies (fire stations, public libraries, schools, highways, local roads...); the adoption of resolutions and motions declaring municipalities in favor of separatist postulates, predetermining even the formulas of oath of inauguration of those elected in the upcoming elections; budgetary allocation aimed at promoting secessionist cause items; calls for participation in secessionist demonstrations by means of the Catalan Broadcasting Corporation...



These practices are incompatible with the respect for political pluralism and institutional neutrality and only serve to inflame the conflicts that Catalan society experience. Public corporations should represent ALL citizens ("must be a home for all") and abstain from becoming institutions representing secessionist ("can not be only the house of independence").

Therefore, from Societat Civil Catalana,

1. We denounce the fact that some authorities and public employees are active in favor of the independence cause, employing institutions in order to influence and coerce the population through the display of secessionist party symbols, for example.
2. We believe that these numerous and severe infractions disrupt the democratic health of our society in election times, given that they alter and condition the exercise of active and passive suffrage for many Catalans who are not separatists.
3. We believe it evident that elections can only be described as democratic if they are based on truly free elections, without coercion or institutional pressure. Alteration of democratic rules takes place from moment the landscape is occupied by public authorities with exclusionary messages and symbols.
4. Remember that democracy in the States of the European Union is founded on the recognition of universal, equal, direct, secret and free suffrage. Political bias and lack of institutional neutrality make Catalonia an area of low democratic quality, making it particularly ironic that those who complain bitterly about their limited capacity as Democrats, have no qualms about discriminating through public authorities against a very large segment of the Catalan population.



5. We call for all Catalan public institutions to cease public support in favor of exclusionary separatist ideologies that also appear in the forthcoming electoral campaigns with the intention of illegally subverting constitutional order and delegitimizing democratic institutions in Spain.

6. We call for on all democratic political parties to work together to remove secessionist symbols from buildings and public areas and condemn certain authorities and public employees and institutions for using them to flaunt their ideology.

7. We announce the creation of a Democratic Quality Observatory to verify, analyze and report subsidized breaches by institutions and public media in the upcoming electoral processes.

8. We reaffirm our respect for the existing legal system, fundamentally based on the current social and democratic rule of law and guarantee coexistence and progress for Catalans and for all of Spain.

Barcelona, April 23, 2015