

FORUM

NOTICE ON THE *INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS CATALANS* (IEC)

The *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (IEC) is an academic, scientific and cultural body, whose aim is to promote research, mainly into all aspects of Catalan culture: As the officially recognized academy of the Catalan language, the IEC establishes linguistic standards and rules and ensures consistency of usage throughout those areas where Catalan is spoken. As an institute for Catalan studies, it conducts research into all subjects related to Catalan culture both in the humanities and in science. As the highest academic body in Catalonia, it contributes to the planning, coordination and carrying out of scientific and technological research and the fostering of the development of society in all its aspects, acting when necessary in an advisory capacity to the *Generalitat* (Autonomous Government of Catalonia) and other public institutions.

Contemporary Catalan history is clearly reflected in the history of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*. Founded in 1907 by the *Diputació* (Provincial authorities) of Barcelona at the instigation of its President, the *Institut* sought «the reestablishment and organisation of all structures linked to Catalan culture, [...] a culture which seeks to develop in all directions possible and thus to become complete and well-balanced». From the very beginning, the characteristics which have moulded the spirit of the IEC and to which it has remained faithful ever since were more than apparent: scientific rigour, *catalanitat* (a sense of being Catalan) and openness.

In 1911, the IEC recognized that «the time was ripe to extend the influence of the Institut to Catalan philology, the mathematical disciplines and the sciences of observation». This led to the creation of Philology and Science Sections, which joined the History and Archaeology Section, created at an earlier date. Up to 1939 the IEC engaged in a wealth of academic activity, producing a large number of publications in Romanesque architecture, ancient Catalan literature, murals, and also the Natural Sciences (basic biology, and flora and fauna), Physics, and Mathematics and Meteorology. It was during these years that the Philology Section produced a series of works aimed at standardizing the language. These included the first Orthographic Dictionary, a Catalan Grammar and a General Dictionary of the language. Catalan was now a suitable medium for cultural and scientific research. In 1914 the IEC's library opened its doors to the public under the name of *Biblioteca de Catalunya* (Library of Catalonia). Today, this is the largest library in the Catalan-speaking countries. In 1923, the IEC was admitted to the Brussels-based International Academic Union, and has since participated in international research projects sponsored by the Union. Throughout this period affiliated organi-

zations operating in different fields, including research, services and laboratories, were created.

Between 1939 and 1976, the IEC having been expelled from its premises, it suffered the repression to which Catalan culture in general was subjected, but it survived thanks to a great spirit of resistance and fidelity to its original aims. In 1976 the IEC was officially recognised by Royal Decree 3118, which also defined its range of activities and objectives as an academic institution. The IEC returned to its former headquarters, the *Casa de Convalescència* (Convalescent Home), in late 1982, a year which ushered in a new era of growth and progress.

Today, some of the most eminent scientists in Catalonia society are members of the IEC. It constitutes a unique body, called upon frequently to act as an independent advisor to public institutions and one, therefore, with considerable influence on Catalan society. Divided into sections along broad subject lines and with numerous affiliated societies, the IEC is above all a centre devoted to Catalan language and culture, undertaking long-term programmes such as major critical editions. It also organizes colloquia and specialist courses in conjunction with the Generalitat's Research and Technology Committee (CIRIT), aimed at familiarizing Catalan researchers with the latest findings in a wide range of disciplines. The Prizes and Awards schemes embody the IEC's long tradition of supporting and recognizing research. The IEC has signed cooperation agreements with all Catalan universities and with the Spanish Scientific Research Council, as well as exchange agreements with foreign institutions. As a member of the International Academic Union, it also continues to take part in international projects.

The *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, as a National Academy, comprises at present five sections, each with twenty-one full fellows: History and Archaeology, Biological Sciences, Science and Technology, Philology, and Philosophy and Social Sciences. Efforts to further research in all areas of science, both traditional and newly-established, have led to the setting up of a series of affiliated scientific societies. At present there are twenty-five such societies which gather more than eight thousand researchers. From the names of these societies it can be seen that their activities range over all fields of contemporary knowledge: Catalan Institution for Natural History, Catalan Society for Biology, Catalan Society for Philosophy, Catalan Society for Geography, Catalan Society for Historical Studies, Catalan Society for Liturgical Studies, Catalan Society for Musicology, Friends of Romanesque Art, Catalan Society for Economics, Catalan Society for Numismatics, Catalan Society for Classical Studies, Catalan So-

ciety for Sociology, Catalan Society for Land-surveying, Catalan Institution for Agricultural Studies, Catalan Pedagogical Society, Catalan Society for Juridical Studies, Catalan Society for Communication, Catalan Society for Physics, Catalan Society for Mathematics, Catalan Society for Chemistry, Catalan Society for Technology, Catalan Society for Language and Literature, Catalan Society for History of Science and Technology, Catalan Association for Nutrition Sciences, and Catalan Society for Hebrew Studies.

The *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* is responsible for establishing linguistic standards and implementing them at all levels of society. For this reason, its Philology Section is the most highly structured section of the IEC. One of the projects that it has undertaken is the compiling of the *Diccionari de la Llengua Catalana* (Catalan Language Dictionary), published in October 1995. Furthermore, a computerised textual corpus of the Catalan language, a basic linguistic data base of texts written in Catalan from 1833 until 1988, has recently been completed. This data base will be the primary source for a set of lexicographic publications including a frequency dictionary, a usage dictionary and a computerised dictionary.

The independent character of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* makes the institution particularly appropriate for advisory and co-ordination tasks. Therefore, the *Generalitat* has commissioned the IEC to prepare a set of reports describing the present condition and future of public and private research in all fields of the Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences and Humanities. In addition, the IEC promotes

interdisciplinary initiatives as well as corporate projects. It created the *Laboratori d'Estudis Geofísics Eduard Fontserè* (Eduard Fontserè Laboratory of Geophysical Studies), which carries out microseismicity studies in Catalonia, the *Centre de Recerca Matemàtica* (Mathematical Research Centre), a research institute that invites leading mathematicians to Catalonia and funds postdoctoral research posts in all areas of mathematics, the *Laboratori de Fonètica* (Phonetics Laboratory), and the *Centre de Referència en Enginyeria Lingüística* (Centre for Linguistics Engineering), among others.

Among the main research programmes carried out by the IEC are the Flora and cartography of plants and vegetation, the Strategy for the Study and Development of Flux Microsensors in Telesurgery, the ARCAT (a computerised data base of Romanesque architecture), the *Corpus Vitrearum Medi Aevi* (a study of the stained-glass windows of the mediaeval cathedrals), the *Arxiu de Textos Catalans Antics* (Archive of Catalan Ancient Texts), the *Catalunya Carolíngia* (compilation, study and publication of documents dating from before 1000), the *Forma Orbis Romana* (a cartography of ...), the PATROM, etc., as well as a series of specialised dictionaries (Geology, Environmental, Sciences, Law, etc.).

A detailed description of the structure, functions and research programmes of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* can be found on our web site, available at <http://www.iec.es>.

In short, the Institut d'Estudis Catalans aims to operate as a point of reference for the Catalan language as well as for natural, human and social researchers of our country.