

CATALONIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



Our integration in the European Community is of the greatest importance for the future of our economy and of our society. It also has great historical significance in breaking —fortunately— with the forced isolation of our reality in relation to the exterior. This integration will require a considerable effort, since the outcome depends on our ability to adapt to the structure and the situation of the Community.

For this reason, people have insisted on the importance of preparing ourselves as carefully as possible, bearing in mind, particularly, the internal effort necessary if we are to get good results from our integration and play a useful part in the foreseeable development of the Community and its institutions. Recently, the *Secretaría de Estado para las Comunidades Europeas* has pointed out that Catalan society has prepared itself well for integration in the community and that this preparation has been broader and more effective than that carried out by the central government.

In this respect, I think we should remember that President Pujol asked the *Institut d'Investigacions Econòmiques*, headed by the economist Joan Sarà i Dexeus, to prepare a "White Book" on the effect that adhesion would have on the Catalan economy. This was published in 1982 and has no equivalent in the Spanish state. We should also remember the work-group set up by the secretary of state for relations with the EEC, which allowed us to follow the negotiating process in detail. Finally, the *Patronat Català pro Europa*, with the collaboration of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*, Catalan savings-banks, the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona and the maximum Catalan academic institutions, has contributed to the awareness, information and preparation of large sectors of Catalan society; a job, once again, which has no parallel at state level. The *Patronat* has carried out activities ranging from the translation of the "European Communities" Treaties and the *Jornades Europees de Pasqua* to the "European Telephone" or the exhibition *Catalunya endavant amb Europa*.

The institution, without a doubt, has inspired, this year, the recent creation of the *Patronato Madrileño para Asuntos Europeos*. This shows the pioneer

nature and the success of the Catalan initiatives in the question of Europe, opening the way for other autonomous organizations in the Spanish state.

I think this is a result, not only of the strong, determined European awareness of the President of the *Generalitat*, but of a deeply rooted characteristic of Catalan society that feels and wants to be European. It is a society which, from its historical origins, has followed the path of European history, with which it formed economic links (with the Industrial Revolution) when it could not do so politically.

At present, Catalonia's European outlook remains alive, and I believe it accepts the historic mission which has corresponded to it from the moment of integration. It is a double mission: to act as a bridge between the peninsula and the Common Market and to play an active and decisive part in the creation of European unity, a future reality which, if it is to be complete, will have to make room for political and social entities like Catalonia, which have an obvious identity within the Community, which is given expression by the Council of the Regions of Europe.

Catalonia is and will be Europe; its society feels European, as is shown by the fact that even in the most difficult periods of the previous regime, and in spite of the difficulties this posed, it pronounced itself clearly in favour of a free, democratic Europe, and also of the Union of Europe. This society is aware of the effort it has to make, of the problems with the Madrid government which have to be solved, the need to overcome the limitations presented in certain aspects —from economics to linguistics— by the Community's institutions at the moment. But I am convinced that the Catalans' decisive contribution will help to resolve these questions, precisely because one of our most outstanding signs of identity is the fact that we feel European.

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OF THE "PATRONAT CATALÀ PRO EUROPA"