



Dear Members of the European Parliament:

We have come here before you as speakers of a European language that at several moments in its history has displayed first rate production and quality. It is a language that between the XIIth and XVth Centuries, cultivated prose and poetry of great richness and subtlety in all areas of public and private life: in the Administration, science, history, philosophy, religion and literature, with figures of international projection such as Raymund Lully (Ramon Llull), Ausiàs March, Jaume I or Saint Vicent Ferrer. This diverse and rich cultural tradition is still edited, translated and commented on today by experts from all over Europe.

After the medieval period this language suffered a retreat in the public and written sphere which lasted several centuries. But as of the mid-19th Century, until the present day, it has almost fully recovered. It once again offers the international community creative works of a very high standard and has translated the most important literary works of other languages. This recovery may be almost exclusively put down to the will of different Catalan-speaking communities to conserve their language and culture and to the popular effort exerted to achieve this. Today the speakers of this language have even managed to obtain a particular language internet domain: “.cat”. Only on very rare occasions have the Catalans had a political structure capable of serving this strong will to save our culture; on the contrary, the administration has generally gone against us, even strongly against us in particular periods.

The political workings of the space taken up in the past by what is today the European Union, and the very European Union itself today, have led to a situation in which this language, and the culture that it is associated with, lack the basic support that is needed to survive in the conditions dictated by today’s world, in which globalization, mobility, migrations, large economic trusts and all-powerful media predominate, and in which demographically or politically strong languages push weaker ones off the board, especially those that lack suitable political backing.

Our language is spoken in four European states (France, Spain, Italy and Andorra) and has an effective quota of speakers around the eight million mark, which is greater than that of several fully acknowledged EU working languages for the simple reason that they enjoy the backing of a state, a factor that gives these languages an even more disproportionately large stability and expansive power than other languages.

The European Union has given signs of wanting to preserve the cultural and distinguishing values of the different people that make it up. But until now the Catalan-speaking communities have not been able to benefit from this will because of the strictly political circumstances I referred

to above. We therefore demand the same acknowledgement and support that other languages are receiving; that is, the political and legal acknowledgement and the moral and economic backing that are vital to enable us to overcome the disadvantages we have suffered for centuries and to be able to develop our culture unhampered in the complex present-day world.

Many thanks for your attention and the good will you are without doubt going to apply to our case.

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