Let us vote!

Artur Mas

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He people of Catalonia - one of Europe’s oldest nations - want and deserve the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to become a new state within Europe. The majority of Catalonia’s citizens have made clear, in elections and public demonstrations, that they want to vote on their own future. A million and a half men, women and children took to the streets last September, joining hands to symbolise their solidarity and freedom, as the Baltic states did in 1989. No true democrat can ignore or deny the power of that popular will.

As mandated by our voters, the Catalan Government and most opposition parties have together decided to hold a popular vote on self-determination on 9 November 2014. Catalonia will be asked a two-part question: “Do you want Catalonia to be a state? If so, do you want Catalonia to be an independent state?” Nobody has anything to fear from these simple questions, except perhaps those who want to pretend that the wishes of the people should be ignored. The relationship between Catalonia and Spain is not what it might be. Our political rights within Spain, enshrined in our Statute of Autonomy agreed with the Spanish Parliament and later endorsed by a referendum in 2006, were unilaterally revoked by a contested Spanish court ruling in July 2010.

My government, with the support of 65% of the Catalan people, has committed to maintain and implement our Statute of Autonomy, which guarantees the democratic right of the people of Catalonia to pursue their own state should be implemented. Uncertainty is disruptive, and does not serve anyone’s interests. We are confident that the democratic aspirations of Catalonia cannot be wished away. With calm, with good sense, and with a pragmatic political outlook, the referendum and any subsequent transition is an opportunity for Europe to once again demonstrate to the rest of the world its great qualities and capacities for addressing challenges peacefully, democratically, and in the spirit of freedom that lies at the heart of our continental union.

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