

22.09.2015. Catalunya #27S2015

À pòpulu fattu, bisogna à marchjà !

A people exists by moving forwards! The Catalan people most certainly exist, and its “onward march”, while it has never ceased over the centuries, has seen an extraordinary acceleration in the last few years. In less than two weeks’ time, it has an appointment with destiny. And with it, all the peoples of Europe who aspire to be free!

On Sunday 27 September 2015, the Catalans are once again going to the polls. Not, like just a year ago, to hold an “extraordinary referendum” for all its tremendously encouraging results, but for official elections for the Generalitat, the parliament of Catalonia. These elections are seemingly ordinary, which means they can bypass the Spanish constitutional veto, but the political framework invoked by the nationalist movement has turned them into a plebiscitary election, a substitute for a referendum whose result will represent a crucial democratic statement.☒

What is at stake? The nationalist movement could obtain an absolute majority in the future Catalan parliament. In the name of the Catalan people, it would then pass a “declaration of independence” which would unleash an irreversible movement for the recognition of its historic rights.☒

To meet this challenge, the Catalan national movement is bringing together great resources.☒First of all, its ability to mount a great demonstration: the *Diada Catalana*, the Catalan national day on 11 September 2015, had nothing to fear from comparison with previous editions, however literally “colossal” they may have been. This time the Avinguda Meridiana, 5.2 km long and as broad as the Champs Elysées, was the setting for an event of a scale unequalled in Europe for a gathering free of any emotional circumstances like the demonstrations in Paris that followed the Charlie Hebdo attacks.☒

During the afternoon, the crowd - 1.5 million demonstrators! - massed along the entire length of the route. Most of them had pre-registered over the Internet and been allocated to a colour-coded section which they could reach from an adjoining street, it being almost impossible for them to make their way along the main avenue. The EFA delegation was with the “officials”, including the Catalan nationalist leaders, at the foot of the finish podium, fitted with giant screens in front of the main Catalan parliament building, which - if the voters so decide - will host a majority for independence on 27 September.☒

A path was cleared through the crowd for the 5,200 metre length of the Avenue, renamed the “Via Lliure”, the Avenue of Freedom, for the day. Everybody was awaiting the symbolic time, 17:14, for 1714, the date of the Catalan defeat by an absolute monarchy in the person of the House of Bourbon, who remain Spain’s royal family to this day. At that instant, from the top of the avenue, a group stepped forward, made up of some thirty well-known Catalan sporting figures, carrying a giant arrow. Their parade took a route through the heart of the crowd; the arrow was acclaimed with fervour throughout the three-quarters of an hour its journey took. This arrow, pointing towards the Catalan parliament, symbolises what is at stake in the elections on 27 September, the result towards which every effort must be made to enforce the right of the Catalan people to decide their own future.☒

At the foot of the podium, surrounded by flags floating in the wind, we followed the progress of the parade on the giant screen. The huge crowd made a tremendous impression: so joyous and so well-

disciplined, dressed in the Catalan national colours, welcoming the passage of the arrow, and closing up behind it. The pictures taken from rooftop vantage points and from helicopters were stunning. It was an overwhelming success. The campaign has been launched for the vote on 27 September!

To make 27 September a political success, the nationalist movements have started by signing a pact committing themselves to a vote on a declaration of independence as soon as the new Generalitat is elected. One of these parties, the CUP on the extreme left, is standing separately. The two other, bigger players - the centre-right *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* and the left wing *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* - have decided to stand on a shared list, *Junts pel Sí*, united for yes. This union, brought about by public pressure, is led by figures of great symbolic importance: Raul Romeva, former environmentalist deputy with strong convictions in favour of independence, heads the list, followed by Carme Forcadell and Muriel Casals, two women who for several years have been leading the associations ANC and Omnium which were responsible for organising the 2014 referendum and the gigantic *Diadas* which have made a massive contribution to the mobilisation and to the leap forward in separatist beliefs in Catalonia since 2006. The two party leaders, Artur Mas and Oriol Junqueras, occupy the fourth and fifth places. So the national union is represented symbolically by this list, which is likely to top the poll by a wide margin. Their target: an absolute majority of seats, and if possible, with the support of the CUP, an absolute majority of votes. We wish them all the best, for their sake and for our own!