

ABSTRACT

The 18th National Congress of the Esquerra Republicana of Catalonia was held in June 1992. It approved the restructuring of its Articles of Association in response to growing electoral support, increased militancy and greater territorial presence in the Principality, the Balearic and Pitiusic Islands, the Valencian Community and Northern Catalonia. In the first article of its Articles of Association, Esquerra proposed the territorial unity and independence of the Catalan nation, through the construction of a Catalan State within a European framework and within a left-wing ideological position which will take as its reference points democracy and the defence of the environment along with human rights and the rights of peoples. The party also chose to base its ideology and political action on social progress and national solidarity. This position was cemented by the 19th National Congress, in December 1993, with the passing of the party's Ideological Declaration.

INTRODUCTION

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, a political organisation that is socially on the left and nationally Catalan, hereby updates, today, in 1993, its political proposals, in line with its Basic Principles (defined in 1931) and the Declaration of 1979, taken over in its entirety. We are conscious, however, of the necessity to adapt them to the passage of time and the historical circumstances of the Catalan Nation, of Europe and the world.

For more than sixty years Esquerra has represented the nationalist left in Catalonia, because it has always been a sovereign organisation independent of any coercion from outside our nation and because it has never had a political doctrine that is separate from the different social, cultural and economic realities of the Catalan Nation.

Esquerra was born from the union of different political traditions: the movement for independence represented by Francesc Macià's Estat Català party; Lluís Companys' Catalan Republican Party; the federal republicanism of many Catalan counties; the collectivist group Opinió and libertarian groups within the workers' movement. Esquerra can lay claim to having been, since its foundation, a leading light on the European Left at a time when a good part of that Left allowed itself to be drawn into totalitarian models and dogmatic doctrines which practice demonstrated unviable as authentic left-wing projects. At the same time, the failure of these models is throwing into sharp relief the important deficiencies and economic and social injustices of the system defended by economic liberalism.

Esquerra has always served the interests of the people, as it demonstrated at the head of the Catalan Government, the Generalitat de Catalunya, from 1931 to 1939, together with the Socialist Union of Catalonia and other parties. With the exception of the period in which autonomous institutions were suspended, the party has encouraged development, modernisation, social welfare and progress in its efforts in government, which have been socially advanced for the times.

Esquerra, the hegemonic organisation of the nationalist left in the Principality since its foundation in 1931, witnessed how, at the end of the war of 1936-1939, a quarter of its 70,000 militants had been killed or imprisoned and half had been forced into exile. This human disaster was accompanied by the annihilation of the party's vitality, initially dispersed into exile and later acting clandestinely within the country. All of this produced a break in the historical continuity of the nationalist left in the Principality which, from largely revolving around Esquerra in the 1930s, had to organise itself in other ways during the time of resistance to the Franco regime from the 1940s up to the first half of the 1970s (National Front for Catalonia, the Socialist Party for Catalan Regrouping, the Socialist Party for National Liberation, etc.) and during the period

referred to as the transition to democracy in the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s (Left-wing Nationalists, Call for Solidarity, the Movement for Defence of the Land, Free Catalonia, etc.).

Esquerra remedied this situation in 1977 by re-launching itself at the 16th National Congress, taking on the whole of Spain as a scene for its direct action, and independence as a political objective; reaffirming, in this way, the direction that would have been its logical evolution had this not been cut short by the military defeat of 1939, as well as incorporating contemporary socialist currents, such as ecology.

Over recent decades, the social arena of the national party has been broadened. However, many people have given their vote and their support to other political forces which have been in the majority since the transition. Esquerra must regain this lost territory by demonstrating that the post-Franco regime, (the monarchic state, along with its autonomies) which is defended by these parties, is actually opposed to people's aspirations.

In France, the durability of the Jacobin structure has led to Esquerra becoming, in Northern Catalonia, the regrouping element for a whole growing social grouping opposed to this situation and demanding connections at all levels with the south of the nation.

ESQUERRA

Some significant events have marked the evolution of left-wing thought in recent decades: the definitive collapse of the Soviet model, the crisis affecting the welfare state and the rise of economically liberal policies as an attempt to resolve the aforementioned crisis.

The Welfare State, a historic victory of the left-wing, is now in crisis in Western democracies due to the transformation of the diverse causes that made it possible. This situation has created a wealth of new problems: the appearance of growing pockets of marginalisation, structural unemployment, public deficit, crises in public services, the growing strength of speculation in the economy, the dismantling of traditional industrial infrastructures, etc.

It was precisely the scale of this crisis that gave an important boost to policies defending, once again, a liberal economic model, in an attempt to overcome the difficulties which almost all developing countries have experienced since the middle of the 1970s. The recipe basically consisted of dismantling the welfare state and taking any brakes off the capitalist economy. Capitalism in its purest state, using the excuse that economic growth is of benefit to all, actually only benefits a powerful minority while attacking the basic social rights of the majority of citizens under cover of the theoretical formal equality it lays claim to. The result is that the poorest sectors of society continue to carry the burden of injustice and exploitation.

The free market, understood as the expression (without interference) of the economic interests of each member of a society and which, consequently, should tend to permanently and continuously self regulate, has never been a tangible reality. The defence of this free market is frequently a cover for the economic actions of monopolies and oligarchies without any public interest at heart. Economic liberalism keeps such interests free of necessary international and state-wide democratic regulations and has nothing to do with true competition.

The economic theories applied by the political right simply lead to wealth being concentrated in the hands of more oligarchies and less social spending, with the majority of the population seeing the fruits of their work effectively reduced and an increasingly larger section of society becoming marginalised.

1. SOCIAL JUSTICE. THE POPULAR CLASSES AND A PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY

Freedom without an equality of opportunity in the production, acquisition and enjoyment of material and cultural goods and services is not genuine. We need policies which rise above the

current system that is only generating inequality and sharpening social differences. In any left-wing option, transforming the unjust structures of society and getting rid of marginalisation and economic and social imbalances is a political priority.

There is a productive economy and a speculative one. The social sectors that live from speculation, political back-scratching, or from a system that protects monopolies and creates oligarchies and circumvents the laws of the market are the greatest adversaries of a productive economy and the popular classes. That is why it is necessary to opt for a productive economy, respecting the individual and collective fruits of work, without this releasing anyone from contributing to public coffers through fair taxation. This taxation then makes possible the maintenance and improvement of the welfare state. We must fight against the parasitical economy and penalise wealth accumulated by speculative activities. Financial services and the money markets should be at the service of the productive economy and it is the function of the state to control them.

The growing globalisation of the productive system has increasingly given a greater role to multinationals. Their liberty of movement on an international scale, justified by sanctifying the free market, can cause sudden impoverishment or enrichment of entire areas, as can be demonstrated in the phenomena of industrial relocation and monetary tensions. The globalisation of the economy requires conduct that is aimed at avoiding a loss of control of our own economic fabric. The democratic powers must maintain under their control, then, the growing globalisation process. They should regulate the movement of capital and should insist on reciprocal benefits (transfers of technologies, sub-contracting industries, environmental measures, etc.) which get the best out of the introduction of multinationals. When it comes to international commerce, it is important to defend the establishment of social and ecological solidarity taxes on imported products from countries which do not comply with minimum employment and environmental conditions. These taxes should be used to encourage the development of a decent social framework in those countries by offering industrial and technological aid to those which agree to carry out such measures.

The popular classes (workers; liberal professionals; those owning small and midscale businesses; shopkeepers; agricultural, fisheries and home workers; freelancers; students, etc.) are the foundation of a productive economy, essential in the development of any country. The left has to represent the interests of these sectors. That is why it has to defend co-operative movements in the countryside, in the cities and in small and midscale businesses because of their potentially high profitability and their capacity to innovate, adapt and create jobs. It has to defend all salary earners; the right to work; the right to a fair salary that ensures a decent standard of living, as well as ensure compatibility between studies and work. It also has to push for an unemployment benefit that allows for contributions to the community or encourages professional retraining for people on the dole. Finally, it needs to fight for an end to social marginalisation, the social fruit of the introduction of the “two-thirds” society, in which an important, and increasingly greater, portion of the population do not partake in the country’s economic prosperity. When there is the danger of grave imbalances, the state must plan the general economic activity.

Development is linked to the creation of wealth. Wealth must be the fruit of work and not speculation. The distribution of wealth should be understood in the sense of an equality of opportunities when accessing jobs, culture and information. Everyone must have the same opportunities to create personal and collective wealth. We must ensure that our common social heritage is not availed of without taking into account the general interests of society. The left

must seek consensus on progress in society. It must ensure that technological and social progresses coincide; putting technology and the state at the service of the citizenry.

In any nation, the maintenance of the primary sector has a strategic importance so as not to have to fall back on external food and agriculture dependence. Agriculture holds a special place as a factor in redressing territorial imbalances, avoiding desertification and conserving the environment. That is why it is important to support family owned farms and agrarian cooperatives; as well as preventing the concentration of agricultural properties in non-agrarian hands and facilitating tenant farmers in the ownership of the property of the lands they work.

2. THE NEW INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

At the end of the 20th century, we are experiencing a new industrial and technological revolution in which the creation of wealth increasingly depends on the interchange of data, information and knowledge. The traditional elements of production (land, work, raw materials and capital) are conditioned by the management of knowledge. This change is related to the revolution in computing, telecommunications and robotics. In contrast to previous times, new technology should permit manufacturing in a flexible and less labour-intensive way.

The possibilities offered by new technologies must be applied to improving that basic economic framework of any nation: its small and midscale businesses. They should permit the creation of new economic enterprises among the widest possible sector of society.

It is necessary to control and direct technological innovations so as to humanise work, promote health, reduce the number of accidents, ensure a balance with nature and facilitate the exercising of fundamental rights.

We need to rethink the concept and role of work within the process of change that the systems of production are going through; a change in which R&D, information technology, robotics and telecommunications are substituting traditional primary investment and outlay for companies and even modifying their very nature and size. We must seek full employment by creating jobs of an intellectual character in response to the new needs for services that society, in its growing complexity and plurality, continues to produce. We must also continue reducing the working week in order to share jobs among more people, which will consequently increase available leisure time. The state must ensure that employment restructuring does not work to the detriment of the socio-economic conditions of working people.

Leisure and free time are in a period of expansion thanks to changes in production, but this should lead to an increase in the quality-of-life for the general public and public administrations should promote access to culture, cultural production and the participation of the social fabric in activities at the service of the collective interest.

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth and social progress must define their objectives within those of sustainable development; since this is the only way we can ensure that we do not compromise the legitimate needs and aspirations of future generations.

Since the Industrial Revolution, the growth model followed by many countries has been based on an accelerated increase in productivity and consumption, without taking into account the time needed for the resources utilised to be replenished, nor the effects of environmental damage on the planet (quite apart from the social and cultural effects on human beings). The abusive extractions of resources (which are not renewable within a human timescale) and environmental pollution that we have seen over recent years have compromised the viability of the planet and, consequently, that of the majority of animal and vegetable species, including our own.

We need then, to incorporate environmental education into our everyday lives in an

interdisciplinary manner. We need to promote a scale of values that is different than the current dominant one. We need to scrupulously respect the rights of animals, minimise the anthropogenic vision we have of the planet and draw up a more adaptable concept of development than that accepted to date in which quality-of-life is linked to consumption; since the greater part of the resources we use are finite. We must promulgate a society that promotes a reduction in current consumption in the wealthiest societies and ensures that future consumption is related to what is ecologically possible and acceptable for all the communities on the planet. We need to achieve a more efficient, rational and renewable use of resources, above all energy, substituting those activities and productive processes in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors that pollute the environment, for those which do not. We need to generate less waste, maintain existing biodiversity and take into account the true level of resources in the environment.

To ensure this is possible, all nations must take measures both in their own territory and in co-operation with the other nations of the world. To achieve this, administrations must have the appropriate instruments (compulsory studies of environmental impact, etc.) to ensure the protection and improvement of our natural environment. We must avoid the squandering of resources, promote the balanced use of the potential of land and advance towards re-establishing a territorial balance better adjusted to the true level of resources available. We need to encourage mutual agreements between nations to not damage the environment, because the use of the majority of renewable and non-renewable resources forms part of a complex ecological, technological, demographical, economic and administrative network in which a large number of countries interact.

Sustainable development implies the exercising of solidarity between generations and among people of the same generation. Without a fairer redistribution of the goods obtained, which implies an improvement in the standard of living in the most underdeveloped countries on the planet, it will not be possible to achieve sustainable development, since a world with grave social imbalances and heightened mistrust only leads to the selfish exploitation of the means that each country has available.

4. THE DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION OF WORK

The new productive system needs participation from all the sectors involved, it needs co-management. Workers and their union representatives, more than ever, need to take joint responsibility in the running of businesses and the production of profits. They need to participate in the taking of decisions and become aware of all the factors involved in the productive system. This will contribute to an improvement in industrial relations and the success of companies. Joint responsibility should also involve the management of companies, who will have to act responsibly towards their workers and shareholders. Those investing must ensure the durability of companies and make sure they serve their social function.

The new productive system, in freeing up hours of work, runs the risk of increasing the number of people unemployed. Therefore we need a more just sharing out of paid work through reducing the working week without affecting income. We need a redefinition of work. We need to re-evaluate work of a social character and reassess all of the jobs that still have low social prestige. We need to recapture the creative element of work and the dignity of all jobs that permit self-fulfilment.

We need to ensure that state aid and subsidies are not fruitless charity, but rather represent a reward for recycling efforts and for socially necessary work. In the same line, we need to encourage training and socially productive work in order to put the passive concept of

unemployment behind us.

Unions, and other workers' organisations, are the basic instruments for defending workers' interests and representing them before the state. The national basis of this unionism is a necessary condition for defending an autonomous employment framework without external dependencies.

5. THE WELFARE STATE

There is a huge difference between the Western societies associated with 19th century liberal capitalism and those which came afterwards as the fruit of the welfare state and were based on a mixed economy. With the welfare state, the West has evolved towards levels of social justice previously unknown. The countries in the centre and north of Europe have seen important advances in the educational and health fields, in social planning and in the welfare of workers. These have reached levels still not achieved by the rest of the West, much less by the rest of the world.

Now, the majority of welfare states are undergoing a crisis due to several causes. There has been a tendency towards bureaucratising services rather than democratising them. In certain cases, public companies have not been managed with the necessary criteria for efficiency and competitiveness. In southern Europe, public services have been conserved, but often through an obsolete and inefficient civil service. Increasing demands for services are being made on states which have deficit problems and the trend towards an ageing population is rising.

However, in southern Europe, in addition to these general problems, we must add the fact that the dominant social grouping is linked to a speculative economy and not a productive one and at the same time it controls the principle wellsprings of political power. The centralised and Jacobin structure of these multi-nation states make their civil services excessively disproportionate, with multiple administrative levels. The diverse national societies included within these states often have political, economic and social traditions and values that are different from, or in conflict with, the centralised vision. That is why in the sum total of these states there is no synergy or guarantee of solidarity (basic conditions for the functioning of an authentic welfare state). The citizens of these states in southern Europe feel that they are experiencing all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of pertaining to states which cannot provide anywhere near the services offered by Central and Northern European states. Despite the current crisis, it is important to maintain the principles behind the welfare state. A nation can only defend and improve its hard-fought social advances if it has its own state.

The welfare state, a social model and objective for the left in Western democracies, should never be a mere manager of capitalism, smoothing out its more savage consequences, almost a charity and in no way getting at the root of problems. But rather, as a system, it should tend towards a true redistribution of wealth, which is a basic presupposition of a just society.

A social system that ensures the well-being of everyone should especially be concerned with the ordinary citizens and those condemned to the periphery of economic progress. The minimalist state defended by economic liberalism, which simply administers and does not offer services, is a direct affront to the rights and social liberties that should be guaranteed to citizens by public authorities in a democracy.

The public sector should be a compensating element addressing the imbalances of social inequalities. It should take on essential public services (education, health, protection and assistance for neglected social groups, public works, transport, culture, communications infrastructure, etc.) and also manage the basic sectors of the national economy (water and energy resources, along with others of national interest, directing and controlling the financial

system, etc.) which cannot be left in the hands of private initiatives, which, by definition, will not attend to general needs if they clash with the interests of private profit.

The state has to provide itself with the necessary structures for guaranteeing well-being. The state must be structured on the principle of subsidiarity. We need a state that promotes solutions involving active solidarity, which should emerge from public institutions, social representatives and civil society itself, understood as the citizenry.

The welfare state is a social goal and a tool for achieving socio-economic justice. In order to finance it, contributions from society and business are necessary. The size of this state has to be just big enough to meet its requirements without its financing stifling family and business budgets. If its size and cost are not sustainable, this could lead to calls for its dissolution.

Savage privatisation into the hands of monopolies or oligarchies will never solve the crisis of the welfare state. Improving the public sector should therefore involve offering concessions for the management of certain public services to companies subject to consumer demand. This could involve supporting companies whose structure is built on a social economy (cooperatives, worker-run businesses, etc.) which could guarantee that there would be no social retrogression. We also need to transform the management controlled, patronage based and bureaucratic concept of public works in the south of Europe into one based on social and economic efficiency.

The welfare state should be an active agent boosting the productive economy, protecting the popular classes and aiding the social and territorial distribution of wealth. Civic and democratic training and the establishment of channels allowing participation in public services must encourage citizens to take responsibility for their duties towards society while remaining conscious of their rights.

A REPUBLIC

6. ENTITLEMENT

The defence of individual entitlement and the condemnation of everything which undermines individual rights is one of the key elements of all left wing policies.

Defending entitlement should not be understood as defending the rights of the individual over the rest of society; it should be perfectly compatible with an awareness of social justice and solidarity between people and collectives. In fact, it is the first consequence of it and the best way of expressing it.

Esquerra affirms and adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 and its later amendments, along with all rights recognised by its specialised agencies. Esquerra also assumes the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, approved by the Council of Europe in 1950, along with all rights derived from it.

It is essential to guarantee the right to civil disobedience by a citizen when a law (or the way in which it is being applied) can be demonstrated to be manifestly unjust, vexatious, discriminatory or undermining the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its later amendments and the rest of the organisations previously mentioned.

Despite the theoretical recognition of individual rights, large sectors of society have seen their rights trampled on for reasons of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic illness, language, culture, ethnic origin, opinion, religion, nationality or any other motive.

We need to temporarily apply positive discrimination to ensure greater access for members of collectives which, although guaranteed formal equality before the law, do not enjoy it in practice. Men and women must have the same rights. Even though complete equality of opportunity

between the sexes in society today has not yet been achieved, men and women should receive the same treatment in the social, employment, cultural and economic fields. Education should not be sexist and access to any type of training should be the same for both sexes. Maternity should never be a discriminatory factor in employment.

Everyone has the right to the free use of their own body. Women have the right to unrestricted abortion at no cost. In order to avoid unwanted pregnancies, everyone should have the right to information and must receive, free of charge, any psychological help or health care which might be appropriate.

Everyone has the right to experience and unreservedly express their sexuality and choose the orientation that they freely desire. No one should be obliged to declare, against their will, their sexual orientation. Society has no right to discriminate against a person, due to their chosen orientation, in the workplace, in relations with public administrations or in any other aspect of life. The state should effectively protect these rights, putting homosexual couples on the same level as heterosexual couples.

This equality for marriages should also be extended to civil partnerships, whether formed by people of the same sex or of different sexes, above all in the area of civil law.

Everyone has the right to die with dignity; consequently, whether in the case of insufferable pain or an irreversible terminal illness, everyone should have the right to access mechanisms within medical institutions which can end their lives quickly and painlessly: the right to euthanasia.

Disabled people have a right to be different and to not be discriminated against for being so.

They have the right to work, to fair pay and to having education tailored to their specific needs.

Society and public administrations must guarantee their complete incorporation into public life suppressing any cultural, sensorial or architectonic barriers that exist in society today.

Childhood must have a special protection to enable children to develop physically and culturally in a normal, healthy and free way with total dignity. Both children and their legal guardians should enjoy special protection and attention as well as adequate food, accommodation and medical attention. Children have a right to always be the first to receive aid and the right to protection from cruelty or from exploitation in the workplace.

The status of young people in society should be recognised. Society should facilitate their right to self dependence, access to accommodation, a quality education without charge, as well as the right to join the world of work once their education is finished. The penal code should be brought into line with the civil code with regard to age. They should have the right to freely choose their own sexuality and to develop fully as people.

Everyone has a right to free preschool, primary, secondary and higher education. Primary and secondary education should be obligatory.

There should be an explicit recognition and protection of the fundamental rights of all of those people who, while born in one nation, live and work in another.

The civic values represented by human rights should be respected by everyone; consequently, education should be directed towards training people to respect those rights, which is the best guarantee for the survival of democracy.

7. DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTIES

The recognition of individual liberties does not guarantee that power remains democratic.

Democratic power should be founded on an authentic separation between three branches of power: the legislative, executive and judicial.

Democracy is not only government by the majority, respecting the minority, but rather a permanent commitment to deepening citizen participation in the management of public services,

in the taking of collective decisions and in promoting dialogue as a framework for coordinating the variety of different interests present in society.

In a democracy, judicial power should be completely independent and its mission should be to administer justice and safeguard respect for the rights and liberties of citizens. It should also ensure that public authorities, and all citizens, respect the principle of legality.

A democratic state must guarantee the right of its citizens to security. Competence for the security of citizens should be exclusively the role of public authorities. The basic purpose of a democratic police force is to ensure peaceful coexistence and respect for the rights and liberties of the citizenry, rejecting any arbitrariness and answering fully to democratic authorities and the law.

The system of parliamentary democracy, per se, should not represent the only model for citizen participation in the management of public issues. A more active and participatory brand of democracy is needed. Plebiscites are an important instrument when making decisions that reflect popular preferences. Plebiscites should be easy to hold in response to popular demand. We should also facilitate popular legislative initiatives. In local authorities, the presence of representatives of low profile collectives as well as assemblies and citizen participation in deliberative meetings, all reinforce the democratic model.

The transformation of democracy from merely representative to participative would improve the functioning of the public sector and the social consensus behind its management. It would also increase transparency in the relationship between the authorities and economic interests and also afford a check on corruption and the power of lobbies.

We must maintain permanent vigilance against any mechanisms of social coercion. In order to do this, rigorous democratic controls must be established over information (above all institutional propaganda) and the use of the media in generating what most people perceive as our shared reality.

True freedom of information does not involve simply guaranteeing the freedom of action of companies and professionals in the mass communications market; it must also guarantee the plurality and veracity of information. Any idea attacking basic human rights should not receive publicity. Citizens have the right to a plurality of information through reports that are balanced, transparent and true. To achieve this, the public communications media (a necessity in any democratic society) should guarantee these basic principles. In order to guarantee these objectives and the basic nature of the media, managements should never be nominated or controlled by governments, but rather should be subject to professional criteria and the public good under the protection and control of the legislative authorities and, consequently, not subject to censorship by any economic interest group or political party. We also need legislation that prevents a monopoly or oligopoly of information in the private sector.

An increase in consensus and co-responsibility among the citizenry within public life is inseparably linked to an increase in direct participation in political decisions. Allied to this is the importance of bringing down the age of majority for voting.

8. THE PUBLIC STATE AND ADMINISTRATION

States provide the natural legitimate frameworks for the expression of national sovereignty and the generation, application and protection of rights. A republican form of government offers the best guarantee for the exercise of democracy and the legitimisation of power.

The state must be the guarantor and defender of individual rights and liberties and of social rights, principally those related to security, socio-economic equality and welfare.

The legislative branch of a democracy must guarantee and impel: the principle of legality based

on the rule of law, the separation of the three branches of power (legislative, executive and judicial), jurisdictional controls, the defence of citizens before the authorities, the plurality of the media and the protection of minorities.

Distribution of power should respond to the principle of bottom up subsidiarity. Whatever can be managed and decided on by a lower level of the administration should not be undertaken by a higher level.

The various administrative units (municipal, county, regions, etc.) should be structured in accordance with a desire to serve the citizenry, based on simplicity and redressing the territorial imbalances of the nation, implying that its name, structure and competences must allow for variations over time.

The state must guarantee the proportional representation of citizens in a legislative chamber and the just representation of all its territories organised in another chamber.

In the counties, the people managing these must be directly elected. They should have wide ranging competence over defining the territory under their control, economic development, social integration and the protection of the environment without prejudice and, should the need arise, of any possible urban planning. They should also have other competences, when required, that are appropriate to the specific characteristics of the county.

Municipalities with dense populations must be organised into districts having mayors with wide ranging competences. This must imply a policy of inter-district cooperation between neighbouring local institutions and/or the metropolitan area.

Municipalities represent the closest democratic authority to citizens and the area in which they can more easily exercise their rights and fulfil their duties. It is the area in which (through mechanisms for direct participation) it is possible to achieve the necessary social consensus that guarantees that the actions of governments are carried out in favour of the majority, respecting minorities, while demonstrating popular support for such actions.

Local institutions should enjoy financial autonomy and participate in fomenting fiscal co-responsibility.

The objectives of any act by the public administration should be established by political authorities involving the participation of social representatives through the criterion of social consensus, a keystone in the successful operation of democracy in a country. From this, an authentic solidarity would emerge, which is a synonym of the cooperation of the whole of society.

In applying the principle of subsidiarity, we need to minimise the bureaucratic nature of state structures and eliminate any overlapping of administrative levels.

People serving in public administrations should be specialised and their number should be no more than is strictly necessary to achieve their tasks. They must be independent of political pressure and open to mobility between various services, as well as remaining accessible to the citizenry. The management of the public sector should be based on efficiency, but an efficiency which respects the objectives that have been democratically prioritised by the citizenry. There should be strict control and transparency over incompatibilities. In addition, the principle of democratic equality demands equity of rights and obligations among public administration staff and other salaried personnel, and should not permit any type of privilege.

The growing complexity of the administration, and its levels, can lead to a situation in which decisions taken circumvent even the politicians nominally in charge as well as the comprehension of citizens. To avoid this, it is more important than ever that public administrations should be flexible and their operations transparent and democratic.

9. POLITICAL PARTIES AND CITIZENS' ORGANISATIONS

The will of the people is the basis for the authority of public power and is expressed through regular free elections. Political parties and unions are instruments for defending diverse political opinions and the interests of a democratic society. Parties put themselves up for elections, which should offer citizens the maximum capacity for making decisions. In order to achieve this, we need a proportional electoral system that guarantees proportional representation and a direct vote. As major players in public life, political parties should be structured, from their core, around the principle of internal democracy, transparency and honesty in their operation and financing. These principles should also be applicable to all social representatives, i.e. all non-political organisations defending the interests of different sectors of society in the socio-economic functioning of a country.

Limits must be placed on the exercise of elected public office, on designations of administrative posts and in the parties. There must be controls covering the incompatibility of exercising political representation with tasks from which individuals can derive benefit. There must also be controls governing transparency and funding within parties and a real equality of opportunities in the various political options on offer during electoral campaigns. We must eliminate from the latter their most costly elements and ensure that during such campaigns there is just treatment of all options in the media. Elected representatives must have their right to liberty and freedom of expression recognised fully and absolutely (the right to inviolability). However, in no case should they enjoy privileges in the area of justice, such as parliamentary immunity. These measures should permit an equality of opportunity for all citizens from all political forces and represent an advance in the elimination of corruption.

In addition to political parties and unions, citizens' organisations (and other non-governmental bodies) act as the backbone of a civil society and represent different concerns. In confrontation with the excessive individualism that has led to the abandonment of personal responsibility in the public behaviour of individuals, citizens' organisations (and other non-governmental bodies) are a source of renovation and future potential for a democratic system, as well as a motor for encouraging interpersonal solidarity and strengthening civil society.

Any official sponsorship of these citizens' organisations (and non-governmental bodies) should not imply compromising their independence of action. These organisations should aim to be self financing. In any case, it is essential that the state is not allowed to abdicate its responsibilities by leaving tasks it should perform to these organisations.

10. CITIZENRY

The right of citizenship, in all of democratic Europe, is based on *ius sanguinis*: the attribution of nationality in accordance with that of an individual's parents, and on *ius soli*: which attributes nationality based on the territory in which an individual is born. Citizenry can also be acquired through voluntary action, *ius volle*, or rejected using the principle of *ius malle* when another is opted for.

It is necessary to affirm the basic rights of everyone to live and work in their own country and, thus, not to have to emigrate. The economically developed countries must apply an international policy that ensures respect for the right to live and work in one's own country to populations in economically underdeveloped areas, while encouraging recognition and respect for all human rights and social justice in these countries.

When the right to live and work in one's own country is compromised, then the right to emigrate should be respected. Sovereign peoples have the right to decide, democratically, what level of immigration they can accept in accordance with the possibilities that the immigrant population

has of finding work and achieving a decent standard of living, which will facilitate their social incorporation. This incorporation must be a priority for local authorities. Legal immigrants must have their rights and responsibilities recognised in international treaties and laws.

11. ETHICS AND POLITICS

The enormous social transformations of our civilisation, which are accompanying the current technical revolution, have brought about a fall in dogmas, but also a lack of values. Utopias are necessary in order to rediscover the real meaning of values and it is important to keep as one of our objectives the creation and fulfilment of new ethical values that bring with them more equality and respect among all members of society, without recourse to dogmas which could return us to retrograde situations.

We need a critical left that fights against conformism while defending liberty, effort, tolerance and jobs as well as eliminating inequalities and social marginalisation.

Ethics and politics are, and have to be, compatible. Politics is a collective service based on the defence of convictions which offer a project for government for the whole of society.

Any political project tries to be a tool for improving peaceful coexistence and consequently contributing to the progress of ethics in public affairs. No dogmatism or moral relativism should be able to endanger or erode tolerance, respect for minorities or any human right. Transparency must be a fundamental axis of public management (contracting services, appointing officials, managing public money, revoking public positions, etc.).

Ethical principles must also apply to scientific research (especially applications in industry, armaments, genetic engineering, etc.) and the information field (data manipulation, use of personal data by the state or companies, etc.).

Ethical politics is that which creates liberty, justice and solidarity. We need to apply ethical principles in personal and public actions. No idea, or personal interest, can justify violence, corruption and speculation in the private or public sectors. We need to fight (using the instruments of juridical and political control, without any limit other than the rule of law) against any manifestation of corruption or fraud in the public sector, since these are actions which are directly opposed to ethical politics and undermine the legitimacy of the democratic state itself. The important powers of transformation that human beings have in their hands make it more necessary than ever that politics acts under the principle of anticipation. It is essential that the values and guidelines of socially agreed conduct are taken into account when planning future endeavours.

Politics should re-establish its closer links with society; it should become a public service capable of making decisions. These political decisions should be in line with citizens' wishes, without interference from lobbies. Social and economic representatives must democratise their structures to ensure that we can arrive at an era of political and social co-responsibility, so eliminating the gap between the official world and the real one. Then it will be possible to reclaim a responsible society which does not delegate all demand for social welfare to public institutions. Moral instincts, one of the foundations of our welfare, cannot be guaranteed by the state.

Responsibility is the other side of the coin of liberty. Liberty is in a state of continual evolution and is only possible from a double perspective that is both individual and collective at the same time, and always in close relation with the ecosystem.

Limitations on individual liberty have to come from social consensus, expressed democratically; but in all cases, the individual has the right to privacy before the excesses of the state.

We need to restore values of solidarity and tolerance, defend diversity against homogenisation,

defend participation against authoritarianism and fortify the right of people to emancipation.

CATALONIA

12. NATIONAL RIGHTS

The contradictions that occasionally emerge between guaranteeing individual liberty and the system of production, conservation and distribution of natural resources and wealth created, demand the most wide ranging social consensus possible. The state is the organism charged with managing this consensus. This is why it is important that this state is established over a territory and a population with the highest level of cohesion. Beyond local boundaries, the human community with the greatest capacity for cohesion and for sharing values is the nation. A nation is a community of people linked through territory, history, traditions, culture, language and economy. The people of a nation are conscious of these links and wish to affirm them and have them respected.

The different declarations of human rights formulated since the French Revolution have never taken into account this reality. We need to affirm that individual rights are not complete if collective rights are not recognised and respected. For democratic reasons, recognition of national rights is an indispensable condition for the securing of individual and collective liberties and social progress.

National rights are:

The right to self-determination. This denotes the right of any nation to freely decide its political future and to organise itself, on terms of equality, with the rest of the nations of the world, through the creation of its own state or any other judicial-political structure. This right is imprescriptible and is founded on preceding postulates to all positive judicial regulations. It is proclaimed in Article One of the United Nations' International Pacts on Civil Rights and Politics, of 16th December 1966. No nation or foreign state, nor any higher judicial instance, has the right to make decisions for another nation.

The right to life, existence and collective identity. The proscription of any genocidal measure (expulsion, dispersion, relegation, deportation, extermination, ethnic cleansing, humiliation, repression, persecution, or the prohibition of languages, religions, cultures and indigenous institutions.

The right to a territory that has been a particular geographical framework within the nation's historical development to the present day.

The right to the use and promotion of the nation's own language in all areas of social life.

The right to safeguard cultural traditions and indigenous ways of life.

The right to its own telecommunications space.

The right to natural resources: whether mineral, energy-related or biological (in the ground, underground and within maritime borders). The right to transfer those resources to the collective and to decide conditions for their exploitation or conservation, including the right to impose their use and transformation in one's own territory. The right to the benefits of exploitation and to use such benefits in reinvestment in situ.

The right to live and work in one's own country and to regulate migratory movements.

The right to market protection, preliminary to the ability to integrate the economy into broader economic areas.

The right to create in one's own territory a centre for political, cultural and economic decisions that does not depend on any external organism whose sovereignty the nation has not accepted.

The right to develop one's own space, to explore resources and to steer the economy, as well as to manage the administration of the territory and decide its government.

The right to its own collective system of defence.

13. THE CATALAN NATION

The Catalan peoples were formed, historically, on both sides of the eastern Pyrenees in the 9th and 10th centuries. They spread around the Mediterranean coast of the Iberian Peninsula and out to the Balearic and Pitiusic Islands during the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. They have remained and developed within all of this geographical area until today, and they constitute by nature, conscience and desire the Catalan Nation.

For political reasons beyond its control, the Catalan nation has been divided into different territories: Northern Catalonia (within France); the Principality of Catalonia (along with the Catalan speaking fringe in Aragon), the Valencian Community, and the Balearic and Pitiusic Islands (within Spain); and Andorra, which has its own state. These divisions, the fruit of more than 300 years of oppression by the Spanish and French states, have led to the different territories having largely turned their backs on each other, or, in the worst of cases, having ignored their own identity.

With the exception of Andorra, which now enjoys its own state, our non-renounceable aim is to obtain independence for the Catalan Nation within the European Union.

The advance of national rights and the unity of the Catalan Nation must be accompanied by achieving similar standards of welfare for the majority of the population and territories. The promotion of national solidarity among the least cared for sectors of society is one of the premises for a successful national integration project.

A project destined for the majority should be accompanied by an effort of critical national self-confidence, along with an educational drive which, from both the official institutions and civil society, contributes to the cohesion of the nation.

14. THE DEMOCRATIC ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Officially recognised states, which encompass nations without states but in which only one of the nations holds real power (despite any apparent democratic organisation they may display) do not guarantee the national rights of peoples. Only by achieving independence for all parts of existing states which wish it, can we guarantee the full exercising of national democratic rights. The struggle for the political sovereignty of the Catalan people and for the independence of the entire nation is pacific and democratic. The attainment of a Republic of Catalonia is a fundamental imperative, since existing international law does not yet recognise any nationality, or territorial organisation, other than that of existing sovereign nation states.

This Republic must be democratic and socially just. It must undertake to comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents previously approved. Participation of the citizenry, the division of powers and respect for minorities are also essential fundamentals.

In the Republic of Catalonia those considered Catalan will be any citizen born in Catalonia, or who has Catalan parents, or who was born outside the territory but is now legally resident in the Catalan Nation and has expressed a desire to become Catalan; without distinction as to place of birth, family origins, ethnic group or religion. The only proviso is that they accept the basic values (arrived at by consensus) of the Catalan people and expressed through their constitution.

The Republic of Catalonia will establish a law which protects the rights of minorities.

15. CATALONIA, EUROPE AND THE WORLD. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The Catalan Nation, today, is one of the many nations without states in Europe: these are nations in which the established frontiers do not correspond to the national reality on the

ground.

Existing states represent the only voice permitted in the United Nations or in questions as important as the unity of Europe, international conflicts or European solidarity. The nations without states, therefore, have no voice, nor do we count in the project to construct a united Europe that is plural, just and prosperous, encourages solidarity and is pacific. Refusal to recognise these nations as states calls into question the genuineness of the process of European unity.

In recent years, some nations without states have exercised their legitimate right to self-determination, propitiating subsequent rectifications of frontiers, which had seemed untouchable, becoming states and opening the doors to an ongoing and more profound process which will have repercussions throughout Europe.

The process of European construction must be conceived as a necessary alternative to the politics of the "New World Order" imposed by current centralist states and large-scale economic interests. The construction of a Europe of Nations, from the Atlantic to the Urals, is the only way to build, once and for all, a project with a continental reach in which all peoples can be present in conditions of equality and national dignity.

Today there are economic, demographic, ecological and military concerns which go beyond the framework of states. That is why it is necessary to move towards international regroupings of a regional, continental and worldwide scope. As a first circle of proximity, it will be necessary for the Catalan Nation to establish relationships with the peoples of the European Mediterranean. The International telecommunications area, constructed in recent decades, has largely been culturally led, from its beginnings, by the Anglo-Saxon world. In the cultural field, we need cooperation between all cultures, on an equal footing, to avoid the hegemony of some over others.

On a second level, the Catalan Nation needs to enlist in all European organisations. The European Union and the Council of Europe represent diverse aspects of the process of constructing the continent. We need to move towards a process of unification, while always preserving the sovereignty of nations. Europe should not be an alias for huge industrial and financial groups, but rather a political, social and economic union which preserves the sovereignty of nations.

The division of the world into a North which is rich and developed and a South which is poor and underdeveloped constitutes one of the greatest problems that humanity faces today. The First World is responsible for the growing difference in wealth and standard of living between the developed countries (which dominate business, the production of goods and services and technology) and the underdeveloped countries in which two-thirds of humanity live in very precarious conditions.

These immense differences have their origin in the plundering, through colonisation over centuries, of countries which are currently underdeveloped by those which are currently developed. These differences are provoked and made worse by the lack of co-operation and support of rich countries towards poorer countries. It is a dynamic born of a savage capitalist system that maintains and foment this exploitation, made worse by an external debt that impedes poorer countries from carrying out development policies and leaves them firmly in a vicious circle of poverty and crisis.

Only with true solidarity among the international community can we lessen the huge differences between North and South. Solidarity is a basic idea (and a central nucleus) of all left-wing politics whether on a national or international scale.

The Catalan Nation must have an active policy of international solidarity. However, it should modify the models in which this has developed up to now. Pouring endless aid into a bottomless pit is no guarantee for true development. Only by encouraging productive capacity in the poorer nations themselves, within the limits of their own resources, can they reach the same level as developed countries.

Catalonia should participate, on equal terms, with the rest of the nations of the world, in all international and governmental forums (UN, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, etc.) as well as in private administrations (the international Olympic movement, international sports federations, etc.) in order to contribute, from our specific national viewpoint, to the achievement of a more just and democratic world where solidarity dominates and in which any indication of social and/or national exploitation and oppression finally disappears.

16. PEACE

Peace does not only mean the absence of war, it also implies the absence of social, national and international injustice, since there are many manifestations of direct or structural violence that have more serious, or even deadlier, effects than armed conflicts. We need to develop a new culture for peace that substitutes the current culture of violence.

Defence should offer us security, guaranteeing different individual and collective needs and creating, thus, a state of justice and peace. Defence and security must be based on legitimate democracy, respect for minorities and the seeking of peace with, rather than the destruction of, an adversary. The subject of this defence is people, both individuals and collectives.

State armies are no guarantee of security. In fact, in many cases, they are the direct cause of wars; they provide a source of tension, mistrust, suspicion, injustice and the squandering of resources. The arms industry and the international arms trade aggravate and encourage situations of conflict all over the world, since their market is war. It is symptomatic that it is the more economically developed countries who are the principal producers of armaments and the less developed countries who are the principal purchasers. We must, therefore, eliminate the arms trade and convert armaments companies into companies producing socially useful products.

Conventional state armies should disappear in favour of a new model of defence based on prevention which gives parity to international relations based on cooperation, dialogue and understanding, as well as transparency and solidarity between nations and which utilises political negotiation as a resource for preventing, regulating and resolving conflicts.

On the road towards disarmament, removing the nuclear threat, and dismantling conventional armies, we need to build a non-provocative defence within a framework of a security policy shared with the United Nations as the sole military power used for dissuasion, once the right to veto is abolished in this international organisation.

We need to ensure that defence is not left to a relatively small body with a monopoly over violence, but rather that defence becomes a shared property that is lightly exercised by the whole community. In order to achieve this we need to ensure that education encourages citizens not only to participate in the voting and choosing of their representatives, but also to being disposed to freely defend their democratic institutions in cases where these are threatened. We need to overcome anachronous and militaristic concepts such as conscription and obligatory military service, and recognise, affirm and guarantee the fundamental right to conscientious objection and ensure this is practised at every moment. Non-violent popular defence is the best guarantee of democratic participation in defending our own security.

The final aim of all defence and security policy should be to guarantee peace, understood as

the total surmounting of the option of war and direct and structural violence and a constant development towards international and national social justice.

Approved by the 19th National Congress of the Esquerra Party, 19th December 1993, in Barcelona.