



The Editor  
The Economist  
25, St. James's Street  
London SW1A 1HG

London, 11th November 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

After reading the references to Catalonia in your special report on Spain, 'The party's over', I would like to make the following comments:

Catalonia is a small nation but it has a long history. For the last one thousand years Catalans have shown a clear will for self-government. The new Statute of Autonomy, therefore, does not in any way go too far, as the report suggests. It goes as far as democratically agreed between the citizens and its political institutions.

As the government of a modern and plural society, the Government of Catalonia is implementing strategies to ensure a top position for our country in the competitiveness and human development rankings of 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe. We are determined to do so without losing our important cultural heritage. The report describes the language as a "nationalist obsession". Since 1979 the Catalan political institutions have understood the Catalan language as the country's own language and as an important tool for social promotion and integration (which is not the same as assimilation). The aim of the Government is to make sure that all citizens have equal opportunities in a context of cultural diversity. This is why we are, for instance, putting in place all the necessary measures to ensure that all pupils in Catalonia leave school being fully competent in Catalan, Castilian and English.

Finally, it is unfortunate that the report describes the 126<sup>th</sup> President of the Government of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol, as a "cacique". This is a politically incorrect term used to describe a politician who abuses his or her power. It is totally unacceptable when talking about the man who was the democratically elected President of Catalonia for over 23 years.

Yours sincerely,

**Xavier Solano i Bello**  
*Head of the Delegation*