

Catalan **business** and independence

At this crucial time for Catalonia, Catalan businesses are one of the groups that will have to decide between sticking with Spain or opting for an independent Catalan state. Whether they side with the sovereigntists or the unionists has a special importance given the company tax collection system. It is time for the Catalan business world, regardless of ideology, to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of supporting a new state.

This article is the first part of a SWOT analysis of the question.

What are the strengths of the Catalan business network?

Catalonia has been and will continue to be a land of entrepreneurs. Catalans have always done business with everyone. We can trace this back to ancient times when the Phoenicians and Greeks settled here, or later, when many Catalans set off to make their fortunes in the Americas. And nor must we forget our continuing productive leadership in Spain from the Industrial Revolution onwards.

This industrial and business tradition has led to us being considered the driving force of the economy in Southern Europe and the leader of Spanish exports. Our business fabric is constantly being renewed

and we have never lost our collective entrepreneurial aspirations.

The list of positive aspects for Catalonia in this field goes a long way back, and the proof can be seen by the number of world leaders in the arts, technology and design that Catalonia has produced.

Catalans are hardworking, which even our opponents do not deny. We have good technicians educated in universities who

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are capable of bringing together all the industrial tradition of the country. We are innovators; the progress made by Catalan researchers is always greater than expected given the resources at their disposal.

We are good managers, and have business schools that are highly rated by the international business community.

We are good organisers, clearly in the large scale organisation of the 11 Sept-

ember National Days in recent years.

In addition to the factors directly related to the business sector the country has other elements in its favour. We have an attractive geographical location, as well as a favourable climate. The diverse origins of the Catalan population reflects the variety of people who settle in our country.

We form a natural and traditional connection between Europe and the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, while brand Barcelona is one of the most important in the world. This, together with the coastal areas and the Pyrenees, brings us an annual number of visitors that puts Catalonia in a privileged position with regard to tourism, a constant boost to our economy.

We are almost self-sufficient in electrical energy. The size of the country guarantees short distances between production and consumption, keeping transport costs low.

We have a modern port and airport, which, when we are able to manage these using our own criteria, will have an exceptional capacity for growth and generation of economic activity. We also have two banks among the largest in Spain.

Naturally, the Catalan business world has shortcomings. We will deal with these in the second part of our analysis.

GALLERY

TERRY PARRIS Writer / tparris@cataloniatoday.cat

Pondering the rhythmic impulse in **nature**

An Ayurvedic Sutra says "Imagine you move in rhythm with the impulse of a conscious universe". On my morning walk with Tilly the dog I translated this into an everyday meaning to wonder if I walked in the rhythm of the seasons?

I was certainly walking in the signs of the season. The beginning of spring was all around in the ploughed fields, the green tips of plants, budding dandelions in the

meadows and yellow tips of broom. The rhythmic impulse in nature was there and, indeed, I did feel a part of that nature.

But what of the cities? They too have spring in intermittent sunshine, in green parks and blossoming roundabouts. The impulse of spring is less obvious, but it is there. As urban dwellers crowd the streets and gather at crossings, do they feel in rhythm with the impulse of the universe?

The Sutra, though ancient, asks us all it's universal questions. It is similar to Shakespeare, because his profundity of thought is also universal and has lasted down the ages for all people and all countries. Does this pondering lead to answers? Only perhaps that we would do well to keep in step with nature. It's in rhythm that we move comfortably and feel at home. What do you think?

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"If Catalonia was one big city, Girona would be its theatre quarter" Salvador Sunyer, Director of the theatre festival Temporada Alta

If there is one person who is responsible of putting Girona on the map of European theatre, it is Salvador Sunyer. Now he is taking the Temporada Alta model to America. Well done, Salvador!