

Our Future in **Catalonia**: debating the Catalan process since 2014

Our Future in Catalonia debuted with an opening event at the Moritz premises in Sant Antoni on October 1, 2014. By proposing to organise debates, mostly in English, inviting renowned academics, politicians or public figures, we address the expat community based in Catalonia to raise topics around the Catalan Process in the most objective way. The first of the five thematic debates that followed (all available on Youtube) focused on the Law and Legitimacy of the Catalan process, with political scientist Klaus-Jürgen Nagel and legal scholar Nico Krisch as guests and, presenting, economist, journalist and group member, Krystyna Schreiber, also from Germany. Krisch's affirmation in a related article is a good summary: "...while the law within a state is afforded a degree of legitimacy, it cannot provide a solution entirely. Only a political agreement which recognises the views of Catalonia's citizens can provide a lasting settlement."

At our third event on April 1, 2015 we had as chair, Carles Boix, a professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University. Contributing to the talk on Lessons of new independent states and international overview of the Catalan process was Elina Viilup, an Estonian policy analyst at the European Parliament, and Ana Stanic, a Slovenian solicitor advocate-based in London and an authority on her country's post-independence process. Notwithstanding, there was a general agreement on the specificities of each process, the fact that both countries are full EU members, where they can defend their own national interests with full rights, which can also be inspirational for Catalonia as to what can be achieved through independence.

At our fourth debate on May 12, 2015



Via Lliure last September in Barcelona./Q. P.

we invited Alfred Bosch, a former MP in Madrid for Esquerra Republicana and the party's candidate for Mayor of Barcelona, in a dialogue with John Stone, a Canadian literary history professor at the UB. Among the topics raised, was the question of how to guarantee a balance between Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia in terms of distribution of power and resources, basically to avoid the metropolitanisation around Barcelona. Another topic was how to take advantage of the different nationalities present in Barcelona, especially in order to build a diplomatic corps able to grasp the diversity of cultures and languages.

The fifth debate of our series was held between the September 27 2015 Catalan elections and those called in Spain on the

December 20. Journalist and communicator Adrià Alsina conducted the debate, facing Yannis Karagiannis, a Greek political scientist at the UPF, and Anglo-Catalan Miquel Strubell, one of the founders of the Catalan National Assembly. The lively but respectful debate was followed by a no less breezy discussion with the audience. This, in a way, epitomised one of the riches of the Catalan process, raising topics that were previously taboo, while maintaining peaceful coexistence and a civic-minded attitude.

In our sixth, and so far last debate, we had Ferran Pedret, a Socialist MP in the Catalan Parliament since 2012, and again Klaus-Jürgen Nagel. It was hosted by the group's communications expert, Jordi Vilanova. Nothing unexpected in the debate, but worth highlighting their differences: Pedret, in his advocacy of the impossibility of independence due the constitutional restraints, argued that a satisfactory proposal of genuine federalism will come from Madrid, sooner or later. On the other side, Nagel reasoned that while independence is always a difficult goal, it is much more feasible than an unachievable federal Spain.

To continue with new debates, there are already several topics in the pipeline: one to analyse the Catalan process from an economic viewpoint; another is meant to give clues on the most feasible scenario for the so-called New Left to implement its policies, to gain power in Madrid or to allow independence to happen; finally, we deem it necessary to debate Defence and Security issues, on the threats and challenges that an independent Catalonia will eventually face.

If you are interested in the past and new debates, please join us at Our Future In Catalonia Meetup group and come to the upcoming events!



"Let us now find the courage, together, to spread peace, and pursue a world without nuclear weapons"

US president, Barack Obama in his tribute speech during his recent trip to Hiroshima

Fine words from Obama but there was no sign of an apology for the US attack in 1945 that killed 140,000 people, mostly innocent civilians. It is also a little disingenuous when the US is involved in a number of wars and has a nuclear arsenal of over 7,000 warheads