



ANDREU PUIG

# INDEPENDENCE AND SOLIDARITY

**TRIBUNE  
PERE MIRET**

Economist and member of the Economy Section of the National Catalan Assembly (ANC)

**T**he vast majority of the Spanish media have for years been carrying out an enormous campaign of misinformation and lies with regard to the historical, political and economic reality of Catalonia. Therefore, it seems appropriate to clarify some points.

Firstly, the Spanish state and the main Spanish parties, such as the PP, PSOE and Ciudadanos, minorities in Catalonia, do not accept that Catalonia is a nation. However, there is no doubt that Catalonia is a

nation, with a territory, its own language and a thousand-year-old culture and history. The independent Catalan state began centuries before the existence of Spain, although it ceased to exist as a state with the military defeat of 1714. However, since then the Catalan nation has resisted all attempts at annihilation by the Spanish state, including by Franco's dictatorship.

Spanish parties, such as the PP, PSOE and Ciudadanos, do not recognise that there is a majority of Catalan people in favour of independence. The latest evidence of this came with the elections on December 21 of 2017, when, despite Spanish control over the media and the repression, with Catalan politicians jailed and exiled, and with Spanish parties having more fi-

nancial resources, the majority in favour of independence in the Catalan parliament was achieved again. That is to say, with neither a tie nor the independentists being a big minority in Catalonia, but with them being a clear majority. And the Spanish state knows it. That is why undemocratically it has never authorised a referendum on self-determination of the Catalan people, unlike the case of the UK with Scotland or Canada with Quebec.

Those who deny the viability of the independent Catalan state also lie. Nobel prizewinners for Economics like Gary S. Becker, Erling Kydman and Joseph Stiglitz have stated that there is no doubt about the economic viability of an independent Catalonia. Just a few figures: Catalonia's GDP in 2017 was 32% higher than that of Greece, and almost two thirds of Catalan exports went abroad and only a third to the rest of Spain; in addition, with independence the huge fiscal deficit with Spain would be eliminated. This would mean that the current Catalan public deficit, of less than 1% of GDP, would become a clear surplus. In 2008, the Spanish state recognised that the fiscal deficit of Catalonia with the central State was 8.7%

of Catalan GDP using the monetary flow methodology. After that, it has always tried to minimise it through tricks. Nevertheless, in the period of 1986 to 2014 the Catalan fiscal deficit was actually 8% of GDP as an annual average, currently more than €18 billion a year. And Catalonia shows great solidarity. For example, unlike Spain, Catalonia has given more money to the EU than it has received. However, Catalonia has said "no" to the colonial treatment it receives from Spain, which spoliates its economy.

The supposed over-indebtedness that the independent Catalan state would suffer from is also a false argument. Catalonia's own public debt is currently 35% of Catalan GDP, one of the lowest in the EU. The holder of the rest of the public debt is the Kingdom of Spain. When the effective separation from the Spanish state takes place, the distribution of assets and liabilities between the two states will be carried out according to international law and Catalonia's debt will increase, but the situation will be an improvement on the current one, whereby it pays around 20% of the Spanish state's high public debt.