



THE FEMCAT MANIFESTO

FemCAT: Making Catalonia

Barcelona, May 2004

Catalonia had always thought that national development would only take place in a democratic environment and following integration into Europe. Twenty-five years after approving the Spanish Constitution and the Catalan Statute of Autonomy and 18 years since our inclusion in the EU, we now see that advancing requires giving new impetus to the social and economic aims of Catalans. This new drive must be promoted from within political circles, based on open debate about the need for a new Statute of Autonomy and changes to the Constitution, but also and more importantly, in economic and social areas. In a democracy, policies and political parties are essential, but so is a commitment to civil society so that it can recover its corresponding initiative.

The recurring debate in Catalonia is the high budget deficit and the lack of infrastructures and growth that has been bogging down the country for years. Undoubtedly these are just some of the deficits that are blocking the economic and social development of Catalonia. This is why our country needs a wider framework for greater powers and wider legislative capacity than it currently holds. The present political organization of the State and the Statute's legal framework have not been able to resolve these questions, but it is also evident that Catalan civil society has not known how to effectively apply influence and pressure in order to get a solution. This means that it is necessary to give new impetus to regenerate Catalonia and in this way not lose competitiveness as a country, while assuming the levels of progress and wellbeing of modern countries, something which, on the other hand, corresponds to a society that has always been historically enterprising.

This is why we have created FemCAT, an association that is independent of any political party and one which aims to carry out and give support to initiatives that promote the progress of Catalan society, while integrating everybody from the business and professional world who wants to contribute to this project's objectives. FemCAT groups together a series of entrepreneurs, managers and professionals who want a greater degree of development for Catalonia, both from within companies as well as through the social framework that makes them possible. In FemCAT we propose taking action, dedicating time, resources and know-how so that our country can take an important step forward over the next 10 years (2004-2014).

Today, our society needs more ambition to assume greater levels of political power to enable economic and social progress of Catalonia. We want Catalonia to take its place on the world and European stage, without falling into chronic pessimism nor systematic complaining about wrongs as the only actions taken. We believe that criticism and self-criticism must be accompanied by constructive proposals and initiatives that can be useful for the various political institutions and, above all, which stimulate our society as a whole.

FemCAT concentrates its activities along the following lines:

Improve our capacity for enterprise and innovation. Catalan society has been historically proven to be imaginative, creative and enterprising. It is important to promote these characteristic traits over the next few years with initiatives that encourage companies with high added value, industry and technology, service economy, our educational system and, above all, knowledge of foreign languages. This is a challenge that can be met by changing our outlook and giving social support and recognition to entrepreneurs.

Encourage improved competitiveness of our country. This means increased productivity, that Public Administrations efficiently manage the resources they have available, have the infrastructures required for development of our country and be able to decide on their allocation and manage them effectively.

Ensure the social cohesion of Catalonia. It is necessary to have the powers and encourage initiatives that enable controlling and integrating migratory movements, the job market and organisation of social services, and the educational system. Social cohesion is basic to continue being, as we have always been, a welcoming, progressive people, and social leaders.

Launch Catalonia in the world. We must be capable of creating projects through our companies, our culture, our scientists, sportspersons, social and sporting organisations, universities (we have two of the best business schools in Europe), and, in the end, through our people, to project Catalonia abroad. It is also necessary to intensify the process of internationalization of our companies and improve our capacity to attract new investments. All this must represent greater creation of riches.

FemCAT wants to stimulate discussion of these ideas within society itself. It is an active initiative that is positive, for the future, one that seeks the adhesion and mobilisation of civil society to make Catalonia one of the most advanced countries in the world.