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EDITORIAL

To Department of State

Dear sirs of U.S. Department of State,

By now, we hope you to have understood a little bit more the linguistic situation in Catalonia and the Catalan Countries. As you know, information about protests against linguistic discrimination of Spanish-speaking citizens in Catalonia, included in your 1999 Country Report on Human Right Practices, caused consternation and real protests all over the country. May be it was an exaggerated reaction, but there are a lot of reasons that explain the high level of sensibility of Catalan people about this matter.

The thing is that we, the Catalan people, have been fighting for a century, peacefully, to recover our millenary language and our culture, widely discriminated and even banned for years and years. Still now, and could be forever, the "linguistic hegemony" –as you say in your report– is the Spanish one. Of course, you know that. We only want for us the same rights as Spanish people have. Not more, and not less. Now, fortunately, democracy is making possible what was impossible during dictatorships in the past: to normalize Catalan language.

Anyway, there are some people that would like to return to past times. It is not exactly the same, but they remind us of the Ku Klux Klan, that would like to re-establish slavery... Because Catalonia is a democracy, these people –and all the people– is free and able to protest and publish their opinions in newspapers, radios and so on. Your information services in the Embassy and the Consulate must know that. That's all.

Discrimination still exists, it is real, but against Catalan language. Most mass media are only in Spanish, which is much more protected by Spanish laws and government than Catalan, Basc or Galician. For example, you can rarely go to the cinema to see a film in Catalan. American majors did not accept the law of Catalan Parliament to translate 50 per cent of films to our language. They only accept to translate it to Spanish.

Then, please, be careful in the future with your reports. They are excellent and useful to defend freedom and Human Rights, except in case you do not believe in them.

“Les realitats culturals i lingüístiques de les societats actuals ens aboquen inexorablement al multilingüisme i, per tant, a l’abolició dels dogmes i les fronteres culturals.”

Per una vegada, sense que servezca de precedent, hem volgut facilitar l'arribada de les nostres opinions al Departament d'Estat dels Estats Units

d'Amèrica i, per això, hem escrit l'editorial d'EL TEMPS en anglès. Confiem que aquest gest servezca d'alguna cosa, per tal d'evitar en el futur els malentesos sobre la discriminació lingüística als Països Catalans.

Les realitats culturals i lingüístiques de les societats actuals (també als Estats Units) ens aboquen inexorablement al multilingüisme i, per tant, a l'abolició dels dogmes i les fronteres culturals. En aquest context, les llengües en inferioritat de condicions com la catalana poden legítimament exigir respecte i igualtat de tracte als idiomes dominants.

I si a algú li pica, que grate, però sembla que el Departament d'Estat del govern nord-americà hauria de tenir altres feines que no pas dedicar-se a exagerar la coïssor. ■