

# **CATALONIA**

## **-Information sheet-**

Catalonia is an autonomous community of Spain. It covers an area of 31,950 km<sup>2</sup> with an official population of 6.3 million. The capital of Catalonia is Barcelona.

### **Historical outline**

The territory that is now Catalonia was colonized by Ancient Greeks and Carthaginians. Like the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, it participated in the pre-Roman Iberian culture and was part of the Roman Empire, followed by Visigoth rule. In the eighth century it was part of Moorish Andalusia, but was conquered within a century by the expanding Carolingian Empire.

Catalan culture emerged in the Middle Ages under the rule of the Counts of Barcelona. As part of the Aragon's crown, Catalonia became a great maritime power expanding as a consequence of trade and conquest into Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and even Sardinia and Sicily.

In the second half of the 19th century, Catalonia became a centre of Spain's industrialization; to date it remains the most industrialized part of Spain, challenged only by the Basque Country.

In first third of the 20th century, Catalonia gained and lost several times its varying degrees of autonomy. As in most regions of Spain, Catalan autonomy was diminished to an unprecedented degree after the defeat of the Second Spanish Republic (founded 1931) in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) brought Francisco Franco to power. Even the public use of the Catalan language was banned.

Following the death of Franco in 1975 and the restoration of democracy, the ban was lifted and the Catalan language is now used in politics, education and the media, including several newspapers, radio and the television channel Televisió de Catalunya (TVC).

### **Administration and political representation**

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 made Spanish the official language of the State. In addition, the other languages of Spain were granted an official status in the various Autonomous Communities in accordance with their autonomous statutes. According the Autonomous Statute of Catalonia (1979) the language of Catalonia is Catalan alongside Spanish.

The *Generalitat* is the institution of self-government in Catalonia; it consists of Parliament, President and an Executive Council. The popularly elected Parliament of Catalonia has 135 seats and serves as the legislative tool of Catalonia. In Spain only the regions of Navarre and the Basque Country hold

higher level of self-government than Catalonia. The *Generalitat* guarantees the normal and official use of both languages and adopts measures to ensure their knowledge in order to guarantee full equality of all citizens of Catalonia. Furthermore, the local administration undertakes steps to protect Aranese language.

The Catalan nationalist leader, Jordi Pujol, came to power in the first regional elections in 1980 and his party, Convergence and Unity (*Convergència i Unió* or *CiU*), held power for 23 years.

At the regional elections held on 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2003, at which Pujol retired, the combined parties of the left defeated the *CiU* for the first time and Pasqual Maragall i Mira became President of the *Generalitat*. The winners of the elections were the Republican Left of Catalonia (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* or *ERC*), which favor full Catalan independence, and the Green Party.

## **Language**

Catalan (*Català, Valencià*) is a Romance language spoken by approximately 12 million people in a territory called the Catalan countries which spans portions of Spain, France, Andorra and Italy, although the majority of Catalan speakers are in Spain.

According to the 2001 Linguistic Census about 5,900,000 people in Catalonia, nearly 95% of residents, understand the Catalan language:

### Knowledge of Catalan

Ability	Individuals	%
Understands	5,872,202	94.5%
Speaks	4.630.640	74.5%
Reads	4.621.404	74.4%
Writes	3.093.223	49.8%
Population	6.215.281	100%

## **LINKS**

General overview on Catalonia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalonia>

## **Politics**

The Parliament of Catalonia

[http://www.parlament-cat.net/portal/page?\\_pageid=34,33596&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.parlament-cat.net/portal/page?_pageid=34,33596&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Website of the Generalitat, Government of Catalonia

[http://www.gencat.net/index\\_eng.htm](http://www.gencat.net/index_eng.htm)

Local Administration in Catalonia

[http://www.municat.net/pagines/ens/ens5\\_uk.htm](http://www.municat.net/pagines/ens/ens5_uk.htm)

## **Culture**

Culture - Website of the Generalitat, Government of Catalonia

[http://www.gencat.net/catalunya/cultura/index\\_eng.htm](http://www.gencat.net/catalunya/cultura/index_eng.htm)

## **Language**

Catalan language

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_language)

Language (Euromosaic)

<http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/homean/index1.html>

Catalan, language of Europe

<http://www6.gencat.net/llengcat/publicacions/cle/clee.htm>

Language Policy Report 2002

<http://www6.gencat.net/llengcat/informe/a2002.htm>

Act No. 1, of 7th January 1998, on linguistic policy

[http://www6.gencat.net/llengcat/legis/angles\\_llei.htm](http://www6.gencat.net/llengcat/legis/angles_llei.htm)

Official census data (Culture and Language)

<http://www.idescat.es/scripts/sqldequavi.dll?TC=444&V0=8&V1=6>

## **Tourist information**

<http://www10.gencat.net/gencat/AppJava/en/esp/hivern/home.jsp>

## **The media**

Daily newspapers written in Catalan:

Diari Avui

<http://www.avui.com/avui/diari/docs/index4.htm>

El 9 Nou

<http://www.el9nou.com/ddv/>

El Punt

<http://www.vilaweb.com/elpunt/>

El Periodico de Catalunya

<http://www.elperiodico.com/>

Regió7

<http://www.regio7.com/>

Segre

<http://www.diarisegre.com/>

Catalan Radio

<http://www.catradio.com/pcatradio/crHome.jsp>

Television of Catalonia

<http://www.tvcatalunya.com/ptvcatalunya/tvcHome.jsp>