

Good evening,

We are living through very serious times for our democratic life. And in these circumstances, I want to address all the people of Spain directly. We have all witnessed the events that have been taking place in Catalonia, with the Generalitat's ultimate intent being to be proclaimed—illegally—Catalonia's independence.

For a long time now, certain Catalan officials have been violating—repeatedly, consciously and deliberately—Spain's Constitution and Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy, which is the law that recognizes, protects and safeguards their historical institutions and their self-government.

With their decisions, they have systematically contravened provisions that have been legally and legitimately approved, thus showing unacceptable disloyalty towards the powers of the Spanish State. A State which, precisely, those officials represent in Catalonia.

They have infringed the democratic principles of a State under the rule of law, and they have undermined the harmony and peaceful coexistence of Catalan society itself, unfortunately going so far as to divide it. Today, Catalan society is fractured and conflicted. Those officials have scorned the affection and the feelings of solidarity that have united—and always will unite—the Spanish people as a whole. And with their irresponsible conduct they may even jeopardize the economic and social stability of Catalonia and all of Spain.

In sum, all of this has constituted the culmination of an unacceptable attempt to appropriate Catalonia's historical institutions. Those officials have, clearly and unmistakably, placed themselves on the fringes of the law and of democracy. They have sought to sever the unity of Spain and its national sovereignty, which is the right of all Spaniards to decide democratically upon their life in common.

For all these reasons, and faced with this situation of extreme gravity, which requires the unwavering commitment of all to the general interest, it is the responsibility of the State's legitimate powers to ensure the constitutional order and the normal functioning of the institutions, the prevalence of the rule of law, and the self-government of Catalonia, based on the Constitution and on the Catalan Statute of Autonomy.

This evening, I also want to convey several messages to all Spaniards—particularly, to those who are also Catalans.

To the citizens of Catalonia—to all of you—I want to repeat once again that for decades we have been living in a democratic State that offers constitutional channels for any individual to defend their ideas, as long as they respect the law. Because, as we all know, without this respect there can be no democratic social harmony, in peace and freedom—not in Catalonia, not in the rest of Spain, nor anywhere else in the world. In our constitutional and democratic Spain, you well know that there is a space for concord and for coming together with all your fellow citizens.

I am well aware that in Catalonia there is also a great deal of concern and anxiety regarding the conduct of the regional authorities. To those who feel this way, I tell you now that you are not alone, nor will you ever be; that you have all of the support and solidarity of the rest of the Spanish people, and the absolute guarantee that our State, under the rule of law, will defend your freedom and your rights.

And to the rest of the Spanish people, who are experiencing these events with unease and sadness, I send you a message of serenity, of confidence, and also, of hope.

These are difficult moments, but we will overcome them. These are very complicated moments, but we will keep moving forward. Because we believe in our country and we feel proud of what we are. Because our democratic principles are strong, and they are solid. And this is because they are based on the desire of millions and millions of Spaniards to live together in peace and freedom. That is how we have been building the Spain of these

recent decades. And we should continue to follow this same path, calmly and with determination. And on this path to that better Spain to which we all aspire, Catalonia will also be with us.

I will end these words, addressed to the entire Spanish people, by stressing once again the Crown's strong commitment to the Constitution and to democracy; my dedication to understanding and harmony amongst all Spaniards; and my commitment, as King, to the unity and permanence of Spain.