



EDITORIAL

In discussing scientific activity in Catalonia, we have to point out a certain contradiction. On the one hand, we can see that research in the Catalan cultural area is developing briskly and the quality of scientific work is comparable to that in other parts of Europe with a high level of science and technology; on the other hand, the Catalan government, like those of the other Catalan-speaking autonomous communities, does not yet have complete authority over scientific policy, nor does it have the funds necessary to cover the cost of research. The power to decide questions of planning and funding of scientific activity belongs to the state. As part of the present process by which the cultural and political identity of the Catalan-speaking lands is being recognized, Catalan researchers would like scientific investigation to be decided and financed by the Catalan community. In this number of CATALÒNIA we draw attention to the fact that Catalan scientific activity is not a recent phenomenon, and we report on this activity in certain specific fields. Most of our researchers make perfectly normal use of the Catalan language in their laboratories, seminars and publications, and whenever necessary they also use English or the other languages of international scientific communication. Non-Catalan students starting out in research in our university centres or specialized institutions receive special linguistic attention so that they are fully integrated within a few weeks and the use of Catalan presents no difficulty for them.

Scientific activity throughout the world is becoming more and more important as a means of guaranteeing a country's cultural identity in today's world. Unless there is investment in science, a country can easily become technologically and economically dependent. Development involves scientific activity and all countries should be able to take part in research according to their needs and priorities. The national dimension of research must be seen to be compatible with its universal nature. Knowledge belongs to all mankind and should not be restricted to certain privileged groups or nations. Despite its limitations, UNESCO is the ideal channel for international scientific communication and for the joint shaping of a global scientific policy. Science must further the cause of man and cater for each country's necessities. All too often, scientists are still working for war or financial or cultural domination. Countries which are now shaping their scientific policies, as in the case of Catalonia, have the opportunity to direct research towards the noble causes of peace, development and international co-operation.

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