

Statement by the Board of Management for submission to the extraordinary meeting of the Senate of Thursday 24 October 2019

There is absolutely no doubt that in Catalonia we have been living politically and socially exceptional times since at least the autumn of 2017, in fact even before. And Pompeu Fabra University, aware of its great responsibility as a privileged place for the generation and transmission of knowledge, public discussion and debate, and as a nursery cultivating active, critical democratic citizens, cannot stand on the side lines, as all areas dealt with by the university are based on the values of democracy, justice and the welfare of society. Hence the need for this University's Senate, a true assembly that can speak legitimately in such serious contexts as the present, on behalf of our university community as a whole, rather than the rector, the Board of Management, or even the Board of Governors, to publicly express and reaffirm the following considerations and principles.

First of all, regardless of the opinion that each individual may have of the content of Supreme Court Sentence 459/2019 on the case of 'el Procès' (Catalan independence process), in a democracy the people's right to freedom of expression must remain intact, including the right to criticize any decision made by any authority, as well as the democratic right to protest -the rights to freedom of assembly, association, to demonstrate and to strike. Hence the University Senate expresses its unequivocal commitment to uphold these basic rights and freedoms of all members of its university community and encourages the governing bodies to take the decisions necessary, as they always have, to ensure that they can be exercised and protected.

Secondly, the University is a free and plural institution that must constitute a platform for the defence of democracy and public debate and the criticism of the injustice that occurs in our environment, undoubtedly committed to the values of human rights, freedom, equality, welfare, non-violence and democracy itself. We have a special duty in promoting critical analysis of the situation we are experiencing, and we urge the University's governing bodies to organize and promote such events as may be necessary so that we can discuss the serious events that have been taking place in our society especially in recent weeks calmly, openly, plurally and peacefully, as is in keeping with a university.

And thirdly, the UPF Senate strongly condemns any use of violence, whichever its source, but which is especially serious when the monopolized use of force awarded to the State has been made abusively. We call for political calm, dialogue and negotiation. It should be obvious to everyone that the Supreme Court's sentence -again, regardless of each individual's judgement- is not and cannot be a solution to today's political conflict, and this solution is now even more remote than it was two years ago. By virtue of its legitimacy, the UPF Senate urges the Catalan and Spanish governments to seek peaceful democratic solutions to the political conflict in which we are immersed that fully respect the democratic rights and freedoms of all citizens.