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Dear readers and friends,

We are very pleased to be able to send you the first Newsletter from the Catalan Observatory at the London School of Economics.

The Catalan Observatory is a research centre within the London School of Economics, forming part of the LSE European Institute. The centre was created as the result of an agreement signed in June 2009 by the London School of Economics and the Catalunya Mòn foundation, which was subsequently complemented by a series of bilateral agreements between the School and other bodies which include Mediaproducció SL, Abertis Infraestructuras SA, the Foment del Treball Nacional, the Mancomunitat de Municipis de Barcelona, the Societat Econòmica Barcelonesa d'Amics del País and l'Obra Social La Caixa.

The Observatory at the London School of Economics is a new project, which has begun operating during 2010. The different individuals and bodies involved in the scheme have set the highest ambitions for it, conscious as they are that to invest their efforts in the international projection of Catalonia and the promotion of academic studies that link it to the European context is a task that is not only useful and interesting, but also profoundly necessary.

In this newsletter we present a summary of the different activities that the Observatory has organized, together with current information on our academic priorities and the themes and topics that we have chosen to highlight during the first half of 2010.

You will therefore find here short notes on the inaugural ceremonies for the Observatory:

Inauguration of the CO in Barcelona, at the Cercle d'Economia

Inauguration of the CO in London, at the LSE

As well as more extensive reports of our recent public events:

The public lecture held by the CO at the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, given by the CEO of La Caixa, Joan Maria Nin



Inauguration of the CO in Barcelona, at the Cercle d'Economia



Inauguration of the CO in London, at the LSE



The public lecture held by the CO at the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, given by the CEO of La Caixa, Joan Maria Nin



The CO seminar at the LSE, the 'Conference on Innovation and Policy Learning Health care: Catalonia and UK in Europe'

Catalonia's commitment to the future of Europe

Note 1: the multi-sectoral effort to develop, strengthen and improve the Euro-Mediterranean area and relations within it

Note 2: the decision to focus on improving cross-border links and exchanges, with special emphasis on the Mediterranean rail corridor and transcontinental communications infrastructure

Note 3: Promoting the exchange of information on efficient systems and practices in Health services, specifically in areas where the Catalan model has shown itself to be particularly efficient, such as transplant surgery, blood donation and the decentralization of health services

Forthcoming Events

8th, June 2010: Seminar 'Sports, Socialization and Economic Development'.
www.lse.ac.uk/catalanobservatory

1st and 2nd, July 2010:
Seminar 'Historical memory: Policy and Practice'.
Joint Conference of the Catalan Observatory and Memorial Democràtic, Generalitat de Catalunya.
www.lse.ac.uk/catalanobservatory

Last week of July, 2010:
Workshop 'Competitiveness and economic growth in Catalonia First Semester 2010', presentation first annual set of socio-economic data on the international projection of Catalonia.

The CO seminar at the LSE, the 'Conference on Innovation and Policy Learning Health care: Catalonia and UK in Europe'

The main body of the newsletter is given over to our most current concerns, regarding the future prospects that Catalonia can offer Europe.

Catalonia's commitment to the future of Europe

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At the same time, we would like to point out that the Observatory has programmed several new events, publications, reports and workshops for the next few weeks, which we hope you will be able to attend or take part in in other ways.

The first of these events will be a conference in the same format as the conference on Health held in March, but with the theme of 'Sports, Socialization and Economic Development'. It will be held on 8 June and the speakers will be British and Catalan experts connected to the field of sport and its economic and commercial development. Those attending will include several members of the management team of LOCOG12 (London Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games), as well as representatives of the Secretariat for Sports of the Catalan Government, the Generalitat de Catalunya.

In addition, on 1 and 2 July the Observatory will organize an important conference on the subject of historical memory in Catalonia. Over two days, a team from the 'Memorial Democràtic de la Generalitat de Catalunya', the Catalan government's official service for the recovery and commemoration of the history of the years from 1931 to 1980, headed by its Director Miquel Caminal and accompanied by Catalan historians, will debate with leading British specialists on the technical and political aspects of historical memory, and on the role of historians and politicians in this area.

Finally, in the last week of July, the Observatory will publish a first annual set of socio-economic data on the international projection of Catalonia, prepared by the team of researchers at the centre.

All the necessary information on these and future events as well as on the different activities that we are undertaking can be found on the Observatory's dedicated website, www.lse.ac.uk/catalanobservatory.

It only remains for me to hope that you find reading this newsletter interesting and rewarding, and to welcome you to our Observatory.

The Catalunya Món Foundation and the London School of Economics and Political Science sign a collaboration agreement for the creation of the Catalunya Món Observatory (2/06/2009)

Group photograph, launch of the Catalan Observatory, Cercle d'Economia, Barcelona



Signing of the agreement, by, from left to right, Adam Austerfield, LSE Enterprise; Sir Howard Davies, Director of the LSE; Josep-Lluís Carod-Rovira, Vice-President of the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya; and Roser Clavell, Deputy Minister of External Affairs

In June 2009 the Catalunya Món Foundation and the London School of Economics and Political Science signed the agreement of collaboration through which the Catalunya Món Observatory was created at a ceremony in Barcelona.

The event was held at the Cercle d'Economia and was attended by numerous representatives of Catalan and British political institutions and civil society. In the course of the ceremony bilateral agreements were also signed between the London School of Economics and Mediaproducción, Abertis Infraestructuras, the Foment del Treball Nacional, the Mancomunitat de Municipis de l'Àrea de Barcelona, the Societat Econòmica Barcelonesa d'Amics del País and the Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona, for the purpose of collaborating in the consolidation of the project.

The ceremony was presided over by Josep-Lluís Carod Rovira, Vice-President of the Catalan Government and President of the Catalunya Món Foundation, and the agreement was also signed by Roser Clavell, Secretary-General of the Catalunya Món Foundation and Viceconsellera (Deputy Minister) for External Affairs and Co-operation in the Catalan Government, Sir Howard Davies, Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science, and David Simon Lee, Executive Director of LSE Enterprise.

The ceremony was followed by a lecture by Howard Davies and subsequent discussion on the future of regulation in the financial markets and global economic prospects. He highlighted the serious problems that are now faced by both the Spanish and British economies, and the possibilities that they may continue for some time.

In his intervention Josep-Lluís Carod-Rovira focussed on the success represented by the creation of the new centre, which links Catalonia to one of the world's most prestigious academic centres, and will contribute to maintaining a window open to the goal of internationalizing the country in every possible area.

Presentation of the programme of the Catalan Observatory at the London School of Economics and Political Science (28/10/2009)

From left to right, Sir Howard Davies, Roser Clavell, Josep Manuel Barberà, Paul Preston



In October 2009, the Secretary-General of the Catalunya Món Foundation and Catalan Deputy-Minister of External Affairs and Cooperation, Roser Clavell, and the Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science, Sir Howard Davies, presented the programme to be undertaken by the Catalan Observatory during the academic year 2009–10.

Among the activities that had been agreed were the organization of a series of one- or two-day conferences with experts invited from other institutions, such as a seminar focussing on the most innovative aspects of health care in Catalonia and Britain, and a workshop on the economic impulse given by sport and its effects in processes of socialization. It was also agreed to prepare an annual report on key economic and social indicators in Catalonia and their degree of internationalization and globalization.

The presentation was also attended by Josep Manuel Barberà, Director of the Catalunya Món Foundation; Carles Casajuana, Spanish Ambassador to the United Kingdom; Xavier Solano, representative of the Catalan government in the United Kingdom; and Paul Preston, Director of the Observatory.

Previously, Professor Michael Cox gave a talk on 'Europe and the new world economic order: challenges and opportunities for Catalonia'.

It was announced that Joan Maria Nin would take part in the first public event in the programme of the Catalan Observatory, to be organized by the British Chamber of Commerce in Spain with the collaboration of the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Catalunya Món Foundation.

The Catalan Observatory at the London School of Economics and Political Science held its first public event at the Llotja de Mar in Barcelona with the lecture 'The Future of "la Caixa" and International Development' by Joan Maria Nin, Chief Executive Officer of "la Caixa" (19/01/2010)

Joan Maria Nin addressing the audience at the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce



The meeting was attended by numerous figures from the Catalan and British business worlds and was organized by the British Chamber of Commerce in Spain with the collaboration of the Catalunya Món Foundation and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Joan Maria Nin spoke on the macroeconomic situation of Spain, "la Caixa" savings bank and the Spanish banking system, and the opportunities "la Caixa" has for international expansion. Nin began his talk by explaining that we are now in a world in recession in which some countries have begun to recover. 'The three largest world economies (the United States of America, Japan and the Eurozone) experienced positive growth in the third quarter of 2009,' the CEO of "la Caixa" told the substantial audience, 'and the emerging economies of Asia are also growing significantly.'

Referring to the Spanish market, Nin forecast that during this year and 2011 the financial system would be subjected to greater pressures, due to low interest rates and the impact of accumulated debt on capital ratios. Nevertheless, he asserted that "la Caixa" is a reference point in the Spanish financial system, as a leader in the private banking market, with 10 per cent of the total market, the holder of the largest industrial portfolio, with a liquidity of 25,648 million euros, and with a social commitment represented by the 500 million euros that in 2009 were assigned to the bank's social foundation, the Obra Social.

The CEO of "la Caixa" concluded his talk by pointing out that the Portuguese bank BPI and "la Caixa" have opened two new business centres, in Lisbon and Madrid, to provide services for companies of both countries. These new centres join with the 53 already operated by BPI and the 79 business centres of "la Caixa" to form the most extensive network of business services in the Iberian Peninsula.

Catalonia has been characterized in recent years by its desire to maintain and strengthen its links with the European Union. Moving closer to the Community institutions has been a recurring strategy that has been shared in by many different sectors of Catalan society. In this respect Catalonia is a region that has clearly demonstrated its firm commitment to the process of European integration, as well as its desire to take full part in it as one of the leading actors in this process. Catalonia is for example one of the few regions in Europe that has incorporated its membership of and participation in the European Union into its own basic constitutional charter (its Statute of Autonomy), and maintains a permanent presence in the Community sphere by means of the Generalitat government's Delegation to the EU.

The year 2010 represents a moment of change for the European Union, of institutional adaptation and socioeconomic difficulties.

This is the year in which a new institutional model is coming into operation based on the Lisbon Treaty, which among other changes brings the creation of a permanent presidency for the European Council. The European Council is one of the principal politico-institutional elements within the EU, and refers to the body made up of the 27 heads of state or of government of the Union, plus the Council's own President and the Head of the European Commission. Its role is that of giving overall political direction to the progress of the EU, and its meetings are customarily held every three months (and popularly referred to as 'reunions europees' or 'reunions de Cap d'Estats de la UE' in Catalan, 'sommets des Chefs d'Etats' in French, 'European summits' in English, and 'cumbres europeas' in Spanish).

In spite of this new element in the organization, which introduces a degree of continuity into the formation of the European Council, the rotating presidency shared between the different member states used up until now continues to be the system employed in another of the principal politico-institutional bodies of the EU, the Council of the European Union (properly named 'The Council', but commonly known as the 'Council of Ministers'). The Council of Ministers is the body charged with representing the member states within the institutional triangle of the EU, and in contrast to the European Council (which meets every three months, and whose role is more of providing general political orientation) is permanently in operation, and one of the main active elements in the European legislative process.

Within this system of rotation in January 2010 the Spanish central government took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months, a post in which it will be succeeded by Belgium and Hungary. The practical possibilities that are offered by a Presidency of the Council of Ministers are very great. The state that occupies the Presidency has the ability to modify or to add topics onto the agendas of the various committees responsible for different fields, and to emphasize particular political priorities. As a result the rotating presidencies continue to be one of the most ideal moments through which to contribute to, develop and push forward, under the leadership of a specific state, those legislative and political priorities that are most suited to the EU as a whole.

In the light of these considerations the political and social institutions of Catalonia have sought to be one of the key elements taking part in the development and composition of the programme of the Spanish Presidency.

Before, during and after the Spanish Presidency

One of the principal elements responsible for making the involvement of Catalonia in the Spanish Presidency effective has been the inter-departmental Working Party created in March 2009. Its purpose has been to prepare and articulate the Catalan contribution, and to coordinate the organization of events connected to the Spanish Presidency held in Catalonia.

After June 2010 this Working Party will remain in operation throughout the trio of EU Presidencies held by Spain, Belgium and Hungary, a period that will run from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011.

Some of the recommendations and actions undertaken by the Working Party allow us to identify the European priority areas in which Catalonia already plays an important role and in which it can ultimately consolidate its position as one of the leading players in European affairs:

- 1) The multi-sectoral effort to develop, strengthen and improve the Euro-Mediterranean area and relations within it (see Note 1)
- 2) The focus on improving cross-border links and exchanges, with special emphasis on the Mediterranean rail corridor and transcontinental communications infrastructure (see Note 2)
- 3) Promoting the exchange of information on efficient systems and practices in Health services, specifically in areas where the Catalan model has shown itself to be particularly efficient, such as transplant surgery, blood donation and the decentralization of health services (see Note 3).

And in more general terms:

- In the energy field, to pay special attention to the infrastructure required for energy production, transport and distribution, in order to guarantee security of supply and improve the interconnectivity and diversification of existing and currently planned systems, while also encouraging renewable energies.
- To encourage cultural diversity and promote multilingualism, ensuring that the initiatives of the European Union are not limited to the official languages of the Union, but also take into account languages that are not those of a whole state. To incorporate the Catalan language into the visual elements representing the Spanish Presidency and subsequent events, reaffirming the image of Spain as a multilingual state.

Documents:

Grup de Reflexió català sobre el futur de la UE (in Catalan and Spanish) website of the Generalitat de Catalunya

Document de contribució del Govern de la Generalitat a la Presidència espanyola (Catalan and Spanish)

NOTE 1

The multi-sectoral effort to develop, strengthen and improve the Euro-Mediterranean area and relations within it

One of the primary contributions that Catalonia, Barcelona and Catalan society offers to European community policy is its involvement in the development of a Euro-Mediterranean area of friendly co-existence, economic exchange and joint projects for the future.

04/03/2010

The Palau de Pedralbes, seat of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean

**Palau de Pedralbes,
new seat of the Secretariat of
the Union for the Mediterranean**



At the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Euromed area, held on 3 and 4 November 2008 in Marseille, Barcelona was chosen to be the seat of the Secretariat of the 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'.

In March 2010 the offices of the Secretariat were inaugurated in the Palau de Pedralbes in Barcelona, and in January the Jordanian diplomat Ahmad Masa'deh, formerly the Jordanian representative to NATO, Minister of Public Sector Reform and Jordanian Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway and the European Union, had been chosen as the Union for the Mediterranean's new Secretary-General.

The Secretariat's role is of a technical nature. It is charged with examining the different project proposals made to the Union and subsequently reporting on them to the Joint Permanent Committee, which is the institution that coordinates the implementation of projects jointly with the states involved and financing institutions.

One of the major objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean is to make the multilateral relationships between Mediterranean partners more tangible and visible by means of regional and sub-regional projects that are in the interests of all the region's citizens. The Paris Summit of July 2008 already identified a series of initiatives to be developed, which were later confirmed by the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Marseille. The first initiatives that are foreseen are the following:

Recapitulation on the Union for the Mediterranean

Biennial Summits. Biennial summits will be held, at which a political declaration will be decided together with a shortlist of specific regional projects that are to be initiated. The conclusions of the meeting will need to define the Union's strategic priorities and a working programme for two years. These summits will take place alternately in one of the EU countries and in one of the other Mediterranean partners. The host country will be chosen by consensus.

Co-Presidency. The use of a Co-Presidency, shared by one of the member states of the EU and one of the other Euro-Mediterranean partner states, seeks to ensure greater balance and shared responsibility in the work of cooperation. Its mandate will be for two years.

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA). The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) will form the legitimate parliamentary expression of the entire process, and is to be consolidated. It will also be necessary for its work to be better coordinated with the other institutions of the Partnership.

Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA). The Marseille Declaration highlights the importance of promoting practical action at regional and local level. Hence, the proposal has been incorporated, initially made by the EU Committee of the Regions, for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA), to be made up of members elected at a regional and local level in the EU member states and partner countries.

Senior Officials. The Senior Officials are charged with managing all aspects of the initiative, evaluating the progress achieved in all areas, including those questions previously dealt with by the Euromed Committee, and preparing Ministerial meetings.

Joint Permanent Committee. The Joint Permanent Committee will be based in Brussels and will assist in preparing and following up the meetings of Senior Officials. It will also deal with matters formerly handled by the Euromed Committee, which will be dissolved.

Secretariat. The Secretariat, based in Barcelona, will have the role of identifying, following up and promoting new projects, and searching for implementation partners.

Documents:

Nota de Premsa, EUROPA PRESS RELEASE (Spanish and Catalan)

Recull de Premsa, Generalitat de Catalunya, Candidature for the UPM

- the decontamination of the Mediterranean;
- establishment of land and maritime highways;
- civil defence initiatives to combat natural and man-made disasters;
- alternative energy development and the preparation of a Mediterranean solar energy plan;
- the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean University;
- business development in the region.

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean must play an important role in the initiation, development and management of all these projects. Catalonia has a clear interest in, and can contribute a great deal to, a reactivation of this process and giving it new momentum. The adjournment of the principal Mediterranean-area summit, which was to have been held on 7 June in Barcelona, is not good news.

20-21/01/10

Barcelona welcomes the Constituent Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA)

Barcelona will be the seat of the political secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA), a new body that began to function in March 2010 after holding its first constituent meeting in January.

The EMRLA will be made up of representatives of regions and cities from 47 countries around the Euro-Mediterranean area, and represents an added responsibility for Barcelona following the city's selection as the seat of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The IEMed, among the best 200 think-tanks in the world

The Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (European Institute for the Mediterranean) based in Barcelona has been placed among the best 200 think-tanks in the world, according to the publication The Global Go-To Think-Tanks. The IEMed takes a leading part in the dialogue between the European Union and the other countries around the Mediterranean, and is one of the chief European centres for reflexion and debate on Mediterranean societies. Prominent among its main tasks are those of encouraging the participation of civil society in the Barcelona Process, and contributing to the publicizing of Catalan and Spanish institutions around the Mediterranean area.

The decision to focus on improving cross-border links and exchanges, with special emphasis on the Mediterranean rail corridor and transcontinental communications infrastructure

The need to unite the Mediterranean coast, Catalonia, Barcelona and Spain with the rest of Europe has been one of the demands most frequently made in the region with regard to infrastructure. During the last few months of 2009, a variety of public institutions and social and economic interest groups had already emphasized the need to use the Spanish Presidency during the first half of 2010 to ensure that the Mediterranean Corridor was declared a 'priority' rail corridor for the EU.

One of the most important of the petitions made in order to relaunch this objective was that which was signed on 11 June 2009 by six of the principal European regions that would be affected by the scheme: Catalonia, the Valencian Community, the French regions of Rhône-Alpes, Languedoc-Roussillon and Franche-Comté, and Piemonte in Italy (Declaration of the Summit of the Regions, Barcelona, 11 June 2009, see 'documents'). These different regions all called for the creation of a trans-European network of multi-modal transport that would be based on rail hubs and would be able to respond to future expectations of sustainable mobility for passengers and freight.

Two days after the signature of this declaration the Council of Transport Ministers of the European Union (one of the forms of the Council of the European Union) received a formal request from the Spanish government for the rail corridor along the Mediterranean coast, and in particular the area that extends from Algeciras to the French frontier, to be included in the list of priority projects for the Trans-European Transport Network.



With the Spanish Presidency almost at an end, the need to establish the Mediterranean Rail Corridor as one of the 'priority' areas within the programmes for Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) continues to be an objective that remains pending for all the interests involved, and for the European Union itself. In this regard one of the last opportunities to achieve this goal before a change of Presidency is the meeting of Ministers of Public Works of the European Union on 8 and 9 June 2010.

The Mediterranean rail axis is one of the most ambitious projects in Europe for the transport of freight and passengers. One of the main studies carried out on the project, for example, undertaken by the FERRMED lobbying group (which coordinates the interests of over 150 multinational companies, chambers of commerce, professional bodies, port authorities and other institutions around the European Union), calculates that it will require an investment of close to 177,764 million euros, but that the return on this investment could be close to 500,000 million euros (taking into account operating costs, energy savings, labour costs and the maintenance or reduction of carbon emissions).

This project, which has the majority support of public institutions in all the regions involved, as well as of Catalan and Spanish business organizations, will give a decisive impulse to business competitiveness in Catalonia and Spain as a whole.

Documents:

Joint Declaration by the Summit of the Regions on 11 June 2009

FERRMED Study on the Great Rail Axis for freight transport.

NOTE 3

Promoting the exchange of information on efficient systems and practices in Health services, specifically in areas where the Catalan model has shown itself to be particularly efficient, such as transplant surgery, blood donation and the decentralization of health services

The Conference of the Catalan Observatory at the London School of Economics, 'Conference on Innovation and Policy Learning Health care: Catalonia and UK in Europe', 17-18 March 2010 (www.lse.ac.uk/catalanobservatory)

The Catalan Observatory (CO) inaugurated its programme of activities for 2010-2011 at the London School of Economics and Political Science on 17 and 18 March with a conference on 'Innovation and Policy Learning Health Care: Catalonia and UK in Europe'.

The opening speeches were made during the afternoon of the 17th by Professor Julian Le Grand, formerly senior policy advisor on health to Prime Minister Tony Blair and Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy at the LSE, and Professor Guillem López Casasnovas, formerly a principal advisor to the health ministries of Catalonia and the Spanish central government, a member of the steering committee of the Bank of Spain and Professor of Public Economics at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The conference was chaired by Professor Paul Preston, chair of the Catalan Observatory and Director of the Cañada Blanch Centre.

Julian Le Grand's lecture centred on the reforms that have been carried out in recent years in the British health system, the difficulties that have arisen and the lessons that can be learnt from the point of view of achieving specific objectives in the efficiency and flexibility of the sector. His talk was vividly illustrated with practical examples drawn from the speaker's own experience during his time as a policy advisor to Prime Minister Blair. For his part Guillem López Casasnovas analysed the principal characteristics of the Catalan health system, giving a clear outline of its levels of decentralization and the relationship between public and private spending. Several comparative graphs served to illustrate the position of Catalonia in these areas in relation to those of other countries in Europe, such as the rest of Spain or the United Kingdom. As a result of these two contributions, and more specifically of the debate that they suggested over the role that has been played by non-profit foundations and organizations in the development of health services, a discussion developed on the need for collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as on the role of governance in the setting of objectives and the distribution of resources. The discussion was then opened up to questions from the audience, which allowed a further debate to begin on the importance of cultural differences when looking at ways to implement successfully institutional reforms in the health administration field.

On the second day the Conference was divided into two consecutive round tables. Alistair McGuire, Professor in Health Economics at the Department of Social Policy of the LSE, was responsible for introducing the three speakers at the first round table, on administration and decentralization in the health systems of Britain, the United States and Catalonia. The first talk, titled 'Devolution in the Health Systems of Catalonia and England', was given by Professor Scott Greer of the University of Michigan, who reflected on the elements that make possible the reform of any particular health system. He laid emphasis on three factors: funding, the degree of asymmetry between the centre and the periphery in a state and the level of decentralization of a particular country and its existing legislation. The second contribution was by Gwyn Bevan, on 'Targets and Health Care Systems in the United Kingdom'. The speaker analysed the different problems that the British government had had to overcome in order to reform the health system, which strategies it had prioritized and what lessons could be drawn from this for Catalonia and its model of health administration. In this respect he was able to show that in the British case a policy of 'naming and blaming' combined with very

tightly defined targets had been relatively effective in raising efficiency levels and standards in the British system. Finally, Professor Joan Costa Font analysed in his lecture on 'Devolution and Health System Performance: Catalonia in Centralized Spain' the different theoretical arguments and practical examples that structure the relationship between decentralization and efficiency in health administration. Professor Costa Font reflected on the part played by different factors such as patient satisfaction and health equity to support his thesis that the more decentralized a system becomes, the greater capacity it has to adapt to emerging needs.

The second round table focussed on an area of the greatest importance in Catalonia, that of transplant surgery and blood donation. Catalonia occupies first place in the world in terms of the number of organ transplants per head of population, and is one of the European regions with the highest incidence of blood donation. The Director of OCATT (the Catalan organization for transplants and organ donation), Dr Rosa Deulofeu Vilarnau, took charge of indicating the strategies that had been followed in Catalonia regarding organ donation and transplants, and reflected on the reasons for Catalan success in this field in her talk 'The Catalan Model of Transplants and Organ Donation'. In doing so she put forward the argument that the high incidence of organ donations and transplants had a deeper explanation than the simple principle of 'presumed consent' (a legal factor that differentiates the Catalan situation from, for example, that in Britain). Her summary of the historical and institutional situation also enabled those at the round table to examine the influence of the Catalan transplant system on those elsewhere in Spain and around Europe, due to the successful results obtained in Catalonia. In the second talk, on 'Incentives in Blood Donation in the European Union', Professor Mireia Jofre Bonet made use of the results of one of her most recent research projects to establish a relationship between the act of giving blood and the various types of motivation and incentives that there may be behind it (remuneration/non-remuneration, financial remuneration/remuneration of other kinds, etc.).

From left to right, Carles Casajuana, Spanish Ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Paul Preston, Chair of the CO



Julian Le Grand, Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy at the LSE and former senior policy advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair, addressing the conference



At the inaugural meeting, from left to right, Guillem López Casanovas, Paul Preston, Julian Le Grand



SNAPSHOTS

A group photograph following the opening meeting on 17 March, with, from left to right, Guillem López Casanovas, Joan Costa Font, Rosa Deulofeu, Paul Preston, Carles Casajuana, Toni Vives, Josep Manuel Barberà



Round table on 18 March. Welcoming remarks by Joan Costa Font (left), Director of the CO, and Josep Manuel Barberà, Director of the Catalunya Món Foundation.



Doctor Rosa Deulofeu Vilarnau, during her talk on the organization of transplants and organ donation in Catalonia at round table 2



Barcelona, European capital of social services for 2010

Between 21 and 23 June 2010 Barcelona will become the European capital of social services. Some 500 professionals in the field will take part in the 18th conference of the European Social Network, hosted by the latter body together with the Department of Social Action and Citizenship of the Catalan government and the administration of Barcelona province.

The 18th annual conference of the European Social Network will coincide with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The theme of the event will be 'Challenges and Opportunities for Social Services in Europe: promoting care and inclusion in a difficult economic environment'.

During the three days of the conference those attending will take part in four multi-strand workshop sessions focussed around the challenges faced by social services around Europe. Special emphasis will be placed on the new social context marked by demographic change, with the arrival of immigrant communities, the ageing of the population, the increase in unemployment, especially among young people, and the need to extend social services to groups previously excluded from them.

In this situation, the European Social Network considers its annual conference in Barcelona to be an ideal setting in which to debate the ways in which social services should be created and provided. Equally, it will analyse current trends, the challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies, and the role to be played by new types of service provider, among other topics.

Catalonia, world record-holder in organ transplants

In 2009 Catalonia achieved a new record in the number of organ transplants undertaken in relation to its population – of the kidneys, heart, liver, lungs and pancreas – by reaching the figure of 844 operations, which makes it the world leader in the field. This has been possible due to the increase in the number of live donors, and the decrease in the number of deaths due to traffic accidents.

The proportion of organ donors in Catalonia was of 35.4 donors for every 1,000 of the population. This means that it has the highest incidence of organ donation in the European Union, surpassing the figure for Spain as a whole, with 34.2 donors per 1,000 people. Catalonia has a donation rate more than double the average for the EU (18.2) and eight points higher than that of the United States (26.3).

Of the total of 844 transplant operations carried out – 67 involving patients from outside Catalonia – 53 were undertaken on children (28 kidney transplants, 12 of the liver, 10 of the lungs and 3 of the heart), which represents an increase of 103.8 per cent compared to 2008. In addition, in 2009 the first and only kidney cross-transplants involving two pairs of patients were carried out, in Catalonia and Andalusia.

Equally, in 2009 the number of people who gave blood from the umbilical cord to the public Banc de Sang i Teixits (Blood and Tissue Bank) was 10,546. Consequently, the total number of high-quality samples held by this bank was 13,186.

Documents

**General Website, facts and statistics,
OCATT (Catalan Transplant Organization)**

e-Health Ministerial Conference 2010

For the first time, the EU Ministerial High-Level e-Health Conference and the World of Health IT Conference and Exhibition (WoHIT) were held in the same week, as part of a joint initiative named 'eHealth Week 2010'. The multi-level programme, held in the Barcelona International Convention Centre from 15 to 18 March, was the most important event of the year in the e-Health field in Europe.

The different events were attended by approximately 2,500 delegates, representing different public bodies, member states of the EU, health providers, and providers of new technology and information systems.

Among the principal resolutions made public at the conference was the project to create a common electronic health network for the whole of Europe, announced by the Vicepresident of the European Commission and Commissioner for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes.

This combination of health and new technologies clearly presents a great opportunity for Europe, and more specifically for Spain and Catalonia, to undertake the modernization of the institutions and methods of the welfare state.