

The Poblet Declaration on the labour market and human capital

Poblet Monastery, 10th May 2014

In March 2013, the *Plataforma Coneixement, Territori i Innovació (Plataforma CTI)* was created, an initiative promoted by the Association of Catalan Public Universities (ACUP), Foment del Treball Nacional, PIMEC, Fundació la Caixa and a group of companies and institutions in the country. Its main purpose is to promote the social and economic development of Catalonia based on a permanent, close collaboration between universities, companies and institutions in the country, with a strategic long-term vision.

In this context, the first activity organised by the *Plataforma CTI* was to hold the *I Jornades Catalunya Futura* conference in Poblet Monastery, at which the Poblet Declaration was made public. It is a declaration that accepts that an economy based on knowledge and innovation must be supported by a close, collaborative relationship between companies, universities, research and technology centres, administrations and the society of which it is a part, and which establishes, as a main commitment, the active promotion of a strategy of competitiveness, social and economic progress that creates employment in Catalonia, which is intensely based on knowledge and innovation.

The *II Jornades Catalunya Futura* conference, which was held in Poblet Monastery on the 9th and 10th of May 2014, focused its attention on the labour market and human capital in Catalonia, based on the combined work of almost 50 representatives from universities and from a whole host of companies and institutions in the country. Their shared diagnosis reveals a complex economic and social reality, the result of a historical economic structure that has been intensified by the current crisis, with an excessive proportion of low-skilled labour market and based on economic sectors with little added value and innovation. An education system which, despite the very clear advances made over the last four decades, shows significant imbalances in some stages and components. Unsustainable levels of unemployment, especially and dramatically with respect to young people without a university degree. Growing inequality in the distribution of income and an alarming growth in poverty levels. All

this within an economic context of growing globalisation and of tertiarization of the economy and of the labour market. This means we can firmly establish that Catalan society should base its dynamics, its cohesion and its progress and competitiveness on the productive sector which generates qualified jobs. Therefore, it should be committed to the growth, internationalisation and innovation of existing companies and to promoting new innovation-based companies.

This is why the *Plataforma CTI* will work in close collaboration with all the agents in the country to make the following objectives attainable:

1. To move towards a productive model which is based on an economy that is intensive in innovative, internationalised knowledge. To do this, it will be necessary to promote a productive structure that bases its competitiveness on creating qualified jobs.
2. To guarantee fair access to education for social cohesion and the optimum use of talent.
3. To activate specific training programmes that enable the active population with low levels of education to evolve to intermediate levels (sixth form college or medium grade vocational training courses). These programmes are particularly necessary in view of the reconversion of sectors such as construction.
4. To facilitate the creation of new companies and the consolidation and growth of existing SMEs.
5. To give prestige to the role of the company as an instrument for social cohesion and creation of wealth at all education levels.

6. To design and execute public policies that are closely interrelated to education, the labour market, the productive system and active employment policies, which requires higher levels of collaboration between the various levels of governance and their coordination with the agents of the innovation system.
7. To favour professional training and to increase its interrelation with university training, to promote measures aimed at certifying skills and competencies to recognise professional practice and to facilitate labour integration and the professional promotion of young people.
8. To give a firm impulse to the hiring of graduates, engineers and doctors in the productive fabric as a key factor for the transformation and incorporation of knowledge into the economic activity.
9. To promote lifelong learning and permanent training to improve basic competences and to encourage training in transversal skills at all education levels, for workers and entrepreneurs.
10. To improve employment and labour mediation services, increasing the resources and providing information and attention services aimed at the young population that guarantee a follow up, as well as boosting the integration of the various permanent employment observatories that allow information and data to be added.
11. To create actions to promote and favour business initiatives and an entrepreneurial spirit among young people and creativity. Of particular interest are those with a comprehensive nature that combine education linked to growing sectors with economic supports; assessment and accompanying systems to develop business projects among university students; to facilitate access to capital and sources of financing and the offer of jobs.

12. To invest in people through measures to reinforce their competences and abilities and to enable them to participate in full in the labour world and in society. The priority areas are education, top-quality nursery school services, health services, training, help in finding employment and reintegration.
13. To promote better alignment, coherence and follow-up on the actions adopted for the growth of productivity, employment and salaries that arise from the administration and from social dialogue.
14. To firmly promote sandwich or dual degree programmes and industrial doctorate programmes, seeking the greatest collaboration between companies and academic institutions.
15. To favour the prestige and recognition of Catalan universities at an international level, as an implicit factor in valuing the training of students and degree holders in our country and as a source of talent attraction.
16. To promote private investment in R&D to be able to achieve the objective of 2% of the GDP and, along these lines, to boost knowledge transfer structures in the country within the favourable context of the 2020 Strategy and the RIS3.

Therefore, we propose measuring the evolution of the education structure of the employed population as a key indicator, so that it comes closer to the 20-50-30 model¹, the central European standard.

¹ 20% primary, 50% secondary and 30% tertiary