

The Mossos are now the national police of Catalonia

At midnight on the first of November 2008, Catalonia reached the historic landmark of the finalization of the deployment of the Mossos d'Esquadra throughout all of Catalonia. The deployment, which started in the year 1994 in the region of Osona, has thereby finalized on reaching Camp de Tarragona and Terres de l'Ebre. There are currently 14,150 male and female officers of the mossos d'Esquadra in Catalonia, of whom 1547 have been stationed in the last stage of the deployment.

In total, apart from the 14,150 officers, the Mossos d'Esquadra Police Force also has 900 administrative workers distributed between 91 police stations and the Egara central complex in Sabadell. In addition, it has 3135 vehicles and motorcycles throughout Catalonia to attend to a territory of more than 32,000 kilometres squared in which a registered population of 7.2 million inhabitants lives, which is multiplied with the visits of the numerous tourists of one of the most touristic autonomous communities of the country.

The end of the countdown

“Exactly 25 years ago, the police of the Government of Catalonia were reinstated, taking the reduced Mossos d'Esquadra police force that already existed as the initial core. Since its creation in 1983, its functions have had ups and downs. They timidly began to take up some of the competences of inspection and control that belonged to the Government of Catalonia and began a slow process of territorial deployment”

These words, which were pronounced by the Minister of Home Affairs, Institutional Relations and Participation, Joan Saura, on 2nd July, now symbolize the end of the long journey that commenced towards the end of the year 1983.

In this same act, those institutional acts which were to be the end of the deployment of the Mossos d'Esquadra Police Force were communicated:

- The organization of a specific institutional act in the Palace of the Government of Catalonia, planned for 6th October
- A itinerant exhibition, travelling throughout Catalonia, which will be inaugurated next autumn and which will show the process of creation and development of the Mossos d'Esquadra Police Force, how it has been implemented territorially and its future objectives and challenges.
- Acts that have been prepared for this coming Friday and Saturday, in the Castle of Sant Ferran in Figueres to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Mossos d'Esquadra Traffic Police and of the Catalan Traffic Service.

10 years “directing” traffic

On 4th May 1998, the first traffic officers of the Mossos d'Esquadra Police of the Government of Catalonia began to patrol the streets of Gerona. In this manner, the transferral to the Government of Catalonia of competences for traffic was consolidated, with this process continuing with deployment in Lerida on 1st May 1999 and culminating in Barcelona and Tarragona on 1st December 2000.

In the last ten years, deaths on Catalan roads have fallen from the 592 recorded in 1998 to 333 last year, which represents a reduction of almost 44%. Fatal accidents have also been reduced by 39.87% as the number of accidents has gone from 479 in 1998 (the year in which competences were taken up for traffic) to 288 in 2007. This reduction brings us close to the objective of reducing road deaths to half in the period 2000-2010 that was set by the European Union (EU).

With these objectives having been achieved, the commemorative acts held at the Castle of Sant Ferran in Figueres were inaugurated on 4th July, for the tenth anniversary of the transferral of competences in traffic and road safety in Catalonia.

Throughout these years, the Mossos d'Esquadra, via the Traffic Division, have taken part in diverse international projects. We may highlight the participation, since November 2005 in the DRUID (Driving in Road Under Influence of Drugs) project, being the only Spanish police force to do so at the outset of the same. The Directorate-General of Traffic (DGT) has recently joined. This project is carried out within the framework of the TISPOL organization, made up by traffic police forces from all over Europe. The objective of DRUID is to analyze the influence of alcohol, drugs and certain medicines on driving. Other international projects in which the Mossos d'Esquadra have participated are the New Programme for the Assessment of Child Seats, ROLL OVER, and ETAC (European Truck Accident Causation).

To the celebration of 4th July, those held on 13th October were added, to render tribute to the 191 officers who formed part of the first year of traffic police and who are still in active service in the speciality. In the acknowledgement, which coincided with the Second European Road Safety Day, the officers were presented with a commemorative watch and a letter from the Minister of Home Affairs, Institutional Relations and Participation, Joan Saura. Those officers of the Traffic Division who have given their most prized possession, their own lives, were remembered in the act.

My name is Lluís Martinez and I am the first one from the first graduation year

These were the words chosen by Deputy Inspector Lluís Martinez to introduce himself to those who were to be the students of the second year of the Mossos d'Esquadra police force in the year 1985, and with these same words he wished to commence his speech, in the acts held in the Palace of the Government of Catalonia on 6th October to render tribute to the 25 years of the Mossos d'Esquadra and to the 268 officers from its first year.

During the act, the Minister Joan Saura wished to acknowledge and thank the Mossos d'Esquadra publically for their energy, desire, effort, and on occasions the excessive personal effort and the hours of dedication with which the male and female officers have accepted the challenge of forming part of the new police of Catalonia. In his speech, the Minister also wished to remember those male and female officers who have been injured or killed in the act of service, attending to road accidents or protecting the general public from terrorist attacks.

The act was finalized with the presentation of a commemorative award to the 268 officers of the first year, which was received by Deputy Inspector Lluís Martinez.

The itinerant exhibition and the final campaign

On 3rd October, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Institutional Relations and Participation inaugurated the itinerant exhibition with the objective of communicating that the 25 years since the creation of the Mossos d'Esquadra Police of the Government of Catalonia is being commemorated this year.

The exhibition, which will travel around another 15 Catalan cities, intends to show in a pleasant manner the different aspects that help to understand the force; on one hand, the old and recent history of the Mossos and, on the other, the importance of the deployment. The exhibition will end next spring after visiting some of the principal cities of our country.

The exhibition will be organized in three thematic areas:

1. The historical background of the Mossos d'Esquadra, from their origins up to 1982, when they ceased to depend on the Council of Barcelona.
2. The creation of the force (1983) and its territorial deployment (1994-2008).
3. New challenges for the future for a consolidated, modern and efficient force.

The end of the deployment has also coincided with the informative campaign that has been carried out by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Institutional Relations and Participation. On 27th October, the Minister Joan Saura, accompanied by the Operational Deputy Director of the Police, commissioner Josep Milán, presented the informative campaign on this end of the road. The campaign informs the citizens of our country of all of the competences that characterize and identify the Mossos d'Esquadra as an integral police force.

The Minister stressed that the deployment has been carried out with the assumption of two principal values or elements, which are to provide a service of closeness to the public and that of the professionalism of each and every one of the members that make up the force. The Mossos d'Esquadra police force is the most highly rated police force in Catalonia, with a mark of a "B".

The end of the deployment. A historical landmark...

During the acts of deployment of the Mossos d'Esquadra Police Force in Camp de Tarragona and Terres de l'Ebre, President Montilla and Minister Saura, expressed their conviction that this is a historical landmark which is the fruit of the effort and excitement of all of those who form a part of the Mossos d'Esquadra police force.

The final act of deployment was culminated at the police station of Amposta (Tarragona), with this fact, in the words of the Minister Joan Saura, coming to symbolize precisely the culmination of this path set out on in the year 1982 throughout the whole of the territory of Catalonia. The Minister Saura encouraged everyone to continue working with the same energy, desire to serve and professionalism with which they have done so over the last 25 years. Now, said the Minister, "one of the great projects of the land" is culminated, which has made the Mossos "one of the most visible symbols of the self-government of Catalonia".

In relation to the future, the minister explained that a new stage is now beginning, with new projects, such as the finalization of the construction of the central facilities of the Egara complex, the approval of the Police System Law, as well as the Ethical Code, and reinforcement throughout Catalonia, with new officers who will come from the Institute for Public Safety of Catalonia next June and in subsequent years.

The president of the Government of Catalonia, José Montilla, classified the date of 1st November 2008 as a *historical landmark, extremely important for our self-government, representing the culmination of a collective effort and the accomplishment of a set objective. We have travelled a long road together, said the president, many years after the first deployment. Today the Mossos have reached the last corner of Catalonia. Today, the police of Catalonia are now the police of all of Catalonia.*

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