



LOCAL PRESS

THE PRESS IN THE CATALAN-SPEAKING AREAS DOES NOT CONSIST ONLY OF REGIONAL PAPERS COVERING INTERNATIONAL AND/OR REGIONAL NEWS, BUT ALSO INCLUDES LOCAL PUBLICATIONS AT DIFFERENT LOCAL LEVELS.

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The Spanish State, seen as a conglomerate of different cultures, but constituting a single economic, juridical and political structure, shows a remarkable variety in the field of written communication, which is, precisely, a result of its plurality.

The Catalan-speaking areas of the state, that is, the *Principat*, the Balearic Isles and the *País Valencià*, have, unlike the other linguistic areas, developed a press with a distinctive structure.

The press in the Catalan regions does not consist only of regional papers covering international and or regional news, but also includes local publications at different local levels.

The press in the towns, cities or districts can be daily or otherwise, wholly or partly in Catalan, tabloid or magazine format, but its greatest concern is always to serve a much smaller and more specific area than the regional dailies, in response to the latter's total lack of interest, which according to local press experts is the main reason for the existence of the local papers.

Today, when television via satellite can let us know at once what is happening in the far corners of the globe, many inhabitants of the Catalan-speaking areas are still offered what could be a round-up of the previous day's news broadcasts from any television channel, instead of local information about their region.

The local or district press's close tie with the town or district that gives birth to it and the professional standards of its staff, over and above their legal obligations, are the foundation stones that support this type of press.

The success of the local press is clear from statistics that show that its circulation in Catalonia is three times that of the regional press. If the latter were to reach the same readership as the former, the sale of newspapers in Catalonia would increase from one for every fifteen Catalans in the *Principat* to one for every six, a figure which would put Catalonia amongst the leading European countries in this respect. Nevertheless, the future is unclear for the local and district press. The need for information processing technology and the rise of new generations are the two principal factors behind the uncertainty that threatens the reality and success of the present.

The interest in the differentiating factor that this type of press represents for Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Isles has led the political institutions of these historical communities to establish Promotion Services for the press, to protect it, encourage it and generally do all they can with their distressingly limited budgets. At the same time, the different publications have formed an association to ensure the survival, development and

success of this type of press. The *Associació Catalana de la Premsa Comarcal de Catalunya* was born in 1981 in Canyamars, a town in the Maresme district, and its constituent congress was held with the help of the central government's provincial delegation in Barcelona. Since then, the ACPC has managed to bring together all the general news publications published one or more times a week, about 80 % of the monthlies and 60 % of the quarterlies. It is based in Barcelona. It has a full-time staff of two, who are responsible for the progress of the associate publications. It is also their only recognized representative before the *Generalitat de Catalunya*, the provincial *Diputacions* and other official organisms, in matters concerning non-daily local and district publications in Catalonia.

In Majorca, the *Associació de la Premsa Forana* has been in existence since 1978, and in January of this year represented some forty publications of varying periodicity. Its aims are the same as those of the ACPC, but restricted to the Isle of Majorca.

In Valencia, the situation of the local press is weak, in the opinion of those involved. It is hoped that, thanks to the results achieved in the *Principat*, the non-daily local and district press here will soon enjoy the same success as it does in the *Principat*. ●