**If you don't do politics, they do it for (and against) you**

As 2015 draws to a close, it is good to look back to January's editorial with which we kicked the year off. In it we spoke of the window of opportunity that was opening up to promote comprehensive development of Law 10/2001 on Archives and Records, thanks to the then newly born Law 19/2014 on Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance. The fact that the latter considered records management as a technical key to the general information system that is to build transparency (Art. 5.2), the portal itself as a basic element of the records management system (Art. 5.4) or that, within the organisational measures necessary to guarantee right of access, one that was particularly outstanding was to establish a records management, information and integrated data system (Art. 19.3) it looked like it would allow us, after nearly fifteen years, a political will that understood the extra democratic quality with which the archival structure endows the public administration.

In that same editorial, however, we warned, from experience, that we would have to be very clear that the mere provisions of the law would not be sufficient guarantee, that it would take full involvement of our profession to make it obvious to everyone that any efficient, long-term solution meant including the reorganisation of procedures and cross-cutting scope that only records management brings simultaneously. Work was required within organisations, building alliances with other specialists involved and, above all, work was required outside, addressing the public and main actors of civil society directly. Because now the following excerpt from the preamble to Law 10/2001 really did take on a clear, transparent and even prophetic meaning: ‘the Law also understands that many records provide evidence of the rights and duties of citizens, organisations and government agencies and that in this regard they play a significant role in their relations. It recognises that access to public records is everyone's right, regardless of nationality, condition or function, a right that can only be denied when legally established limitations are applied. Also, the law considers that for government agencies proper records management is essential to legal certainty and to effective, transparent action that is open to public participation’. Yes, you read that right: accountability, access to information, transparency, administrative efficiency and public participation coherently drafted in a ... fifteen-year-old law.

Just days before the coming into force of the Transparency Act, we are all aware of the small, not to say non-existent, degree of compliance with the articles quoted. Essentially, most government agencies have spent this year promoting a new superstructure (also in the Marxist sense), which attempts to comply with the obligations of active advertising, rather than effectively coordinating the existing structure, which not only guaranteed access to information, but also manages its complete life cycle. As at 1 January 2016, no transparency portal will form part of the records management system of government agencies nor will it structure information according to the relevant classification scheme, and in only a handful of transparency committees or offices has expertise in archival science and records management found a place, despite its indisputable relevance in the provisions of the law. The unfortunate incident of the naming of the members of the Commission to Guarantee Right of Access to Public Information has undoubtedly had even more negative consequences than merely failing to comply with Article 40.3: it has set a precedent to exclude the specialists in charge of designing municipal records management systems when emulating it at local level. Either through legal supremacy or, more recently, through technopolitics, our political representatives have opted to prioritise partial strategies that in no way facilitate collaboration between equals of all the agents involved (including the public) proposed by the spirit of the Transparency Act.

Thus, with no political mandate to match up to the objectives of the current legal framework, we have no choice but to get political so they don't get political with us (and even against us). The title of this editorial reworks a statement by Joan Fuster in *Un país sense política?* and in *Diccionari d’ociosos*: ‘All politics not done by us will be done against us’. The author, who also wrote *Contra el Noucentisme,* was very clear on the need for political involvement. Doing politics obviously does not mean becoming a militant and joining a party sector committee or standing for election (although you could); rather it means understanding our scientific knowledge from a political perspective (civic, if you prefer, seeing as they are synonymous). Essentially, this is what we at the AAC-GD have tried to do up to now and will continue to do as far as we can in the future. Creating awareness of archival science outside of government agencies and companies in which records managers work is essential if we are to build the necessary fabric of social alliances that will ultimately enable understanding of our regulatory framework, not as sector-based (cultural) but inextricably linked to the general framework of administrative procedure and access to public information.

We have held meetings with political parties and official agencies (Anti-Fraud Office, APDCAT, Síndic de Greuges (ombudsman)) and taken part in both municipal symposia with citizens' groups, audit platforms (Municipal Citizens' Observatory), data journalists and jurists and more strictly technological and governmental symposia (Digital Government). For the first time, we have a stable presence in the media, thanks to *Arxipèlag*, the digital community on *Núvol*, and a few sporadic contributions to other generalist media. We will continue to seek out dialogue and cooperation with these and other agents (institutional observatories, pro-transparency organisations, etc.) because we are convinced that only through the recognition and interaction of collective expertise can we build comprehensive, sustainable strategies on transparency and public participation. For such efforts to yield the results we all seek, each of us, obviously, has to ‘do politics' in the particular context of our profession and do it, as we said, both inside and out. If we don't believe and trust in the capillarity of the Catalan archival system as a key structure to guarantee the interoperability and preservation of public information in Catalonia, who will? Merry Christmas and good luck.