

Why is Verificat a non-partisan organisation

We are a devoted non-partisan organisation and our compromise with neutrality is vouched by our coverage of political issues. Verificat's first challenge was the local election in Barcelona - a especially disputed one with pretty high level candidates - in 2019, when each fact-checker in the team was following one or two candidates. That methodology allowed us to be aware of all the potential verifiable statements every candidate made, regardless of their political position. We had one reporter covering mayor Ada Colau (Comuns), one for Ernest Maragall (PSC), one for Manuel Valls (Ciudadanos), one for Jaume Collboni (PSC), one for Elsa Artadi (Junts per Catalunya) and one for Josep Bou (PP). Our coverage shows strictly the statements we considered verifiable and relevant. We also published pieces that gathered misleading statements by different candidates on subjects such as migrants, public housing or kindergartens.

This is how we work during electoral periods, where we make efforts to hire further fact-checkers and volunteers to be able to cover every single statement candidates make. Notably, we are now gearing up for the next Autonomic election in Catalonia, which might be held this Autumn. Other than that, in the past six months we were mostly focused on the coronavirus pandemic, especially on viral hoaxes propagating false science, more than on political statements. Still, we continue to make an effort to stay non-partisan in our political coverage.

Quim Torra, the Catalan president is the politician who has received the most attention by our fact-checking team, along with Lorena Roldán, Ciudadanos' spokeswoman in the Catalan Parliament (she is one of the most prominent voices of the opposition to the regional Government). Following their parties, we find ERC, which is governing in coalition with Torra's Junts per Catalunya. That is the reason why there are more fact-checks analyzing their words than any other political parties. The other parties have been analyzed when their members have made relevant statements and covered according to a three member team. Contrary to what happened during the Barcelona election in 2019, Comuns (Ada Colau's party) does not have the same relevance in the regional level than the local level. This also happens with PP or PSC (the two most important parties in Spain, but less relevant in the Catalan parliament) and VOX (which still does not have parliament representation in Catalonia).

The next 10 pieces show our non-partisan commitment: (please note, this list include 6 pieces with a total of over 10 fact-checks, plus 3 reports that we feel demonstrate our compromise with non-partisanship). We have selected only recent work, but at the following link you will be able to see that our previous work on elections was well-balanced and non-partisan.

- **Verdades y mentiras del debate sobre el aumento del impuesto de sucesiones**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/verdades-y-mentiras-del-debate-sobre-el-aumento-del-impuesto-de-sucesiones>

Part of our work is to follow Parliamentary debate over politically significant issues, in this case, the debate around a increase on inheritance tax.

This piece was made by listening to the complete Parliament debate and choosing all claims that looked verifiable regardless who stated them. In this case, we found way more misleading or false statements made by Ciudadanos, the main opposition party in Catalonia and the parliamentary group that asked for this debate. This piece includes seven statements by different political leaders.

- **Torra no tiene datos para afirmar que las residencias de otras comunidades sufrieron más el coronavirus**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/Torra-datos-para-afirmar-residencias-comunidades-sufrieron-mas-coronavirus>

The President of the Catalan Parliament is held by Verificatt under high scrutiny, given his visibility and role in the political hierarchy. In this case, we assessed a claim he made about the handling of the coronavirus crisis, an issue that is *per se* very important.

This statement claims that Catalonia has registered better death toll figures in nursery homes than other regions of Spain. We wanted to verify these numbers regardless of the political party that is in power in those regions. In fact, Andalusia is led by a right-wing coalition (PP, Ciudadanos, Vox), Castilla y León by the conservative party PP and the Balearic Islands or Comunidad Valenciana by the Spanish left PSOE. Our final assessment was that the claim was misleading, as the President did not have enough data to affirm what it did, and the data he did have seemed to point to a different direction.

An editorial note about this piece. As we sometimes do, we have separated the proper fact-check by the wider analysis of the data, which we have included in an explanatory box.

- **Es engañoso que el gobierno de ERC y la CUP en Sabadell no tuviera un alcalde investigado**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/es-enganoso-que-el-gobierno-de-erc-y-la-cup-en-sabadell-no-tuviera-un-alcalde-investigado>

Left-wing parties ERC and CUP used the Sabadell mayor, who was ousted after being investigated by a judge, as an example of politician leaving his position after being put under investigation. This piece was relevant because in those days Laura Borràs, Junts per Catalunya's congresswoman was asked to be forced out of Parliament after the Spanish

Supreme Court started an investigation on her. The statement was made by Gabriel Rufián, the most influential voice of ERC and its spokesman on the Spanish Parliament, and was deemed as misleading, because while Serracant did leave office for a while, he got back into office before the end of the trial, while Rufián's declaration stated otherwise.

- **Torra no se ha subido el sueldo durante la crisis del Covid-19**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/torra-no-subido-sueldo-durante-la-cri-sis-del-covid-19>

This is one of our most read pieces because the opposition parties, PP and Ciudadanos, conservative media and many Twitter users have been repeating that the Catalan president has increased his and his predecessor's income. It's a mistaken interpretation of the 2020 Catalan budget law, which was voted during the Covid-19 pandemics.

This piece demonstrates that Verificat's attention to the President is not only focused on correcting his wrong claims, but also wrongful claims made about him by the opposition.

- **JxSí no llevaba un referéndum de autodeterminación en el programa, como dice Junqueras**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/jxsi-no-llevaba-un-referendum-de-autodeterminacion-en-el-programa-como-dice-junqueras>

Oriol Junqueras, just on probation after three years in jail for his role in the Catalan declaration of independence, spoke on TV after a long time. He is one of the most popular independentist leaders and president of ERC. We found this claim to be very relevant because it shows he is trying to give a different version of an historical fact, a view which we deem very likely to be shared among his followers.

- **Sant Cugat no ha sortit de l'Associació de Municipis per la Independència**

<https://www.verificat.cat/fact-check/sant-cugat-no-ha-sortit-de-l-associacio-de-municipis-per-la-independencia>

This Ciudadanos' statement has had an important impact on social media and online newspapers. Even if the story is about a town that does not have a particular impact on Catalan public opinion, this subject was of interest and had a certain amount of virality, and shows our compromise with local information, as our regional scope is part of the essence of the project.

Other than traditional fact-checking, we also do investigative and data journalism willing to uncover the Government's activity. In this practice we also follow strict non-partisan criteria, but for obvious reasons we especially focus on the current Government contracts.

- **¿Qué incluyen los 17,6 millones que Salut contrató a Ferrovial?**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/que-incluyen-los-176-millones-que-salut-contrato-a-ferrovial>

The Catalan government hired the multinational company Ferrovial during the coronavirus pandemic with an urgent contract worth 17,6 million euros. We got to get the contract's conditions to explain what exactly included the agreement.

- **Justícia fraccionó “indebidamente” 829 contratos por 9,5 millones de euros entre 2015 y 2016**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/justicia-fracciono-indebidamente-829-contratos-por-95-millones-de-euros-entre-2015-y-2016>

Verificat accessed a report by a public office that said that the former administration had divided public contracts illegally to avoid public contests.

- **Militares y policías reciben más de la mitad de los sobresueldos que otorga la Casa Real**

<https://www.verificat.cat/es/fact-check/militares-y-policias-reciben-mas-de-la-mitad-de-los-sobresueldos-que-otorga-la-casa-real>

For the first time, and protected by the Transparency Law, Verificat has accessed to the detailed information about bonus payed to the workers of the Spanish King's House.