

Catalan Foreign Secretary meets with members of the U.S. Congress

- The Secretary for Foreign and European Union Affairs, Roger Albinyana, is on an official visit to Washington, DC to speak with U.S. policymakers and provide clarity concerning current events in Catalonia
- During a debate at the prestigious Peterson Institute for International Economics the Secretary highlighted the EU's "**history of flexibility and pragmatism when dealing with thorny issues**"

Just several weeks in advance of Catalonia's historic plebiscitary elections on independence slated for September 27, the Catalan Government's Secretary for Foreign and European Union Affairs is making an official visit today to Washington, DC in order to speak with U.S. policymakers and provide clarity concerning current events in Catalonia. Secretary **Roger Albinyana** is accompanied on this visit by **Jordi Solé**, Head of the Foreign Action Committee of the Catalan Parliament, as well as **Dr. Andrew Davis**, Delegate of the Government of Catalonia to the United States.

This afternoon, Secretary Albinyana and Mr. Solé met with U.S. Representatives **Mario Díaz Balart** (R-FL), **Ileana Ros Lethinen** (R-FL), **Albio Sires** (D-NJ), **Dana Rohrabacher** (R-CA), and **Carlos Curbelo** (R-FL) at the historic Rayburn House Office Building just steps from the U.S. Capitol. Secretary Albinyana and Mr. Solé explained how recent events in Spain and Catalonia have led the Catalan Government to call plebiscitary elections for September 27, discussed future scenarios for an independent Catalonia, and responded to questions from the members of the U.S. legislature.

Speaking with the press afterwards, Representative Rohrabacher shared his view that "**in the long run, it's better to give people a choice and voluntarily remain part of your country, rather than make them think that they are being forced into your country because it creates resentment, it creates bad feeling, it undermines a feeling of unity that a country needs to have – so give people a choice**".

Prior to this afternoon's meetings, Secretary Albinyana also took part in a morning conversation on the "*Political Economy of Catalanian Independence*" hosted by the prestigious Peterson Institute for International Economics. The Secretary was joined by **Adam Posen**, the President of the Institute, and **Ángel Ubide**, a Senior Fellow, for a direct and cordial debate on the economic prospects of an independent Catalonia. This was warmly welcomed by the Secretary, who noted that the Catalan Government encourages and welcomes a respectful debate on this important subject, and indeed that "**this is precisely why we are holding plebiscitary elections**".

Making a case for the economic viability of an independent Catalonia, Secretary Albinyana underlined the fact that because of the Catalan economy's size and strength, which makes it comparable to the economies of other European Union Member States, **“in the end what we are left with regarding**

Catalonia's economic future depends largely on the assumptions affecting political reactions to a transition to independence”. He affirmed the position of the Catalan Government that the EU's **“history of flexibility and pragmatism when dealing with thorny issues”** would govern a sensible response to the formation of an independent Catalonia, noting that **“it would be in the interests of the E.U. and of each Member State, including Spain, that Catalonia be welcomed seamlessly and quickly as a Member State in its own right”**.

Later this afternoon, Secretary Albinyana will be meeting with journalists from *The Washington Post*, one of the oldest newspapers in the United States.

While not always readily apparent, there is indeed clear interest in Washington, DC concerning what happens in Catalonia later this month. In the words of Representative Díaz-Balart, **“we'll all be watching for what happens on the 27th”**.