



STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE HIGH COURT RULING ON THE 9N VOTE

Barcelona, 13 March 2017

Good afternoon.

As you know, a few hours ago we became aware of the verdict reached by Catalonia's High Court of Justice on the trial of the former President of Catalonia, the Right Honourable Artur Mas, the former Vice President, the Honourable Joana Ortega and the former Minister of Education, Honourable Irene Rigau, for having allowed this country to hold, on November 9 of 2014, one of the most honourable events of democratic participation ever seen in this country, and one which I, personally, wanted to thank and join the people in solidarity who said "I would have done the same and would do it again".

Indeed, it is a ruling that was expected but, nonetheless, it is still very serious. It is a sentence that, through a criminal proceeding, condemns democratic representatives who committed no crime other than to try and listen to the voice of the citizens and allow them to express themselves.

At the start of the trial, I stated that we all felt represented by the defendants and that we also felt judged. Today, we all feel condemned. Not only those who voted 'Yes', but also those who voted any of the other options, including the 'No'. Today, the nearly 2.4 million Catalans who voted have also received this guilty verdict.

We also want to make clear, in case anyone has any doubt, that what the Spanish judiciary has just sentenced will be pardoned by the people of Catalonia in a referendum. By voting. And by voting this year.

Finally, it should be noted that this ruling comes at a moment in which a profound apprehension is beginning to show. There is a growing concern in Europe about what is happening in the Spanish state.

Only a few days ago, the Adenauer Foundation stated that the solution to the problem between Spain and Catalonia could not simply be resolved through police or judicial means.

And few hours later, we learned about the verdict of the Venice Commission, which in an unprecedented opinion, corrected the amendment to the law of the Constitutional Court, clearly stating that this approach does not fall in line with the practice of the majority of countries of reference.

Nothing that can come of this ruling will make us re-think anything. Quite the contrary. It encourages us to continue looking for and providing the answer through the ballots while those at the other side of the conflict lack in dialogue and proposals, and stubbornly continue to present lawsuits, trials and convictions.

Carles Puigdemont Casamajó
President of the Government of Catalonia