

## **Official Statement by the President on the invocation of Article 155 of the Spanish constitution**

*Barcelona, 21 October 2017*

All the proposals for dialogue addressed to Spain have had the same response: o silence, or repression. In my last letter to the Spanish president I reiterated the need to speak and reminded him that this is a clamor that is directed to us by many people, from many places. Today, the Spanish Council of Ministers has been in charge of giving a real slam to this clamor and this request and announces a series of measures and dismissals that directly represent the liquidation of our self-government and the democratic will of the Catalans. What the Catalans decided at the polls the Spanish government cancels at the offices.

Thus, the Spanish Government, with the support of the Socialist Party and Citizens party, has undertaken the worst attack on the institutions and people of Catalonia since the decrees of the military dictator Francisco Franco abolishing the Generalitat of Catalonia. Despising the popular will expressed in a clear and massive manner in the elections of September 27, 2015, violating our Parliament and all the guarantees and rights of the members of the Parliament who have elected the President of the Generalitat and have approved the Government platform, the Spanish Government has illegally self-proclaimed the representative of the will of the Catalans.

Without going through the polls, with little support and against the will of the majority, the government of Mariano Rajoy wants to appoint a directory to remotely control the life of Catalonia from Madrid.

This is not the first time that Catalan institutions have received the Spanish state once, even with the help of the king, to reduce, reorient or directly suppress them. Every time the Catalan people have superimposed stronger and more determined, aware that the aggressions have always hidden the inability to make policy on the part of the State and that consequently, had to reach higher levels of self-government. From the regionalism of the early twentieth century to the 21st century sovereignty, the hegemonic idea in Catalonia has always been the same.

The Generalitat is not an institution that is born with the current Spanish Constitution. Long before the approval of the Magna Carta, the Generalitat was already functioning and was provisionally reestablished, bearing in mind its historical legitimacy and the continuity that Presidents Companys, Irla and Tarradellas had ensured in exile. No decision of the head of government can erase this persistent fact over time: it has been the will of the Catalans that has allowed us to defend and restore our institutions. What we have we have always won with the strength of the people and the strength of democracy.

The Catalan institutions and the people of Catalonia cannot accept this attack. The humiliation sought by the Spanish Government as a guardian of all Catalan public life, from

the Government to the public media, is incompatible with a democratic attitude and is situated outside the rule of law. Because imposing a form of government not chosen by citizens and without a parliamentary majority that supports it is incompatible with the rule of law.

It is like acting with impunity against peaceful citizens, using old penal codes to keep two persons of peace who have committed no crime, pursuing ideas and media, or irresponsibly stimulating economic instability. Or as was the very serious irresponsibility of the PP with the current president Mariano Rajoy as leader of an infamous collection of signatures against Catalonia and the shameful ruling of the Constitutional Court later, I stress the after, that the Statute of Catalonia had been approved by legal referendum and agreed. Those irresponsible who despised the will of the Catalans and violated the constitutional pact of 1978 are those who want to rule us today.

I am aware, therefore, of the threat that weighs on all the people of Catalonia if the State perpetrates its liquidating intent. We must confront ourselves to defend our institutions as we have always done, in a peaceful and civilized way, but with dignity and reasons. That is why I will ask the Parliament to set the convening of a plenary session where representatives of citizen sovereignty, those elected by the votes of the citizens, we debate and decide on the attempt to liquidate our self-government and our democracy, and act accordingly.

I want to send a message to the Spanish democrats. What is being done with Catalonia is directly an attack on democracy that opens the door to other abuses of the same kind anywhere, not just in Catalonia. Criminalize the dissident, deny reality and raise walls of legality before the windows of the will of the Catalan people... if all these triumphs damage to democracy, and therefore to the citizens, will be very severe and will lead to a monumental setback. We must not allow that to happen.

I want to address a message to Europe. Not only to its political leaders but also, and especially, to all European citizens, our brothers and sisters, with whom we share the European citizenship.

If European foundational values are at risk in Catalonia, they will also be at risk in Europe.

Democratically deciding the future of a nation is not a crime. This goes against foundations that unite European citizens through their diversity. Catalonia is an ancient European nation. Is core to the European values. We do what we do because we believe in a democratic and peaceful Europe. The Europe of the Charter of Fundamental Rights should protect each and every one of us. You should know what you are fighting for in your home, we are fighting for Catalonia. And we will continue to do so.

My fellow citizens: Long live Catalonia!

**Carles Puigdemont Casamajó**  
President of the Catalan Government