



## **Statement by the President of Catalonia**

The Spanish judicial authorities are committing one of the worst outrages seen in Europe in recent years. Up to 2017, there have been many signs of degradation through the politicization of the judiciary and through procedural and judicial irregularities. It's for these reasons that there have been a variety of pronouncements in different higher courts of Europe, such as the recent one in the European Court Of Human Rights, denouncing such actions. The lack of ideological impartiality in Spanish justice, along with the nomination system for high office in the Spanish judiciary, have been a source of worry for the European Council and for other European countries. In effect, the image and prestige of the Spanish Justice system has hit bottom among the international community. It has also been denounced by the most internationally prestigious organisations for the defence of human rights.

In this context, and in light of the refusal of European courts to accept consideration of the crimes of rebellion and sedition in the extradition applications of those exiled, the Spanish Constitutional Court continues delaying the political prisoners' process of appeal against their preventive imprisonment because they know that it's a first step towards appeal to European high courts. In addition, in the face of this misconduct, implying as it does a clear infringement of the right to a defence, I would like to recognise the commencement today of a hunger strike by a number of these political prisoners. I join in denouncing the delaying strategy of the Spanish Constitutional Court in the legal process.

This dramatic and drastic measure being taken is because of what we find to be the complete violation of citizens' rights, civil and political rights, and of respect for the legal processes of the Spanish state itself. It's my view that penal law is being used for vengeance, establishing a makeshift legality in order to attack political dissidence.

As President of the Generalitat of Catalonia I would like to express my solidarity with, and my support of, the complaints made by all of the political prisoners, and also those who have today begun their hunger strike, imprisoned in the Lledoners jail for the last eight to thirteen months without trial and without the guarantee of a fair defence. I also stand by their families. I send them my warmest wishes; we are with them, as are those who hold dear democracy, justice and liberty.