

Institutional declaration of President Aragonès on the occasion of the approval of the pardons to the pro-independence leaders

Catalan Government, June 22 2021

After more than three and a half years unjustly deprived of their freedom, nine political and social leaders, members of the Government and the Parliament of Catalonia, leaders of civil society, and with whom we share an unequivocal commitment to the welfare, prosperity and freedom of our country will be released from prison.

They entered with the conviction of not having committed any crime. With the certainty of wanting the citizens to freely decide the political future of the country in any case can be considered illegal.

They leave with their heads held high and their ideals intact. They leave with the strengthened to build a free and fair Catalan republic. European and prosperous.

They leave with the conviction that it is time to respect the popular will of the Catalans to definitively resolve the conflict between Catalonia and the Spanish State.

On February 14, independence surpassed for the first time 50% of votes in an election, proving once again that many of us are convinced that independence is the best tool to improve the lives of all citizens of the country. To generate more equity and equal opportunities. To generate more prosperity and welfare for all. And there are many of us who are convinced that the best way to achieve it is through dialogue, through negotiation, through agreement.

That is why it is time for amnesty and the right to self-determination. It is time for an agreed referendum. It is the time for the solution that generates more internal consensus, that ensures international endorsement and that guarantees social cohesion that cannot be waived.

Today's step helps to generate credibility on this path, on the path of negotiation and agreement to resolve the conflict. For this reason, the Government of Catalonia will devote all our efforts to make possible this new stage where negotiation, where politics, must be the space to resolve a conflict that has been entrenched for too long.

The decision taken today by the Government of Spain is a recognition that the sentences were unjust.

That is why we are pleased that our comrades who have been in prison for more than three and a half years have regained their freedom.

Undoubtedly, the pardons alleviate their personal situation, that of their families and that of their closest environment.

Undoubtedly they alleviate the suffering of a large majority of citizens of Catalonia who demanded the freedom of political prisoners.

But in no case do they put an end to the repression against those of us who want to decide freely whether Catalonia should become a republic with all rights and freedoms.

In no case do they put an end to the disqualification that continues to limit the political rights of the pro-independence leaders who will be released from prison.

In no case does it resolve the situation of the exiles, with President Puigdemont at the forefront.

In no case does it resolve the general cause against the independentism with thousands of people pending trial or under the threat of the Court of Auditors for their democratic commitment.

That is why we defend the amnesty, because it means putting an end to all repression.

That is why we will continue to be determined to achieve it, convinced that together with self-determination they represent the great consensus of the country.

For this reason we demand that the Spanish State heed without further delay the call of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to put an end to the repression, to withdraw the demands for extradition against the exiles and to stop the persecution of political representatives and public servants in the exercise of their mandate.

We demand that the State cease all repression and commit to working to find an agreed solution to the conflict with Catalonia that starts from respect for the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights, as the Council of Europe recognizes we did in October 2017.

It is time to put an end to repression. It is time for an agreed referendum with international endorsement, as desired by a very large majority of the population of Catalonia.

Amnesty and self-determination. Freedom and democracy. Negotiation and agreement.

It is time to return to politics. Let us face it with the utmost exigency and with the commitment to find an agreed solution that respects the popular will of the people of Catalonia.