

2.21 Urgency resolution on the current situation in Catalonia

Summary

- The Spanish government has refused to negotiate on the subject of a referendum despite an overwhelming majority (80%) of voters in Catalonia wanting a vote and the results of the 2015 Catalan election, in which 59.19% of the votes and 83 out of 135 seats went to parties supporting a referendum.
- The Spanish government has made use of the inadequate separation of powers
- The regional government of Catalonia held a referendum on Catalan independence after their legal framework for the referendum was suspended by a ruling of the Spanish constitutional court. The regional Government of Catalonia reported a result of 90,09% in favour among ballots counted and a ballot turnout of 56.75% including ballots which were seized by the Spanish police and therefore not counted.
- Appalling scenes of police brutality, which were roundly condemned across Europe and the world, unfolded in Catalonia on the date of the referendum as Spanish riot police made use of force against protesters and against voters to take away ballot boxes and ballot papers.

Whereas:

- LYMEC has recognised the right of people in Catalonia to decide their political future in a referendum, both in public statements and in its policy book.
- The current president of the ALDE Party, Hans van Baalen, has called for negotiations between the Spanish national and the Catalan regional government. His predecessor, Sir Graham Watson, has voiced support for a Catalan referendum

• IFLRY has also called for Catalan citizens to express their democratic will freely in a referendum on the political future of Catalonia; and the Liberal International has also stated its support for any decision taken by the Catalan people on their future.

Considering that:

- Whatever their views on independence, 80% of people in Catalonia want the issue put to a referendum;
- The Spanish government has refused **to negotiate** a referendum despite the aforementioned level of popular support and repeated entreaties from international politicians and political movements;
- A referendum was held on 1 October 2017 by the Catalan regional Government, despite the Spanish constitutional court suspending their *Law on a Self-*

determination Referendum on the Independence of Catalonia, passed by the Parliament of Catalonia on 6 September;

- The Spanish Constitutional Court has provisionally suspended said law pending its judgement on the case, while the Spanish government claims that it is illegal
- The Spanish government has had beforehand warned it might exert its power to uphold the courts suspension of the referendum law by arresting the arrest of journalists, civil servants and 712 out of 947 mayors in Catalonia for taking

part in preparations for the referendum;

- The power exertion by the Spanish national government has prompted 17

members of the Parliament of Denmark, representing seven different parties, to write to the Spanish government expressing their “deep concern for the situation in Catalonia, which has reached a critical point” and urging Madrid to refrain from using threats and repression;

- On 20 September, the Spanish national paramilitary police stormed several Catalan ministries and government buildings and arrested a dozen officials for conducting the referendum, in a move which was roundly condemned throughout the political spectrum, including ALDE national MPs and MEPs;
- The OHCHR issued a statement in which UN rights experts warned that “[t]he measures we are witnessing are worrying because they appear to violate fundamental individual rights, cutting off public information and the possibility of debate at a critical moment for Spain’s democracy.”
- British MPs and peers also wrote a letter voicing their concerns and calling on the Spanish government to cease repression and allow the referendum;
- On 1 October, scenes of shocking and police violence against voters left 893 people injured and were roundly condemned all over the world;
- The pro-independence drive in Catalonia is, partly a pro-European civic movement with a strong commitment to the values of the European Union.
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LYMEC:

- Calls for de-escalation and nonconfrontational approaches from all parties involved in the conflict
- Calls for international mediation between the Spanish national and the Catalan regional government under EU involvement
- Rejects any abuse of the judiciary forces as a means of repression against journalists, elected officials and volunteers taking part in a peaceful referendum in Catalonia;
- Strongly condemns the brutality of Spanish police forces against voters on the date of the referendum
- Takes note of the result of the referendum held on 1 October 2017 in Catalonia; and urges the Spanish government to negotiate in good faith with the Government of Catalonia.

