

Emergency Resolution adopted

at the EPP Congress, Helsinki (Finland), 7-8 November 2018

Catalan attempts at secession are contrary to law and democracy ⁱ(1)

On 6 September 2017, the Regional Parliament of Catalonia illegally approved, with only half its members present, an unlawful referendum act that attempted to break democracy, territorial unity and the rule of law in Spain. It was unanimously rejected by EU and the international community.

The Government of Spain had to implement a mechanism included in Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution and that led to the call for early elections in Catalonia. There have been more than 50 electoral processes in Catalonia since 1978. The result was a Catalan society divided between 48% secessionists and 52% non-secessionists.

We have to keep in mind that Catalonia is an Autonomous Community fully recognized in the Spanish Constitution enjoying autonomy in education, health, language, culture and that makes it one of the most decentralized regions of Europe enjoying a high-level of self-governance.

Since then, secessionists in Catalonia have not stopped challenging and defying the rule of law, exacerbating tensions between the Spanish people who live in Catalonia and dividing society in order to achieve their political goals. As a result, many firms have abandoned Catalonia, forced to move their head offices to other parts of Spain. Catalonia has been plunged into serious political and economic instability.

Spain is an established democracy governed by the rule of law, with all legal guarantees. This is outlined in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and in our membership of the Council of Europe and the European Union. This was ratified by 87.8% of the Spanish population, and over 90% in Catalonia, with an exemplary period of political transition.

The alleged exercise of a right to self-determination by part of the territory is not permitted under the Spanish Constitution, in international law, or in United Nations resolutions. Moreover, the siphoning off of public funds to finance a massive international propaganda machine to buy public opinion, that has endangered health and education in Catalonia, was not backed by any member nation of the United Nations.

For this reason, the EPP:

- Condemns all illegal secessionism as an altered political reality, contrary to law, the rule of law and democracy itself;
- States that it is opposed head-on to any attempt to break with the legality and equality of the citizens who are part of a country and supports the guaranteed territorial unity of each State under the Constitution and the law;
- Recognises that secessionists in Catalonia have tried to ignore the constitution by an ongoing process of adopting decisions that go against established laws, against European values and the rule of law;
- Affirms that secessionist actions generate political instability and uncertainty in countries, affecting their levels of economic growth, job creation, prosperity, coexistence, consensus and their very future;
- Stresses that illegal secessionist attempts will not be recognised internationally, noting that it is a case of minority and radical policies that have clashed with the law, justice and the judiciary, and that endanger democracy and the rule of law;
- Highlights the firm defence of democratic values and human rights, as stated by the European Union itself, which defends the territorial unity and integrity of all its Member States.
- Highlights the important role of regions as part of EU Member States and of the multi-level structure of the EU.
- Hopes that the issue will be resolved for the sake of cohesion of all citizens of Catalonia.

(1) Nothing in this resolution relates to the unique situation in Northern Ireland where legally binding international agreements exist.