



**JHUMUNC**  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

**GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA**  
*Joint Crisis: Spanish Constitutional Crisis (2017)*  
*Chaired by Hana Kadir*

Session XXIII

# Generalitat de Catalunya

## *Joint Crisis: Spanish Constitutional Crisis of 2017*

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*Topic A: Catalan Peoples' Right to Nationhood/Right to Vote for Independence*

*Topic B: A New Catalunya Within the EU*

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### **Committee Overview**

Following the ratification of the Spanish Constitution in 1978, the relationship between the Spanish state and Catalonia has been complex and oftentimes contentious. Catalonia's continuous struggle for greater political and economic freedom has been a recurring point of dispute between the two governments. The turning point in this conflict finally occurred in 2017, when the government of Catalonia declared a referendum on the question of Catalan independence. The Spanish government's subsequent response to the referendum – declaring it illegal and using brute force to stop it – was perceived as unnecessarily aggressive and illiberal, further complicating relations between the two governments. The conflict has progressively soured since the referendum in 2017, with the focus now being on the release of jailed Catalan politicians and the Catalan peoples' right to nationhood. This committee will investigate these issues and attempt to reach a conclusion with the government of Spain.

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

This committee will operate under standard parliamentary procedure. Unmoderated caucuses will be used to allow delegates to develop new ideas. Committee-wide action will be taken through directives, which can be written by any delegate. Communication between delegates can be achieved through the use of communiqués. Throughout the committee, various crises will be given to the delegates to address in real-time. Delegates may communicate with other committee members, the chair, and the joint Spain committee through crisis notes. Each delegate will be representing a real person who has importance in Catalonia. The delegates are expected to do extensive research into their assigned person and their portfolio powers. Knowing the powers of your role will be important when conducting actions through crisis notes, as not all powers are available to all delegates. Clear and efficient crisis notes are key to maintaining the excitement of the committee.

While upholding parliamentary procedure is important for the functioning of debate, the committee will have flexibility in this regard. Adjustments will be made based on the crises at hand to keep the debate flowing and relevant.



# Delegate Biographies:

## Carles Puigdemont

Puigdemont joined the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia in 1980, which is now known as the Catalan European Democratic Party.<sup>1</sup> In 2006, he was elected into the Parliament of Catalonia. He was elected Mayor of Girona in 2011, and in 2016, he became the first President of Catalonia who refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Spanish constitution and monarch.<sup>2</sup> As a politician, Puigdemont was the leader of JuntsxCatalunya, a pro-independence electoral alliance, and the co-founder of the National Call for the Republic, a pro-independence political party in Catalonia.

## Jordi Cuixart

Cuixart studied mechanics at Institut Escola Industrial i d'Arts i Oficis in Sabadell. In 1996, he joined Òmnium Cultural, a non-profit cultural organization in Catalonia that promotes independence and self-determination. He became the president of the organization in 2015 and promoted the widening of the sovereignist social majority and the social mobilization of Catalonia.<sup>3</sup>

## Jordi Sànchez

Upon receiving his degree in Political Science from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Sànchez taught as a part-time instructor in Barcelona and at other universities. He was the leader and spokesperson of *Crida a la Solidaritat* from 1983-1993. He was a board member of the Catalan Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In 2015, he became the President of the Catalan National Assembly, taking on a pro-independence stance.<sup>4</sup>

## Ada Colau

Colau was born in Barcelona and studied philosophy at the University of Barcelona. She was a founder of the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages in 2009. She co-authored *Mortgaged Lives* and founded Barcelona en Comú. She became the mayor of Barcelona in 2015. Colau believes that Barcelona's future should be bound to the EU. She has stated that she is against Catalonia declaring independence and is not a nationalist.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, Patrick. "Carles Puigdemont: The man who wants to break up Spain." BBC, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> "Spain Faces a Constitutional Crisis over Catalonia." Economist, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> "Jordi Cuixart." Front Line Defenders, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> "Jordi Sanchez, Pacifist Social Leader, Accused of Violent Rebellion." WeReport, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> "Ada Calau - Mayor of Barcelona." Barcelona City Council, 2019.

## Quim Torra

Born in Blanes, Girona, Catalonia, Torra was educated at St. Ignatius College, Barcelona. He studied law at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Torra became a member of the Òmnium Cultural and later its vice-president in 2013. He was also a member of the Assemblea Nacional Catalana. He and Jordi Cortada filed a lawsuit before the European Court of Human Rights against the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia rewritings. Torra associated with the Democratic Union of Catalonia and later the Reagrupament, but he is not currently aligned with any political parties.<sup>6</sup>

## Jordi Solé i Ferrando

Jordi Solé i Ferrando was born in Vallès Oriental, Catalonia, Spain and graduated from the Autonomous University of Barcelona with an education in political science. Solé served in the European Parliament for the Republican Left of Catalonia in 2017, and he was a member of the Greens/European Free Alliance Group. He was previously the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the European Union in 2016. Solé has stated that nationalism will weaken the future and freedoms of Europe and has been critical of pro-unionists arguing against Catalan independence.<sup>7</sup>

## Oriol Junqueras

Junqueras studied economics at the University of Barcelona before transferring to the Autonomous University of Barcelona to study modern and contemporary history. He received his doctorate in "History of

Economic Thought" in 2002. Junqueras joined the Republican Left of Catalonia in 2010.<sup>8</sup> He held a seat in the European Parliament from 2009-2012. After his run in the European Parliament, he was elected as a member of the Parliament of Catalonia for Barcelona. After an alliance with the Junts pel Sí and the Popular Unity Candidacy, he was appointed to Vice President of Catalonia.

## Inés Arrimadas

Arrimadas studied law at the Pablo de Olavide University and was a student under the Erasmus program studying international business in Nice, France. In 2010, Arrimadas was invited to a Citizen's political party event, after which she became part of the party. She moved her way up, becoming a spokesperson for Citizen and later a leader of the party. In a 2012 regional election, she became a member of the Parliament of Catalonia and was the Leader of Opposition starting in 2015.<sup>9</sup>

## Miquel Iceta

Iceta was born in 1960 in Barcelona. He originally studied chemistry but switched to economics at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He abandoned his studies after being expelled from the university. In 1978 he joined the Socialist Party of Catalonia. In 1996, he was elected into the Congress of Deputies, after which he became a deputy in the Parliament of Catalonia. Iceta is also one of the first openly gay politicians in Spain.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Jones, Sam. "Catalan leader in court over displaying of pro-independence symbols." *The Guardian*, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> "Jordi Solé." *European Parliament*, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> "Oriol Junqueras, to Risto: 'I see myself as president of Catalonia.'" *Cuatro*, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Silio, Elisa. "Arrimadas joins the mobilization of the concert against Celaá." *El País*, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> "Yes, there are also gay deputies." *Archivo de Miquel Iceta*, 2006.

## Xavier Domènech i Sampere

Domènech was born in Sabadell, Catalonia, Spain in 1974. He studied at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and became a history professor at the university. He has published many history books about Catalonia and civil society. He was elected into the Congress of Deputies in 2016, in which he aligned himself with the Procés Constituent Catalunya en Comú party. He has since been a key figure in Catalan left-wing politics. Domènech has also been a member of populist parties such as Podemos and Catalunya en Comú.<sup>11</sup>

## Xavier García Albiol

García Albiol was born to a street sweeper and hairdresser and grew up in the outskirts of Badalona, a municipality outside of Barcelona. He studied law at the Colegio Badalonés but abandoned it for a career in politics. He became the president of the People's Party of Badalona in 1990. In 2011, he was elected as the Mayor of Badalona. The rival party to García Albiol was the Initiative for Catalonia Greens which had brought charges against him for publishing a xenophobic pamphlet against the Romani. He was acquitted of all charges in 2013. He now serves on the Parliament of Catalonia with the People's Party.<sup>12</sup>

## Carles Riera

A widower with three children, Riera became involved in politics as a member and spokesperson of Call to Solidarity in Defense of Catalan Language, Culture, and Nation in the 1980s and as a member of the People's Unity Assembly in the 1990s. He had studied politics and sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. He formed and was the leader of the Popular Unity Candidacy party in 2015 which won seats in the Parliament of Catalonia. As an activist, he was a member of the World Social Forum from 2002-2012 and was the president of the Escarré International Center for Ethnic and National Minorities from 2010-2015. Since 2013, he has been a member of the independentist, socialist, and feminist political party, Endavant.<sup>13</sup>

## Raul Romeva

Born in March 1971 in Madrid, Romeva received a degree in economics from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and earned his Ph.D. in international relations there as well. He is a Spanish politician who is a former member of the European Parliament and led the pro-independence group, Together for Yes, in the Catalan parliament election of 2015. From 1995 to 1996, he was the principal aide of the UNESCO representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina and became an assistant professor of international relations at the UAB. He was jailed in November 2017 and again in March 2018 on rebellion and sedition charges.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Barcelona en Comú assembly passes motion to stand in the Spanish general elections on the ticket 'En Comú Podem.'" Medium, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> "Xavier García Albiol." La Vanguardia, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Gonzalez, Manuel. "12 things you didn't know about Carles Riera." Teinteresa, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> "Raül Romeva i Rueda: Catalan Pro-Independence Politician." Barcelonas, 2019.

## Ramona Barrufet

Born in Juneda, Garages in 1959, Barrufet graduated from the School of Teaching at the University of Lleida and has worked as a teacher of music and French.<sup>15</sup> In 1981, she joined the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) and served as the mayor of Arbeca from 2005 to 2007. In 2015, she was elected to the Catalan Parliament as a Deputy and for the 2015 elections, she was a member of the Together for Yes alliance consisting of the CDC, the Republican Left of Catalonia, the Democrats of Catalonia, and the Left Movement. She was appointed as the Fourth Secretary on the Parliament's Board in 2015.

## Albert Rivera

Born in Barcelona in November 1979, he was an only child to a working-class family. He completed a master's degree in constitutional law from the Ramon Llull University and after starting his degree in law, he became interested in politics by taking part in a debating competition.<sup>16</sup> He began working as a legal counsel at the La Caixa savings bank in 2003 and stopped in 2006 after he became the President of the Citizens, where he pushes the message against Catalan independence. He is also a member of the Congress of Deputies and a former member of the Parliament of Catalonia.

## Carme Forcadell

Forcadell was born in Xerta, Spain in May 1955. She received a degree in philosophy and communication studies from the Autonomous University of Barcelona as well as a Masters in Catalan

Philology.<sup>17</sup> She was the former President of the Parliament of Catalonia and is known for her Catalan independence activism. She held the position of President from 2015-2018 and since March 2018, she was jailed in pre-trial custody accused of rebellion.

## Anna Gabriel

Born in 1975 in Sallent, Catalonia, Gabriel grew up in a mining and trade union family where she then worked as a street educator before studying law and doing a part-time teaching job at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She is a Spanish social pedagogue, law adjunct professor, and a politician. She was a member of the Catalan Parliament from 2015 to 2017 and she represented the pro-Catalan independence political party, Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP).<sup>18</sup>

## Artur Mas

Mas was born in January 1956 in Barcelona as one of the four children of a wealthy industrialist family. He studied at the *Aula Escola Europea* and is thereby fluent in French, English, Catalan, and Spanish. Afterward, he graduated in Economics from the University of Barcelona.<sup>19</sup> Mas is a Spanish politician and a Catalan nationalist. He was the President of the Government of Catalonia from 2010 to 2015 and was a long-time member of the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC).<sup>20</sup> His ideology is liberal from the economic point of view and he is supportive of Catalan independence.

<sup>15</sup> Dowsett, Sonya. "Catalonia calls October referendum on independence from Spain." Reuters, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Aparicio, Sonia. "Albert Rivera." El Mundo, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> "Carme Forcadell i Lluís: President of the Parliament of Catalonia." Barcelonas, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Minder, Raphael. "Catalan Politician Leaves for Switzerland Days Before Court Date." New York Times, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, Simon. "Why I'm supporting Artur Mas ... not just this week but for the next 18 months as well." Barcelonas, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## **Marta Rovira**

Born in January 1977, Rovira has a degree in Law from Pompeu Fabra University and in Political Sciences and Public Administration from the Open University of Catalonia.<sup>21</sup> She is a Spanish lawyer and politician from Catalonia who has fled to Spain to avoid being judged by the Spanish Supreme Court. Rovira has been a member of the Republica Left of Catalonia since 2005 and in 2015, she stood in the elections to the Parliament of Catalonia with the pro-independence coalition, Together for Yes.<sup>22</sup>

## **Josep Lluís Traperó Álvarez**

Born in 1965 in Badalona, Catalonia, Álvarez graduated from the Open University of Catalonia in 2006 with a degree in law. He had specialized in cybercrime, money laundering, and terrorism financing. After university, he joined the Mossos d'Esquadra, the Catalan Police Force, in 1990. He was promoted to head of the General Police Office of Criminal Investigation in 2013. In April 2017 he was appointed the Mossos d'Esquadra Major, the highest rank.<sup>23</sup>

## **Josep Maria Bartomeu**

Bartomeu was born in Barcelona and attended ESADE's Business school, a private Jesuit university. He has been an entrepreneur since his graduation. He is the CEO of the ADELTE Group which leads the world in engineering and transportation of seaports, airports, and roads. In addition, he is a partner of the EFS Group. Being a sports aficionado, he is also the president of FC Barcelona, a professional football club that is based in Barcelona. He has been a European Club Association Executive Board Member since 2014.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "A new life in Switzerland for Catalan separatist Marta Rovira." The Local, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Josep Lluís Traperó." Libertad Digital, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> "Josep Maria Bartomeu." European Club Association.



## Topic A:

# Catalan Peoples' Right to Nationhood/Right to Vote for Independence

## Introduction

The origin and rise of secessionism in Catalonia is the culmination of multiple factors that date back to Francisco Franco's dictatorship and the subsequent transition to democracy. What began as a movement for greater autonomy has evolved into a desire for an independent Catalan state separate from Spain. This committee will explore the main objectives of the Catalan secessionist movement: to reestablish the political and economic independence of the region by creating a Catalan state within the European Union.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, we will discuss the Spanish government's response to this process, and the role these negotiations will play in shaping the future of Spanish politics.

## Historical Background

### Government Structure

In order to understand the motivations and consequences of secessionism in Catalonia, it is important to understand the political mechanisms that have shaped the relationship between Catalonia and Spain over the last 40 years. Following the death of Franco in 1975, it became clear that the Spanish political system needed to adapt to the changing domestic and international environment. Francoism was ill-suited to govern this "new" Spain – a country that had

transformed from largely agrarian to one of the most industrialized and wealthy nations in Europe.<sup>26</sup> Thus, following a consensus reached by Spain's first democratically elected political parties since the Civil War, the Spanish Constitution was ratified in 1978. The new constitution recognized the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of Spain, declared Catalan (along with Basque and Galician) as a historic nationality, and regionalized the country into 17 autonomous communities.<sup>27</sup> However, the greater autonomy of nationalities and regions was restricted by Article 2 of the constitution – which declared the indivisibility and indissolubility of the Spanish state. The article states: "The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards; it recognizes and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed, and the solidarity amongst them all."<sup>28</sup> The wording of this article highlights the historical tensions in Spain resulting from the social pressure to give recognition and autonomy to different nationalities while also protecting the unity and indissolubility of the state. The Article stresses the "unity" of Spain – but this unity is called into question by the recognition of "nationalities and regions" within the country.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Guibernau, Montserrat. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368-93. doi:10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Szabó, Róbert Gyóri. 2017. "Catalonia's Striving After Independence." *Selye E-Studies*, no. 1 (January): 24–41.

<sup>28</sup> Spanish Constitution

<sup>29</sup> Guibernau, Montserrat. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368-93. doi:10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.



In order to peacefully accommodate the regional nationalism that emerged during the Spanish transition, the makers of the constitution allowed for the creation of 17 autonomous communities, some historically and culturally distinct (Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia) and others artificially created.<sup>30</sup> This system of Autonomous Communities attempted to reconcile the nationalist demands of the Basque Country and Catalonia, which had been culturally and politically oppressed under the Franco regime. While this system granted both regions with greater political and economic autonomy, it also delegitimized their distinct national identities by equating them with communities like Madrid and La Rioja, which lacked a shared sense of identity, culture, and language.<sup>31</sup>

The last political mechanism that shaped the relationship between Madrid and Catalonia is the 1979 statute which established Catalan autonomy. The statute outlined the framework of self-government for the Catalan autonomous community – a system that was heavily demanded following the corruption and inefficiency of local governments under Franco. Local political power was to be exercised by a Generalitat consisting of three main institutions – a legislative assembly, government, and president.<sup>32</sup> Under this system, Catalonia could govern itself on local issues related to the economy, media, agriculture, education, health care, policing, and tourism.<sup>33</sup> However, the central Spanish government still retained responsibility for issues related to foreign relations, national

defense, taxation, and the legal system.<sup>34</sup> Regardless, this statute served as a positive step towards protecting Catalan culture as it enabled the Catalan language to be taught in schools and used in public administration.

### *Post-Franco and Early Challenges*

Nonetheless, the process of transferring power from Madrid to Catalonia was reluctant and slow, leading to dissatisfaction in the region. Further, the development of an independent education system and Catalan-language radio and television fueled revisionist sentiments and calls for independence.<sup>35</sup> Modern Catalan nationalism emerged in the 1960s as a progressive social movement defending democracy and freedom against Franco's dictatorship. Franco's regime was characterized by significant civilian repression and censorship – and Catalonia faced the brunt of it. Following the successful siege of Catalonia during the Civil War, one of the first acts of Franco's forces was to ban the use of Catalan in public.<sup>36</sup> Further, tens of thousands of Catalans had their property confiscated and were held in concentration camps. Leaders of the Catalan opposition were subject to torture and exile, and many were even sentenced to death in order to send a political message to the public.<sup>37</sup> Over the subsequent decades of dictatorship, Franco referred to two Spains – the “authentic” and the “anti-Spain” – that is those who supported the regime and those who opposed it.<sup>38</sup> This not only generated major disenchantment and bitterness towards the regime but also created a feeling of otherness

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Szabó, Róbert Gyóri. 2017. “Catalonia’s Striving After Independence.” *Selye E-Studies*, no. 1 (January): 24–41. <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsu&AN=123452431&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> “The Scars of Catalonia.” *New Statesman*. Accessed December 09, 2018. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2017/12/scars-catalonia>.

<sup>36</sup> “The Scars of Catalonia.” *New Statesman*. Accessed December 09, 2018. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2017/12/scars-catalonia>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

within Catalans – they no longer felt that their interests and identities lined up with the rest of Spain. Still, the movement at this time remained more nationalist than secessionist. Though Catalan leaders under and immediately following the regime pushed for greater political and economic autonomy, calls for independence did not begin until much later.

## Origin and Rise of Secessionist Sentiment

### *Economic Factors*

Current secessionist sentiments in Catalonia can be explained by two main factors – political and economic. Between 1980 and 2003, Catalonia was governed by the moderate Convergence Union (CiU) party, under the leadership of Jordi Pujol. Pujol was committed to achieving the national and cultural independence of Catalonia *within* the Spanish state. The party believed that Catalan and Spanish interests were reconcilable within the frameworks of democracy, where autonomous communities with varying levels of autonomy could govern together with Madrid.<sup>39</sup> In the 1990s this approach seemed feasible, mainly because Catalan national parties played a significant role in Spanish politics – their support was necessary in order for the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the People's Party (PP) to form a government in Madrid.<sup>40</sup> Catalonia benefitted from this approach too, as it was able to take advantage of the favorable economic conditions of Spain. In fact, the

Catalan economy benefited considerably from Spain's integration into the EU.<sup>41</sup> However, following the global economic crisis of 2008, sentiments in Catalonia quickly changed. As a result of Madrid's poor economic policies and the burst of the housing bubble, unemployment during the economic crisis rose to almost 25% in Catalonia (rising to almost 40% among young people).<sup>42</sup> Catalonia, a traditionally prosperous region, saw its wealth and resources deteriorate as it began to lose competitiveness in global markets. On top of crippling unemployment and slowed trade, the region also accumulated an annual deficit of 8% of GDP due to the financial framework imposed by the Spanish government.<sup>43</sup> To give context, in 1983 Catalonia had the second-highest GDP of any Spanish region. By 2010, however, it had dropped to fourth place.<sup>44</sup> Catalans were further disillusioned by the fact that while they were providing 21% of the national tax revenue, they only received 8% of overall government investment – significantly less than the other regions.<sup>45</sup> This imbalance became increasingly evident during the recession when the infrastructure in Catalonia was slowly deteriorating. Increased immigration to the region combined with a lack of public investment by the Spanish government meant that public transport systems, education, and sanitation measures were overused and underequipped. This problem was largely ignored by Madrid, who did not increase funding to the region. In this context, support for Catalonia's fiscal independence

<sup>39</sup> Szabó, Róbert Györi. 2017. "Catalonia's Striving After Independence." *Selye E-Studies*, no. 1 (January): 24–41. <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsu&AN=123452431&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Guibernau, Montserrat. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368-93. doi:10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "The Scars of Catalonia." *New Statesman*. Accessed December 09, 2018. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2017/12/scars-catalonia>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

fueled secessionist sentiments. By 2012 resentment against the Spanish government's economic policies during the recession resulted in 49% of Catalans saying they were "dissatisfied with democracy."<sup>46</sup>

### *Political Factors*

The desire for secession was also driven by political factors, namely the violation of Catalan national identity and the denial of their national status.<sup>47</sup> Following the 2000 victory of Jose Aznar's conservative Partido Popular (PP), sympathy towards Catalan demands for greater autonomy was replaced by hostility rooted in neo-centralist political dialogue.<sup>48</sup> The Popular Party was dismissive of calls for greater recognition by Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque country. In fact, in 2005 a boycott against Catalan products (mainly cava) developed in Spain.<sup>49</sup> In Catalonia, this served to increase dissatisfaction with the Aznar government and grow support for the PSOE party led by Zapatero, who championed the idea of a "plural Spain" and was seemingly sympathetic to Catalan political demands.<sup>50</sup> In 2004, largely due to support from Catalonia, Zapatero became Prime Minister. However, his administration proved to do little to advance the Catalan cause. Zapatero promised to support the new Statute of Autonomy drafted by the Catalan parliament. However, once the Catalan parliament ratified the Statute of Autonomy (90% of MPs voted in its favor), it was subsequently modified by the Spanish parliament in Madrid.<sup>51</sup> The Spanish Constitutional Court of Justice argued that some of the contents of

the statute did not comply with the constitution. Together, members of both the PP and PSOE challenged over 50% of the text.<sup>52</sup> After four years, the court approved the Statute – after removing many of the Catalans' main demands.

### *Recent Developments*

Thus, public distrust and resentment towards politicians combined with disenchantment regarding Catalonia's economic situation and burden culminated in 2011 with the establishment of the Catalan National Assembly. The Assembly's main objective was the re-establishment of Catalonia's political independence through the creation of a Catalan state within the European Union.<sup>53</sup> Since its inception, the ANC (Catalan National Assembly) has been successful in promoting independence by organizing a range of peaceful, democratic initiatives across Catalonia.<sup>54</sup> For example, from 2013-2016, millions of Catalan people have annually organized mass assemblies throughout the region on Catalonia's National Day in order to support secession. In 2017 these initiatives resulted in the referendum on Catalonia's secession, spearheaded by the leader of the Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català and President of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont. The results of the referendum, though inconclusive, suggested that a majority of Catalans were in favor of independence.

<sup>46</sup> Guibernau, Montserrat. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368-93. doi:10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.

<sup>47</sup> Szabó, Róbert Gyóri. 2017. "Catalonia's Striving After Independence." *Selye E-Studies*, no. 1 (January): 24–41.

<sup>48</sup> Guibernau, Montserrat. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368-93. doi:10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

## Questions to Consider

1. *Should Catalonia pursue independence from Spain?*

Is it politically, economically, and socially feasible? Does it make sense? What are the views of Catalan politicians? What about Spanish politicians?

2. *Does Catalonia have a right to hold an independence referendum?*

Does an Autonomous Community have the authority to vote on secession? Should it have that authority?

3. *How should Spain respond to Catalan peoples' request for independence?*

Given the unconstitutionality of independence/secession, what is an appropriate response from the Spanish government? Does a government have the right to force a region to remain in the union?

4. *Is it constitutional for Catalonia to secede from Spain?*

Given the language of Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution, is it even legal/constitutional for Catalonia to secede? Should the language be rewritten?

5. *How should independence proceedings be approached?*

How should the Catalan and Spanish governments cooperate on these issues? Is bipartisanship feasible?

6. *How can Catalonia relieve tensions/consolidate plans between its various political groups?*

Catalonia has many different political groups with different interests and opinions on independence. How can these groups come together to forge a solution? Is it possible?

7. *How can Catalonia relieve tensions between itself and the Spanish government?*

Is peaceful negotiation possible? How can/should both sides approach this issue?

8. *Does the Spanish government have a right to stop independence proceedings?*

If independence proceedings were to go underway, does the Spanish government have a constitutional right to halt them? What about a moral right – is it moral to inhibit Catalonia from seeking independence?

## Conclusion

Madrid's response to the Catalan independence movement and the bitter divisions it has caused between Catalonia and the rest of the country will play a significant role in shaping the future of Spanish politics. It is clear that a history of political and economic mistreatment towards Catalans by the Spanish government has fueled the secessionist sentiments we see today. Ultimately, it is up to Madrid to peacefully negotiate with the Catalans to ensure a successful and prosperous relationship between the two going forward.



## Topic B:

### *A New Catalunya Within the EU*

## Introduction

Some of the biggest questions when looking at Catalonia's struggle for independence are whether Catalonia will want to be part of the European Union if they are successful in seceding from Spain and whether the European Union will accept them as an independent country. This committee has two main goals: deciding what are the consequences of seceding from Spain and whether they would like to be a part of the European Union or implement border controls for trade partners of the newly independent country.

## Historical Background

### *History of the European Union*

In 1950, the concept of a European trade area was created. The European Coal and Steel Communities began to unite European countries economically and politically as a solution to the frequent wars at the time. The six founding members were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.<sup>55</sup> In 1957, the Treaty of Rome established a common market called the European Economic Community (EEC). The 1960s were a decade of economic growth for Europe, primarily because countries in the European Union eliminated custom duties in 1968. They also established a few standard policies - like joint control over food production, which soon created a surplus of agricultural produce.

In 1973, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined the European Union, increasing the number of members to 9. The Arab-Israeli War in October of 1973 started an energy crisis and fiscal problems in Europe. In Europe, the last conservative dictatorships ended after the Salazar regime in Portugal was overthrown in 1974 and General Franco died in Spain in 1975. The EU puts regional policies in place, which transfer money to impoverished areas in order to create jobs and infrastructure. In 1979, the EU created its first Parliament, which allowed citizens to elect their members directly. The EU also adopts laws to protect the environment, such as fines when people are caught littering.

In 1981, Greece joined the European Union, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. In 1993, the Treaty of Maastricht established the EU common market and the Single Market is created with the "four freedoms of movement of goods, services, people, and money."<sup>56</sup>

In 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon increased the European Parliament's powers. It gave the EU authority to negotiate and sign international treaties. It also increased the EU's powers in areas like border control, immigration, judicial cooperation, and police cooperation.

Today, there are 27 countries in the European Union. Since it is a "unified trade

<sup>55</sup> "The History of the European Union." European Union.

<sup>56</sup> Amadeo, Kimberly. "How Europe Became an Economic Powerhouse." The Balance.

and monetary body,"<sup>57</sup> there are no border controls between its members, which allowed for the free flow of goods and people. The European Union improves advances in environmental protection, research and development, and energy.<sup>58</sup>

### *Economy*

The European Union's trade structure has made it the world's second-largest economy, after China. In 2018, its gross domestic product (GDP) was \$22 trillion, 22% of the global GDP. The European Union's economy experienced a slight decline after the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU in 2016. This dampened economic growth for companies that operate in Europe.<sup>59</sup>

## **European Union's Response to Catalonia**

The European Union has stayed out of the conflict, citing that the conflict is domestic and therefore, they do not have a right to intrude. Throughout their rebellion, the Catalan leaders have kept the EU's flag next to theirs, even as they rolled up the national flag of Spain. They thought the EU would support them since the European Union made the rebellion possible with their idea that borders are outdated, and European citizens should be able to "travel and work from Portugal to Estonia's frontier with Russia without once flashing a passport."<sup>60</sup> As of 2018, even after the arrest of the former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont caused outcry amongst nationalists and protestors, the EU affirmed their position that Catalonia's independence

movement must remain a matter for Madrid.<sup>61</sup>

## **Economic/Financial Consequences**

Catalonia is the most prosperous out of Spain's 17 regions; it "houses roughly 19 percent of Spain's economy, benefiting from tourism, exports, manufacturing, and industry." Even though Catalans only account for 16% of Spain's population, they contribute to 20% of Spain's total gross domestic product (GDP). According to Business Insider, since the independent Catalonia would not have to pay taxes to Spain, the state would gain about 16 billion euros yearly. Spain, however, would lose about 2% of its annual GDP. According to Alain Cuenca, an economics professor at the University of Zaragoza in Spain, "The establishment of a border would result in a loss of jobs, income, and wealth for everybody, whether they live in Catalonia or in the rest of Spain." The losses would be caused by the obstacles to trade, financial problems, and the spending needs of the newly independent Catalonia.<sup>62</sup>

Catalonia would take a big financial hit since "35.5% of Catalan exports are to the Spanish market." Catalonia would have to pay to create new state structures, such as embassies and central banks. While this would create more jobs in the region, new state structures are pricey. According to Spanish Economy Minister Luis de Guindos, "Catalonia could see its economy shrink by 25 to 30 percent and its unemployment double if it splits to form a separate state." This is a problem since Catalonia accounts

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Birnbaum, Michael. 2017. "Catalan Separatists Counted on Support from the E.U. but they got the Cold Shoulder."

*Washington Post*.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> correspondent, Jon Henley European affairs. 2018. "EU Still Unmoved by Spain's Standoff with Catalan Separatists." *The Guardian*.

<sup>62</sup> Bosch, Sofia. "Here's how Bad Economically a Spain-Catalonia Split could really Be." CNBC.

for approximately 7% of Spain's \$1.18 trillion debt. While many people believe that Spain would assume Catalonia's debt, this is not guaranteed and would be a problem for Spain since the country would lose part of its annual GDP if Catalonia became independent. The country also may not assume the region's debt out of spite; many believe that there is a likely chance Catalonia would face a trade boycott from the rest of Spain.<sup>63</sup>

Even if Catalonia becomes a newly independent state and Spain assumes the region's debt, there is no guarantee that Catalonia will be admitted to the European Union. In order for Catalonia to become a part of the union, the members of the union must unanimously agree, which includes Spain. If Catalonia becomes a part of the Union, the region would prosper and this would not affect the EU's economy. However, if Catalonia were not admitted to the EU, it would face economic turmoil, "as the EU accounts for roughly 65.8% of Catalan exports."<sup>64</sup>

## Social Consequences

Generations of migrants from poorer parts of Spain have settled in Catalonia, finding work and prosperity. Most of Catalonia's population can find their roots elsewhere in Spain. In the case of an independent Catalonia, Catalan Spaniards would find themselves as part of a minority group in a foreign country. With the animosity between Spaniards and Catalans resulting from the referendum and the centuries of Spanish authority, Catalan Spaniards fear they "will become second-class citizens, viewed with suspicion like

Mexican migrants in the US."<sup>65</sup> They also worry about the administration of pension plans by a new Catalonian government. Currently, the Spanish central government holds full responsibility for pension plans and unemployment benefits.<sup>66</sup> An independent Catalonia would need to implement its own pension and unemployment benefits and address whether elderly Spaniards in Catalonia will still receive benefits they had accrued as Spanish citizens. Concerning citizenship, if a Catalonian government does not recognize Catalan Spaniards as citizens of a new state, there may be a crisis in which displaced Spaniards need to choose between migrating back to Spain and leaving their homes or becoming part of a new Catalonia. Catalans who now reside in other Spanish regions may also need to choose between migration or staying and enduring possible animosity with their Spanish neighbors.

*The Los Angeles Times* proclaims that "the struggle over Catalonian independence has divided Spanish communities, from neighborhoods to workplaces and families."<sup>67</sup> Moreover, there is no clear majority favoring or opposing independence in the region. Catalonia is undergoing a deep divide in her society with 48% of those in favor of independence still identifying to some extent with Spain.<sup>68</sup> This fissure in families and communities is unlikely to fade and may escalate into greater conflicts even after independence. Still, independence means greater recognition of Catalonia culture and traditions. Historically, Catalan culture had been suppressed under Bourbon and Franco's rule. However, modern-day

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Jackson, Patrick. 2017. "Catalan Spaniards Fear Loss of Identity." *BBC News*.

<sup>66</sup> Aguilar, Manuel, Anna Escobedo, and Teresa Montagut. "Local Welfare Policies in Spain:

Employment, Housing and Child Care." WILCO Publication (6).

<sup>67</sup>Hennessy-Fiske, Molly. "Spanish Families Confront Catalonian Independence." 2017. *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>68</sup> Blais, ré and Guntermann, Eric. "Analysis | Catalonia is Deeply Divided for and Against Independence. here's what Makes the Difference." *Washington Post*.



Catalans learn Catalan in school--Spanish taking on a secondary role--have their own radios and newspapers, celebrate their own holidays, and have great autonomy in their regional politics. Independence assures Catalans that their way of life will not be influenced by the sways of future Spanish politics.<sup>69</sup>

If accepted into the EU, Catalonia would retain the benefits it has now as part of Spain. However, some EU politicians have not responded favorably to the idea of an independent Catalonia. If not accepted, Catalonia would face restricted movements in Europe and lose the benefits of educational, cultural, and economic exchanges such as the Erasmus Exchange and the Eurozone. A new Catalonian state would also need to apply separately for other European accesses like the Schengen Zone.

<sup>69</sup> Keller, Kate. "Beyond the Headlines, Catalan Culture has a Long History of Vibrancy and Staying Power." Smithsonian.

## Questions to Consider

1. *What should Catalonia expect from the EU?*

What should the Generalitat prepare for in the case of independence? Can it expect generous outcomes?

2. *What will the state of Catalonia be like after a referendum?*

What can the Generalitat do to create a functional state? How will it lay the foundations for stable domestic policies?

3. *What will Catalonia's relations with other states be like?*

How will Catalonia interact with foreign nations? How will other nations react to an independent Catalonia? Can the Generalitat make allies as it emerges into the European political arena?

4. *How will Catalonia establish a functional government in light of starting anew as a state?*

Will the new government keep the elements borrowed from Spain? Will it enact new ideas in place of systems that were established while under Spanish authority?

5. *How would a new Catalonia mitigate tensions between the Spaniards and the Catalunyans?*

Since tensions are likely to arise after splitting away from Spain, what will Generalitat do in order to ensure a peaceful transition for the general public? Is the social issue of race and ethnicity going to be an important aspect of the new state?

## Conclusion

In the coming conference, the Generalitat de Catalunya will need to address the consequences of a new Catalunya state within Europe. Nationalistic and populist fervor has taken the region, and it is up to the Generalitat to consolidate the people's dreams with reality. The European Union would provide great

mutual economic and social benefits, but the road there requires Catalunya to acknowledge and resolve the effects of independence. Keep in mind that Spain is still part of the EU and is Catalunya's largest neighbor. A cordial relationship will help in creating a stable and secure Catalunya after this event in history.

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