

Beat: Politics

Spain is a free, European nation

Statement of the Spanish Prime Minister

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USPA NEWS - The acting President of the Spanish Government, Mariano Rajoy, made the following statement on Sunday evening from the Moncloa Palace complex on the occasion of the investiture session of the President of the regional Government of Catalonia:

"I appear here before you to set out the assessment of the Government of the Nation on the political programme proposed by the candidate to the Presidency of the regional Government of Catalonia at the plenary session of the investiture being held in the regional Parliament of Catalonia. Today we have heard the investiture speech made by the new candidate based on an already proven unlawful action. The speech was a repetition of that made by Artur Mas on November 9. This speech is based on a statement from the regional Parliament of Catalonia that the Constitutional Court has already ruled to be unlawful and without legal effects.

Whilst the pro-sovereignty discourse has not changed, over these last two months, the rule of law has certified that this discourse lacks any democratic legitimacy. On December 2, the Constitutional Court made it clear that the pro-sovereignty resolution of November 9 cannot be upheld. It has been overturned for all legal effects because it goes against the principle of democracy, the Spanish Constitution and the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, and because it is in clear violation of the rights of the Spanish people, and also and above all, of those who live in Catalonia.

While the pro-sovereignty discourse not changed, over these last two months, we have witnessed the strength of the rule of law and the functioning of its institutions. We now have more instruments than ever before to defend our unity. The main political forces are in agreement on this issue and when our rules of existence have been brought into question, as democrats we have found a way to set aside our differences to defend the unity of the nation.

Following the speech this afternoon by the candidate to the regional Presidency, I have been in touch with the leaders of the Socialist Party and Citizens, and I have also tried to contact the leader of Podemos, and I will do so again on Monday. I have conveyed to them that, as President of the Government, I am under an obligation to oversee compliance with the Constitution and the law. And this I will do.

In the same way as I received support to appeal to the Constitutional Court against the resolution of November 9, I have also received their support to ensure that the ruling handed down by this court, which annulled this resolution, is respected by all the institutions, regardless of who may head them up. The majority of Spanish society is united in the face of this breakaway challenge, while the pro-sovereignty intentions in Catalan society have only served to cause uncertainty and division, culminating in today's plenary session of investiture in extremis of a new person who didn't use to be a candidate.

I would like to remind all the members of the regional Parliament of Catalonia that the State remains operational and that our democracy has the same strength as ever, regardless of whether we have an acting government or not. I understand politics from a perspective of dialogue and I always exercise this from a perspective of moderation, but I have never lacked, nor will I lack, firmness and determination in continuing to defend the unity of Spain, the sovereignty of the Spanish people and the democratic coexistence that supports our common project.

And the Government continues to have the instruments available at law and under the rule of law to hand, in order to defend these. I have used them and I will continue to do so because it is my obligation as President of the Government and my conviction as a Spaniard. I have issued instructions such that any action that may be taken by the new regional Government of Catalonia, by its regional President, by the regional Parliament and any other institution that may violate the Spanish Constitution and its legal system will be responded to under the rule of law to defend democracy and the law.

I would like to make clear to the Spanish people that they can remain calm. An independence process outside of the law will not be initiated, nor will structures be created outside of those legitimately established by the State. The Government will not allow a single action to take place that goes against our unity and sovereignty, that is unlawful or goes against Spanish case law. Spain is a free, European nation, with a consolidated and advanced democracy, a mature society of free and equal citizens.

We have earned these rights through our own efforts and we will preserve everything good that we have achieved. That is why I will not allow anyone to claim unlimited and uncontrolled powers outside of the law and outside of our democracy. I will defend and uphold democracy throughout Spain. And I will defend its main principle, which is the sovereignty that lives within the Spanish people as a whole".

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