

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Honourable members of the Catalan Parliament,

I would like to begin my words by reminding the importance of Catalan independence, not just from the perspective of Catalans but also its implications for the rest of the world. First time in the modern history, Catalonia, along with Scotland in the United Kingdom, tried to secede from their respective democratic countries without a violent cause such as genocide. Since there are over 200 micro-nations across the world that are eager for earning their self-determination rights, that is also embedded in the charter of the United Nations, Catalan case would be a pioneer for their objectives. Therefore, should it be successful in the manner of achieving recognised, stable, and peaceful government after secession, the global politics surely would have subjected to an unprecedented change.

That is why, the subject at hand is a meticulous one and demands delicate handling in terms of both the internal and foreign affairs of the Catalan government as it constitutes a crisis situation not just for Catalans but also for the whole world politics. Therefore, as a person representing the interests of the people who have elected you in the first place, you have to consider differentiating aspects of Catalan independence concerning national, regional, and global political circumstances since its implications will be upon your constituents. These being said, it should be noted that each and every word carries utmost significance in political matters and this is precisely you should choose them with an extraordinary care in your dealings with other political factions and entities.

As I close my remarks, I would like extent my thanks to the under-secretary-general, Umut Işık Usluyer and his academic assistant Ali Demir Budak for bringing this historical occurrence to delegates.

Cordially,

Secretary-General
Çağdaş Başar Bahar

LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL

Most distinguished deputies of the Parlament de Catalunya,

As the Under-Secretary-General of the Catalan Parliament, it is my utmost honour to welcome you deputies to Catalan Parliament.

With the help of my dear academic assistant Yiğit ÖDÜL; we tried to give you a broad perspective by providing you with the knowledge of what Catalan people and Spain went through in the past and which path they chose during the course of history. This knowledge will enlighten the future of the parliament upon the process of Independence for Catalonia.

I'm most certain that the deputies of this parliament, whether they are pro-unionist or pro-independence, will fight for their cause and bring many perspectives upon the debate of Independence.

That will be all for now. For any kind of inquiry regarding the committee, you may contact me via email (academy@iumun.org). See you all in the parliament!

Best wishes,

Under-Secretary-General

Umut Işık Usluyer

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I. INTRODUCTION

This committee correlates with the various legal and political issues about the Catalan independence referendum. Delegates will represent different members of the Catalan Parliament in this committee that calls attention for finding different solutions. The main purpose of this committee is to find practical solutions that respect the complexity of national identities and numerous political ideologies.

Committee members will play important roles in politics and taking decisions, practising their positions so they can have in-depth conversations with each other. Members will learn about the complex connections that exist between nations and diplomats, as well as the opportunities and challenges that come with self-determination and governance. The work of these committee's delegates will help bring about peace, stability, and justice on a regional and global scale, and delegates will be more informed about how a referendum on Catalan independence is conducted. Delegates will be able improve their negotiation, conflict resolution, and policy-making techniques for the real political issue through this experience.

Importance of this committee cannot be underestimated. In the long run, the decisions that will be taken by delegates could determine how the debate about autonomy and self-determination could be resolved. Delegates will establish a medium ground between national sovereignty and the right to self-governance via careful discussion and passionate debates, providing an example of how to settle this problem in the most democratic and nonviolent ways possible.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Early History of Catalonia

1. Roman Period

This region today called Catalonia was incorporated into the Roman Empire as a part of the province of Hispania Tarraconensis. Among important Roman cities, mention may be made of Barcino (today's Barcelona), Tarraco (Tarragona), and Gerunda (Girona). Roman rule brought in infrastructure in the form of roads, aqueducts, and theatres and Latin, the predecessor of the Catalan language, was the dominant language.

Visigothic Rule: In the 5th century, after the Roman Empire fell, the Iberian Peninsula was settled by the Visigoths. Catalonia would remain under Visigoth rule until the early 8th century, when it would be conquered by Muslim forces from North Africa.

2. Late Middle Ages

From marriages and politics, the Counts of Barcelona enlarged their influence to the middle of the 12th century. Ramon Berenguer III extended the counties and the County of Provence by marriage. In 1118, the Catalan church regained the archiepiscopal post of Tarragona, separated from the eparchy of Narbonne. In 1137, the most important match was done when Ramon Berenguer IV married Petronilla, heiress of Aragon to save his state from the threat of invasion by the Castillians. Their son Alfonso II assimilated the titles of Duke of Provence, Count of Barcelona and King of Aragon making Catalonia a legally recognized region. After gaining the conquest of Valencia, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, and Sicily, Catalonia became the centre of the maritime power of Aragon. The strategic location of Barcelona grew in importance when it served as the centre, from which he organised the **"Cortes Catalanas"**, one of the first parliaments of Europe that limited the king's power of legislation and had its own tax collection, known as the **"Generalitat"**. With famines, the Black Death, and internal strife, the power of Catalonia disintegrated. In 1469, the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon placed Catalonia in a loose confederation under Spain. The discovery of America in 1492 moved the focus of Spain from the Mediterranean and

deepened Catalonia's decline. In 1516, Charles I united all the Spanish crowns, but Catalonia remained a legal entity separated by law until 1716. In 1640, the Reaper's War when Charles II died without an heir in 1700, led to a war of the Spanish Succession that was between the French Bourbons and the Austrian Habsburgs.

B. Late Modern History

1. Napoleonic Wars and French Occupation of Catalonia

The Napoleonic Wars were a series of battles which were fought between some European alliances and the French Empire and its Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte between 1803 and 1815. During the years 1789–1799, the French Revolution significantly affected Europe's politics and made it affected by nationalism and liberty. The revolutionary spirit also spread among the regions placed under Spanish rule, such as Catalonia. Catalonia was also widely affected by the Napoleonic Wars. Catalonia served as a battlefield during the Peninsular War, when the effects of French rule were visible in several ways;

1. The war caused great economic distress through battles and blockades, with the requisition of resources by the French and Spanish armies. The French Administration was really disruptive to the normal institutions of Catalonia. The French imposed new administrative divisions and tried to bring Catalonia closer and more directly into the French Empire again.

2. The occupation brought inside the minds of Catalan people the feeling of resistivity and the idea of difference. So, the struggle against foreign domination also means the reinstatement of some sort of unity of pride. 4. French Revolutionary ideas on nationalism and self-determination played on the Catalan identity to an extent. Ideas in contact emboldened the pursuit of the independent identity and the maintenance of the Catalan culture.

With the repressive policies of trying to recover the liberal changes under King Ferdinand VII following on from the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the Spanish monarchy, there, it could not have been foreseen, but the seeds of Catalan

nationalism had already been sown by the impact of the Napoleonic Wars and the spread of revolutionary ideas. Ultimately, this period would serve to define a strong sense of a distinct Catalan identity characterised by the pursuit of its own political and cultural preservation.

2. Peninsular War

The peninsular war (a.k.a War of the Spanish Independence) was a significant battle which is a part of the Napoleonic Wars. Combined Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom have fought against the invader French Empire of Napoleon I on the Iberian Peninsula. It is still the bloodiest incident in Spain's contemporary history.

After the Kingdom of Portugal took a long time to agree with a French demand to stop the ongoing trade with Britain, the war broke out in October 1807. Lisbon was under French military occupation by November 30. Napoleon then turned against his former ally, Spain, overthrowing the Spanish House of Bourbon and installing his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as King of Spain in an attempt to strengthen his power. However, Napoleon has underestimated the level of nationalism in Spain which is an unexpected move from such an experienced leader. Eventually, most of the Spanish people revolted against the French occupation.

Many French soldiers were sent to the peninsula during the war. However, there were a significant problem which is mainly about the mountain chain named as "the Pyrenees" which creates the modern border between Spain and France. Harsh terrain of Spain was significantly different from plain Europe and that difference resulted with huge casualties on the French side. Despite frequent changes in the war's direction, France eventually lost control of the Peninsular war and it resulted with Spanish Victory. Hostilities have diminished after the first abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte.

3. First Spanish Republic

The First Spanish Republic, (a.k.a. the Democratic Sexennium) was a short-lived republic which was established on February 11, 1873, and lasted until December 29, 1874.

The First Republic was formed after the abdication of King Amadeo I. After this resignation, an administrative gap occurred, and this gap was filled with a republic by the people who wanted a more fair and modern government. However, the First Republic was going to face lots of problems. First one of them was the Carlist Wars (1833–1876) which happened between people that supported and followed Don Carlos and the government. There were also fights inside the republic which were mainly between three groups: republic supporters, people that wanted autonomous regions and people who supported the kingdom. All of these fights have made the government extremely weak.

The First Republic was also struggling with its economy, the unemployment rate was very high, and people were extremely poor. The government's failure to resolve the issue has increased the unrest in the public. Due to these major problems, there were many times when the military staged a coup and took control over. However, that caused even more problems and led to the collapse of the First republic which happened in 1874.

C. Second Spanish Republic

On the 28th of January 1930, the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera was overthrown by various republican factions (conservatives, socialists, Catalan nationalist and etc.) that gathered around the principles of rejecting monarchy and establishing a new, democratic and free Spanish Republic, which solidified these intentions in *San Sebastian Pact*. The next municipal elections would result in a major landslide victory for the republicans. This victory gave the republicans the needed legitimacy to disband monarchy and two days later after the elections, the second republic was proclaimed, and the king would go into exile. The young provisional government was established, and they began to draft a new constitution to solidify the ideals that led to proclamation of the new republic

In June of 1931, the young provisional government would be successful in drafting the new constitution. The constitution was the most liberal and democratic constitution that Spain has ever seen. The new constitution gave people Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Association. Other than that, it made radical changes like allowing

divorce, disestablishing the Roman Catholic Church (although it was reestablished by the *Cortes* later in that year), nationalised key industries and , most importantly for our topic, gave all of the Spanish regions the right of Autonomy. Although the Catalans tried to establish an independent state in Catalonia after the elections, these attempts were suppressed by the government. Newly established constitution gave one more chance for Catalonia to have some degree of freedom inside the union, so, Catalonia approached matters and became the first region to apply and gain a statute of autonomy almost right after the constitution's approval in 1932. The ***Generalitat*** was reestablished after 3 centuries under a leftist government and Catalan was made the official language of the state, signalling the reemergence of Catalan identity.

However, this statute of autonomy would continue for 2 years. In 1933, leftist government of Spain suffered a huge defeat against the rightist ***CEDA***, gaining most of the seats in the parliament. However, the upcoming prime minister didn't include any ***CEDA*** members in his cabinet. This led to unrest among the CEDA seats. In 1934, the president Niceto Alcala Zamora was unwilling to call for an election and instructed the prime minister to form a new government. This time, the new cabinet had 3 members from CEDA inside of it. This led to an uproar from the leftist side of the parliament. Left wing denounced this move as "betrayal" against the republican ideas and the General Union of Workers called out for a general strike. However, the general strike in Catalonia turned out to be an armed insurgency against the "fascist" government forces and Catalan State was proclaimed by the protesters in 6th of October with the support of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. This led martial law to be declared in the state and the insurgency was quickly

suppressed by the army. Upon the insurgency, the government of Spain suspended the statute of autonomy of Catalonia. But the suspension would last only for 2 years as in 1936 made a comeback in the elections and pardoned the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. This time though, an event that would change Spanish history was in sight.

D. Spanish Civil War and Catalonia

1. Popular Front Victory in Elections

In the 1936 Elections, the left wing Popular Front secured a narrow victory over the right wing parties. After the victory, the revolutionary masses took the streets and freed prisoners who were persecuted for their beliefs and were imprisoned by the right-wing government. However, in just 36 hours after the election, 16 people were killed due to political clashes between the parties. Manuel Azana was given the responsibility to form a new government. Believing that there was no returning back, right wing began to plan on overthrowing republic.

2. Preparation of a Military Coup

Right after the election, some of the officers of the military started planning on a military coup. By the end of April, General Emilio Mola emerged as the head of a new conspiracy amongst the other officers of the army. However, the Republican Government acted quickly and removed the suspected Falangist officers from their post. Fransico Franco was sacked from being the Chief of Staff and sent to command the garrison in the Canary Islands. Meanwhile, Emilio Mola was sacked from being the head of the Army of Africa and was appointed as the commander Pamplona. However, this would prove to be a mistake as it made Emilio Mola to be much more advantageous at commanding and planning of the mainland rising. General Jose Sanjurjo was made the figurehead of the coup and General Emile Mola was made the chief planner and second in command. Meanwhile, the law and order in Spain was getting weaker day by day as multiple deaths at political clashes were almost a normal thing of the day. The discontent between the Spaniards was getting stronger.

3. Escalation

After thorough preparations, the uprising was scheduled for the 17th of July. The first uprising was staged in the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco. Although the plan in Morocco was discovered, rebel officers moved with the plan quickly and captured key points in Morocco, solidifying their victory. However, in the Iberian Peninsula, rebels couldn't manage to capture most of the major key points and failed to gain upper hand in every major city. The Republican government immediately ordered dispensing weapons to the public. These moves marked the beginning of the Civil War.

4. Catalonia in Civil War

In the beginning of the civil war, the rebellious groups of officers also tried to gain control over Barcelona. However, the rebels were crushed by the royal Civil Guard and Assault Guard. The crushing of rebellious officers placed Catalonia firmly in the Republican side of the war. However, there were two rival factions in Catalonia. First being the de jure powers of the Generalitat de Catalunya and the de facto power of armed popular militias that consisted of anarchists, communists, socialists and other leftist groups. Although the ruling faction was the Generalitat de Catalunya, the militias had the financial and military power at their hands. The situation between these factions worsened day by day and eventually, some of the militant groups tried to overthrow the Republican rule in Catalonia. However, their attempts were soon crushed, and a truce was signed between the rebellious militants and republicans. Though, this uprising really hurt the morale of both sides and weakened them further against the Falangist attacks.

In 1938, Francoist troops managed to break out Republican frontlines, thus separating the Republican frontlines into two. Catalonia was isolated by this move and would soon be a target for the Falangist forces of Francisco Franco. However, Catalans weren't an easy bite for the Falangists. They fought hard with what they had in their hands. This series of battles were the fiercest of the whole Civil War. But, in the end, without any help, Catalonia fell to the hands of the Falangist and soon the Falangists would defeat other remaining Republican forces in Spain. Thus, marking the end for the Second Spanish Republic and Spanish Civil War.

E. Catalonia During Francoist Regime

After the civil war, the first thing that Franco did was to install his dictatorship in Spain. To achieve first he collected all the power under him and banned all opposition against him (Preston, 1993). Of course, the Catalan statute of autonomy was revoked and considering that the Catalans sided with Republicans, the Franco regime was full of hatred and anger against Catalonia and Catalans. They felt so much hatred that some of the Francoist said *"Catalan dogs! You are not worthy of the sun that shines on you!"*.

As expected, the Francoist government would start to ban anything related with Catalan nationalism or Catalan identity. People who used Catalan in daily life would be threatened by the Francoist government, if not beaten brutally or killed in an “accident”. They were doing this to “purify” the Catalans who were mere subjects of anarchism and communist that were left behind by the old Republicans. Also, as Catalonia was one of most industrialised areas of Spain, the Francoist government immediately took the initiative and began seizing the factories or businesses that were left behind by the Catalans that were forced to exile from the country.

However, this acts of the Francoist regime would have an impact on the Catalan people. Catalan people had enough of the Francoist regime’s actions towards the people of Catalonia. In 1951, the Francoist government raised the ticket prices for trams in Barcelona. Upon this, Catalan people decided to organise a strike against the increased prices. Their reasoning was that the government was unfair as the people of Barcelona get to have the same service with Madrid, but they ultimately paid more than the capital city. For two whole weeks, people of Barcelona striked against the government’s unjust implementation of rules against the Catalonia and Catalan people. The government asked the Guardia Civil to interfere with the strike. However, even the Guardia Civil’s commander stated that he could not kill a citizen for basically not taking the tram. In the end, the government had to back down from raising the ticket prices for trams. This action by the Catalan people showed that even in their most oppressed times, they could stand up for themselves and show the people that they are there and they won’t be leaving their fate into the hands of any dictator. This small strike marked the beginning of what to come in the next years against the brutal oppression of Franco's regime.

F. Spanish Transition to Democracy and Modern Catalonia

The reign of the dictator Francisco Franco came to an end after his death in November 1975. Before his death, Franco chose Juan Carlos I to be his successor. Many believed that the new king would follow the Francoist beliefs in his rule. However, this would soon be proven wrong by the king *Juan Carlos I* himself. In his first speech, the king signalled that he had the intentions to pave the way for democratisation of Spain and

bring back constitutional monarchy after a almost-40-years long brutal and oppressive dictatorship of Franco. The ambitious plan to convert Spain into a democratic country gave Catalans a new light of hope to shine once again after the oppression of their culture for so many years.

1. Beginning of Reforms

As a new political era for Spain begins, upon his crowning, King Juan Carlos I started his work by pardoning 9000 political prisoners. This was one of the first signals that the new decade would bring Spaniards and those who were persecuted for their beliefs to gain their freedom. However, Francoist still held many positions under their rules including the position of prime minister. The king was aware of this fact, but his majesty was also aware of the fact that such radical moves could provoke another dispute between the Spaniards and might be the cause of another civil war. So, instead of appointing another prime minister immediately, the king chose to leave the already existing Francoist government in its place for a while. However, the Francoist government would soon collapse, and the king would appoint Adolfo Suarez to pave the way for democratisation of the country.

The new government of Adolfo Suarez immediately began work on the *Political Reform Bill*, which re-establishes democratic elections in the country and allows the elimination of Francoist governmental structures. Adolfo Suarez's government used logical tactics -such as using the already existing Francoist elements inside the country for their advantage- to bring this bill to the Spanish parliament and in the end, the government succeeded at its goal. The bill was approved by a huge majority of the Spanish Parliament after fierce debates. After this, Adolfo Suarez's government held a popular referendum and presented the bill to the public in order to gain more legitimacy on the matter. The popular referendum turned out to be a great success as 77% of the votes were in favour of the bill and this gave the government the needed legitimacy in order to eliminate what was left from Franco's brutal regime. The bill took effect immediately and a free election to be held on the 15th of June 1977 was announced to the public.

2. 1977 Elections

On 15th of June 1977, Spain had its first free elections since 1936 in which Christian democrats managed to secure plurality in the Spanish parliament. They were followed by the socialists and communists. Christian democrats now had the responsibility for drafting the new constitution of Spain, in which they would later succeed upon this mission.

Another thing to be noted in this election was the success of the minority parties in the election. The *Basque Nationalist Party* managed to win 8 seats in the election. Basques' were followed by the Catalans in which ***Democratic Pact for Catalonia*** managed to win 11 seats in the Spanish Parliament. This clearly indicated that minorities like Catalans and Basques still had national consciousness in them even though their identity was brutally oppressed by the Francoists for years.

3. Restoration of Generalitat de Catalunya

Upon their victory in the election, Christian democrats began their reforms right away. The first reform they did was the Amnesty Act, which freed political prisoners in Spanish prisons and permitted those who were exiled by the Franco government to return Spanish territories once again.

By this, ***Generalitat de Catalunya***, the official government position of Catalan region, was reestablished by the Spanish government under its legitimate president *Josep Tarradellas* which was exiled by the Francoist regime. Upon his arrival to Catalonia, the president would leave his mark on history by saying: "*Ciutadans de Catalunya: ja sóc aquí!*" ("*Citizens of Catalonia: I'm back!*"). He immediately assumed the autonomous powers of Catalonia under him. Both the election results and Josep Tarradellas return marked the reemergence of Catalan identity in Catalonia.

4. 1978 Constitution and Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia

The last hit to destroy what was left from the Francoist regime was to destroy the Francoists' constitution. In December of 1978, the new constitution was approved in a referendum by the people of Spain. The constitution made it very clear that Spain was a parliamentary democracy with constitutional monarchy. The constitution also

recognised the fact of autonomous communities, and 17 autonomous communities were established by the constitution with each of them having their own Statute of Autonomy. Accordingly, Catalonia received its Statute of Autonomy in 1979 after 40 years of oppression under the Francoist governments.

5. New Millennium and Modern Catalonia

The new millennium marked a new beginning for Catalonia. As the world became much more inclined to accept liberal ideas thanks to increased globalisation of the world through the rapidly advancing technology, Catalonia and Catalans were much more accepting and supportive of a Catalonia that was independent from everything and had the self-determination that it yearned for centuries.

First step of this new movement came in 2003. In November 2003, The Parlament de Catalunya transferred into the hands of a leftist coalition between Socialists' Party of Catalonia, Republican Left of Catalonia and Initiative for Catalonia Greens. The new government immediately started working on a new Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia that aimed to consolidate and expand Catalonia's right to self-governance.

In 2006, the new Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia was approved in a referendum by the Catalan people. However, some parts of the society rejected the idea of an independent Catalonia and the conservative People's Party sent the law to the Constitutional Court of Spain. After 4 years, in 2010, the Constitutional Court of Spain ruled that the referendum was illegal and thereby non-valid. Large segments of Catalan society fiercely opposed the decision, which led to heightening the calls for independence. Large demonstrations were called, which is estimated to gather around 1 to 1.5 million people wanting the Catalan independence. The largest of these demonstrations were the one that was held on 11 September 2012 during the National Day of Catalonia. Protestors from all over Catalonia chanted "***Catalunya, nou estat d'Europa***" (***Catalonia, new state in Europe***) in the streets of Barcelona. The request of independence could be seen in every part of Catalan society whether it came from a demonstration or, for example, from the colours of the F.C. Barcelona's jerseys.

The demonstration marked the dispute over the right to organise a referendum on Catalonia's independence and the viability of an independent Catalan state and its

admission into the European Union has been revived, and the event has defined the political agenda for Catalonia. Artur Mas, the president of the Generalitat of Catalonia, stated on September 25, 2012, that "*The street vocal must be moved to the polls*" and that early elections for the Catalan Parliament will take place on November 25. On 25th of November, the elections were held and President Artur Mas and his party managed to secure the majority in parliament although they lost seats in comparison with the last elections. On 19 December 2012, President Artur Mas and Oriol Junqueras signed the governability act. The act included a referendum on the political future of Catalonia in 2014. On 19 September 2014, Parlament de Catalunya approved a call for an independence referendum. On 9th of November, the votes were once again cast for the future of Catalonia, however, on the same day the Spanish government announced they will block any efforts of Independence by appealing to the Constitutional Court. Catalonia decided 80% in favour of Independence in the referendum, but, on 29th of November the Constitutional Court decided to hear the Spanish Government's case and decided to suspend the vote in accordance with the 1978 Constitution. Upon the news, Catalan government decided on a temporary suspension of the referendum process.

3. 2015 Catalan Regional Elections

After the non-binding independence referendum, President Artur Mas proposed to have new regional elections. Although at first the idea raised questions regarding the stability of the government since the new elections would be the third general election in just 5 years. However, the parliament eventually came to an agreement and on 14th of January 2015, the President Artur Mas announced that the snap election was to be held in September of the same year. Also, Artur Mas stated in his speech that this election to be turned into an alternative vote on independence of Catalonia, with pro-independence parties including their independence goal in their election campaign. This resulted in some pro-independence parties founding new alliances between themselves.

The elections were held on 17th of September 2015. The results of the election were quite shocking. Although the newly established ***Junt pel Sí (JxSi)*** managed to win

most of the seats, it failed to gain an absolute majority in the parliament. The next was the shocking rise of the Pro-Spanish party *Ciudadanos* as the second party right after the alliance of *JxSi*. The party managed to secure 25 seats in the parliament thanks to their anti-independence stance. *Ciudadanos* was followed by the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*, however, the socialists scored a new low for their election results. They lost 4 seats in the parliament. They were followed by another pro-independence supporter alliance, *Catalunya Si que es Pot*, they managed to win 11 seats in the parliament. In 5th place, was the counterpart of socialists, *People's Party*. They also scored their lowest since the 1992 elections and lost 8 seats in the parliament. Lastly, the far-left party of *Candidatura d'Unitat Popular* performed very well in the general elections and managed to raise their number of seats from 3 to 10. With these results, the election came to an end.

III. POLITICAL FACTIONS

A. Junts pel Sí (JxSí)

After the failed referendum of independence in 2014, Junts pel Sí was established by the pro-independence parties under the leadership of the president Artur Mas in order to gain absolute majority in the upcoming 2015 elections (de facto independence referendum). The alliance contains parties of *Democratic Convergence of Catalonia*, *Republican Left of Catalonia*, *Democrats of Catalonia*, *Left Movement*, *Independence Rally* and some of the influential pro-independence supporters from the civil society. Although they failed to gain the absolute majority in the last elections, they still have the most seats in the parliament and are a strong alliance that support Catalan Independence and Catalan Nationalism.

B. Ciudadanos (C's)

Founded in 2006, Ciudadanos is the second largest in the Parlament de Catalunya party after the 2015 Regional Elections. Presenting themselves as the centre-of-left, Ciudadanos made a quite shocking surprise in the elections as nobody expected a pro-unionist and Spanish Nationalist party to be the second largest party in the parliament. Given this, Ciudadanos is a strong political faction that could challenge the independence movement of Catalonia.

C. Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC-PSOE)

Socialist Party of Catalonia is the third largest party in the parliament. Standing at the left of the political compass, socialist party is also a strong advocate of Catalan Independence and Nationalism. Although their power declined throughout the years, Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya remains as a strong faction that holds a very good position among Catalan people, especially those who are in metropolitan areas of Catalonia.

D. Catalunya Sí que es Pot (CatSiqueesPot)

"Catalonia Yes We Can" as both the motto and the name of the coalition, the left-wing union was a succession to the former coalition of Initiative for Catalonia Greens (ICV)

and United and Alternative Left (EUiA) with the addition of Podemos and Equo. Elections of 2015 motivated the coalition to be formed and approximately 9% of the total vote and 11 seats in the parliament was secured. CSQP defends Catalan's right to self-determination, and they could be a key factor in supporting the process for independence.

E. Partit Popular de Catalunya (PP)

The People's Party of Catalonia is a rooted faction founded in 1989 as a conservative and Christian-democratic party. Embracing centre-right and right-wing ideologies, the party since its assembly has peaked with 12.98% of the total vote and 19 seats in 2012 and lost 8 of the seats in the most recent election 2015. PP in affiliation with the Spanish People's Party, presents strong Spanish unionist opinions. If they can manage to cooperate with Ciudadanos, they could create a strong faction against independence movements.

F. Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP)

The Popular Unity Candidacy is 1991 founded pro-Catalan independence party, leaning left-wing to far left. The constitution of an independent republic on the basis of self-determination is the main focus of the party. The economic model followed is generalised as socialism, defending the nationalisation of public utilities alongside transport and communication networks. The party ran only municipal elections until 2012, taking a poll that year to decide whether to attend parliament elections. CUP, which earned 3 seats in 2012 increased that number by 7 in 2015.

IV. GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA

Generalitat de Catalunya, or the Government of Catalonia, is the governing system in which it uses the powers given to Catalonia in accordance with its Statute of Autonomy inside Spain. It embodies *Parlament de Catalunya (Parliament of Catalonia)*, *Consell Executiu (Executive Council)* and lastly *President de la Generalitat de Catalunya (President of the Government of Catalonia)*.

A. President de la Generalitat de Catalunya

As can be understood from the name, *President de la Generalitat de Catalunya* is the head of government of Catalonia. The president holds some functions under his jurisdiction:

1. Representative Functions

In the autonomous community, the president is the highest representative of the Generalitat and the ordinary of the State. Additionally, he oversees internal relations with other State entities and Spanish autonomous communities with which Catalonia has mutual interests. In addition, the President is in charge of selecting the regional ministers (formally known as consellers) and other high posts as required by law, as well as calling for elections. In his capacity as the King's ordinary envoy to Catalonia, he enacts legislation on behalf of the autonomous community.

2. Governmental Functions

The president directs and oversees the Catalan government as a member. He appoints and has the authority to remove the ministers, convenes meetings of the Executive Council, and serves as its head. In addition, he authorises the publication of decrees issued by the Executive Council by signing them. He may also convene an extraordinary session of the Catalan parliament, which may be required to have a wide discussion or, depending on the circumstances, be dissolved.

B. Parlament de Catalunya

Reestablished in 1979, Parlament de Catalunya is the most crucial part of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy as it consists of deputies that were chosen by the free will of the

people of Catalonia. So, parliament and deputies inside of it represent all the people of Catalonia.

Given this role of the *Parlament de Catalunya*, the deputies and their actions in the parliament will be decisive on the oncoming debates and decisions for the future of Catalonia.

1. Legislative Function of the Parliament

Parlament de Catalunya has the legislative capacity to draft and pass laws regarding the ***Statute of Autonomy*** of Catalonia. However, the laws to be drafted or passed should be in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Spain. This, in a matter of fact, limits the parliament's legislative decision-making regarding the independence of Catalonia as the ***Constitutional Court of Spain*** may suspend any decision that is not in accordance with the *Organic Law* or, in general, *Constitution of Spain*. Acting accordingly, the deputies of the parliament should always be aware of the consequences they could face in case of an independence referendum.

2. Budgetary Function of the Parliament

Each year, Parlament de Catalunya has the responsibility and authority to approve and debate upon how to distribute public money raised through taxes. It plays a crucial role for the parliament and *Generalitat* as the distribution of money will be a key-factor on specification and implementation of the chosen *Generalitat's* programme. So, deputies of the parliament should be cautious on how they will allocate the money that is to be given to them at the beginning of the parliamentary session and shall keep a close eye on the *Generalitat* on whether they use the given money according to their promises and benefit of Catalonia.

3. Elective Function of the Parliament

Parlament de Catalunya can elect the President of the ***Generalitat*** (however any elected person by the Parlament de Catalunya can only be appointed with the approval of the king) and the senators who will be responsible for the representation of Catalonia and Parlament de Catalunya in the ***Cortes Generales***. This role of the parliament is an important instrument to carry the voice of Catalan people to the

Cortes Generales and resolve any kind of issue from the heart of Spanish democracy. So, deputies of the parliament shall be careful at choosing which deputies will be given the responsibility for the position of *Generalitat* and which deputies to represent Catalonia in *Cortes Generales*.

4. Working and Decision-making System of the Parliament

Parlament de Catalunya takes every decision through a series of debates. Every matter at hand or any questions that came through -whether be it from the deputies of parliament or Catalan people- to parliament shall be discussed and be voted upon at the end of the discussion. The rules governing the debate, voting types and procedure hereby goes:

1. During the Parliamentary sessions, Catalan and Spanish flags must always be visible to the parliament. Any disrespect to flags shall result in disciplinary penalty for the said deputy.
2. Every deputy shall one by one come to the floor and take an oath in front of other deputies before starting the parliamentary session.
3. Deputies of the parliament may present "*motions*" to the parliament in order to discuss what they presented.
4. There can't be more than 3 motions presented to parliament at one time.
5. Given motions time shall not be shorter than 10, not be longer than 15 minutes.
6. Every deputy shall be given at least 2 minutes of speaking time.
7. Motions presented by the deputies shall be put to vote by the parliament's speaker.
8. Given motions shall be voted upon by the deputies of the parliament by raising their hands on whether they vote "*Si*" or "*No*". (If seen necessary by the speaker, deputies may use their placards during the voting)
9. No deputy can interrupt any other deputy's speech.
10. Deputies may demand semi-moderated debate in order to facilitate the debate much quicker. However, deputies from the same faction cannot speak after each other unless a deputy from another group was recognised.

11. In order to write declarations and public releases to inform the public about the ongoing situations, deputies may demand unmoderated debate.
12. One deputy from each political faction shall take the floor and share their beliefs on the discussed matter.
13. Parliament shall elect the president in its first two parliamentary sessions. Failure to do so shall result in failure of the parliament.
14. Every deputy may present themselves as a candidate. However, every group inside the parliament may only nominate one deputy as their main candidate.
15. Nominated candidates of the parliamentary groups must give a speech in front of the parliament.
16. The speech of the candidates should not exceed 4 minutes.
17. After hearing every candidate, parliament shall proceed with the voting procedure.
18. During the voting, every deputy shall commence their vote secretly.
19. The Speaker and vice speakers shall call every deputy's name to cast their vote in order to simplify the tracking process and eliminate the risk of one deputy casting more than one vote.
20. After every vote is cast, Mr./Mrs. speaker shall first count the casted votes in order to see if there are any extra votes than the number of present deputies. If there is any, the extra votes should be destroyed by the Speaker.
21. After the procedure is done, the Speaker shall open the casted votes and proceed with announcing and showing every casted vote to the parliament.
22. Once the counting is done, Mr./Mrs. Speaker shall announce the result of the election to the parliament
23. The winner of the election shall come to the floor and take an oath in front of the Parliament.
24. The chosen president shall choose 6 deputies to present Catalonia in the Spanish Parliament as senator. The president should choose 1 deputy from each political group inside the parliament.

V. OBSTACLES FOR CATALAN INDEPENDENCE

Forming a state has always been a tough process. Independence may seem like a sweet idea, but every rose has its thorn, and the thorn in our story is the responsibilities that come after independence. Since the formation of Catalonia, Spain has always treated its subdivisions as an elder brother; united, steered, and protected them. Apart from these facts, the existence of Spain as the head honcho, practically showed a catalyst effect for the subdivisions to be able to trade and travel freely with the entire European Union.

In that case, being independent basically meant renouncing all these concessions and being obliged to form new agreements. Besides, even if Catalonia is capable of getting over all these obstacles, there are some more about the constitution itself.

Here are some major obstacles for Catalan independence:

A. Legal Obstacles

Evolving from an era of dictatorship to democracy, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 was approved by the people and runs as the most basic legal framework of the entire country. It clearly states that Spain is unified and establishes the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and national unity. No region can independently withdraw from the Spanish Union while existing under the constitution.

The Spanish Government believes that the idea of separating the Catalan region from the Spanish Union is unquestionably illegal and unconstitutional has resulted in a long-term constitutional crisis. This crisis has put Spain's constitutional system and its power of supervision to the test and highlighted strong political, cultural, and historical divisions within the nation. It has also brought up difficult issues regarding the nature of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the right to self-determination in a modern democratic state.

B. Economic Obstacles

Catalonia is a strong economic area with 292 billion Euros of annual GDP. And this is nearly on the same level as some of the European countries. However, there are some important issues that make it more difficult to continue its existence as a separate state.

Catalonia owes its economic freedom and prosperity to the strong relations established by the Spanish State with Europe. Catalonia would conceivably lose these advantages after a possible separation from the Spanish Union and trying to make whole new agreements with major trade partners would cost time and create bureaucratic barriers. While existing as an autonomous region it's always easier to trade with the whole world.

On the other hand, Catalonia would be obligated to set its own infrastructure which can be expensive and difficult to implement for essential services like foreign relations, defense, and currency.

Catalonia's independence may also bring up economic instability, including a potential for capital flight, barriers to trade, and difficulties in building relationships and international recognition.

C. International Recognition

Even if Catalonia has managed to gain its independence, there would be a major problem with international recognition, which affects a country's diplomatic relations, its trade agreements and its international reputation etc.

A country should be able to build healthy diplomatic relations with other countries in order to strengthen its position in the international arena. However, in this situation a Catalan state which newly gained its independence would not be recognized by any other country in the first days of its independence. One of the most important reasons for this is the deep-seated diplomatic relations between the Spanish government and the rest of the world. Naturally, any nation would want to jeopardise its relationship with Spain by recognizing Catalonia's independence.

And without diplomatic recognition, Catalonia could have practical challenges such as difficulties in establishing embassies or consulates abroad, participating in international organisations and negotiating trade agreements etc. These challenges could block Catalonia's ability to fully integrate into the modern world.

VI. POSITIONS OF OTHER STATES AND ORGANISATIONS REGARDING CATALAN INDEPENDENCE

A. European Union

The European Union generally abstained from interfering in the internal affairs of its own member nations, but it did not have a stance on Catalonia's independence vote. Before 2017, EU representatives underlined that Carles Puigdemont's administration ought to operate within the boundaries of the Spanish constitution. The European Union has consistently stated that it supports Spain's sovereignty and geographical integrity. It was also made plain that the declared act of independence would not be accepted by the European Union. This means that it would have political and legal consequences for both Spain and the EU.

B. United Nations

The UN also affirms the right of self-determination. However, The UN Secretariat avoided interfering in Spain's domestic affairs and abstained from expressing any clear opinions on the Catalan independence movement. The UN emphasised how crucial it is to maintain Spain's legal system and constitutional order. Its representatives demanded that the parties engage in talks in order to find peaceful and democratic solutions.

C. Germany

Germany's stance during the Catalan independence vote can be about its desire for the stability and unity of the European Union. The German government openly supported Spain's unity and made some statements regarding that a possible referendum would be against Spain's Constitution. Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that the Spanish government has the right to defend the country's constitutional order. Furthermore, Germany emphasized the necessity of a conversation between the Catalan administration and the Spanish government, assuring a peaceful solution.

D. United States of America

The United States emphasised that Catalonia's independence movement was an internal matter of Spain and publicly defended Spain's geographical unity. Like many other nations in the international community, the United States State Department expressed hope that in the future, the Spanish government and people would work together to find a way out of the current political difficulties while following democratic principles and constitutional law.

E. Russian Federation

As expected, Russia is more tolerant when it comes to separatist issues on the West side, but it has formally said that it supports Spain's territorial integrity when it comes to the upcoming independence referendum in Catalonia. The Russian Foreign Ministry specifically said that such issues need to be settled in accordance with national laws and constitutional frameworks. Since Catalonia's independence movement was an internal Spanish affair, Russian officials did not publicly endorse or even sympathise with it. But for the same reasons (the impact of European separatist movements on the political dynamics and stability of the West) the Russian government has been careful.

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