

Leaving Spain to become part of Europe

It is evident that the efforts deployed for almost two years by the Spanish foreign minister have been useless against some thousands of Catalan activists spread around the world. The aim of Catalan people to vote for their collective future cannot be stopped with rhetoric and old fashioned arguments.

The sovereignty process in Catalonia will reach its goal based on the passion and effort that Catalans put into it. Repeating an extraordinary Diada national day with La Via Catalana (The Catalan Way) in 2013, a year after the mass demonstration of 2012, made some governments see that the process is real, not just a flash in the pan. Everything is in the hands of the Catalans. In our hands.

Any country that counts for anything in the world knows what the situation is in Spain very well, and privately they admit that Spain cannot continue as it has done. The image of Spain in the world is not a very good one: widespread corruption, economic collapse, huge debt, skyrocketing unemployment, the monarchy in dispute, new laws undermining basic rights, such as abortion, education, human rights.

The Anglo-Saxon world (UK, USA) is quite clear about its priorities. The key point is democracy. But neither the UK nor the USA make the decisions in the EU, so their support is important, but not enough.

France, with regard to geo-politics, and Germany with regard to the economy, will decide in the end how the question will be treated if Catalans go all the way. France can see Catalonia as a potential ally, if viewed as a "southern Belgium", as the French mentality includes Catalonia in the same way that it includes Belgium. In fact, Napoleon annexed Catalonia to the French Empire in 1810, the only territory he annexed from Spain. He pursued the geographical inheritance from the time of Charlemagne. If France considers Catalonia part of Charlemagne's inheritance, we



The human chain passing through Avinyonet del Penedès./ JUANMA RAMOS

could get French support if we give them our unconditional support in return. Of course this would not mean being annexed by France, just as Belgium is not part of France, just the commitment to be a good ally. France sees Spain as a corrupt copy of their Jacobin system, ruled by a bureaucratic and hereditary caste system.

Germany recognises that the Catalan situation with Spain is untenable. The Süd-deutsche Zeitung talks about "Five centuries of anti-economic decisions", and they know about fiscal balance, but their biggest concern is the Spanish debt. Their second main concern is that 55% of the German corporations on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain & Portugal) are located between Barcelona and Tarragona. And this is no

joke. Germany won't allow any action that could damage its corporations. In fact, the German government leaked a report from Kai-Olaf Lang where the issue about the acceptance of Catalonia within the EU is resolved.

The criteria for Catalonia would be that the "flight" of Catalonia (a resource from the Roman law) will enter the EU, but not the soil. In all events it is most likely that Catalonia will be in the EU in the case of independence. In the implausible event that a net contributor to the EU budget with a population already under EU laws were to be rejected from EU membership, EFTA is the alternative to be "in Europe" as in the case of the Swiss or Norwegians. Not a bad alternative.

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"A debate between a man and woman is very complicated, because if you abuse your intellectual superiority, you end up looking like a male chauvinist." Miguel Arias Cañete (Spanish MEP)

Old-school machismo should have no place in the European Parliament. With his witless comment, Mr. Arias Cañete buried his chances of becoming a new European commissioner