

Spanish Government pardons the leaders of the Catalan independence movement

Approved nine pardons

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USPA NEWS - The Spanish Government approved this Tuesday nine pardons for as many leaders of the Catalan independence movement, who are serving sentences for the secessionist attempt of October 10, 2017. On that date, the Parliament of Catalonia approved a declaration of independence by which they were suspended from their functions and subsequently convicted the political and social leaders of the Catalan secessionist movement.

On Monday, Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, has announced that, "thinking on the constitutional spirit of concord", he will propose to the Council of Ministers pardoning the nine convicted in the 'juicio del procés' who are in prison. Sánchez said he was aware that some people are opposed to this measure and assured that he "respects" their reasons. "I understand the part of Catalan and Spanish society that opposes granting these pardons: people who were affected in their daily lives, at work, in their families, with their friends, by the events prosecuted in the case of the process," but "those of us who support the pardons also have reasons," he said, "in which the expectations of the future outweigh the grievances of the past. And in the balance of political decisions, the future must matter more than the past."

The Government of Spain's proposal is to "give way to a new project for a new country," Sánchez announced on Monday. "Let union be instrumental in the great social and economic change that Catalonia, Spain and Europe demand in the coming years," he added. This Tuesday, Spanish Government approved the first step to this new project for a new country. Although the current independence leaders from Catalonia accept the pardons, they consider them "insufficient" because their objective is to achieve amnesty for convicted politicians and a firm commitment from the Spanish Government to hold an independence referendum in Catalonia.

The proposed pardon of the 'procés' prisoners conditions the grace measure that none of them commit a crime again within a certain period of time that ranges between three and six years in prison. The leaders of the condemned sovereign entities, Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart, have one of the longest periods in which they cannot re-offend if they do not want the grace measure to be revoked: five years. Spanish Government sources have pointed out that all pardons, as in all those granted, have a period in which their revocation depends on their re-offending. The period is three, four, five and six years once the royal decree by which they will be released is published in the State Official Gazette.

The entire center-right opposition in the Spanish Parliament has come out against the pardons. The conservative Popular Party announced that it will appeal to the Supreme Court the granting of pardons, considering them illegal. The far-right party VOX also announced that it will take the Government's agreement to Court. And the centrist Citizens criticized the unilateral decision to grant the pardons of President Pedro Sánchez, whom he accused of seeking his continuity in the Headquarters of the Government.

But the decision to grant or deny pardons is a Government prerogative, on which neither the courts, political parties nor society have anything to say. If pardons were to commit a crime again, they would return to jail, but not because the Government revoked their pardon, but because pardons, such as amnesty, pardon past crimes, tried and convicted, but not future crimes.

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