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Catalonia To Take Legal Action Against Spanish State As Junqueras Threatens Financial Chaos



By [Matthew Bennett](#) | November 1st, 2014

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NEWS—CATALONIA—SECESSION: *Nobel Peace Prize winners and cultural figures sign a manifesto calling for Catalans to be allowed to vote, as Madrid announces a new legal challenge.*

The First Minister of Catalonia, Artur Mas, yesterday announced his regional government is preparing legal action against the Spanish state for “abuse of power and of law” and that he was continuing to finalise logistical preparations for the independence poll on November 9.

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“This is not a referendum, even less a hidden one”, said Mr. Mas: “This is an open participative process. So much so that 940 town halls, out of 970, have said they will collaborate, and there are 40,000 volunteers; and everyone knows where they must participate and at which voting booth”.

At lunchtime, Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría confirmed in her weekly post-cabinet press conference that Mr. Rajoy’s executive was to immediately challenge the new, watered-down version of the Catalan vote on November 9.

Leading supporters of Catalan independence made a number of statements signalling an intention to increase the possible internationalisation of the conflict with Madrid.

Spokesman Francesc Homs said in a radio interview that the Catalan government was looking into the possibility of turning the Catalan demand for a vote into an international legal problem.

“[The lawsuit the Catalan government is preparing] is a preparatory step if we later wish to go to international courts”, he said: “We do not rule out acting wherever we need to act, but first we will do so within the Spanish state”.

In an [interview](#) with the new online Catalan language version of Spanish daily El País, the leader of Republican Catalan Left (ERC, Esquerra), Oriol Junqueras, again demanded early regional elections to be able to: “exercise independence as soon as possible” and threatened turmoil for global financial markets if Madrid refused to negotiate.

“One of the keys is Spanish public debt”, said Mr. Junqueras: “Catalan society will assume a part if Spain agrees to negotiate assets. If the Spanish

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state does not negotiate it will become inviable for the Catalan economy to take charge of that debt, and Spain will enter into a situation of default.”

He rejected the description of his statements as a threat, and said he believed the international community would pressure Spain to do a deal: “The capacity to mobilise society can have consequences that help the Spanish state to understand that it is good if everyone faces up to their international commitments”.

10 leading international figures, including Nobel Peace Prize winners Desmond Tutu and Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, film director Ken Loach, historian Paul Preston and literary critic Harold Bloom gave their names to [a new manifesto](#) calling for Catalans to be allowed to “exercise their democratic right to vote on their political future”.

“As the precedents in Quebec and Scotland show, the best way to solve legitimate internal disputes is to employ the tools of democracy. To prevent the Catalans from voting seems to contradict the principles that inspire democratic societies.”

On October 30, Spain’s State Council said in a new advisory report to the government that the new version of the Catalan referendum announced by Mr. Mas on October X as a “participative process” was even more serious a challenge to the Spanish Constitution because it lacked “some of the most elemental constitutional guarantees” required of a legitimate vote.

Read more reporting and analysis of this news story:

- [Spain’s State Council Backs Government Request To Challenge New Catalan Plan For November 9](#)

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