

Monday, 03 November 2014 **POLITICS** | **CATALONIA'S INDEPENDENCE FROM SPAIN?**

10 international figures, including 2 Nobel Peace Prize winners, support Catalonia's right to self-determination

CNA

Barcelona (ACN).- "To prevent the Catalans from voting seems to contradict the principles that inspire democratic societies" state South African archbishop Desmond Tutu and Argentinian activist Adolfo Pérez Esquivel – both of whom were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize – as well as UK film-maker Ken Loach; Columbia University professor and Dutch sociologist Saskia Sassen; New York University professor and American sociologist Richard Sennett; London School of Economics chair and UK historian Paul Preston; Yale University chair and American literary critic Harold Bloom; Portuguese writer António Lobo Antunes; Founder of Art for Amnesty and Irish activist Bill Shipsey; and, US former ambassador Ambler Moss. The 10 international figures have issued the manifesto 'Let Catalans Vote'. "A majority of Catalans have repeatedly expressed in different ways the wish to exercise their democratic right to vote on their political future" the document starts, implicitly referring to the massive pro-independence demonstrations and the last Catalan Parliament elections, among other citizen and institutional mobilisation and participation actions. The signers highlight that employing "the tools of democracy" is the "best way to solve legitimate internal disputes", mentioning the examples of Quebec and Scotland. Finally, they urge the Spanish and Catalan governments "to work together to allow the citizens of Catalonia to vote" and "to negotiate in good faith based on the result".

The manifesto has been published online (www.letcatalansvote.org) and in English, French, Italian, Spanish and Catalan. It was published after the Spanish Government decided to appeal against the alternative citizen participation process that the Catalan Executive is organising to replace the original consultation vote, which was banned by Spanish authorities a month ago. The manifesto has been coordinated by Eduard Vallory, President of Catalonia's UNESCO Centre.

This is the manifesto's original text:

"Let Catalans Vote

A majority of Catalans have repeatedly expressed in different ways the wish to exercise their democratic right to vote on their political future.

This strong demand to vote is the result of longstanding dissension between the governments of Catalonia and Spain over the degree of cultural, political, and financial autonomy that Catalans should enjoy, despite several attempts to reach an acceptable solution.

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.

Accordingly, we call on the Spanish government and institutions and their Catalan counterparts to work together to allow the citizens of Catalonia to vote on their political future and then negotiate in good faith based on the result.

- Desmond Tutu, Archbishop and Nobel Peace Laureate
- Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, sculptor and Nobel Peace Laureate
- Ken Loach, cinema director
- Saskia Sassen, Sociologist (Columbia University)
- Richard Sennett, Sociologist (New York University)
- Harold Bloom, literary critic (Yale University)
- António Lobo Antunes, writer
- Bill Shipsey, Founder of Art for Amnesty International
- Paul Preston, Historian and Hispanist (London School of Economics)
- Ambler Moss, former Ambassador of the United States of America"

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