

# Catalan Independence 2018



On October 1, 2017, the Catalan Government headed by Carles Puigdemont of the *Junts per Catalunya* parliamentary alliance held a referendum on the future independence of Catalonia. A semi-autonomous region within Spain, Catalonia enjoyed comparatively larger self-governance than many of Spain's other regions after Francisco Franco's rule ended in 1975. While independence has had relatively strong support in recent years, a final decision has remained elusive due to inconclusive elections, referenda, and political opposition from Madrid.

The 2017 referendum recorded 92% of respondents favoring Catalan independence. However, only 43% of registered voters voted in the election marred by domestic and national opposition. The government nonetheless pushed through, declaring itself independent on October 27th. Declaring the referendum and declaration illegal, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy dismissed the Catalan Generalitat and renewed elections. Puigdemont and his cabinet subsequently fled to Brussels, the headquarters of the European Union.

This committee takes place in Catalonia, but Puigdemont remains in exile and his former vice president, Oriol Junqueras, remains in prison. This cabinet consists of fifteen members of *Junts pel Sí (Together for Yes)* who had not been prosecuted by the Spanish Government after the referendum, and five Spanish representatives sent from Madrid to ensure compliance. Each Catalan member will have access to powers retained after the dissolution of parliament and powers temporarily withheld by Madrid in response to the crisis. Each Spanish member starts with greater powers given by the Spanish government, but will lose some power if and when Madrid deems the situation more under control. The ultimate goal of this committee for Catalan members is to further the priorities of Catalonia and the Catalan people, while the goal for Spanish members is to maintain Madrid's control of the region. Normal aspects of crisis - personal directives, press releases, committee-written directives, etc. - still apply in this crisis committee.

NOTE: Crisis events may not match real-world events and there are more options than full independence for the future of Catalonia.

### **Setting**

This committee takes place after the 2017 regional elections in a hypothetical world where Madrid has allowed the cabinet to return to Barcelona. However, Carles Puigdemont and Oriol Junqueras, the former president and vice-president, remain in Brussels and no longer hold official titles. Madrid has withheld certain powers from each minister in the new government, but

has allowed each to retain powers related to regional issues. It has also sent a temporary representative to direct the Catalan executive cabinet until regional stability has been reestablished.

## **Background**

Catalonia has historically been either an independent region or an integral community under the Spanish crown since the first specific mention of the region in the early 12th century. For nearly 300 years, Catalonia enjoyed regional power as part of the Kingdom of Aragon, based in Barcelona, which controlled much of the western Mediterranean. By the late 1480s, Catalan rulers controlled much of the eastern Iberian peninsula, southern Italy, Corsica, and Sardinia, emerging as one of the Mediterranean's most powerful nation-states. Eventually, the Kingdom of Aragon united with the neighboring Kingdom of Castile, bringing much of modern-day Spain under a single ruler.

While united under the same crown, Catalonia and the rest of Spain have struggled to reconcile a distinct Catalan regional identity within Spain, even before today's controversial independence movement. In the mid-1600s, Catalan peasants declared the region independent, eventually protected by neighboring France, although the Spanish military quickly regained control of the region. Later, Catalonia saw similar uprisings in the 1800s inspired by the French Revolution, although Napoleon quickly took advantage and briefly annexed the region. Uprisings lasted until the middle of the century in response to corruption and ineffective leadership, where Catalan leaders generally favored a Spanish republic over a monarchy.

The Catalan Generalitat was reestablished in the early 1930s after local leaders briefly proclaimed the Catalan Republic, providing enough political pressure on Madrid to concede to semi-autonomy for the region. However, the region was shaken significantly during the Spanish Civil War, where the region strongly favored a republican-style government. However, as Francisco Franco closed in on the region and established himself *El caudillo* (the strongman) of Spain, Franco abolished the Catalan Generalitat and significantly targeted Catalan culture, particularly Catalan language, art, and music. Not until 1977, two years after Franco's death, did Catalonia regain regional autonomy and cultural rights.

Today, the Catalan Generalitat has been temporarily suspended by Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, and several members have fled to Brussels claiming to be a government in exile. Before the constitutional crisis in which Spanish courts dismissed the legitimacy of the independence referendum, the Generalitat had no majority party. Its largest individual party opposed independence, but the governing coalition of several parties strongly favored independence, leading to the referendum and subsequent declaration of independence. Catalonia has not been recognized by any independent nation, and several international bodies have refused

communication with Puigdemont and other former members in exile. In particular, the European Union and United Kingdom do not favor Catalan independence, as recognizing its separatist nature would give credence to similarly-minded movements in other member states.

### Questions to Consider

- 1) Is the best future for Catalonia independence, greater autonomy, or retaining the status quo before the referendum?
- 2) As a member of a pro-independence party, how can you restore the trust of the Spanish parliament in Catalonia?
- 3) Should Carles Puigdemont, the controversial leader of the independence movement, be allowed to return to Catalonia in an official capacity?
- 4) Who should lead the Catalan people after resolving the Spanish constitutional crisis?
- 5) How does your ministry interact with other ministries in the committee, and how can that interaction be used to benefit the Catalan people?
- 6) How should Catalonia interact with foreign entities, many of which purposefully will not communicate with regional officials?
- 7) If a Spanish minister, will strong actions against Catalan ministers benefit or hinder a solution in the region?

### Committee Members

- **Meritxell Borràs**, *Catalan Minister of Governance, Public Administrations, and Housing*
  - Bio: Borràs is a member of the Partit Demòcrata Català (Catalan Democratic Party), a center-right party supporting Catalan Independence whose head is Carles Puigdemont. Under the previous government, she was the Minister of Governance and Institutional Relations, a similar position with powers of Institutional Relations redelegated to Foreign Affairs under Puigdemont. She has also worked in Barcelona's pharmaceutical sector prior to her 1995 election to the Catalan Generalitat.
  - Retained Powers: Can direct Catalan regional police forces (those not under local jurisdictions), can publically investigate Catalan government ministers, can initiate housing and public works projects.
  - Withheld Powers: Can create new Catalan government agencies with relevant uses to this department, can privately investigate Catalan government officials.
- **Raül Romeva**, *Catalan Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Relations, and Transparency*
  - Bio: Born in Madrid but raised in Barcelona, Romeva previously served in the European Parliament as a member of the European Green party, serving on that

parliament's Foreign Affairs committee and committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. He was a leader of the *Junts pel Sí* (Together for Yes) political alliance in the 2015 election and is currently under investigation by the Spanish government following the 2017 referendum. Outside Catalan politics, he has worked for UNESCO, has observed elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and has taught international relations in Barcelona.

- Retained Powers: Can communicate with the UN general assembly and EU parliament, can issue public statements about Catalan government relations and topics.
- Withheld Powers: Can communicate with all national governments, can issue statements about Catalan and Spanish government topics, can establish representatives in foreign nations and regions.
- **Jordi Turull**, *Catalan Minister of Presidency*
  - Bio: Turull has been involved in politics since his early teen years as a student at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He has been active in both local divisions and in the Generalitat and was elected deputy of the *Junts pel Sí* party in 2015, allowing him greater power within the governing party. He was briefly the government spokesperson before being appointed the Minister of Presidency in 2017.
  - Retained Powers: Can communicate directly with the Spanish Prime Minister, can issue statements related to the presidency, can establish organizations intended to aid or assist the presidency or cabinet.
  - Withheld Powers: Established organizations do not have to necessarily aid or assist anyone, can communicate with other Spanish ministers.
- **Meritxell Ruiz**, *Catalan Minister of Education*
  - Bio: Ruiz has been a member of the Catalan parliament since 2006, having previously been elected Deputy of the Parliament of Catalonia until 2010. Since this time she has held various positions in the Ministry of Education, focusing particularly on family influence in education and on reforming the daily schedule of public schools. In 2016, she was appointed Minister of Education by Carles Puigdemont. She is a member of the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia party, an ally party of the *Junts pel Sí* government.
  - Retained Powers: Can establish schools and increase funding for universities, can set curriculum and general education requirements, can establish general public education systems.
  - Withheld Powers: Can change the Catalan curriculum directly (even if different than the national curriculum), can determine how facts are presented through required texts, etc.
- **Antoni Comín**, *Catalan Minister of Health*

- Bio: Comín comes from a historically political family, whose ancestors were active in both communist and fascist movements in Spain since the 19th century. He holds degrees in philosophy and political science from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and frequently contributes to local newspapers and radio networks. He has been active in the Catalan parliament since 2003, having since joined and abandoned multiple parties due to political differences. He was elected to the current governing majority in 2015, and has held the post of Minister of Health since 2016.
- Retained Powers: Can provide emergency health services, can direct funds towards affected areas, can build and establish hospitals, clinics, etc. in Catalonia.
- Withheld Powers: Can update medical and health safety priorities of Catalonia, can dictate who is prioritized in medical treatment
- **Joaquim Forn**, *Catalan Minister of the Interior*
  - Bio: Forn graduated from the University of Barcelona with a degree in law after having attended a French high school that avoided Franco's education policies. In the late 1980s, he was part of the *Acció Olympia* group that campaigned for Catalan independence during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Before joining the Catalan parliament, he was a councillor and deputy mayor of Barcelona.
  - Retained Powers: Can control Catalan imports and exports, can control traffic, emergency services, and firefighting services.
  - Withheld Powers: Can control immigration to and emigration from Catalonia, can close the border with France, can establish customs posts throughout the region.
- **Josep Rull**, *Catalan Minister of Planning and Sustainability*
  - Bio: Rull graduated from the Autonomous University of Catalonia with a degree in public administration, eventually working in law from 1993 to 1997. He was then elected to the Catalan Generalitat in 1997, and was a deputy spokesperson for a minority nationalist party and the party's spokesperson for interior policy. From 2010 to 2015 he was the third secretary for the parliament of Catalonia, and has held his current position since 2015 under the Puigdemont government.
  - Retained Powers: Can invest in energy sources for Catalonia using government funds, can establish goals for future Catalan projects involving resource management or sustainability issues.
  - Withheld Powers: Can lobby foreign entities for investment in Catalan energy sources, can claim private land for public works.
- **Lluís Puig i Gordi**, *Catalan Minister of Culture*
  - Bio: Gordi is a former art director with extensive knowledge in Catalan culture, traditions, and folklore. Since the 1980s, he has been a local expert and leader in the promotion of Catalan culture, having either directed or founded various institutions in the region to preserve or exhibit Catalan music, art, dance, or

folklore. Since 2011, he has held similar positions in the Catalan government, and was promoted to Minister of Culture in 2017.


- Retained Powers: Can organize regional and local events involving Catalan traditions, can establish services aimed to broadcast and promote such events.
- Withheld Powers: Can directly order what is promoted, can develop government films and broadcasts involving Catalan traditions.
- **Meritxell Serret**, *Catalan Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food*
  - Bio: Serret holds degrees in political science and in general management from two Catalan universities: the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Open University of Catalonia. She speaks Spanish, French, English, and Catalan. She has been active in rural and agricultural movements in the region, having managed and coordinated efforts for both the *Unió de Pagesos* (Farmer's Union) and *Fundació del Mon Rural* (Rural World Foundation). She was one of several ministers to have initially fled to Belgium with Carles Puigdemont, but was forced to return by the European Union.
  - Retained Powers: Can provide funding for farms and fisheries, can stockpile food for future use, can ban certain products from production in Catalonia, can investigate Catalan food safety concerns.
  - Withheld Powers: Can ban food sales to the rest of Spain or from other Spanish regions, can deny access to stockpiles set aside for Catalonia, can investigate foreign and Spanish food safety concerns.
- **Dolors Bassa**, *Catalan Minister of Social Welfare and Family*
  - Bio: Bassa holds degrees in education and psychopedagogy from two Catalan universities and has taught Catalan in local communities since 1976. She is regionally known for her work in the Spanish trade union *Unión General de Trabajadores*, associated with the Spanish Socialist Workers Party. She is one of six *Junts pel Sí* representatives from Girona, where she has lived for most of her life, first elected in the 2015 regional elections.
  - Retained Powers: Can fund or defund welfare projects like public education, public hospitals, roads, etc., can build or deconstruct public housing
  - Withheld Powers: Can lobby foreign entities for investment in public works in Catalonia, can design new welfare projects.
- **Carles Mundó**, *Catalan Minister of Justice*
  - Bio: Mundó has practiced law since 1998, having obtained a degree and a masters in Urban law from Pompeu Fabra University. He is a member of the Bar Association of Barcelona, focusing primarily on Civil Law in the region. He first joined the Generalitat in 2003, where he was the chief of the Department of Education until 2006 and the chief of the Department of Culture and Media until 2008. He opposes acts perceived to be “Catalan-phobic,” or harmful specifically

to Catalan culture, traditions, or people. Although a Catalan minister, he retains significant connections to regional law associations and organizations.

- Retained Powers: Can investigate and prosecute Catalan cabinet ministers and members of the public, can end or stall an investigation under the Catalan Justice department.
- Withheld Powers: Can investigate and prosecute any person in Catalonia, including Spanish government officials and foreign offenders.
- **Joan Vidal**, *Catalan Secretary of the Government*
  - Bio: Vidal has previously worked in banking and industrial private companies in Catalonia before joining the Catalan Generalitat in 2016. He also was the managing director of a regional broadcasting network and has served on Catalan councils on cultural broadcasts. He holds a degree in business management from ESADE, a university in Barcelona. Vidal campaigned for the *Junts pel Sí* party prior to the 2016 regional elections and served in the parliament for one year before the 2017 declaration of independence.
  - Retained Powers: Can propose legislation to the Generalitat, can limit or increase funds for other Catalan government agencies (but not departments)
  - Withheld Powers: Can limit or increase funds for Catalan ministries, can propose monetary policy, can lobby Madrid for extra funding for Catalonia.
- **Neus Munté**, *Catalan Government Spokesperson*
  - Bio: Munté has a degree in law from Barcelona University and a master's in public law and administrative organization from Pompeu Fabra University. In the early 2000s, she worked in the Ministry of Education, and was finally elected to the Catalan Generalitat in 2002. However, she left in 2003, only to return in 2010 and again in 2016. She has been a government spokesperson for education, has held positions on specialized policy committees, and was the deputy secretary for the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia youth wing before her first election into the Generalitat.
  - Retained Powers: Can issue statements relating to Catalan government affairs, can communicate with non-government stakeholders in Catalonia.
  - Withheld Powers: Can issue any statement on Spanish, Catalan, or other affairs, can create initiatives and programs designed to promote Catalan objectives.
- **Amadeu Altafaj**, *Permanent Representative of the Catalan Government to the EU*
  - Bio: Altafaj is formerly a journalist who covered European matters from Brussels and has served as a permanent Catalan representative in the EU since 2015. He has worked exclusively within the European Parliament previously, as a spokesperson for the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid and for economic affairs of the European Commission. He gained notoriety in the organization as a spokesperson for both during the eurozone crisis of the early





2010s. Unlike most other cabinet ministers, he was never arrested or charged with any crimes by the Spanish Government.

- Retained Powers: Can speak in front of the European Parliament, can communicate between the Catalan Generalitat and EU president or commissioner.
- Withheld Powers: Can speak directly with other European diplomats at the EU, can propose legislation in the European Parliament.
- **Ada Colau Ballano, Mayor of Barcelona**
  - Bio: Ballano attended the University of Barcelona but lacks a formal degree, having left the institution due to financial instability in her family. She is a prominent critic of Spanish banks and predatory mortgages as one of the founding members of the People Affected by Mortgages group. Ballano rose to national prominence in 2013 after the housing crisis by calling a representative of the Spanish Banking Association a criminal in front of the Spanish parliament. She has had legislation introduced and debated on the floors of the Spanish parliament and European parliament regarding mortgages and financial issues. Her political party, *Barcelona en Comú*, has no official stance on Catalan independence.
  - Retained Powers: Can direct local police forces, can establish relations with domestic mayors and cities, can promote investment and business in Barcelona and nearby regions, can approve or deny public works in the city.
  - Withheld Powers: Can establish relations with foreign mayors and cities, can call upon regional police to bolster local police.
- **Juan José Omella, Archbishop of Barcelona**
  - Bio: Omella was born in a small town in a region that still speaks largely Castilian and Catalan today. Having entered a seminary in Zaragoza, he later studied at missionaries in Belgium and Israel and was ordained as a priest in 1970. He worked for the Catholic church in Zaragoza and Zaire, the modern-day Democratic Republic of the Congo. He eventually became a bishop in 1996 after being appointed an auxiliary by Pope John Paul II. In 2015, Pope Francis appointed him the archbishop of Barcelona and raised his status to a cardinal in 2017. Omella and the Archbishop of Madrid are seen to be Pope Francis' representatives in Spain.
  - Retained Powers: Can directly speak with Pope Francis or other members of the Catholic church or Vatican, can direct local Catholic church operation and management.
  - Withheld Powers: Can use church property for official non-religious purposes, can alter church funding.
-  **Infanta Elena, Duchess of Lugo**
  - Bio: Elena is the older sister to Spanish King Felipe VI and is third in line of succession to the Spanish throne. The monarchy was re-established in 1978 after

the death of dictator Francisco Franco and has since enjoyed relatively high popularity throughout Spain, although its high expenses allowed for significant criticism during the 2008 financial crisis. As a member of the royal family, she has represented the King abroad, notably in Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan.

- Extra Powers: Can represent Spain in the Organization of Ibero-American States, can speak directly with foreign leaders without government approval.
- Normal Powers: Can coordinate with the King and other members of the royal family, can issue official statements from the palace.
-  **José Manuel Holgado Merino**, *Director of the Spanish Guardia Civil*
  - Bio: Holgado graduated with a degree in Law from the University of Salamanca and served in courts in Seville during the 1980s. He has also taught and attended courses on civil law, particularly concerning rights of women, minorities, immigrants, and societies. Much of his career as a member of Spanish courts have centered around issues concerning minors and around penal reform. He has been the director of the Guardia Civil since 2016.
  - Extra Powers: Can call in extra Guardia Civil forces from elsewhere in Spain, can arrest members of the Generalitat if thought to be in violation, can declare martial law in Catalonia.
  - Normal Powers: Can direct the Guardia Civil national police forces stationed in Catalonia, can arrest those in known violation of Spanish law.
-  **Rafael Catalá**, *Spanish Minister of Justice*
  - Bio: Catalá was born in Madrid and has held the position of Minister of Justice since 2014 and was the interim Minister of Public Works for three months in 2016. In 2017, the Congress of Deputies passed a motion to censure the Minister due to his perceived relation to moves designed to limit anti-corruption measures. Together with State Attorney General and an anti-corruption prosecutor, the Minister was rejected by the Congress, the first minister to have done so.
  - Extra Powers: Can prosecute Catalan government officials, can order private investigations into government officials in Barcelona and Madrid.
  - Normal Powers: Can direct public investigations into government officials suspected of violating Spanish law.
-  **Cristóbal Ricardo Montoro Romero**, *Spanish Minister of the Treasury and Public Function*
  - Bio: Montoro previously represented Madrid in the European Parliament, having a seat on the Committee on Economic and Monetary affairs. He held this position from 1993 to 2000, when he was appointed Minister of Finance by then-PM José María Aznar. He held this post until 2004, when his party lost its majority in the Spanish parliament. He has held his current position since 2011.

- Extra Powers: Can withhold or increase funds for specific Catalan ministries or organizations, can institute policies to favor or to hinder certain industries or companies within Catalonia.
- Normal Powers: Can withhold or increase funds for the whole Catalan government, can institute policies favoring or hindering industries throughout Spain.
-  **Alfonso María Dastis Quecedo**, *Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation*
  - Bio: Dastis entered the Spanish Diplomatic Corps in 1993 and held several positions in Spain's Foreign Affairs department, having worked in the Spanish Embassy to the UN and in the Minister's office. In the late 1990s, he was in charge of organizing Spain's presidency of the EU, which ended in 2002. He became the Spanish Ambassador to the Netherlands in 2004, Permanent Representative to the EU in 2011, and has been the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2016.
  - Extra Powers: Can directly lobby foreign governments not to cooperate with Catalonia, can suspend relations with nations known to be in strong cooperation with Catalan leaders.
  - Normal Powers: Can establish relations with foreign governments, can promote foreign investment in Spain or in Spanish regions, can host diplomats.
-  **Íñigo Joaquín de la Serna Hernáiz**, *Spanish Minister of Public Works*
  - Bio: De la Serna was born in Bilbao but spent much of his childhood in Santander, and holds degrees in civil engineering from Spanish and American universities, focusing primarily on roads, canals, and ports. He began his political career in 1999, when he was appointed Minister of the Environment by the government of Cantabria in northern Spain. Soon after, he was elected the mayor of Santander and was Spain's second youngest mayor. In 2016, he was appointed the Minister of Public Works by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.
  - Extra Powers: Can block access to public works in Catalonia like roads, airports, or harbors, can order or deny public investment in certain projects affecting Catalonia.
  - Normal Powers: Can build public works in Catalonia and in Spain, can give funding to public works requested by devolved governments.



