



Speech Miquel Iceta
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Debate on the political consequences of 1st October

10th October

Debates are meant to discuss, to talk and to listen. I was now trying to have someone help me with a verbatim transcript of what you've said to check if I understood correctly. You take on a mandate, which I question, and at the same time, you say you are proposing to suspend a declaration that hasn't been made. That's complex, but political situations sometimes are, and we all must admit that, in complexity, dialogue can turn more difficult if we do not sufficiently understand each other, but it can also offer room for us to all work together.

A declaration that hasn't been issued cannot be suspended. And when you tell us 'I propose to suspend'..., it looks like we are really reaching the limit that the words of the Generalitat's president are the ones validating – or not – the laws, and this places us in an extremely complex field.

I must tell you that these days I find myself among distressed people who, as you have well said in your intervention, are people thinking very differently. But they probably agree on two big points: they love their country but they wish for the prosperity of their family and their children. We need to serve them all well and get it very right.

I thought that at some point you would say that you communicate agreements, results, but that that's not your role to play... Because the referendum law very clearly establishes that, within the two days after the announcement of the results by the Electoral Syndicate, an ordinary session will be held in order to make a formal declaration of independence of Catalonia to all purposes and agree to initiate the constituent process. This isn't such session, or am I much mistaken? Someone should tell us.

I'd like to reiterate the warning that we socialists have often given in this chamber, and myself particularly as president of my group. Already back on 9th November 2015, at the beginning of this parliamentary term, I was asking you whether you had thought carefully about the costs and consequences of placing the Catalan institutions outside the law. I had the opportunity to repeat it during the two failed debates on the investiture of Artur Mas, I said it again during your own investiture debate, during the motion of confidence's debate, in many other occasions.

From our point of view, the Catalan institutions were placed outside the law last 6th and 7th September. From our point of view, you breached the regulations, trampled on the rights of the opposition, struck down the Statute of Autonomy and violated the Constitution. For our 'piece of mind', it was not only our opinion; it was the opinion of the Parliament's legal counsels, of the Council of Statutory Guarantees, of the Constitutional Court and even certain members of your government said that things were not done right.



From this same point of view and for all these reasons, I must tell you that on the 1st October the effective and binding referendum with guarantees that you committed yourselves to did not take place. In spite of this, the State made the serious mistake of commanding or protecting violent police actions against the people who intended to take part in that act of voting, however illegal or irregular some might consider it to be. We condemned those actions and requested the immediate withdrawal of the security forces on the same morning of the 1st.

However, I want to tell you, Mr President: no democratic mandate can be claimed from the vote organised on the 1st. I know that this is a political opinion and that, like every political opinion, is disputable, but the point is we're talking here in broad or, if you want, very solid terms, about a democratic mandate that you have intended to take or convey today.

From our point of view, a vote that had no guarantees. Even your international guests have said so. Without an electoral syndicate – for the reasons that we all know, with the resignation of some of your members, affected by very tough decisions of the Constitutional Court – that could endorse that process and officially proclaim the results. Therefore, from our point of view, we are by no means standing today where you've said we are and not because you're suspending it from the rostrum, but because the requirements provided by the referendum law and the legal transition and foundational law of the republic have not been met. You cannot suspend an agreement that has not taken effect.

You were sworn in, and I quote because you introduced a new element that was never used before at that very moving moment for any Catalan person of ascending into office, and which you wanted to use: "in full fidelity to the people of Catalonia". Mr Puigdemont, the 38.47% is not the people of Catalonia. With this support, you cannot do what you wanted to do. You cannot complete your term of office allowing that a minority, however respectable it may be, imposes itself upon a majority. A 38.47% cannot impose itself upon the 61.53%, at least not on our behalf.

And since the world is indeed looking at us these days, I reiterate:

Una minoria no pot imposar-se sobre una majoria.

A minority cannot impose itself upon a majority.

Une minorité ne peut pas s'imposer sur une majorité.

Una minoría no puede imponerse sobre una mayoría.

The wishes of two million cannot impose themselves upon those of three million. This is why I was telling you yesterday, with all respect, please do not declare independence out of patriotism. Out of patriotism, let's all tell each other the truth. The independence process has undoubtedly had some virtue: awakening enthusiasm, mobilising, making people shudder. You will never hear me criticize this aspect, quite the opposite.

However, objectively, you have divided society, you have polarised it. By intending a break with the rest of Spain, you have separated us from the European Union. And, even before materially occurring, you have generated an institutional instability and a legal uncertainty that have received a very clear answer from the so-called 'markets'.



You told us that 'the referendum will bring Catalan people together' and it hasn't been like this. You told us that 'the process will bring us closer to Europe', and it has been just the opposite. You told us that 'independence will boost us economically', and that's not true. I hope that the measures we have heard of from some important financial institutions and major companies of the country will be absolutely temporary and simply imply a gesture to ensure the legal certainty that the course of trade makes imperative and requires in our time.

Parallelisms can never be drawn, but many of those who left Montreal for Toronto never came back. We are extremely worried. The relocation of just the decision-making centres, even if only for formal purposes: Banc Sabadell to Alicante, CaixaBank to València, Critería to Palma, Gas Natural, Aigües de Barcelona, Gaesco and Cellnex to Madrid, MRW to València, Abertis to Madrid, Adeslas to Madrid, Catalana Occident to Madrid...

Please think, Mr President, that probably unintentionally, through denial, an uncertainty that we cannot afford is being generated. The *postponement sine die* of nobody knows exactly what will only increase this uncertainty. It is an uncertainty for companies but also for families. These days we all know about family stories, in the bordering area of Aragon, in Vinarós, about visits and queues at the banks, issues with cash machines... why? Is it the result of an international conspiracy of hidden powers, or is it the concern of many people, of good people who do not know where this will lead us? It is the distress of many people regardless of what they have voted for.

I think that someday, and today can be a good day, we have to tell each other where the problem is. And the problem is not Spain, nor Europe, nor legality, the real problem is amongst us. On the 6th and 7th September, 52 MPs did not participate in the votes. The referendum law and the transition law were passed with far from the two thirds that we ourselves fixed as a minimum limit for the Statute's reform or for the adoption of an electoral system. Because we have always aimed to guarantee that no relevant decision that can alter our institutional system is made without making sure it has a broad consensus in the chamber and therefore in society.

There is an old Catalanist motto that says 'United we'll win, divided we'll be defeated'. Mr President, the path of division is a path of defeat. We have said it many times, we do not want to resolve a tie vote. We wish to seek an agreement that could gather an 80% of Catalans. We want more self-government, improved financing and a reform of the State. And we wish to have the chance to vote, in one sense or the other, for this agreement.

We do not want to go 300 years back, nor 38 or 40. I believe that the solution to the problem we have, I'm afraid lies in Parliament elections, where everyone can vote, in equality, with guarantees, and with the possibility of opting for different political projects which can have the deep democratic legitimacy of the future.

Now it's absurd to complain all together about the consequences of acts that depended solely on us. And I'm saying this with the utmost respect for all the institutions and names that I'll now mention. I cannot hold Òmnium, nor the Catalan National Assembly accountable; I can only demand accountability from you. And at



this serious time, Mr President, I hold you accountable for stating that this Parliament hasn't declared independence; that the Electoral Syndicate hasn't announced the referendum results; that we are not activating the provisions of the referendum law and the transition law.

And I will finish with three flashes. The first one is a quote from Raimon Obiols: 'Politics can serve emotions, but it is unacceptable to make use of emotions to deceive oneself or deceive others'.

The second one is a quote from Josep Tarradellas: 'Our country is too small for despising any of its children, and big enough for everyone to fit'.

And this quote from president Tarradellas brings me to the final coda. Today, we do not want to point any fingers nor wipe out anybody. We all have been part of the problem in one way or another and, if we so desire, we all have to be part of the solution.

Thank you very much, Mr President.