

CATALONIA BACKGROUND INFORMATION [SERIES E / 2013 / 12.3 / EN]

Date: 13/07/2017

Author: Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF CATALONIA

Generalitat of Catalonia

The Generalitat is the institutional system around which Catalonia's self-government is politically organized. The Generalitat was founded in 1359 and its first President, appointed by the Catalan Parliament or Courts, was Berenguer de Cruïlla. Nowadays, the powers of the modern Generalitat stem from the people of Catalonia and are exercised in accordance with the Spanish Constitution and the Catalan Statute of Autonomy – the basic institutional law of Catalonia.

The Generalitat is an entity made up of the President of the Generalitat, the Catalan Government, and other public institutions as established in the Statute of Autonomy – to be specific, the Council for Statutory Guarantees, the Ombudsman, the Audit Office, and the Catalan Broadcasting Authority. Municipalities, counties, and other local government bodies determined by law also form part of the institutional set-up of the Generalitat, representing the bodies through which the Generalitat is organized territorially, respecting each bodies' own powers.

Catalonia exercises its self-government in those areas specified within the Statute of Autonomy. In matters in which the Generalitat has 'exclusive' powers, the legislative power, regulatory power, and executive functions correspond exclusively to the Generalitat. The powers of the Generalitat in other matters are defined as 'shared' and here Catalonia legislates within the framework of basic conditions established by the Spanish state. Finally, there are other matters in which Catalonia simply executes the legislation the Spanish state passes.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERALITAT - CARLES PUIGDEMONT



The highest representation of the Generalitat is currently President Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó. He is the 130th President of the Generalitat of Catalonia. As head of the Catalan Government, he leads the executive branch and directs government action.

The Government of Catalonia is made up of thirteen ministers in charge of policy management and public administration.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS, AND TRANSPARENCY - RAÛL ROMEVA



Raül Romeva has been Minister of Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations, and Transparency since this ministry was created in January 2016.

This ministry is in charge of coordinating foreign action, the actions of the Generalitat before European Union institutions, and tasks of cooperation and development. It is also in charge of the work of the democratic memory (recovering and protecting the recent democratic memory of Catalonia), and policies of transparency and open government. It also establishes criteria for and manages and controls public administration contracts.

The Parliament of Catalonia

The Parliament is the institution which represents the people of Catalonia. This places it at the centre of the self-government of Catalonia. As an institution of direct democratic representation, it is the most important body within the Generalitat. The powers of other government bodies emanate from the Parliament. The Parliament consists of a single chamber or house, and is independent and inviolable.

The Parliament of Catalonia has a single chamber with 135 MPs. As the institution which represents the people of Catalonia, it is the central part of the Catalan government. Parliamentary tradition in Catalonia dates back to the Middle Ages in fact. The present Parliament, abolished under Franco's dictatorship, was reestablished in 1980. There have been ten elections held since then.

The range of political parties in the Catalan Parliament is very different from that of the Spanish Congress. There are many more parties with a sizeable presence and, in addition to the usual left-right balance, the parties have always had to position themselves on the spectrum of opinions regarding the relationship

between Catalonia and Spain.

There are currently six parties in the Catalan Parliament:

Junts pel Sí (JxS) has 62 MPs and forms a minority government through a Stability Agreement with the CUP party. JxS (Together for Yes) is a pro-independence coalition formed by the two largest parties in Catalonia – **Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya** (CDC - liberals), refounded in 2016 as **Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català** (PDeCAT), and **Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya** (ERC – socialdemocrats). They formed this new party together alongside independent representatives of civil society and former members of the UDC party (which had previously been a Christian-democratic partner of CDC, but stood separately in the last elections as the party is not in favour of unilateral independence).

Ciutadans – Partido de la Ciudadanía (C's) has 25 MPs. The C's (Citizens) party first entered the Catalan Parliament in the 2006 elections. This party campaigns in favour of Spanish unity, trying to seek votes from both the left and the right amongst voters opposed to the holding of an independence referendum.

Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC) has 16 MPs. The PSC (Catalan socialist party) is federated with the Spanish socialist party (PSOE). It is in favour of a constitutional reform in Spain to change Spain into a federation.

Catalunya Sí que es Pot (CSQP) has 11 MPs. It is a left-green coalition led by two main parties, **Iniciativa per Catalunya – Verds (ICV)** and **Podem**. It is in favour of a referendum to decide the future political status of Catalonia.

The **Partit Popular (PP)** has 11 MPs in the Parliament. The PP (People's Party) is a right-wing party in favour of the unity of Spain. It is also the party governing Spain at present. It is against holding a referendum in Catalonia.

Candidatura d'Unitat Popular – Alternativa d'Esquerres (CUP) has 10 MPs. This party (Popular Unity Candidacy) entered the Parliament for the first time in 2012. It is an alternative-left party in favour of the independence of Catalonia.

THE SPEAKER OF THE CATALAN PARLIAMENT – CARME FORCADELL



Carme Forcadell i Lluís was chosen to become the 14th House Speaker of the Parliament of Catalonia (also known as the President of the Parliament in Catalan nomenclature). The Catalan Parliament has a Speaker, Bureau, and Permanent Committee, and works through plenary meetings and committees.

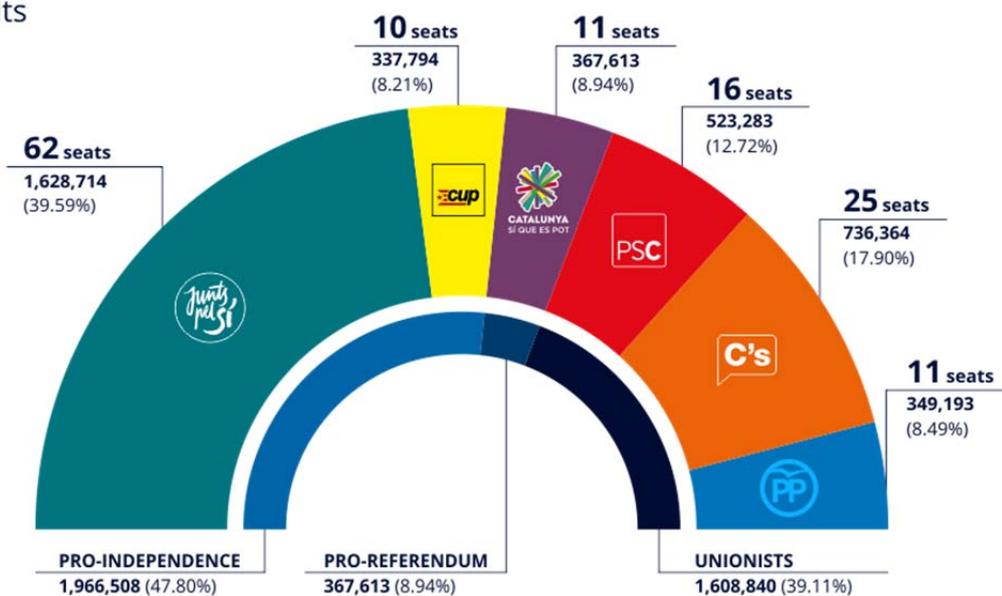
Catalan Parliament Election

27 September 2015

Results

Total: **135 seats**

Turnout: **4,130,196 (74.95%)**



Source: Ministry of Governance and Institutional Relations of Catalonia (resultats.parlament2015.cat)