



BRIEFING #6

Last Sunday, 1st October 2017, the Catalan people cast their vote in a **referendum on self-determination**. The provisional results offer the following information:

- As far as turnout is concerned, 2,262,424 ballots were cast.
- 2,020,144 of voters (90.09%) backed independence, while 176,565 people (7.87%) voted against it. Provisional results indicate 45,586 blank votes (2.03%) and 20,129 void ballots (0.89%).
- The voting took place in 2,243 polling stations across the 948 municipalities of Catalonia. Registered citizens permanently residing abroad were able to vote by post.
- The voting took place under the scrutiny of over 100 international electoral visitors as well as 37 observers from two international electoral observation missions deployed across the country.

Unfortunately, the day was marked by the actions of **Spanish police forces** to obstruct the voting and repress with violence those who were trying to take part in it.

- Spanish police stormed polling stations in 92 municipalities. Some 400 polling stations were closed and ballot boxes confiscated, effectively hampering the right to vote of some 770,000 citizens.
- As a result of the indiscriminate violence and the use of rubber bullets, tear gas and violent charges against peaceful citizens gathered in front of polling stations, 893 people were injured.
- Spanish police took control of the Catalan technology and communications centre in an attempt to disable the software connecting polling stations and disrupt the voting. In doing so, over 30 services (including websites, apps and official registries) of the Catalan administration were disconnected.

These developments have triggered another wave of **reactions from international institutions and organisations** condemning the use of violence against those who were merely attempting to exercise their right to vote. Among these, it is worth highlighting the statements issued by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (see [here](#)) and several rapporteurs and independent experts of his Office (see [here](#)), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (see [here](#)), OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (see [here](#)) or the one by Amnesty International (see [here](#)).

Following the violent events of 1st October, the Catalan Government issued an immediate **call on both the Spanish Government and EU institutions to engage**



in a dialogue or mediation to avoid further escalation. In their public appearances in three consecutive days, the Spanish Prime Minister (on 1st October), the Deputy Prime Minister (on 2nd October) and the King of Spain (on 3rd October – see [here](#)), dismissed all calls for dialogue while restating their resolve to use all means necessary to ensure full obedience to the law. Yet again, in a televised address on 4th October, the President of Catalonia insisted in his call to dialogue and mediation (see [here](#)), a call which was immediately dismissed by the Spanish Deputy Prime Minister.

Against this backdrop, yesterday, the Catalan Parliament called a session for Monday 9th October to debate the result and effects of the referendum. Today, the Spanish Constitutional Court ordered its suspension. This comes at a time when the chief of the Catalan police and the leaders of two pro-independence civil society organisations will have to appear before the Spanish High Court tomorrow accused of sedition.

As expressed on numerous occasions, the Catalan Government firmly believes that the ultimate purpose of the Law is the defence of rights and freedoms –especially those of minorities- and it should never be instrumentalised to restrict them or to repress political positions or ideologies. Thus, the Government of Catalonia remains fully convinced that, in democratic societies, the resolution of political disagreements requires that all parties involved engage in and commit to a genuine dialogue and negotiation.

Barcelona, 5th October 2017

This is the last of the series of briefings devoted to the Catalan referendum on self-determination.