



Ms Ursula Von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Mr Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Mr David Maria Sassoli
President of the European Parliament

Brussels, 28 September 2020

Subject: Removal of Catalan president Quim Torra i Pla by Spanish Supreme Court

Dear Presidents,

Today, 28th of September of 2020, the Spanish Supreme Court has ruled on the case of Catalan President Quim Torra, banning him from public office for 18 months and leaving Catalonia without a President in a new violation of the political rights of Catalan citizens. Spain's Supreme Court upheld the sentence of a lower court that had found him guilty of disobedience for displaying a banner saying "Freedom for political prisoners and exiles" for three days after the Spanish Central Electoral Commission (CEC) ordered him to remove it during the general election campaign of April 2019.

The legal appeal that has ended with today's ruling was initiated by the Ciudadanos party, who at the same time had on payroll Mr Andrés Betancor, one of the CEC members deciding on it. Mr Betancor had to resign due to his conflicts of interest months later.

The ruling of the Supreme Court should be understood in the context of the imprisonment on sedition charges of the former Catalan Government and social leaders Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sánchez, who have been in jail for three years already for their involvement in the referendum of October 2017.

With all three last Presidents of Catalonia, Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont and Quim Torra having faced judicial prosecution for their political activity in the last five years, we have the growing conviction that in the current state of affairs, no Catalan pro-independence politician can have a fair trial in Spain.



It is no coincidence that three out of five judges deciding on President Quim Torra, also took part in the trial on the former Catalan Government. Right now, there are hundreds of cases against Catalan pro-independence citizens. These rulings and highly politicised judges worsen any progress of political dialogue towards a solution to the Catalan and Spanish conflict. It is important to remark that the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) of the Council of Europe warned of the serious shortcomings of judicial independence in Spain.

EU institutions must urgently confront that there is a problem of rule of law in Spain.

Thus, the undersigned, want to express our rejection to the judicial repression against Catalan self-determination movement, and express our solidarity with President Torra. Therefore, we demand the EU institutions to be truthful to their words on the defence of democracy and the protection of the rights of the Catalan people.

Yours sincerely,

Carles Puigdemont
Diana Riba
Antoni Comín
Jordi Solé
Clara Ponsatí
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