

28.9.2015 Catalonia. The advance continues

This 27 September 2015 marks a new stage in the history of the march of the Catalan people towards independence in Europe. By electing an absolute majority to the Generalitat comprising parties that have promised voters to declare independence soon after election, they have approved the democratic mandate demanded by Convergencia and ERC, the two parties which have combined with civil society in the coalition Junts pel Si, and the CUP, the independent party of the left. For the Catalan nation, the advance continues.

By obtaining 72 elected representatives, four more than the 68 seats needed for an absolute majority, Junts pel Si (62 seats) and the CUP (10 seats) have seen their gamble pay off: nothing can prevent them from passing the declaration of independence which was at the heart of the election campaign and which gave this vote plebiscitory force. They should do so next month, during the Spanish parliamentary elections, which will thrust the Catalan question even more firmly into the heart of Spanish politics and keep up the pressure on negotiations for a process of self-determination in the near future.

This clear majority represents a total political success. The hands of Catalan voters did not tremble as they posted their papers into the ballot box, despite the sabre-rattling of the Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and his close-knit entourage whose ideology is still close to Francoism, despite the blatant manipulation of the European Commission whose actual position was falsified (see p.), despite the threats of leaving Europe and the euro area offered by Nicolas Sarkozy himself, despite the borderline feeble-mindedness of bosses of the major finance companies threatening to move their banking headquarters to Madrid – as if no other European, American or other banks would replace them in the heart of a country of 7.5 million inhabitants with 20% of Spanish GDP! - and the thousand other contortions that all express the wave of panic that Catalan democracy has sent through the political and economic establishment in Madrid.

The turnout was 75%, almost 20 percentage points higher than five years ago. This outstanding turnout indisputably confirms the significance of the election results. Two million voters supported the separatist groups; 1.6 million voted for the three parties openly hostile to independence - Ciudadanos, the Spanish Socialist party and the Partido Popular which holds power in Madrid - the party that Nicolas Sarkozy came to support, and which has now fallen well below 10%; and lastly 500,000 votes were cast either for the Catalan branch of Podemos, the Spanish equivalent of the Greek Syriza party, or for the centrist separatist party Unio, the result of a split with Convergencia over a disagreement with the strategy of union with ERC. These two groups have expressed their approval of holding an independence referendum without entering into any formal commitment to independence.

Separatists have thus beaten the declared 'no' parties both in seats and votes, contrary to the argument of Spanish propagandists, who claim that their 47.78% does not represent an absolute majority of the vote. In any event, this majority can only grow stronger, and in the months to come - boosted by their impressive election performance and following many years of rising support - Catalan nationalists will continue their inexorable advance.