

25.08.2017 Femu a Corsica

## A Corsican nationalist party with a European dimension

Not many European nationalist parties are also genuine parties of government. Here is the list.

The oldest is undoubtedly the PNV, the Basque nationalist party, which has been almost continuously in power in the Basque Autonomous Community since the post-Franco autonomy of the 1980s. EH-Bildu, a coalition of the nationalist left formed after the end of political violence in the Basque country, now positions itself as an alternative to the PNV.

Within the European Free Alliance, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya is the main party in the ruling Catalanian coalition Junts pel Sí, which is engaged in a self-determination process with a crucial deadline on 1 October, the date set by the Generalitat de Catalunya for an independence referendum. Its coalition partner, Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya, now known as the Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català, governed in Catalonia all through the post-Franco years.

Also in the EFA, and very powerful in Flanders over the past decade, is the Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie [N-VA], which has taken over from a founding EFA party, the Volksunie. The N-VA is the only nationalist party in Europe to exercise state powers, at Belgian level, and also rules the powerful region of Flanders within the federal state. It is the only European nationalist party to sit on the Council of Ministers [for certain areas of its powers, as ministers in government] in the same way as the representatives of other state governments.

Another key member of the EFA, the Scottish National Party, has held power in the Scottish Assembly for the last three parliamentary terms. It now has a very large majority in Scotland, and is responsible for the very different result in the Scottish vote on Brexit [62% 'Remain' in Scotland against 47% elsewhere in the United Kingdom].

Another nationalist party is currently in government in Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin. It is the only party emerging from a national liberation struggle, and its balanced governance, against the very particular background of Northern Ireland with its Republican and Unionist camps, is now meeting new challenges to maintain the ties between its territory and the Irish Republic, and hence with Europe: Northern Ireland largely voted Remain.

All these parties have members sitting in the European Parliament; they control the governments and the parliaments of their territories, and they have parliamentary representatives in their state capitals.

This is the first circle, to which can now be added a Corsican nationalist party, Femu a Corsica. Through the EFA, the path towards this end will be even easier. The merger of Inseme pè a Corsica, the PNC and Chjama Naziunale has achieved the critical size necessary to be a political force of the same rank. Of course Corsica will never have as much weight in Europe as Catalonia, the Basque country, Scotland or Flanders. And we do not yet have the strong democratic structures that these countries have, based on years of experience in autonomous institutions with extensive powers. But in terms of political symbolism the first step will have been taken, our status will have changed. Our visibility in the European political landscape, supported by the EFA, will be strengthened. This is a key factor if we are to nurture the power relationships that will enable us to grasp the independence that we need for the Corsican people.

The creation of Femu a Corsica marks a new era for the Corsican nationalist movement. It will do so at the European level too.

François Alfonsi  
President of the European Free Alliance.