

¡Visca Catalunya! The 2017-18 Catalan Independence Crisis

CLARKMUN XIV

Clark University Model United Nations



Table of Contents

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| Table of Contents | 2 |
| Chair Letter | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Role of Committee and Committee Expectations | 4 |
| Mechanisms of Committee Proceedings | 5 |
| Historical Background | 6 |
| Pre-1900's | 6 |
| More Recent History | 6 |
| The Last Five Years | 7 |
| Current Situation | 8 |
| Character Descriptions | 9 |
| Questions to Consider | 13 |
| Suggestions for Further Research | 14 |
| References | 15 |

Chair Letter

Hey everyone! I'm Luke Sistek, your Crisis Director for ¡Visca Catalunya! The 2017-18 Catalan Independence Crisis and I am absolutely thrilled to get to meet you all and help this committee run its course. I'm a Freshman here at Clark University, studying both Political Science and Geography and hoping to potentially double major in both fields. In my free time, I love following international politics and elections, especially within Europe which helped fuel my interest in a committee on this topic. Learning about countries and their cultural, political, historical, and other intricacies is something I love so separatist regions and movements that offer the chance for new countries to be born such as Catalonia are so fascinating to me. In addition, you can probably find me watching or reading up about sports at any given moment whether it be NHL hockey and my Boston Bruins, Formula One and other auto racing, or anything else going on in the world of sports, chances are I'm probably following it. My involvement with Clark Model United Nations is rather short as of now, given I'm only a freshman. However, I did Model UN throughout high school and in my senior year was President of my high school's Model UN club so I definitely have been in all of your shoes, attending high school conferences. At Clark, I made a point to get involved in the Model UN team as soon as I could and enjoyed my first semester on the team attending two conferences in Atlanta, Georgia and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I can't wait to make further memories with MUN at Clark and hope that our ClarkMUN committee will be a huge part of those memories! As for the topic of our committee, the Catalan independence movement always fascinated me for a plethora of reasons. The cultural uniqueness of the Catalan people when compared to the rest of Spain has always created a divide within the nation which was only exacerbated under the rule of fascist dictator Francisco Franco who brutally suppressed Catalan culture and language, and its this more recent history which really caught my attention and sparked my interest in this topic. In addition, Catalonia is hugely important to Spain being its most economically prosperous region, so the fate of Catalan independence has huge repercussions on Spain, a major European country. All this made this topic stand out to me as one that I both had pre-existing interest in and would make a really fascinating Model UN crisis committee, and I can't wait to see all the unique ideas you will come up with at ClarkMUN! If you have any further questions about the committee, the topic, or anything else you might want to talk about, feel free to reach out to me at lsistek@clarku.edu. I can't wait to see all of you at ClarkMUN in March!

Introduction

The **2017-18 Catalan Independence Crisis** takes place in an extremely volatile political environment which forms the basis of the difficult situation delegates will be tasked with working within. The Spanish government led by the conservative People's Party (PP) and Prime Minister **Mariano Rajoy** are staunchly anti-Catalan independence, and willing to go to drastic lengths to stop the independence movement from gaining traction and attempting to break free from Spain. Diametrically opposed to this is the regional Catalan government led by President **Carles Puigdemont** and his pro-independence Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCAT) who are actively working towards their goal of Catalan independence. Central to this committee is the debate regarding the Catalan Independence referendum on **October 1st, 2017**. Delegates will be placed into the situation in the immediate run-up to the referendum in which the question is simply stated "Do you want Catalonia to become independent in the form of a republic?" The Catalan government approved the referendum on September 6th, 2017, with the vote being boycotted by anti-independence forces within the Catalan parliament. This referendum is not authorized or recognized by the Spanish federal government and is considered **illegal** by them. The pro-independence side hopes to simply brute force their way through, securing a commanding victory and unilaterally declaring independence. Meanwhile, the pro-union side hopes to stop independence in its tracks by casting enough doubt on the validity of the referendum that it is not taken seriously both domestically and internationally and fades away. They have some valid reasons for using these tactics. The referendum was not approved by any valid Spanish government channels, and is therefore completely unrecognized in their eyes. Meanwhile, the Spanish central government is launching campaigns such as **Operation Anubis** which seek to dismantle the framework of the October 1st referendum by seizing materials and certain locations, launching investigations and making arrests against certain individuals involved¹ and more.

Role of Committee and Committee Expectations

Content

The role of this committee is to navigate the complex political situation of Catalonia in late 2017/early 2018. From a timeline perspective, the committee will begin on September 20th, 2017. 10 days before October 1st, when the referendum will take place. The result is all but assured to be one in favor of independence given the boycott being carried out against the referendum by anti-independence voters. September 20th holds some other relevance too, as the day Operation Anubis officially began after being authorized by the orders of a Barcelona trial court.² Prior to the vote, delegates will be tasked with making preparations for all possible contingencies and using what power they have to help influence the outcome. After the referendum, delegates will attempt to either help form or help subvert the creation

¹ Javier Who, Ángeles Escrivà, and Fernando Lázaro, "La Guardia Civil Cercena El 1-O," ELMUNDO, September 20, 2017, <https://www.elmundo.es/cataluna/2017/09/20/59c2032446163f2b338b459a.html>

² Javier Who, Ángeles Escrivà, and Fernando Lázaro, "La Guardia Civil Cercena El 1-O," ELMUNDO, September 20, 2017, <https://www.elmundo.es/cataluna/2017/09/20/59c2032446163f2b338b459a.html>

of a new and independent Catalan state. Subjects such as Spanish intervention in Catalan affairs, the drafting of a Catalan Declaration of Independence, and international reactions will be of immediate concern for delegates. Delegates will have to navigate the constantly changing geopolitical environment and push forward policy that empowers or deters Catalan identity depending on the standpoints of the character they represent. In terms of a timeline of events, what we will be looking at is a start right before the events of the referendum, before moving into the referendum and the fallout of that vote and its immediate aftermath will create the basis of the rest of the committee as we advance in a gradual manner. In addition, it goes without saying that it is expected that each and every delegate refrain from discussion of potentially sensitive topics and keep the committee respectful and inclusive to all delegates from all backgrounds.

Mechanisms of Committee Proceedings

In the front room, standard Model UN parliamentary procedure protocol will be expected of all delegates in attendance, with the standard format of debate taking place in moderated and unmoderated caucuses. However, there is another aspect to this committee that may be unfamiliar to newer delegates who have not taken part in a crisis committee before. You may be used to General Assembly (GA) committees, however this is a **Crisis** committee. In a crisis committee, there is also a **back room** part of the committee. What this means is that in addition to their front room performance, delegates will be expected to craft a narrative for their character using their own creative thinking and research on the topic of the committee and their character's background. This will primarily be done through **crisis notes**. A crisis note is a letter a delegate will write to an imagined person. This person can either be a real person in the world of the committee (but not someone represented by another delegate!) or someone you made up that serves a purpose for you. In these notes, you will be writing to this character to request something or some action to be taken. You will then receive a response from the back room which may affirm your request, may request more specificities, or may try to lead you in a different direction if we don't think your ideas are working. The content of your crisis notes will directly influence proceedings in committee through **crisis updates**, where we will come from the backroom and provide an update on the current happenings in the world of our committee. However, crisis updates will not be the only thing impacting the goings on of the committee. Delegates will also be expected to work together to draft and pass **directives**, which are pieces of legislation that will be voted on by the committee that work to solve the issues that are raised by crisis updates. Delegates may also work together to pass **Joint-Personal Directives**, or JPD's. These, despite the name including directive, are not pieces of legislation voted on by committee, but essentially additional crisis notes with the key difference being that they are worked on and submitted by multiple delegates who all sign onto them. Lastly, delegates will be tasked to find solutions to **timed crises**, which are essentially a crisis update that freeze all other debate or work on crisis notes and give delegates a set amount of time to deal with a problem that arises in committee. This may be finding the perpetrator of a crime, dealing with a sudden change of circumstances, or something else entirely. Delegates will have to think on their feet to solve these issues with directives passed within the allotted time of the timed crisis in order to meet the needs of the moment and avoid disaster.

Historical Background

Pre-1900's

The original Principality of Catalonia was formed in 1137 within the Kingdom of Aragon as a result of the dynastic union of the County of Barcelona and the Kingdom of Aragon, and by the time the late 1400's came around the Kingdom of Aragon and the Crown of Castile united in marriage to form the Kingdom of Spain, forming a unified Spanish polity for the first time.³ Catalonia was, naturally, part of this Kingdom, thus beginning the tumultuous relationship between the Catalans of Barcelona and the Crown in Madrid. In 1640, in an event that would come to be known as the Reapers' War, Catalan peasants revolted whilst the Crown was busy fighting the French. The Catalans declared an independent principality and named the French King Louis XIII Count of Barcelona in an attempt to gain French protection before being reconquered by Spain in 1652.⁴ In the war of Spanish succession, Catalonia was firmly on the side of the Habsburgs as opposed to the Bourbons, as the Habsburgs vowed to continue upholding the Catalan constitutions and their "fueros", or laws and customs. However, things would not go their way as the Bourbons won and Barcelona surrendered to the Bourbons in 1714.⁵ The Bourbon victory saw the creation of a much more central Kingdom of Spain for the first time, and the Catalan "fueros" were no longer respected, instead policies of assimilation were pursued. Already evident is the feeling of disillusionment and repression from Spanish rule by the Catalan people.

More Recent History

In modern Catalan politics, we saw the organized civic movement for a free Catalonia begin in 1922 with the first explicitly pro-independence political party - Estat Català, founded by Francesc Macià⁶. Originally, Estat Català mostly existed in exile in France, but after the fall of Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera in 1931, a new and broader Catalan political force emerged - the Republican Left of Catalonia, which still exists to this day. In the Spanish Civil War, Catalonia very much sided with the Republicans rather than the Nationalists. However once the dust had faded and Franco's Nationalists had clearly won, things were clearly not positive for the Catalans. Democracy had come to a swift end in Spain. Catalan autonomy was abolished and Catalan identity, language, and culture would be harshly suppressed by the Franco regime.⁷ Eventually, democracy returned to Spain in 1975 following Franco's death.

³ Richard Herr, "An Historical Essay on Modern Spain : Herr, Richard : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming," Internet Archive, January 1, 1974, <https://archive.org/details/historicalessayo0000herr/page/40/mode/2up>

⁴ "Catalonia, Revolt of (1640-1652)." Encyclopedia.com, January 19, 2024. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/catalonia-revolt-1640-1652>

⁵ Agustí Alcoberro, "The War of the Spanish Succession in the Catalan-Speaking Lands," Catalan Historical Review, May 1, 2010, <https://revistes.iec.cat/index.php/CHR/article/view/37024>

⁶ Francisco José Romero Salvadó, *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2013)

⁷ Rafael Aracil Martí, Joan Oliver i Puigdomènech, and Antoni Segura, *El Mundo Actual: De La Segunda Guerra Mundial a Nuestros Días* (Barcelona: Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 1998)

In this time, Catalan identity did not die, and although they were suppressed from organizing politically, the desire for an independent Catalonia lived on. The new Spanish constitution of 1978, while asserting the indivisible nature of the Spanish nation, conceded "the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions which form it".⁸ In 1979, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 1979 was issued, defining Catalonia as an autonomous community within the Kingdom of Spain. Originally, this placated pro-independence movements thanks to the thought that they had achieved some victory in gaining autonomy. However, this did not last for long. In 2003, a more left-wing and pro-independence government was elected in Catalonia. This new government drafted and passed a new, second Statute of Autonomy in 2006, which expanded on the special rights and privileges already granted to Catalonia within Spain and added more fuel to the Catalan people's desire for independence.⁹ However, this new statute was challenged in court by the conservative People's Party, and four years later in 2010 the Spanish High Court of Justice struck it down, completely striking down 14 articles of the statute and restrictively interpreting 27 other articles. Included amongst the articles struck down were articles recognizing Catalonia as a nation and giving preference to the Catalan language. This was hugely offensive to Catalan nationalists, who took to the streets of Barcelona on July 10th, 2010, in a demonstration organized by Catalan cultural organization Òmnium Cultural (OC) which saw over 1 million attendees.¹⁰ In addition to the OC, the Assemblée Nacional Catalana (ANC) was crucial in organizing the rallies and protests of this period, as well as organizing within government to achieve more Catalan autonomy and, ultimately, independence.

The Last Five Years

The years running up to 2017 are defined by heightened fervor for independence coming together in the beginning of explicit calls for secession of Catalonia from Spain. This was seen in a major rally held on September 11th, 2012 which unlike the 2010 rally, explicitly called for independence from Spain. In January of 2013, the leaders of the two largest pro-independence parties of the time, the left-wing ERC and the centrist to center-right CiU, Oriol Junqueras and Artur Mas, met to draft the Declaration of Sovereignty and the Right to Decide of the Catalan People, which declared Catalonia as a sovereign nation and declared that the Catalan people had the right to decide on their future. Following this, another large-scale protest took place, the "Catalan Way", a human chain made up of 1.6 million people stretching from the French border to the regional border with Valencia, the entire length of Catalonia, in support of independence.¹¹ This symbolized how strong the grassroots groundswell of support for independence had begun in Catalonia: In 2013, Catalonia had just under 7.5 million

⁸ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (Reno: Univ. of Nevada Press, 2000)

⁹ Xavier Cuadras-Morató, *Catalonia: A New Independent State in Europe?: A Debate on Secession within the European Union* (London, UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016)

¹⁰ Michel Seymour, *Multinational Federalism Problems and Prospects* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

¹¹ Matt Moffett, "Catalans to Form Human Chain for Separatist Cause - WSJ," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324324404579041122800860290>

people. That is a huge proportion of those people willing to go so far as to get involved in a protest like this. Symbolic referendums on independence were held in many individual localities throughout Catalonia, before a “participation process” was held across all of Catalonia in 2014. It passed overwhelmingly, with 80% in favor of independence, but it was a non-binding referendum - it didn’t lead to any actual consequences.¹² Catalan President of the time Artur Mas was making bold claims, claiming he would start the independence process if his party won the 2015 Catalan elections - which they did. In November of 2015, a resolution was passed formally starting the independence process, however the federal government was more than fed up with the antics of Artur Mas and the separatists. Mas had to resign. That’s when Carles Puigdemont came into the fold, ascending to the presidency in January of 2016. Perhaps a sign of things to come, Puigdemont refused to give the customary oath of loyalty to the King and the Spanish Constitution. In September of 2016, Puigdemont announced that Catalonia would hold a binding independence referendum in 2017 with or without the consent of Spain.¹³ This brings us to the point of our committee, where Catalonia is in a seriously strenuous situation that could meet extremely difficult ends if not navigated carefully.

Current Situation

In Catalonia at the time of our committee’s starting point, we are ten days away from an independence referendum that has the potential to throw Catalonia and Spain as a whole into chaos. Catalonia claims this referendum to be binding, meaning they very much plan on acting on it. However, the Spanish do not share that view at all - They will not let Catalonia leave without a fight and will do whatever necessary to undermine the referendum and stop independence from gaining serious traction. Pro-independence parties hold a majority in the Catalan parliament, but the opposition parties are essentially boycotting anything relating to independence - and their voters are doing the same. It is expected that the referendum will essentially be contested only by voters in favor of independence, and those wishing to remain in Spain will not be voting. This deals a serious blow to the legitimacy of the referendum, as it will easily be dismissed by its critics as being not truly representative. However, the Catalan government under President Puigdemont will still be able to make its best efforts to try to secure independence - attempting to secure control of Catalan security apparatuses from the federal government could go a long way in achieving some kind of independence, but this is a hard ask. Especially while the federal government launches an initiative like Operation Anubis, a plan to arrest key figures in the independence movement, discredit and stop the referendum from actually going through, and generally speaking covert operations targeting the referendum and pro-independence organizations throughout Catalonia. Delegates are being placed in an extremely volatile situation in Catalonia in late 2017, with the (prospective) nation sitting on a powder keg that could erupt into chaos if neither side is willing to back down and accede to the other.

¹² Duerr M. E. Glen, *Secessionism and the European Union: The Future of Flanders, Scotland, and Catalonia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015)

¹³ 1. Angus Berwick and Tomás Cobos, “Catalonia to Hold Independence Referendum with or without Spain’s ...,” Reuters, September 28, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-catalonia-idUSKCN11Y2FR/>.

Character Descriptions

Delegates will be representing figures with different levels of political relevance in Catalonia in 2017. Remember that the character you are assigned is a real person who was involved, in some capacity, with the Catalan independence crisis whether their allegiances lie to Spain or Catalonia. Please do additional research to learn more deeply about your character's role in committee, the powers their position has, and some information about their background and personal opinions on issues in order to properly represent them in the best, most compelling way possible.

1. **Carles Puigdemont** - President of Catalonia, Puigdemont comes from a background in journalism.¹⁴ A staunch Catalan nationalist, Puigdemont saw his political rise in the Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCAT), a center to center right Catalan nationalist party which was the ruling party in Catalonia at the time of this committee.¹⁵ Puigdemont served as a member of the Catalan parliament starting in 2006 before becoming Mayor of Girona in 2011, and finally becoming President of Catalonia in January of 2016.¹⁶ Puigdemont is committed to Catalan independence and serves as the primary figurehead of the independence movement.
2. **Mariano Rajoy** - Prime Minister of Spain from 2011 onwards, Rajoy represents everything in opposition to the Catalan independence movement - He is from the conservative People's Party and is staunchly opposed to Catalan independence, willing to utilize repressive tactics to undermine the referendum and keep Catalonia in Spain¹⁷.
3. **Jean-Claude Juncker** - President of the European Commission, Juncker had served as Prime Minister of Luxembourg from 1998 to 2013 before resigning¹⁸. An experienced politician, Juncker seeks to maintain order in the scenario and avoid larger consequences of this crisis around Europe. However, he respects the rule of law within Spain and sides with the Spanish government given the illegal nature of the referendum.
4. **Ines Arrimadas** - Leader of Centrist party Ciudadanos within Catalonia, Arrimadas is Leader of the Opposition in the Catalan Parliament. As such, she serves as a primary

¹⁴ Wil Longbottom, "Rajoy vs Puigdemont: A Profile of Two Leaders," Sky News, October 29, 2017, <https://news.sky.com/story/rajoy-vs-puigdemont-a-profile-of-two-leaders-11103935>.

¹⁵ Eleanor Rosenbach, "The Catalan Independence Referendum Is a Smokescreen for Other Issues," The Independent, October 1, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/catalan-catalonia-independence-referendum-spain-smokescreen-for-other-issues-a7976841.html>

¹⁶ Russell Leadbetter, "Scourge of Madrid: The Guitar-Playing President of Catalonia," The Herald, October 1, 2017, <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/15568691.scourge-madrid-guitar-playing-president-catalonia/>

¹⁷ Sam Jones and Stephen Burgen, "Spain Crisis: 'stop This Radicalism and Disobedience,' Pm Tells Catalan Leaders," The Guardian, September 21, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/20/spain-guardia-civil-raid-catalan-government-hq-referendum-row>

¹⁸ "Luxembourg PM Juncker Offers Government Resignation," BBC News, July 11, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23275318>

antagonist to the Independence movement. Many believe Arrimadas has ambitions to lead Ciudadanos nationally, and thus she will attempt to make a name for herself in her response to this crisis¹⁹.

5. **Oriol Junqueras** - Junqueras serves as Vice President of Catalonia and President of the Republican Left of Catalonia, representing more of the left wing side of Catalan independence as opposed to Puigdemont. However, on the issue of independence they are in alignment and are working together to advance the referendum and declare independence²⁰
6. **Ada Colau** - As Mayor of Barcelona, Colau exerts a large influence on Catalan politics. Her focus as mayor is not primarily on issues of sovereignty and thus she attempts to strike a middle ground between both sides of the issue, stating "I've never been nationalist or pro-independence" whilst also stating her openness to a referendum and rejecting federal intervention in Catalan self-government.²¹
7. **Pedro Sanchez** - Leader of the Federal Opposition and President of PSOE, Sanchez is opposed to Catalan independence as all national parties are. However, he criticizes the handling of the situation by the Rajoy Government and proposes a new, more federalist system of government for Spanish regions in an attempt to placate Catalans and keep the country united.²²
8. **Jordi Cuixart** - Cuixart serves as President of Òmnium Cultural, an organization dedicated to promoting the Catalan language, Catalan identity, civil rights for Catalans, and strengthening the base of support for Catalan sovereignty overall.²³ He is committed to Catalan independence.
9. **Josep Lluís Trapero** - Trapero is the Mossos d'Esquadra Major of the Catalan Police, making him the highest ranking policeman in Catalonia. Trapero is officially politically neutral, however he is suspected of harboring pro-Independence sympathies and this could impact how he carries out his job.²⁴
10. **Anna Gabriel** - A professor and member of the Catalan Parliament, Gabriel is a member of the far-left pro-independence Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP). Gabriel is a

¹⁹ Rafa Julve, "Inés Arrimadas, La Khaleesi Naranja," elperiodico, December 22, 2017,

<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/politica/20171221/ines-arrimadas-biografia-khaleesi-6507698>

²⁰ Sara Prim, "New Catalan Government Set to Work," Catalan News, January 14, 2016,

<https://www.catalannews.com/politics/item/the-new-catalan-government-is-set-to-workstarts-running>

²¹ Diego Torres, "Ada Colau," POLITICO, December 6, 2016, <https://www.politico.eu/list/politico-28-class-of-2017-ranking/ada-colau/>

²² Jesús Aguado and Ingrid Melander, "Catalan Nationalists Back in Power, Target Secession in Challenge To ...," Reuters, June 2, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-idUSKCN1IY0B8/>

²³ "About Us," Òmnium Cultural, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://www.omnium.cat/en/presentation/>

²⁴ Mariona Ferrer I Fornells, "L'Audiència Jutjarà Trapero per Organització Criminal i Sedició," Ara.cat, April 5, 2018, https://www.ara.cat/politica/lamela-processa-trapero-organitzacio-criminal_1_2740725.html

key player in the events leading up to the referendum and figurehead of the furthest left segments of Catalan independence.²⁵

11. **Jordi Sànchez** - Sànchez is President of the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC), a political organization designed to support the independence of Catalonia.²⁶ Sànchez is a key player in organizing for pro-independence causes and building support for the independence referendum.
12. **Gonzalo Gortazar** - Gortazar is CEO of CaixaBank, the third largest bank in Spain and the largest headquartered in Barcelona. However, the instability surrounding the political situation in Catalonia and possibility of independence is leading CaixaBank to consider moving its operations to Valencia²⁷, one example of the instability the crisis is causing in the business world.
13. **Joaquim Forn** - Forn is a pro-independence politician and member of PDeCAT who serves as Minister of the Interior of Catalonia. As such, his responsibilities include public security, emergency management, identification, and more. In his role, Forn will help maintain control over the security and government apparatus for pro-independence forces in the wake of federal interference through Project Anubis
14. **Mario Vargas Llosa** - Llosa is a Peruvian-Spanish right-wing academic who is staunchly opposed to Catalan independence. Llosa is quoted as saying "Spanish democracy is here to stay. No separatist conspiracy can destroy it." in response to the independence movement²⁸. Llosa has advocated for right-wing politics and neo-liberal reforms globally²⁹.
15. **José Manuel Maza** - Maza is the Attorney General of Spain and a member of Rajoy's conservative People's Party. As Attorney General, Maza has authority to launch investigations and call for criminal charges, and he is actively investigating Catalan attempts to carry out an independence referendum³⁰.
16. **Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría** - Sáenz de Santamaría serves as Deputy Prime Minister of Spain. A member of the People's Party and a staunch supporter of Prime Minister Rajoy, she assists Rajoy in dealing with the issue of Catalonia. In her role as

²⁵ Swissinfo.ch, "Separatist from Catalonia Seeks Swiss Advice," SWI swissinfo.ch, February 19, 2018, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/legal-council_separatist-from-catalonia-seeks-swiss-advice/43911184

²⁶ Maiol Roger, "Jordi Sànchez, Nuevo Presidente de La ANC," El País, May 16, 2015, https://elpais.com/ccaa/2015/05/16/catalunya/1431776228_237452.html

²⁷ Stephen Burgen, "Caixabank: Spain's Third Largest Bank Joins Exodus from Catalonia," The Guardian, October 6, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/06/catalonia-business-independence-spanish-government>

²⁸ "Catalonia Independence: Peruvian Nobel Laureate Calls for 'unity' in Spain," BBC News, October 8, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-41544565>

²⁹ Jack Hanson, "The Miseducation of Mario Vargas Llosa," The Nation, July 3, 2023, <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/mario-vargas-llosa-tribe/>

³⁰ "Spain Catalonia: Court Blocks Independence Referendum," BBC News, September 8, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41196677>

Minister of Territorial Administrations, she would be the first to call to administrate Catalonia in the case of the Spanish government dismissing the Catalan government³¹.

17. **Carme Forcadell** - Forcadell is the President of the Parliament of Catalonia, serving in a similar capacity to a Speaker of the House. She formerly served as President of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), a pro-independence civic organization³². Forcadell is a major player in the backroom machinations leading up to the attempt for independence.
18. **Josep Maria Bartomeu** - Bartomeu is the President of F.C. Barcelona. While not an explicitly political organization, F.C. Barcelona has become a symbol of Catalan identity and culture through its international success and recognition, and the Catalan culture and identity woven into F.C. Barcelona's brand, with the motto "Mes que un club" being symbolic of the club's roots in Catalan identity and political ties with Catalan independence³³.
19. **Carles Sastre i Benlliure** - General Secretary of the pro-independence and leftist Intersindical-CSC trade union, Sastre i Benlliure has a history of taking matters into his own hands with attacks and violence against certain anti-independence forces³⁴. Through his capacity as leader of Intersindical-CSC, he is helping organize general strikes in favor of independence throughout Catalonia.
20. **António Costa** - Costa is the Prime Minister of Portugal. Though not directly tied into the situation in Catalonia, Portugal is deeply tied into Spanish affairs due to the geographic concerns and the possibility of a third major player on the Iberian peninsula will be relevant to Portugal.
21. **María Dolores de Cospedal** - Cospedal is the Minister of Defense of Spain and Secretary-General of the People's Party, second only to PM Rajoy. She is responsible for managing the military administration of Spain, so Cospedal will be key to any potential federal military intervention in Catalonia.
22. **Santiago Abascal** - Perhaps the most viscerally opposed to Catalan independence, Abascal is leader of the far-right Vox party in Spain nationally. Not only is Abascal a fierce opponent of Catalan independence and identity, but he advocates for the

³¹ "Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría - Madrid's Enforcer for Catalonia," BBC News, October 28, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41788406>

³² Xavier Domènech, "De Les Consultes a l'assemblea Nacional," Diari de Girona, September 14, 2012, <https://www.diaridegirona.cat/catalunya/2012/09/14/les-consultes-l-assemblea-nacional-49357060.html>

³³ Ryan Kelly, "Mes Que Un Club: Barcelona Club Motto Meaning & History in Catalan Independence," Goal.com US, September 19, 2023, <https://www.goal.com/en-us/news/mes-que-un-club-barcelona-club-motto-meaning-history-catalan-independence/c0e1i7haj3uh1hXu5wmid3qub>

³⁴ José Yoldi, "El Independentista Carles Sastre, Condenado a 30 Años Por El atentado Contra Bultó," El País, October 30, 1985, https://elpais.com/diario/1985/10/31/sociedad/499561207_850215.html

abolition of all regional parliaments as a whole³⁵. A fierce Spanish nationalist, Abascal is committed to keeping Spain together by any means necessary.

23. **Elisenda Paluzie** - Paluzie is a pro-independence economist and professor. She is a staunch advocate for Catalan independence and uses her academic background to help make the argument for why Catalonia is better off going it alone.
24. **Sergey Lavrov** - Lavrov is the Russian Foreign Minister. In his capacity as Foreign Minister, he carefully monitors events such as the situation ongoing in Catalonia. Although not directly related to the situation, it is believed Russia would benefit from helping foster strife within the west, and it is alleged that certain pro-independence forces may attempt to solicit covert diplomatic backing for their cause³⁶.
25. **Rafael Catalá** - As Minister of Justice of Spain, Catalá will seek to prosecute those seen as breaking Spanish law within the Catalan independence movement to justice. He will also have a key role in the behind-the-scenes operation of Operation Anubis to subvert the independence referendum.

Questions to Consider

- What tactics can the pro-Spanish side use to undermine the referendum and keep Catalonia in Spain?
- What are the possible international reactions to the political crisis developing in Catalonia? How can international reactions be managed?
- How will pro-independence forces manage to actually secure independence given the lack of recognition from the Spanish government?
- How will the financial and business sectors react to the independence referendum? Consider that business will prioritize stability.
- How will the Spanish political establishment react to the possible loss of its most economically prosperous region?
- What kind of government will a new Catalan Republic, if formed, become?
- How will an independent Catalan state form new international relations? Will it join the EU? NATO? Consider an independent Catalonia's place in the wider world.

³⁵ Henry de Laguérie, "Santiago Abascal, l'homme Derrière Le Retour de l'extrême Droite En Espagne," leparisien.fr, April 22, 2020, <https://www.leparisien.fr/international/santiago-abascal-l-homme-derriere-le-retour-de-l-extreme-droite-en-espagne-14-11-2019-8192649.php>

³⁶ Michael Schwartz and José Bautista, "Married Kremlin Spies, a Shadowy Mission to Moscow and Unrest in Catalonia," The New York Times, September 3, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/03/world/europe/spain-catalonia-russia.html>

Suggestions for Further Research

I would recommend delegates target their further research in a few different areas

1. Delegates should go into further research on the character they are representing. Remember these are real people with real positions. Research both the personal views and history of your character, and the responsibilities that the position they hold entail. Researching these areas should provide you with a wide variety of knowledge of the person you will be representing.
2. Delegates should research further detail into the history of Catalonia and its relationship with the Spanish state, as that forms the basis of this committee. Understand why many Catalans feel disillusionment with Spain and the cultural differences between Catalonia and mainland Spain. In addition, I would recommend that delegates look into what makes Catalonia such an invaluable part of Spain today, such as its economic importance and other issues.
3. Delegates should research the history of the formation of new countries to look for examples on how the possible process by which independence could be attained and a new government formed could transpire.
4. Anything else you think may be interesting and give you valuable perspectives to use in committee! There's so much out there to learn on this topic, and I highly encourage all delegates to not limit the kind of information they take in and use.

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