



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

WITH LAWYERS
IN 21 COUNTRIES

Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

London/Düsseldorf, 18 October 2019

ELDH condemns the conviction of Catalan politicians and civil society activists - a travesty of justice

The ELDH condemns the sentences of between 9 and 13 years imprisonment imposed by the Spanish Supreme Court on Monday 14 October 2019 on the nine Catalan political and civil leaders already in custody for long period. The Court also announced a verdict for the three former Government of Catalonia Cabinet Ministers who are currently not in jail. Oriol Junqueras, Jordi Turull, Raül Romeva, Dolors Bassa, Joaquim Forn, Josep Rull, Meritxell Borràs, Carles Mundó, and Santi Vila were Cabinet Ministers of the former Government of Catalonia; Carme Forcadell was the President (Speaker) of the Parliament of Catalonia, and Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sánchez were leaders of two civil society organisations.

The trial began on 12 February 2019 in Madrid. The ELDH's President, Professor Bill Bowring, observed two days at the start of the trial.

The Court dropped the State Prosecutor's charges of rebellion, but sentenced them for the crimes of sedition, embezzlement of public funds, and disobedience, in the context of the 1 October 2017 referendum on independence.

ELDH recalls that the referendum was a non-violent act of civil disobedience, organised peacefully to allow the voices of many Catalans to be heard. The only violence on 1 October was that perpetrated by the Spanish Police, in actions of extreme repression and destruction captured on film.

ELDH agrees with the Government of Catalonia's Minister for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency, Alfred Bosch, who stated that:

- These have been political proceedings, putting people on trial solely and exclusively for their political ideas.
- The prison sentences imposed upon the nine Catalan leaders represent a historical error that, far from solving the problem, merely worsens it.
- The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, has done nothing to resolve this situation through dialogue, as can be seen by the punishment sought by the State Prosecutor's Office and the Spanish Attorney General's Office, both directly politically appointed by the Spanish Government.
- Far from providing any solution, the verdict against the political prisoners shifts the conflict to the European arena and the international courts of justice.

- The international community needs to play an active role in resolving this conflict between Catalonia and Spain. Nobody can remain silent before this violation of fundamental rights.
- The Government of Catalonia has always and will always argue that this conflict cannot be resolved with further conflict, and makes an international call for dialogue and a democratic solution.

ELDH agrees with Alyn Smith, SNP, MEP, and President of the European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament that the sentences are 'a travesty of justice which will only serve to worsen already difficult relations between Catalonia and Spain'.

ELDH calls on the Government of Spain to bring about the earliest release of these Catalan prisoners, and urges the European Union and its member states to work with Spain to achieve early release, and to redouble efforts for a political solution.