



JORDI CUIXART. PRESIDENT

A call for democracy

Democracy is under siege in Catalonia. You may think we are exaggerating **but we ask the international community to follow carefully the 1 October referendum on self-determination in Catalonia.**

A referendum was called by the Catalan Government, following the wishes of two thirds of the Catalan population. Despite the opposition of Mariano Rajoy's government in Spain, Catalans have the right to vote, as fifty international personalities have affirmed by supporting the [Let Catalans Vote](#) manifesto.

The Spanish government has mobilised its prosecutors and democratically elected politicians could face prison for allowing people to vote (more than 700 mayors are under threat). We denounce the attempts by the low quality democracy that currently exists in Spain to stop this referendum through measures like the arrest of civil servants, threats to the media or the closure of almost 140 websites. Their "crime"? Promoting the right to vote.

Catalan self-government has been abolished 'de facto' without any law or political debate in the Spanish Parliament. Madrid has taken the control of our finances and of the Mossos regional police, and has deployed 10.000 paramilitary police, the Guardia Civil, to Catalonia. It is thus unclear how far Mr. Rajoy will go in his attempts to stop the referendum. We want to vote like they did in Scotland but Spain's answer is like that of Turkey.

I am the president of Òmnium Cultural, a grassroots organisation with 70.000 members and 40 local branches across Catalonia and no public funds. It was founded in 1961 and Franco banned us from 1963 to 1967. Yesterday, 40 years after the end of Franco's dictatorship, our [campaign web](#) was closed by the Spanish government without any court order (it is currently open at [cridademocracia.eu](#)). For all these reasons we launched a far-reaching campaign to defend democracy and civil liberties, inalienable rights that should be granted also by the European Union.

Civil Rights are at stake in Catalonia. We will continue with our massive peaceful protests. All we want is to vote. The international community asks Rajoy to open dialogue and to let Catalans vote. And he answers by threatening us with more repression. Europe cannot ignore this: it is not a matter of opinion or interpretation, we are suffering facts on the ground.



Despite all these uncertainties and difficulties, people in Catalonia are still going to vote on Sunday. Most Catalans share the view that democracy is the best tool for solving political conflicts in the 21st century. Today the cause of Catalonia is the cause of basic freedoms everywhere, such as freedom of speech and the right to vote. Thank you.



Jordi Cuixart

President of Òmnium Cultural

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