

VILAWEB

Ramon Tremosa: 'We do not have to fear walking alone for a few weeks'

Interview with the Euro deputy who has just published the book 'Let Catalonia Vote'

Per: [Josep Casulleras](#)



Tremosa. Picture: Josep Losada

The capacity of Spanish diplomacy to pressurise and have an influence in Brussels is limited, and the Catalan sovereigntist process, though cautiously and with certain mistrust, is seen with greater respect than we believe. This is the thesis of the book 'Let Catalonia Vote' (Pòrtic) that has just been presented by the Euro deputy for Convergència, Ramon Tremosa. And he says so after several years walking the corridors of the Euro chamber with commissioners, ambassadors and Euro deputies of all countries and colours. 'If the Financial Times and The Economist were read here just like ABC and El Mundo there would have been no need to publish this book', says Tremosa, and you can find out why in this interview.

—**How must we understand Merkel's declarations on the independence of Catalonia?**

—As the New York Times header said: very vague support for Rajoy.

—**What does that mean?**

—It means that Obama clearly recommended the 'no' vote for the Scottish referendum, but on the other hand Merkel has not said that we cannot vote or that we will be expelled from the euro or from the zone of free circulation or the EU, which is what the Spanish government would have said. If this is everything that the Spanish democracy with all of the thousands of officials, ambassadors and ministers, has managed to get out of Merkel in an explicit reference to the internationalisation of the process, with controlled questions ...

—**But you yourself say that the German politicians are those that view the sovereigntist process with more mistrust.**

—Yes. Germany and France have had absolutist views up to a few days ago, but in countries of centuries of democratic

tradition like the Scandinavian, the Anglo Saxon and the Nordic countries, they see it differently. If in Scotland the 'Yes' had won by one vote, the next day it would have been recognised by all of the states and the EU would have started negotiations with Scotland, because no one would have questioned the result.

—Will the EU count votes on 27-S ...?

—Seats will be counted for if they want to count votes, they have to allow a referendum. If the Spanish government is so convinced that there is not a majority for independence, why haven't they called for a ballot? If it is a parliament, the seats will be counted. In Scotland in 2011, when the democratic mandate was achieved to call a referendum, there was a very tight majority of seats for the SNP, with 34% of the vote, and the English never questioned it, and it was a very tight absolute majority. Less than half of the votes gave 52% of the seats and served to call a referendum.

—So what will the European institutions and the governments of the Spanish states look at on 27-S?

—At eight in the evening you will have some cheeses that will say that Junts pel Sí go from sixty to seventy seats and that the second force has no more than twenty and that there is no alternative government to Junts pel Sí. This is the great success of the united list. There will be no alternative government to Junts pel Sí. This is why the express reformation of the Constitutional Court is being prepared, because the PP already believes there will be no alternative government and that Junts pel Sí and the CUP will make an absolute majority. This is the most likely scenario and the one the Spanish government will have to manage the day after.

—Let's imagine that the sum of Junts pel Sí and the CUP reached a very tight absolute majority, sixty-eight seats.

—The Quebec referendum was binding and the 'no' won by 0.6% of the vote, and nobody questions this difference. Colau is Mayoress of Barcelona by one councillor and we do not question her.

—We know that the Spanish state, the government, the press would question a result of this kind ...

—The Spanish government destroyed a Statute with 80% support from the parliament, and a 9-N with two-thirds of the parliament. They would not recognise any result, not even a hundred seats. Felipe González already said so in the article: 'Whatever they vote, what is impossible is impossible'. I do not expect any recognition.

—And from the other European governments? Wouldn't they find problems?

—I have votes that win by one every month in Strasbourg and the parliaments work by votes. If there are sixty-eight seats against sixty-seven, there is one more. Maybe if we make sixty-eight and not seventy-five seats, we will have to work more slowly, but it will still be an electoral victory.

—Up to now, we have seen that the EU has rejected the Catalan question. When do you think it will become involved?

—For the moment, the EU is waiting for the democratic mandate of the people of Catalonia. In 2012 the right to be consulted was won, and this is what the Financial Times said in its header the day after the elections. Nobody is telling the Catalans they cannot vote because there is a democratic mandate for it. And if this new democratic mandate wins, we will enter a new dimension because the argument the Spanish state has used to deny the process up to now will be overturned.

—But the Catalan process is awkward for the European states, and you yourself say that we have no allies.

—Yes, and Scotland is also a problem for the United Kingdom; Flanders for Belgium, the Venice region for Italy, and there is the Basque Country ...

—We do not have allies?

—But we have had gestures: in Latvia with the prime minister; with the Danish parliament, which discussed the Catalan case despite the pressure from Spain; with Holland in the case of the book 'Victus', the censorship of which had a great impact. And we also see the spectacular defeat of the 'Spain brand' in Europe. We have many signs that a Catalonia that wants to do things better, if it has a clear democratic mandate, we will see whether the Spanish government can stop it.

—Without allies, couldn't the steps to independence be taken?

—The Baltic republics had much harsher mandates against from Delors, Thatcher, Mitterrand, saying that they would never enter the EU with the Soviet tanks at the door... They were in the clouds for a few weeks and then moved forward. And when the world saw these people's determination, they began to recognise them: Iceland recognised Estonia, and then came Norway, Sweden... We do not have to be fearful of going it alone for a few weeks, if necessary, so that the world can see that we are determined to do it. The clearer the democratic mandate, the more recognised the steps will be. However, if we fail to win a clear democratic mandate, we will lose a generation.

—And would we be left out of the European Union?

—Europe has three solutions. What does the EU say to the United Kingdom? It says that if they vote to leave the EU,

they should hold on to as much European legislation in the country as possible. If you vote to leave, they say, then leave from an institutional viewpoint. And it is not believable that Spain might veto Catalonia. When in 2012 Margallo threatened to veto an independent Scotland, the weekly *The Economist*, which is unionist, told him that a hyper-indebted Spain ever more dependent on funds from the ECB, could not veto anyone. Volkswagen in Martorell has a railway station built with European gauge waiting for the European Railway Corridor. Barcelona port has paid the EU for it. There is too much money from Europe and European multinationals for Spain to say that it will expel us indefinitely and the rest of Europe to look on with indifference. The Catalan economy already depends more on the European economy than on the Spanish.

—Would the EU force Spain to negotiate on secession?

—I told Trichet that with a letter and a telephone call in thirty minutes it managed what the Catalans had not managed in thirty years, which was an express reformation of the constitution. The Spanish position is weaker than they would have us think.

—It is weak, but it is also effective in a certain way, because they made Viviane Reding change her way, they called the Latvians and Lithuanians to the polls ...

—An ambassador or minister can be made to change, but what they have said remains. This is the language of Europe. The best way to avoid getting into trouble is not to say anything. Spain shouts a lot, struts a lot, but is nothing when it comes down to the facts. The Catalan process reveals all of the democratic deficits of the so-called democratic Spain. Europe has seen Spain's economic ruin and the Catalan case also shows Spain's very poor democratic quality.