

Beat: Politics

## **Sánchez defends for the first time the amnesty for convicted independentists**

### **As the only way to repeat the position**

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**USPA NEWS** - The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, publicly defended this Saturday, for the first time, the amnesty for all those convicted of the independence attempt in Catalonia in 2017. And he did so by appealing to his personal interest, although he disguised it as an interest for Spain, by admitting that "this is the only possible way to have a progressive Government" in the country. Before the Federal Committee of the Socialist Party, Sánchez said that it is time to make "necessity a virtue." And he alluded to the need for the 14 votes of the republican left of Catalonia (ERC) and the former Catalan nationalists (Junts per Catalunya), and to the virtue of presenting the amnesty as a "contribution to political normalization in Catalonia."

The conservative opposition, the historical leaders of Spanish Socialism and at least half of Spaniards recriminate the Socialist candidate for re-election who, until the July 23 elections, considered that pardoning convicted independentists was unconstitutional. Pedro Sánchez justified his change of attitude by saying that the July 23 elections, which the Socialist Party lost, "change things." And he added that "in the name of Spain, in the interest of Spain, in defense of coexistence between Spaniards, today I defend the amnesty in Catalonia."

"This measure is a condition for there to be a Government of progress" in Spain, Sánchez said. For the opposition and for many analysts, the Socialist candidate and acting Prime Minister finally "removed his mask." His interest, they say, is to repeat his position, even if to do so he has to give in to the demands of the Catalan and Basque independentists. And they reject that the Socialist candidate's change of opinion pursues the general interest of Spain.

"It was not our plan at this time, but one cannot always choose the moments in which one makes one's plans," Pedro Sánchez argued to justify his change of mind about the amnesty. "Catalonia is ready for a total reunion. The representatives of more than 80 percent of Catalans support this measure," he explained. "And for those same reasons, in the name of Spain, in the interest of Spain, in defense of coexistence between Spaniards, today I defend the amnesty in Catalonia for the events that occurred in the last decade," he added.

But Sánchez seeks the explicit support of Socialist militants. For this reason, a consultation will be opened on Monday in which the militants will be asked if they support the agreement reached by the Socialist Party with the extreme left formation Sumar, and the agreements with other political formations, in reference to the Catalan independentists and Basques, to reach a sufficient majority to form a Government. "This party belongs to the militants," said Pedro Sánchez. "They are the ones who choose their course to follow with their free and democratic vote." In his opinion, Socialist militancy is "exemplary, sovereign and autonomous. And most importantly, he never fails when asked to step forward." With this he tries to silence dissenting voices within the party, such as that of some regional president who is opposed to pardoning the independentists.

For the Socialist candidate for re-election, "the amnesty is not an end in itself nor is it the end. It is a path to advance on the path of reunion and harmony between Catalans, and between Catalans and Spaniards." And he concluded by saying that "our responsibility as politicians is to take that step."

Later, on social networks, Sánchez stated: "The result in Catalonia proves that the grace measures, the pardons, have had a much greater effect on Catalan society than could be assumed. Catalonia is ready for a total reunion."

#### **Article online:**

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United Press Association, Inc.  
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168  
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA  
(702) 943.0321 Local  
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile  
[info@unitedpressassociation.org](mailto:info@unitedpressassociation.org)  
[info@gna24.com](mailto:info@gna24.com)  
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