

Beat: Politics

## Governments of Spain and Catalonia meet again after 12 years of estrangement

### Sanchez visits the Catalan president

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**USPA NEWS** - Twelve years ago a president of the Spanish Government did not visit the headquarters of the regional government of Catalonia and this Thursday, that tradition was broken. In the midst of a political crisis due to the Catalan independence threat, but with the firm intention - according to official sources of the Spanish Government - to conduct relations between the governments of Madrid and Barcelona along the political and non-judicial path, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez interviewed this Thursday with the Catalan president, Joaquin Torra, whom he asked for support to open a dialogue between the Spanish Government and the independentists.

"There is no other way to resolve this conflict than dialogue within the law, the law itself is not enough," said Pedro Sanchez after his meeting with the president of the regional government of Catalonia. He called it "dialogue for reunion" because, in his opinion, the last decade in relations between Catalonia and Madrid has been "regrettable." Sanchez said that "a democracy is strong when it is capable of dialogue." Aware that he will find resistance to this dialogue with the independentists, the Spanish Prime Minister warned that "we who have firm principles are not afraid to talk about anything."

The first thing the two leaders talked about was the opening of a dialogue between the Spanish Government and the independentists. Sanchez urged the Catalan president to support this dialogue, although he warned that it should be developed "within the framework of the law and respect for legal certainty." In this regard, he said that "I am a strong advocate of the self-government of Catalonia and these proposals demonstrate the distance between the Government and the Generalitat" [Catalan name of the Government of Catalonia].

For his part, the Catalan president, Joaquin Torra, was willing not to obstruct that dialogue, but warned that the right of self-determination and independence of Catalonia will be on the negotiation from the first moment. "It seemed to me that in his speech he recognized the right to self-determination and the referendum, even if the road is long," he told reporters after the meeting. Torra received Pedro Sánchez as a foreign president, who also asked that the imprisoned and exiled independence workers join the dialogue between the Government of Spain and the Generalitat.

The meeting between the two leaders was denounced in court by the opposition Popular Party. Conservatives believe that Joaquin Torra no longer holds any public office, after being disqualified by the Central Electoral Office and the Superior Court of Justice of Catalonia for disobeying court decisions. Torra was devoid of his status as a deputy in the Parliament of Catalonia and, according to the Popular Party, can not be president of the regional government because Catalan law states that, to be president, he must be a member of Parliament.

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