



Remarks by Spain on Democracy and the Rule of Law in Spain
Session of the OSCE Permanent Council
Vienna, 18 January 2018

Mr Chairman,

I once again address this Permanent Council, on my own initiative, to inform you about the state of democracy and the rule of law in Spain.

This Delegation last addressed the Council on 2 November 2017. At that time, a report was given on the approval by the Spanish Senate of the measures requested by the Government, under article 155 of the Constitution, to restore legal order in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia.

Among other measures, the Senate resolution dissolved the Catalan regional Parliament and called regional elections. These elections were held on 21 December within a framework of lawfulness and electoral guarantees, and polling day proceeded in the normal manner. Voter participation broke a record for this kind of election, at 81.94%—230,000 more than in 2015, even though the electoral census was smaller.

As to the outcome, Catalan nationalist parties dropped nearly one percentage point, from 48.70% to 47.52%; for their part, non-independentist parties rose to 52.48%—including the most-voted party, Ciudadanos—although once again, the distribution of seats according to the electoral laws in force gave a majority to the nationalists.

Yesterday, the opening session of the new Catalan Parliament was held, Parliamentary Board was constituted as usual and the opinion of the Parliament's legal advisers was respected. This represents the first step towards the investiture of the new head of the regional executive.

Mr Chairman,

The results of the latest regional elections show once again that Catalonia is a plural society, and that the social and political divide that has been created can only be bridged if this plurality is respected. To this end, our constitutional framework and the rule of law are essential, as are messages to promote a renewal of coexistence, integration, and respect for the rights of all.

The Spanish Constitution will have its 40th anniversary in 2018. Spain's well-known track record of democracy during these past four decades has

placed our country among those enjoying the highest degree of freedom and guarantees for the protection of the rights of all their people. The Government of Spain and the great majority of the political parties would like to see the newly constituted Catalan Parliament ensure a return to the path of constitutional legality and institutional loyalty, in order to overcome once and for all the chapter of instability and social and economic deterioration that has been caused, and provide the well-being to which everyone in Catalonia aspires.

Thank you very much.

Mr Chairman,

I would be very grateful if you would include the text of this statement in the Journal of today's Plenary Meeting.