

Beat: Politics

## The electoral campaign in Catalonia ends, which will decide the future

### Surveys predict an adjusted result

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**USPA NEWS** - The campaign for regional elections on Thursday in Catalonia was closed on Tuesday with the rallies of the candidates for the Presidency of the regional government, not all because the heads of the list of independentist parties are in jail or fled from the Spanish Justice. This is the case of the former Catalan president, Carles Puigdemont, who declared unilateral independence and fled to Belgium. If he returns to Spain, he will be arrested and imprisoned.

The rarest electoral campaign in Spanish democratic history ends without a clear prediction of what the polls can decide. The latest polls give a technical tie between the Republican left ERC and the Citizens centrist party. As a third party, if the polls are met, the Socialist Party would be, followed in fourth place by Puigdemont's party, the CUP anti-system and, in last position, the conservative Popular Party, which supports the central Government of the Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, but can not win new support in Catalonia. What all the polls agree on is that the separatists could lose the absolute majority needed for their secessionist purposes.

Also most experts agree that the elections on Thursday will not clear the complicated Catalan political map nor solve the problem of independence. Catalonia is administratively intervened by the Spanish Government since the Justice imprisoned the first responsible for the political break with Spain and the regional government of Catalonia was dismissed in its functions. Since then, the political and social climate has calmed down, although there are still pockets of violence in some parts of the region where pro-independence activists are irreducible.

None of the attempts of those responsible for the secession to recover the freedom to join the electoral campaign has paid off. And the independentists have taken it as an affront. On Tuesday, a group of Republicans moved to Estremera prison, in Madrid, where their leader and former vice president of the Catalan government, Oriol Junqueras, is being held for the purpose of holding a rally in front of his cell. It was a symbolic meeting as was the one of the nationalists of former President Puigdemont, absent from the campaign not to be arrested. Puigdemont aspires to repeat as president and be able to take office, but then be imprisoned. But it seems unlikely that it will succeed, as the Spanish Government has strengthened surveillance at borders and airports, in order to detect any attempt by Puigdemont to return to Spain.

The future of the former Catalan president is defined. If he returns to Spain, he will be arrested and imprisoned, given the risk of escape that he has accredited with his escape to Belgium. If he does not return, he must expatriate for twenty years, time in which the crimes of which he is accused will prescribe. He will go down in history as the president who managed to divide Catalan society and as the cowardly politician who fled so as not to be arrested, while his government entered the prison. An image that does not benefit him, but neither his party, the old Convergence I Unió, nationalist, which in two years has gone from being the valid interlocutor of Spanish governments to a state of almost political irrelevance.

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