

Author: SVT Nyheter

Original Source: <https://goo.gl/X9QQtA>

Publication Date: 17th Feb. 2018

## **“The Spanish democracy and the credibility of the EU are at stake in Catalonia.”**

**OPINION: “EU and Sweden politicians should have understood by now that the Catalan crisis will not get solved by itself. The longer the EU ignores the problem, the more severe it will get and the bigger contradictions will become”, write Oriol Poveda and Jakob Svensson.**

**If we had been told that in 2018 a regional elected president in the EU would have to be exiled in Brussels or that a member state of the EU would have political prisoners held in custody for more than 100 days with no trial, nobody would have believed it.**

And if we had been told that the Peace Nobel Prize, the EU, would do nothing to solve the situation at a political level, most of us would have burst out laughing and thought this was all about a script for a TV series.

And if we had been told that the Peace Nobel Prize, the EU, would do nothing to solve the situation at a political level, most of us would have burst out laughing and thought this was all about a script for a TV series.

### **But it is not only the EU.**

From Sweden, whose government openly boasts about their feminist foreign policy and its use of dialogue and diplomacy, we have just been able to hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs’s mantra stating that Europe has no need for more dissension.

**We are living a very peculiar time with Trump, Putin and Erdogan. Europeans’ ethical compass seems to be going round and round at random, and precisely because of that, we cannot ignore what’s going on inside the EU.**

We witnessed a referendum, certainly controverted, that was subject to an excessive police action.

Then we were spectators of the election call, imposed by the government in Madrid, the conservative People’s Party (PP), where the parties supporting independence got a majority back again in the Catalan Parliament.

The PP’s rush elections strategy was about removing the pro-independence forces from the Catalan government, and thus set a similar regime to that of the central government.

Author: SVT Nyheter

Original Source: <https://goo.gl/X9QQtA>

Publication Date: 17th Feb. 2018

**But the victory of the pro-independence parties**, with more than 2 million votes, made the Spanish government panic and strive to do whatever was within its reach, up to dismantling the rule of law.

Now the political independence of Spanish courts is being questioned by important organisations, including the European Council.

**Even the report about the status of democracy around the world in 2017, by the British magazine *The Economist***, points out that the Spanish government's management of the Catalan crisis is a clear democratic violation.

Recently, the Madrid government has exhorted the Constitutional Court to forbid the Catalan Parliament to appoint Mr. Puigdemont as President, even against the legal judgment of its own State Council.

The Spanish government's peculiar request has clashed with disagreement at the Constitutional Court, but it has managed the appointment of the Catalan president by the Parliament to be postponed to an undetermined point in the future.

**On the meanwhile, the Catalan political prisoners are still awaiting their trial and Puigdemont and four of his former regional ministers keep awaiting their destiny in exile.**

And all this is taking place before a freezing silence from the EU.

We all expected that, once the dust from the police's beatings had dissolved, the time for politics and dialogue would come.

**But we were wrong. Where is the EU?**

When are the negotiations between the pro-independence parties and the Spanish central government going to start? What does the Swedish government think about having a member state in the EU where a democratically elected leader cannot take office?

**EU politicians, and even Swedish ones**, should have understood by now that the Catalan crisis will not get solved by itself. Quite the contrary, the longer the EU ignores the problem, the more severe it will get and the bigger contradictions will become.

**It's time for a EU intervention**, for a reasonable, peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict. And if the EU is too weak to force the Spanish government to sit before the negotiation table, it would be more honorable to admit it to citizens, rather than making fun of it and being accomplices to the Spanish government in this kind of actions.

Lastly, **we would like to add that if the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs** keeps insisting on the idea that neither division nor dissension are desirable, she is actually pleading guilty of connivance behind the idea that European cohesion has a price and so do the well-being of Spanish democracy and the credibility of the EU