

Political Briefing #69/2017

POLITICS & POLICY

In Spain, national and regional institutions in Madrid and Barcelona are unable to ease-off tensions over the unilateral independence process kicked-off Catalan authorities.

After that Sunday's referendum took place amid violent clashes between the national police and citizens, the President of the Catalan Region, Carles Puigdemont, announced that Catalunya will unilaterally declare its independence from Spain by Monday.

The news sparked harsh reaction across Europe with a majority of EU leaders blasting Puigdemont and calling of his attempts as a *coup d'Etat*.

At the same time, only few leaders endorsed Mariano Rajoy's leadership. The registered acts of undue violence against unarmed citizens conducted by the police force in Catalunya are becoming a heavy burden to be carried by the authorities in Madrid, and, more precisely by the right-wing Popular Party (PP).

Over the past few days, authorities in Catalunya called for EU institutions to mediate between Madrid and Barcelona.

Yet, the national Government said it would not accept any involvement of supranational bodies. At the same time, EU institutions in Brussels are on the fence, unsure about which official position to take.

Over the past few days, the European Commission and the European Parliament dismissed the legality of independentist cause and condemned the violence against citizens. Paradoxically enough, on social media channels, such as twitter, many citizens invoke a stronger intervention by the EU.

In Germany, the negotiations for the establishment of a new coalition Government are on hold. More specifically, talks among parties are split in two.

The ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Chancellor Angela Merkel is discussing with the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) - a key partner of the CDU at the national level - the terms of a sustainable prosecution of its long-lasting alliance.

After that the popular vote crowned the radical right-wing party, Alternative for Germany (AFD), as the third force in the Bundestag, the CSU feels the pressure to gain back its most radical base. At the same time, the comeback of the Liberal party (FDP) is eroding consent among centrist voters. As a consequence, the Bavarian party is calling for Angela Merkel to accept a tougher immigration policy. Such a move would protect the Christian Social Union from future AFD's claims. An agreement among the CDU and the CSU is pivotal to kick-off real

negotiations with the FDP and the Green party and to establish a so called “Jamaican” coalition.

However, meanwhile, the Greens and the FDP are understood to have kicked-off unofficial talks dealing with the prospects of the coalition. According to media reports, the Greens eye the Foreign Affairs Ministry, whereas the Liberals are poised to take hold of the Ministry of Finance. Leaders of both parties dismissed the reports.

As a result of the parallel negotiation paths, the EU stance of any future Government looks unclear as of now. According to the FDP leadership, any new Government will take power in January 2018, at earliest.

THE STATEMENT

“Brussels is defending the interests of the Soros organisations with all its means”.

The Hungarian ruling, Fidesz party

Source: [EurActiv](#), 04.10.2017

NUMBERS

250 million euros

The amount of money the European Commission is claiming back from the multinational company, Amazon, for past non-taxed profits.

Source: [Politico](#), 04.10.2017

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