

MADRID DOES NOT OFFER GUARANTEES THAT CATALONIA'S SELF-RULE WOULD BE RESPECTED

The President of Catalonia withdraws his offer to call regional snap elections

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In an institutional declaration earlier this afternoon, the President of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, confirmed that he had been willing to call early elections in exchange of guarantees by the Spanish government that article 155 would not be triggered to suspend the autonomy of Catalonia.

The intention of the Catalan government was to avoid the triggering of the said article of the Spanish Constitution which the Spanish Senate plans to pass on Friday. In exchange the Spanish government had to make sure the autonomy of Catalonia would not be suspended and that it would not use force against citizens in order to implement article 155, as the spokesperson of the Spanish government had menaced. President Puigdemont was willing to do so to de-escalate the crisis.

In this sense, the president of Catalonia had accepted the demands of the Rajoy government to call regional snap elections. He was prepared to do so today at 1.30 PM and he had even informed the Catalan government and the parliamentary group that backs the government about his decision.

Eventually, the President of Catalonia was not offered guarantees that Madrid would fulfil its side of the deal. This is the reason why he has announced this afternoon his decision not to call elections and to upkeep the plenary debate at the Parliament of Catalonia scheduled later today. This debate was meant to lift the suspension of the declaration of independence in case Madrid decided to suspend Catalonia's self-rule.

At the same time, the Deputy Prime Minister of Spain, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, has announced in the Senate that article 155 will be triggered. The delegate of the Government of Catalonia in Madrid has not been allowed to address the chamber to explain the Catalan position on the issue.