

Elected officials behind bars

Five Catalan separatists, currently detained and being tried in Madrid (Spain) for their role in the attempt of Catalanian secession in 2017, were elected deputies on Sunday April 28 during the Spanish legislative elections won by the Socialists.

The five deputies are on trial for having organised a referendum on the independence of Catalonia in October 2017, following which Carles Puigdemont declared the independence of Catalonia (this was not recognised by the Spanish government).

Among them is Oriol Junqueras, the former vice-president of the region. He is the main defendant in the trial which began on February 12 and the prosecution has requested a term of 25 years in prison. Oriol Junqueras was elected deputy leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia.

Raul Romeva, former regional head of Foreign Affairs, was elected senator under the same label. Three other detained separatists were also elected: Joaquim Forn, Jordi Turull and Josep Rull, members of the other major independence party *Together for Catalonia*. This movement is that of the former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, who fled to Belgium to escape prosecution.

Catalan independence parties have gained ground, obtaining 22 of the 350 seats in the Chamber of Deputies on Sunday. They could have a key role in negotiations for the constitution of a future majority in Parliament. Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez won the elections without obtaining an absolute majority.

AFP, "Legislative in Spain: five Catalan separatists elected while in prison", Francetvinfo.fr, April 24, 2019.



Raul Romeva

Joaquim Forn

Jordi Turull

Oriol Junqueras

Josep Rull