

Analysis of the current situation and scenarios in the Spanish state

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Parliamentary Group

June 2023

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Local and Provincial Elections on 28 May 2023

The pro-independence left achieved historic results, breaching its vote ceiling -with 366.000 votes- and thus consolidating as the largest municipal party with a total of 1.400 councillors, in addition to making major strides forward in the three province assemblies of the Basque Autonomous Community and in the Parliament of Navarre.

Results confirm the upward trend of the pro-independence left, which responds to a structural tendency: EH Bildu has the capacity to give answers to the main challenges in Basque society. Our principles and values are gaining increasing support across the country.

EH Bildu holds key positions both in Gipuzkoa as the largest party and in Nafarroa, where the PSN would need our support to get into office; as well as in several municipalities, such as Vitoria-Gasteiz, where we were the largest party, and Pamplona-Iruñea.

Spanish Political Context

The snap election called by Prime Minister Sanchez has accelerated the political and electoral cycle. In light of this situation, it becomes imperative to examine the state of affairs within the Spanish state and share the vision of the Basque pro-independence left regarding the near future.

Although this document focuses on the current political situation in Spain, it is essential to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine have significantly disrupted the global economic order and geopolitical dynamics. Consequently, a scenario of instability and transformation, with significant implications, is emerging on the horizon.

The call for a snap election took place within a politically polarized environment between the coalition government of PSOE and Podemos and an opposition in constant dispute and competition in harassing the Executive led by Pedro Sánchez.

The political model established during the transition period is displaying signs of fatigue. The credibility of the monarchy has been eroded, and the territorial framework remains a perpetual source of instability. Furthermore, the crisis of the two-party system, which long sustained Spain's political, institutional and socio-economic structure, is obvious.

Over the past decade, the Spanish political map has been transformed by territorial conflicts and corruption scandals, resulting in the emergence of alternative political options that have redefined the traditional two-party system. Notably, the left-wing movement Podemos has driven the formation of the first coalition government since the Second Republic. Conversely, the far-right party Vox has not only challenged the right-wing spectrum but also influenced political

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discourse. Additionally, the presence of pro-independence majorities in Catalonia and the electoral strength of the PNV, Geroa Bai, and EH Bildu in the Basque territories underscore the extent and complexity of the ongoing territorial conflict.

Political polarization has led to the instrumentalization of state institutions and apparatuses in the political battle. The strategy employed by the Popular Party (PP), involving the judiciary and other elements of the deep state, coupled with the significant media polarization, has reached unprecedented levels of destabilization and tension. Consequently, social divisions have escalated, further destabilizing the state across multiple dimensions.

Within this context, both Basque and Catalan independentism have become influential actors in shaping government majorities, introducing an unprecedented political dynamic. Paradoxically, this occurs while the territorial model remains a chronic crisis factor within the Spanish system.

EH Bildu's Position and Key Priorities

EH Bildu made a momentous decision by facilitating the formation of a coalition government between PSOE and Podemos dependent on the positions of the Basque and Catalan pro-independence movements. By modifying our historical position in the Spanish Parliament, we supported a form of government not witnessed since the Second Spanish Republic.

Our support for this government aimed to influence social and civil rights policies, challenging the measures implemented by the previous PP administration. Moreover, we sought to create a more conducive political environment for addressing the territorial conflict. However, our support should not be understood as an unconditional endorsement.

In the event of a hypothetical new term with a progressive government in office, EH Bildu intends to address the consequences of the conflict and the territorial issue, alongside social concerns.

We want to acknowledge the positive steps taken during this parliamentary term, particularly with regard to prisoner policies and ending the policy of dispersal. However, urgent action is still required to resolve the situation of Basque political prisoners, to whom ordinary penitentiary policy has not yet been applied.

In the short and medium term, the political landscape is becoming increasingly turbulent as general elections approach. This will intensify the polarization that continues to destabilize the state on multiple fronts. Consequently, two possible scenarios may unfold during this electoral cycle: either a continuation of the current coalition government with the support of Basque and Catalan pro-independence parties or the formation of a government led by the PP and Vox, which would open a scenario of increased confrontation with the political majorities in

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the Basque Country and Catalonia. It goes without saying that EH Bildu prioritizes the former scenario.

In both scenarios, however, the conflict over the territorial model will persist as something structural that will have to be addressed in depth. We believe there are three possible options:

- Coexistence with the conflict, accepting its chronic nature and recognizing that the Spanish state must learn to cohabit with this “issue” instead of addressing democratic solutions. This approach would involve employing various strategies -political, judicial, economic- to gradually weaken the territorial conflict through a prolonged process of attrition.
- Involution or counter-reform, which aims to impose “order” upon the territorial model by reinforcing the powers reserved to the central state, setting limits on the autonomous regions, and entering heightened conflict with the political majorities in the Basque Country and Catalonia.
- Democratization of the territorial model by acknowledging the plurinational reality of the state and addressing the asymmetry through democratic channels. This approach represents the only way to ensure political and economic stability within the Spanish state.

Considering these hypotheses, EH Bildu firmly believes that the third option is the most viable. It offers a path towards a democratic and stable scenario that benefits both the citizens of the Basque Country and the Spanish state as a whole. Therefore, **our efforts will be dedicated to promoting dialogue and fostering agreements as the primary instruments for achieving long-term structural solutions to the territorial conflict.**