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## **CATALONIA PROMISES 'IMMEDIATE' INDEPENDENCE FROM SPAIN POST-REFERENDUM**

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05.07.2017

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Deutsche Welle (5 July 2017)

Catalonia's leaders have put forward a bill supposedly ensuring that an independence referendum will take place even without Madrid's backing. The vote is planned for October 1, but questions remain over its credibility.

Catalonia will declare independence "immediately" should the majority of voters choose to secede from Spain in a referendum scheduled for late this year, according to a new bill unveiled on Tuesday by the separatist-led regional government.

According to Catalonia's President Carles Puigdemont, the new bill seeking to extract the northeastern region from Spain's legal system.

Read more: [Catalonian independence rears its head again](#)

However, doubts continue to cast over the credibility of such a vote.

Catalonian lawmakers hope that by passing the bill in the regional parliament month, Catalonia's government will be allowed to circumvent any legal or practical challenges raised by the central government in Madrid against the referendum. Essentially, legislation related to the referendum would become "supreme law" and take precedence over all other legislation.

"A decisive vote will be held on October 1, we will respect the vote," Puigdemont said. Gabriela Serra, a member of Catalonia's separatist coalition said that if voters choose to split from Spain "obviously independence will have to be declared immediately." The bill to pull Catalonia out from Spain's legal system will be submitted to a vote regional parliament in August.

The bill also outlined the question voters will be asked in the referendum: "Do you want Catalonia to be an independent state in the form of a republic?"

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Push back from Madrid

Despite calls from regional lawmakers that the bill, if passed, should be legally binding, any vote on independence would face heavy push back from Spain's central government.

Xavier Garcia Albiol, the head of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's conservative Popular Party in Catalonia, called the upcoming referendum "a coup d'etat dressed up as democracy."

Despite years of pushing from for approval from Madrid to hold an independence vote, Spain's central government has always remained steadfast in its opposition to Catalonia's regional government on the issue.

Spain's Constitutional Court has previously quashed Catalonia's resolution to hold a referendum. The court and Spanish government have also warned Catalonia officials that they could face legal repercussions and sanctions if they help to organize the vote.

Catalonia held a non-binding vote on independence in 2014. While a massive 80 percent voted in favor, turnout was low, with only 2.2 million out of 5.4 million potential voters casting their ballots.

Catalan government faces internal pressures

Despite showing optimism over the proposed bill, President Puigdemont is under pressure from within his own party over the viability of the referendum.

On Monday, he fired a senior member of his government for openly expressing their doubts over the vote.

Question marks over the credibility of the vote have also made it difficult for Catalonia's government to secure ballot boxes for the referendum. The Spanish government has already warned that any company involved could face punitive action.

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