

Beat: Politics

## The King of Spain asks Catalan politicians for responsibility

### Christmas message of the monarch

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**USPA NEWS** - With a message, like last year, marked by the current political situation in Catalonia and the risk of breaking the State, King Philip VI congratulated the Spaniards on Christmas. In his traditional speech on Christmas Eve, the monarch asked politicians to face "the problems that affect all Catalans, respecting plurality and thinking responsibly in the common good of all."

The King warned that the unilateral independence of Catalonia can only "lead again to confrontation or exclusion" and called for the recovery of "serenity, stability and mutual respect." Against what he asked the former president of the regional government of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, who, from Brussels, urged him to rectify his speech on October 3, when the monarch accused the Catalan leaders of disloyalty and endorsed the intervention administrative of the Catalan institutions by the Spanish Government, Philip VI remained firm in his classification of the secessionist intent. This Christmas Eve, he asked Catalan politicians to respect "the principles and values of the Rule of Law."

In this sense, the King of Spain stressed the value of dialogue as a basis for coexistence and recalled "the unwavering will of concord" of the Spanish. Philip VI admitted that 2017 has been "a difficult year" for Spain, but he highlighted the important achievements. Among others, reach 40 years of democracy, overcome the involutionist attempts, enter the European Union and defeat the terrorist organization ETA. He also referred to the place that Spain occupies among nations, leader in health, infrastructure or social services. For all this, also, the King considered that Spain is a society "open and supportive, not closed in on itself and that recognizes and respects" its plurality "with an integrating spirit."

Philip VI acknowledged that in Spain "difficult and complex situations persist," but considered that the balance of the four decades of democracy is undoubtedly positive. "We have to appreciate and value it. We deserve it as a country," said the monarch. Spain, he added, is "a mature democracy where you can defend all ideas, but not impose them against the rights of others." Referring to Catalonia, the King warned that "respect and preserve the principles and values of the Rule of Law is essential." Only thus, he said, can the constitutional principles of freedom, equality and justice be guaranteed. "When they break, coexistence first deteriorates and then becomes unfeasible." After demanding responsibility from the new Catalan Parliament, he warned that the confrontation "only generates discord, uncertainty, discouragement and moral, civic and economic impoverishment of an entire society."

He asked the Catalan politicians to work to recover "stability, serenity and mutual respect," so that ideas "do not distance or separate families and friends." Only this way, he said, will Catalonia be able to recover "its leadership capacity, its creative spirit, its commitment and its sense of responsibility." And to the Spanish politicians as a whole, the King warned them that "nobody wants a paralyzed or conformist Spain." But a Spain "willing to evolve and adapt to the new times," improving it "and updating it" on the basis of democratic principles.

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