

German court to release ex-Catalan leader Puigdemont on bail



Havana, April 6 (RHC)-- A German court agreed Thursday to release on bail former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and said his extradition to Spain was possible on the basis of corruption charges there, but not on the more serious charge of rebellion.

Puigdemont was arrested on entering Germany last month on a Spanish-issued arrest warrant. Spain accused the Catalan separatist of rebellion and corruption after he organized an unsanctioned independence referendum. The court set bail at US\$91,717.50.

The court said the rebellion charge Puigdemont faced in Spain was not a criminal offense in Germany, while the violence component that would justify a high treason charge was also missing.

However, proceedings to decide whether to extradite him on corruption charges could continue.

"There is a risk of flight," the court said in its explanation of its decision to grant bail. "But since extradition on rebellion charges is impermissible, the risk of flight is substantially lessened."

The Spanish government was not immediately able to comment. Puigdemont entered Germany on his way back from Finland to Belgium, where he is living in self-imposed exile.

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