

# *Catalonia Pushes Ahead with Independence Vote*

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Madrid, October 4 (RHC), -- The Catalan government says it will push ahead with its scheduled plan to hold an independence referendum, despite a Spanish Constitutional Court order to suspend the vote.

Catalan President Artur Mas established a seven-member committee late on Thursday to supervise the referendum on Catalonia's independence from Spain which is due to be held on November 9.

Earlier on Wednesday, the creation of the supervisory commission had been ratified in the Catalan parliament.

President Artur Mas' decree comes shortly after a ruling by Spain's Constitutional Court on September 29 to block Catalonia's referendum on independence after a request from Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

Rajoy's government had lodged a formal appeal with the court, asking it to declare the referendum illegal.

Despite all controversies, a 'Yes' vote for independence in the non-binding referendum will not automatically lead to the secession of the region. The vote would only give the Catalan president the mandate to negotiate independence with the Spanish administration.

Catalonia, a wealthy region in northeast Spain, has a population of 7.6 million people, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the country's economy, and has been seeking independence for years.

Polls indicate that a huge majority of Catalans demand an independence referendum, encouraged by a similar referendum in Scotland last month. The Scottish referendum, however, did not end in favor of pro-independence voters.

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