
Spain Declines Extradition of Ex-Catalan leader from Germany

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Spain's Supreme Court said on Thursday it had decided to decline the extradition of former Catalan regional leader Carles Puigdemont from Germany on the charge of misuse of public funds linked to his organization of a banned referendum on independence.

A German court ruled one week ago that Puigdemont could be extradited for alleged misuse of public funds but it rejected a request to send him back to answer a more serious charge of rebellion.

Former Catalan minister Clara Ponsati's lawyer welcomed a Spanish court's decision to withdraw European Arrest Warrants against Catalan politicians, but said it was unclear whether they would be allowed back.

Spain's Supreme Court has also said that it had withdrawn European Arrest Warrants for politicians linked to the organization of a Catalan independence referendum last October.

Former education minister Ponsati, 61, a professor at Scotland's University of St Andrews, is one of several leaders of Catalonia's regional government being sought by Spain. "It's excellent news, with regards to my client Clara Ponsati, and obviously for Puigdemont... but we tread cautiously," Amer Anwar told Reuters by phone.

"The question that arises is whether the Spanish government are willing to allow Mr Puigdemont to simply return back to Catalonia and declare independence... I suspect not."