

Beat: Politics

## Half a million Spaniards demonstrate against the Government in Madrid

"Let Sánchez fail"

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**USPA NEWS** - Thirty-one thousand people, according to the Police, or half a million, according to the organizers, demonstrated this Saturday in Madrid against the Socialist Government chaired by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and his policies. "It is about defending democracy," chanted the protesters, who called Pedro Sánchez a "dictator" for his concessions to the pro-independence supporters, while the Prime Minister, in a pre-electoral act, assured that those who demonstrated were "nostalgic" and "exclusive."

The demonstrators chanted against the pardons of the Catalan independence leaders, the release of prisoners from the terrorist organization ETA, the modification of the Penal Code and the "assault" on the Constitutional Court, recently renewed and in which the Socialist Party now has a majority with magistrates who previously held positions in the Government of Spain. "The politicization of the courts" was massively rejected by those attending the demonstration in Madrid, as well as the attempt to empty the content of the judicial sentences.

Under the slogan "For Spain, democracy and the Constitution," 31,000 people, according to the Government, and half a million, according to the organizers, gathered in the Columbus Square in Madrid. The representative of the conservative Popular Party, Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, told reporters that "it is time for individual responsibility and our responsibility is to make (Pedro) Sánchez fail so that Spain does not fail."

There were no big names in Spanish politics. Only the leader of the far-right Vox party, Santiago Abascal, participated in the protest. The rest of the representatives of the conservative Popular Party and the centrist Citizens were second-tier politicians, but more important were the thousands of citizens who took to the streets to oppose Government policies. "Nostalgic" for the Franco regime and "exclusive" of those who do not think like them, said Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez at an electoral act in Valladolid.

Spain is in the pre-electoral period. Local and regional elections will be held next May, an appointment with the polls that is considered a test prior to the December legislative elections. If the Socialist Party loses the local elections in big cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia or Seville, and in regional governments like Madrid, Castilla y León, Valencia and Galicia, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will receive a clear message: his policy is not shared by the majority of Spaniards.

The opposition assures that the agreements with the Catalan separatists, the transfers to the Basque separatists, the reforms of the Criminal Code and, specifically, the elimination of the crime of sedition and the reduction of the penalties for embezzlement, will take their toll on the Government. Meanwhile, Cabinet ministers close ranks around the Prime Minister and repeat over and over again that the Government's policies are good and the opposition is trying to boycott them.

The first appointment with the polls will be in May. The moment to know if the Spaniards support the policy of the Government. For the Socialist Party that supports the Government of Pedro Sánchez, the results of these elections may be premonitory about what will happen in December in the legislative elections. And in the Socialist headquarters in Madrid, there is concern that, according to the polls, there is a clear probability that the left will lose the Government of Spain and the conservatives will regain power.

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