

21D: Can the people in Madrid change my vote?

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I have been living in Toronto, Ontario, Canada for more than 40 years. During those years the electoral process has been change at both levels, national and regional ones and they have been adjusted according to the needs of the time.

I do remember that in the beginning of any election, been those national or regional ones, the voting papers were mailed to us directly from the electoral college of your area without the need for you to "request to vote". When the documentation arrived there were two envelopes one small and a second one much larger. In the small blank envelope we put inside one list of candidates from several lists provided by the Electoral district of our area. In the much larger envelope we put inside the small envelope that contains our vote; then, we add the proper documentation requested by the electoral district which is as 1) a copy of our passport or ID; 2) the letter from our electoral district in which contains our data that should match the data that is found in our passport or ID, and 3) the cost of sending the letter, by certified mail, to our **electoral district which address was already written in the large envelope**, in my case my electoral district is Lleida. Few months later we received, by ordinary mail, a cheque to cover the expenses of sending our vote to the electoral district. Because it appeared that this process was too expensive the election process was modified and it was change.

Now what the Government does is sending letters to all eligible voters who lived outside the country or outside its autonomous region asking the voters if they want to vote. This

process is called "Vote requested". In other cases, such in my case, the voter may received a letter from the electoral district in which has been added an "electronic code" which allows the voter to register electronically in which, once you did access to it, the voter entered its personal data and, after that, he/she receives notice that the registration has been successful. Few days later the voter receives, by ordinary mail, all documentation needed for the voter to vote such as several voting papers or candidates lists of which you will choose one only to be put inside the small blank envelope; the two envelopes, one small and one large, and one letter from your electoral district. **This is the change: before, the large envelope used to have the address of your electoral district, this time around the large envelope has the address of the Consulate of your area.** In other words, **your vote does not go to your electoral district in Catalonia, this time around it goes to the Consulate of your area.** Therefore in my case it goes to the address of the Spanish Consulate in Toronto. There all envelopes are put into a 'diplomatic pouch' and from there it is send to Madrid. **This is my dilemma: once in Madrid, who is responsible for the envelopes? Who opens them? Do those envelopes goes to the electoral district of each voter's registration?**

I, myself, I have been asking this question, **how come in this forthcoming Catalonia election, 21 of December, the Spanish state has an extraordinary interest that the 224.000 Catalans that reside abroad exercise the right to vote?** I say so, because I know that some people have received phone calls from the Consulate office requesting to come there and pick up the document and filled the form "Vote requested" to be send via mail or fax to the electoral district that the voter belongs to. As president of the Catalan community here, Toronto, I have been asked by the consulate office to notify the Catalan community of the forthcoming election. This is the first time that I have received such a request.

We all know that the 21 of December elections are illegal. We also know that all votes cast by the Catalans living abroad goes, definitely, to Madrid. This is the one million dollar question: **What Madrid will do with all those votes received?** According with the Catalan Government the Referendum held on October 1st. Catalans living abroad or outside of Catalonia, but inside Spain, only vote, approximately, 4.000 people and of those 98% vote YES to the question. Definitely, in this coming election there could be a trap or a scam. Naturally my vote will go to one of the parties or list of members that are committed to respect the results of October first and also of the Parliament resolution of October 27. I'm expecting that some of those 98% who vote YES, will do the same thing. **Will my vote be send to my electoral district which is Lleida? Will all other votes go the electoral district of each respective voter? Can the people in Madrid change my vote and all other votes for one of their own?** The Spanish government is very interested, this time around, with the votes of the Catalans that reside abroad. Very strange. Hard to believe.