

Beat: Politics

## Sanchez resists the attacks of his rivals five days before the legislatives

### Debate five on television

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**USPA NEWS** - Five days before the legislative elections in Spain all the surveys coincide in predicting a very even result between the two main parties that attend the polls, the Socialist Party and the conservative Popular Party, which would perpetuate the political blockade suffered by the country. A televised debate on Monday between the top five candidates for the Presidency of the Government did not clear the doubts of 35 percent undecided, which can be decided by the winner of the elections.

For many analysts, the winner of the debate was the candidate of the extreme right (Vox), Santiago Abascal, because he was able to expose his ideology without appearing as the fascist drawn by the media. Others, however, are torn between the current acting Prime Minister, the socialist Pedro Sanchez, and the leader of the Popular Party, Pablo Casado. Everyone agrees to point to the centrist Albert Rivera as the great loser of the debate because he allowed himself to eat the space he claims to represent and was not able to clearly expose his message.

Sanchez saw on the right "flattened" and the extreme right "emboldened." He ignored the far-left candidate Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) and, although he was uncomfortable in a debate where he faced the other four candidates, who attacked him mercilessly, he emerged gracefully from the televised compromise. He did not want to reveal if, after the elections, he will agree with the Catalan independentists to support him in the investiture, and was criticized for it. Nor did he deepen his economic proposals. The announcement of the October unemployment was delayed until Tuesday to avoid damaging the image of the acting Prime Minister: unemployment rose last month by almost 98,000 people and places the number of unemployed at 4.8 million people. Andalusia and Catalonia were the regions where unemployment grew the most.

The situation in Catalonia was absent during the debate on Monday. Although the other candidates insisted on claiming the acting Prime Minister the administrative intervention of the regional government of Catalonia and greater harshness in dealing with the independence leaders, Pedro Sánchez did not want to enter into this matter. But he announced novel proposals regarding the territorial map proposed by the Socialist Party: he no longer defends the federal state, as he did last April, and offered the recovery of the crime of organizing illegal referendums that the Socialist Party suppressed from the Criminal Code. The conservative candidate, Pablo Casado, defined it this way: "For you, Catalonia is a nation and Spain is a nation of nations. A person who does not believe in the Spanish nation does not deserve to appear to preside over the Spanish nation."<sup>[1]</sup>

Pedro Sanchez also did not accept that there is violence in Catalonia. The acting Prime Minister described the situation in the streets of Catalonia as "a problem of living together." Shortly before, the leader of the Citizen centrist, Albert Rivera, had shown him a cobblestone torn from a street in Barcelona that was thrown at the Police during clashes that have been recorded in recent weeks. "It's not a souvenir of the Berlin wall," Albert Rivera explained. "It's a cobblestone from Barcelona, my city. This cobblestone represents public disorder, represents the threat to the rule of law. Do you think it is normal for cobblestones to fly on Paseo de Gracia, in Eixample, in Urquinaona? If there is a public order problem, we must solve it,"<sup>[2]</sup> he demanded.

While everyone attacked the acting Prime Minister, ultra-right-wing leader Santiago Abascal was left alone in his defense of anti-immigration policies. "A nation without borders ceases to be a nation," said and the centrist candidate, Albert Rivera, replied: "I wish it were as easy as building walls so high," he said. "Security is not given by walls or racism. The word sovereignty is not to have a very large flag,"<sup>[3]</sup> added the candidate of the extreme left, Pablo Iglesias.

After the debate, the surveys predict that the distance between the Socialist Party and the conservative Popular Party is only 10 points, with 35 percent undecided who can decide the winner of the elections. The shortest campaign in history - a single week - will end at midnight on Friday. On Sunday, the Spanish are called to the polls to renew the two Houses of Parliament and unlock the political situation.

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