Committee: Special Political and Decolonisation Committee

Issue: The issue of independence of autonomous regions in Europe

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Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

The issue of independence of autonomous regions in Europe is a situation on the rise which should not be taken slightly. Numerous regions in the continent are on the verge of independency creating economic and political instability to their sovereign states. In fact in some regions independence movements have gone violent and have led even to the creation of military groups to fight the state they are trying to separate from, this in many situations has led to deaths and injuries of innocent people.

The issue itself is a very difficult situation to handle as both the country and the autonomous region that wants to separate never tend to find common ground in order to solve the situation. Most of the times the state turns down the request of the region to become independent creating a negative atmosphere to the negotiations to come. It is also a matter of ethnic and religious differences in the population, although most of the time the majority of the population wants the same thing there are some minorities who think otherwise and because of the differences aforementioned it provokes violent tensions between the two sides leading frequently to civil wars. The degree of power of this issue is on such a big scale that various researchers have considered it will be one of the causes that will lead to a WW3 in Europe due to the instability that it will provide to the continent. The conclusion is that it is matter of great importance with human lives at risk and dominant states in jeopardy.

Taking into account the complexity and the importance of the issue in hand it is of the outmost importance to understand all aspects of the matter. If any inquires arise please feel free to contact me for further information and explanations at my e-mail address (alexandrosmad1@gmail.com).

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

Chairpersons: What is the duty of a chairperson?

- To have authority and to be able to provide guidance
- To ensure that the administrators of the committee run it properly by:
    a) Running effective chairing meetings
    b) Reviewing the committee and renewing it
- To establish an effective management of the committee
- To equip the committee with his/her support and supervision
- To be the "Front man" of the committee in public events

Current Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah. Sr.(Liberia

Vice Chairpersons:

- Mr. Faisal Nasser M. Alhakbani (Saudi Arabia)
- Mr. Dániel Goldea (Hungary)
- Mr. Michael O'Toole (Ireland)

Bodies reporting to the Special and decolonization Committee:

- Committee on Information
- Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34)
- Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)
- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for State of Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)

Important note from the chairs' team

In order for the chairs to fully understand the dynamics of the committee, discovering any misunderstanding prior to the debate and for the better preparation of the delegates you are asked to proceed as indicated below;

1) Conduct your chairs via email and informing them about your mun experience so that they can know what exactly to expect of you.
2) Prepare and send your chairs by 11:59 of the 6th of November one position papers for each of the topics you are going to discuss during the conference. You can conduct the expert chair, of each topic for further information concerning your country's policy if needed, and for general guidance when it comes to your position papers (word limit structure etc). You are going to receive general comments during the lobbying for your position papers as well as personal feedback and grades for your papers. The points you will receive will add up to your general score which is one of the factors that determine the best delegate award. If you for any reason fail to send your papers before the final deadline you will not be eligible for any award.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Autonomous regions

An autonomous region has full control over its decisions and has the freedom to act without foreign surveillance. They are sections of land or sea of a nation which have free will in most issues that involve them. For a region to gain autonomy, the region must be located a reasonable distance from the nation that it's a part of or contain minority ethnic groups. Autonomous regions also deviate from federal units and independents states as they in a sense have a bigger degree of power when it comes to legislative powers.

Statute of Autonomy

A statute of Autonomy is a law which in its degree power belongs just under the constitution of a country and above all other laws including organic laws[1] , the legislative assembly acknowledges a sub national area of the nation and then the articles[2] construct a constitution, which allows the area to institute the organisation of its autonomous government.

Autonomous Communities

Autonomous communities are citizens who obtain their nationality based on the area that they live or have been born. The volume of this phenomenon is really visible in Spain where most areas are diverted and even have their own flags and coat of arms[3].

Autonomous cities

Autonomous cities are sub cities or even capitals of nations which declare autonomy but are still part of the state. They function under the same constitution but however depend themselves on their own resources that they either gain from the city itself or the province.

Independence Referendum

An independence referendum [4] is a referendum in which the citizens of a province, region or territory vote to determine whether they want the region to become an independent country nonetheless a independence referendum rarely leads to independence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The first region in Europe to declare autonomy in modern era were the Åland islands in 1922 which they achieve through the Åland convention in 1922,the Åland islands were also demilitarized in 1856 by an agreement between the united kingdom, France and Russia following the loss of the Russian empire in the Crimean war with the treaty of Paris . Since

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[1]https://www.merriam-webster.com/legal/organic%20law
[2] Laws that have been wrote in the forms of articles
[3] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/coat-of-arms
[4] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/referendum

then numerous regions have declared autonomy or gained it through treaties or agreements and now seek for independence. Most autonomous regions have not gained independence yet and still struggle both political and in military conflicts leading to some regions becoming worn torn and inadequate to sustain the safety of their civilians and the implementation of human rights in the area.
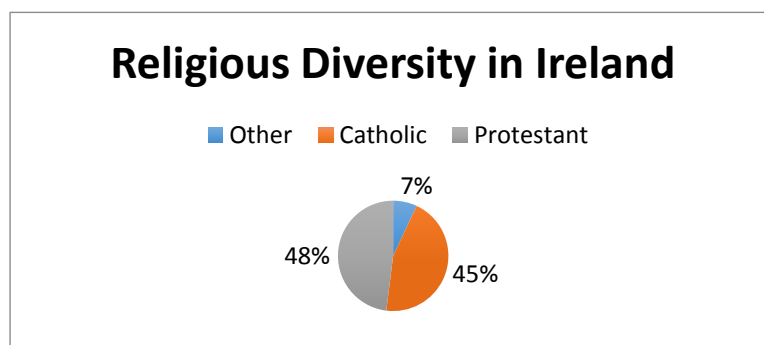
Post and present war torn autonomous regions

Ethnic map of Kosovo (1991)
● - Albanian majority
○ - Serb majority
◎ - Muslim (Gorani) majority

In 1989 Slobodan Milosevic president of the Yugoslavian republic established a constitution that disavowed Kosovo of its prominence as an autonomous area of Serbia. In response to that Ibrahim Rugova leader of the Albanian majority in the Serbian region commenced a chain of non violent protests in contrast to the constitution that had just been voted. The overall majority of ethnic Albanians in the region brew tensions between the ethnic Serbians leading to conflicts and clashes. In 1996 the Liberation army of Kosovo (KLA) was emerged and started launching attacks on Serbian police and politicians leading to the Kosovo war (1998-1999).Kosovo although recognized by some states still struggles to become a independent sovereign state.

A similar situation to the aformentioned is the issue of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland has been fighting for independence in modern era for about a century.In 1919 the Irish Republican Army(IRA) was formed by military nationalists with the purpose of removing english military forces from Irish land to achieve the goal of an Independent Ireland which was also accompanied by the Irish nationalist party(Sinn Fein) on a political level leading to the Irish war of independence in (1919-1921).Later in 1922-1923 the Irish civil war had just

started due to the diversity of the populations religion,the protestants wanted to be a part of the United Kingdom as they felt as a minority which they were and the catholics wanted Ireland to become an independent soveireign state.In 1969 there was need of miltary presenece due to the continuous attacks of the IRA which forced the british to deploy the
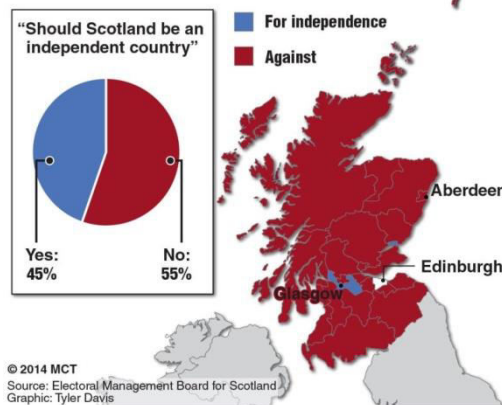
british army in Northern Ireland.This action by the British enfuriated the Irish leading to multiple attacks launched by the IRA and also the big bombing of Belfast knows as bloody Friday in which they where 9 deaths and more than 130 civilians injured.The clashes between the IRA,protestors and irish civilians with the British army continued until 1998 were Ireland achieved the good Friday agreement which led the Irish to form a new government based however still on British constitution,Ireland this way gained more autonomy but however still remain non independent.These are the only two autonomous regions who tried to ensure independence through severe force of the mililtary.
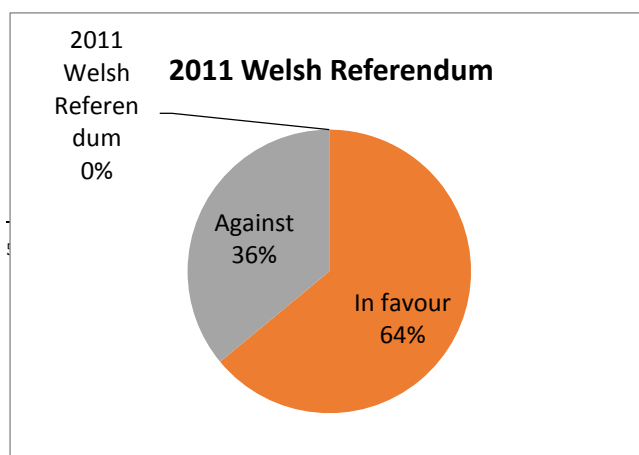
Autonomous regions on the verge on independence

With recent events developing in Europe especially BREXIT, Scotland and Wales are on the verge of leaving the United Kingdom and declaring independency, threatening the stability of the region. In 1999 Wales and Scotland gained became a constituent[5] country through the act of devolution which forced the British government to make several constitutional alterations. Later on in 2011 Wales held a non binding referendum to increase the degree of power of the Welsh parliament's legislation power, bestowing law making powers over the 20 controlling areas of the welsh government. In 2014 Scotland held an independence referendum to leave the United kingdom and become an independent state. The Welsh referendum was a success but the Scottish failed due to various cultural differences. Both constituent countries are on the verge of leaving if a BREXIT deal doesn't take place in the following months.

Votes on Scottish Referendum

The country in crisis of losing several regions is Spain. Spain consists of 17

autonomous communities and 4 autonomous

Regions (Andalucía, Catalonia, Basque country, Galicia) .All of them are on the verge of declaring independency, particularly Catalonia and Basque country. For Catalonia it all started in the 2008 crisis in which the region received a big economical blow as the province felt that it was paying more taxes to Madrid to comparison to their economical gains. This started a independence movement among the people of Catalonia, in 2010 the constitutional court of Spain limited the claims of Catalonian nationhood infuriating the separatist population and expanding the member participation of the independence movement. In 2014 Catalonia held a non binding independence referendum which was a success with 80% in favour and 20% against, due to it being none binding the Catalan parliament held new elections in order to strengthen the existing mandate on Catalan independency. In 2017 another Independence referendum was called upon but it had no effect as the Spanish government supported that Catalonia had no constitutional right to separate.Basque country has also made its fair share of an effort to declare
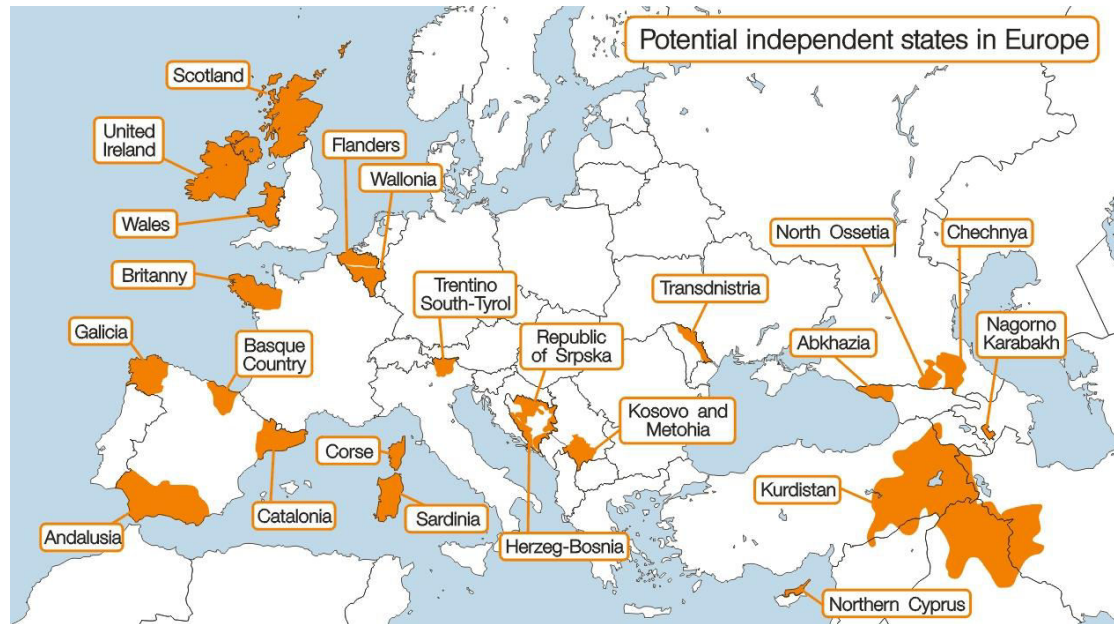
independency. In 1958 tensions between the locals in the region with the Spanish government were raised high, this led to the creation of the separatist group later recognized as a terrorist groups Euskadi Ta Askatasuna or ETA.The goal of this military group was to aid in the achievement of Basque independence, the first assassinations happened by the group where on 1968.In 1978 when dictatorship fell and democracy was re emerged in Spain Basque country was granted its autonomy back , nonetheless this did not put to ease the nationalist group ETA which continued to take out violent measures to attain independency. In 1987 ETA bombed the Hipercor shopping centre killing 21 civilians and injuring 45 more making it the deadliest attack of ETA history. In 2010 ETA officially declared ceasefire with the Spanish government having killed until then 800 politicians, civilians and police officers. In 2010 Basque politicians also made a push towards independency by introducing to the Spanish government a new statute

which would give more autonomy to Basque. However it was turned down by the Spanish Government in fear that it would enable Catalan Claims on independency. Moreover the issue of independency in Spain is in a very unstable situation.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Andalucía

Andalucía is one of the seventeen autonomous Communities in Spain it is located in the southern part of Spain and has an estimated population of 8 million civilians with its capital being Seville. Andalucía had no interest in becoming an independent region until the 2009 recession which affected highly the GDP causing it to drop and increasing unemployment in the area. The region has the worst rates of GDP per capita and unemployment in Europe, giving as such sentiment to the majority of the population to vouch for independency. However no political action has been taken yet.

Basque country

Basque country is located between the border of northern Spain and southwest France with an estimated population of. It is a region with its own language, lifestyle and has poor relation with Spain despite being a province of the country. For Four decades the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) has been fighting for the independence of Basque country, since 2018 when it was disbanded. The majority of Basque population still remains strongly in favor of

independence from Spain and Basque politicians are acting accordingly with protests also on the rise in the Basque Region.

Catalonia

Catalonia is a region in north east Spain with a population of 7.5 million people and is considered the wealthiest province in Spain with its Capital being Barcelona, Catalonia is dominant over most of its public services including the police. It declared its autonomy in the Catalan parliament in 27 of October 2017 but despite the actions of the ruling separatists it failed to become autonomous as the Catalan leaders where sacked by the Spanish government during the 2017 national elections.

Kosovo

Kosovo is a region within Serbia which independently declared autonomy in February 2008 and has from than been recognized by various major states in the EU and also by the United States of America. It has a population of 1.8 million people and its Capital is pristina. However because of the diversity of their population in ethnicities and beliefs, and Serbia strongly opposing the autonomy of Kosovo with the help of the Russian Federation they have not achieved independence yet.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a state of the United Kingdom with a population of 1.8 million citizens and its capital is Belfast. North Ireland in Modern era has been pursuing independence since 1922 where they achieved autonomy by officially being recognized as a free state with the Irish free constitution act[6].With the BREXIT in 2017 Northern Ireland has shown strong interest in leaving the UK after the UK leaves the EU, becoming as such an independent state out of the United Kingdom.

Scotland

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[6] The Irish Free State constitution act was an act authorized by the Parliament of the United Kingdom which officially recognized Northern Ireland as a free state.

Scotland is a free state that belongs in the United Kingdom with an estimated population of 5.4 million citizens with the capital of the state being Edinburgh. Scotland was recognized a constituent country in 1999 through devolution. Nonetheless with the BREXIT act taking place Scotland tends toward calling up a new independence referendum. They still remain a free state of the United Kingdom.

Sardinia

Sardinia is one of the five autonomous regions in Italy; it is a Italian island in the Mediterranean with an estimated population of 1.6 million civilians and its capital being Cagliari. Recent polls taken out by the University of Cagliari have shown that 40% of the population of Sardinia is in favor of independence and the rest aspire more autonomy from Rome. On the other side of the coin no political actions have been made towards that aspiration.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1856	Demilitarization of the Aland islands
1919	The Irish Republican Army takes form and the Irish Independence war commences.
1921	End of the Irish war of Independence
1922	Irish civil war begins and the Aland islands gain autonomy through the Aland convention
1923	Irish civil war ends
1958	The Euskadi at Askatasuna(ETA) emerge
1968	The ETA assassinate first Targets
1969	British army deploys in Northern Ireland
1978	Democracy is Spain is reestablished
1987	Hipercor bombing by ETA

1989	Yugoslavian Republic establishes constitution that detains Kosovo's autonomy
1996	Assembly of the Liberation Army of Kosovo
1998	The Kosovo war begins
1999	The Kosovo war ends and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland gain autonomy through the act of devolution
2008	Kosovo officially declares autonomy and the 2008 economic recession takes place
2010	Spanish Parliament limits claims to Catalan Nationhood, ETA declare ceasefire with Spanish government and the Spanish parliament turns down statute proposed by Basque country
2011	Welsh non binding Referendum takes place and succeeds disclosing welsh belief on the matter of independence
2014	Scottish Independence referendum fails and Catalan non binding referendum succeeds
2017	Catalonia held's an official independence referendum which gets intervened by the Spanish Government on the grounds that it was out of constitutional law
2018	ETA disbands after apologizing publicly to the state of Spain

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Resolution S/RES, 10 June 1999, 1244: Resolution 1244 was adopted by the Security Council in order to achieve the withdrawal of the Yugoslavian forces from Kosovo and to establish the United Nations mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to confront the humanitarian crisis that prevailed.

- Resolution S/RES, 11 March 2004, 1530: Resolution 1530 was adopted by the Security Council shortly after the Madrid bombing in 2004 by Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), the main objective of the resolution was to condemn the Madrid attacks and assemble a counter terrorist task force which later on was not brought into play.

- The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement (The Good Friday Agreement**)** was an instituted based on the peacemaking mandate with the goal establishing a new Irish government in which both unionist and separatists shared power, ensuring that way peace and temporarily solving the issue.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The issue of independence of Autonomous regions is vital to NATO especially during the cold war and after states that had declared independency across central and eastern Europe where their first priority as they wanted to preserve the regions democracy and not let them fall in communism to Soviet Russia. That is why NATO funded several regions and recognized them as independent in order to ease their way towards independency. In 1999 NATO created a peacekeeping force in order to restore stability in the region, since the deployment they have restored stability in Kosovo and they have cooperated with the United Nations in order to rehabilitate the area. They have also tried to help the negotiations between Kosovo-Serbia by strongly supporting the Belgrade-Pristina EU-brokered Normalization Agreement in 2013.

The United Nations during the Catalan elections in 2014 criticized the Spanish governments for their actions during the situation causing Spain to lose some Political influence over their own population and Neighbor countries. Aiding that way several separatist movements in Spain and increasing protests in the country. Expect the United States and NATO the EU has done little concerning the Issue of independence of autonomous regions.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The issue at hand has been threatening human rights and provoking the stability of these regions. An easy way to oppose to this situation is to organize meetings between the sovereign states and the autonomous regions with exterior oversight which will be included by Historians, economologists and political experts. That way experts can make a thorough research on the historical part of the region which will contribute in the progress of the meetings without jeopardizing the economical and political stability of the nation and

region. At the end of the research the information will be analyzed and a fair solution will be achieved.

If an autonomous regions is in crisis and human rights are violated a state should be compelled to let the region declare independency. Independency doesn't mean sovereignty or recognition, even if a region declared independency there is no ensure way that it will be globally recognized. This way the region can come at ease but won't still have full independency leaving some claims to its past sovereign state.

Nations have the tendency to turn down claims of autonomy or independence ending to the use most time of military power. To ensure this does not happen provisional rights on ethnic minorities should be passed in every European country based on European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. With this approach minorities will not have the urge to protect themselves from the surrounding community as the will feel accepted and protected by law, preventing conflicts between them and the majority population and tranquilizing separatist movements .

In general delegates should focus on the safety of human lives and human rights in these regions and focus all there solutions on the question of how can both sides be pleased? How can minorities be protected? How can autonomous regions who declare independency orchestrate a democratic functioning government?

For any Information or questions upon the matter don't hesitate to contact me:

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