

Beat: Politics

The Spanish Justice investigates the alleged Russian interference in Catalonia

Through elite spies

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USPA NEWS - The Spanish Justice investigates the alleged interference of Russian spies in the independence process of Catalonia, with the aim of destabilizing Spain. The investigation opened by the National Court and entrusted to the anti-terrorist section of the National Police has been declared secret. Former Russian deputy Sergei Markov confirmed on Friday to Spanish public television (TVE) that, in 2017, during the days before the illegal referendum on Catalan independence - on October 1 -, Russian intelligence agents traveled to Spain.

An alert launched by British intelligence put the Spanish Police on the trail of Russian spies displaced to Spain during the months of September and October 2017. The reason was the detection of Russian intelligence agent Sergei Fedotov, suspected of the attempted murder of also spy Sergei Skripal in Salisbury (United Kingdom) on March 4, 2018, of the attempted poisoning of an arms dealer in Bulgaria and of his alleged interference in the attempted coup in the Central European Republic of Montenegro in 2016. Fedotov, whose real name is Denis Sergeiev, would have been in Spain twice, in November 2016 and between September and October 2017, but also in Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In British territory it was six days of April 2016 and four days in July of that same year, coinciding with the Brexit referendum.

In Spain, Fedotov would have been accompanied by two other Russian spies. All of them would be part of a special unit of Russian espionage called 29155. Fedotov is a senior officer of the Russian military intelligence services. In November 2016, he flew from Moscow to Barcelona and from the Catalan capital to Switzerland. That same route would do it in 2017 but, on this occasion, he traveled by train to Switzerland.

Coinciding with their visits to Spain, Russian disinformation media published news with titles such as: "An independent Catalonia will recognize that Crimea is Russian," "Spain strongly suppresses the Catalan spring" and "Spain boils: the EU refuses to act in Catalonia although Spain violates the most basic human rights." This Friday, former Russian deputy Sergei Markov confirmed to TVE the displacement to Spain of Russian spies. According to Markov, Russia has spies in all European countries and, when in a country the political situation falters, the number of spies increases. However, he denied that Russia interfered in the Catalan crisis. On the contrary, he admitted that Russian diplomats met with representatives of former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont - fled from Spanish Justice in Belgium - and said that it was those representatives of the independence leader who asked how the Catalan recognition that Crimea is Russian can be received in Russia.

Russian Government sources denied Friday his interference in the Catalan crisis. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also denied it and underlined the collaboration between both countries to fight against the disinformation of some media that have wanted to influence the United States elections and Brexit.

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