

Catalonia's new separatist government sworn in

New team: Catalan President Quim Torra, centre, with the members of the new government in Barcelona .AP

Catalonia's new separatist government was sworn in on Saturday in an emotional ceremony full of pro-independence symbolism, a move that will spark the end of Madrid's direct rule over the region imposed after a failed secession bid.

The 13 councillors picked by new Catalan President Quim Torra, a close ally of ousted leader Carles Puigdemont, took oath in the regional presidency in Barcelona — some of them wearing yellow, the colour that has come to symbolise the separatist cause.

Mr. Torra later called for talks with Spain's new Prime Minister.

"Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, let's talk, let's address this issue, let's take risks, you and us," he said.

"We need to sit down at the same table and negotiate, government to government," he said.

Mr. Sanchez, a 46-year-old economist who as Opposition leader was sharply critical of Catalonia's independence bid, has promised to try to "build bridges" with the wealthy region's new separatist government.

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