

Ongoing protests rock Spain ahead of vote

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EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS - A wave of ongoing protests has shaken Spain's political establishment ahead of upcoming regional and municipal polls, with the country's electoral commission opting to ban further street action this weekend.

Concerns are also mounting that forecast losses for the ruling Socialist party could expose the true nature of the Spain's regional debt, after a government change in Catalonia five months ago revealed the region's budget deficit to be twice as big as previously estimated.

The number of protesters camped out in Madrid's Puerta del Sol central square continued to swell on Thursday (19 May), with participants condemning the domination of Spain's two main political parties.

Anger at Spain's high level of youth unemployment - roughly 45 percent for 16 to 29 year-olds - and opposition to the recent wave of government austerity measures were also dominant themes among participants calling for change.

Initiated on Sunday by a group calling themselves 'Real Democracy Now', the protests have morphed into a larger 'May 15 movement', with street action also planned for Brussels this Friday evening.

Spain's electoral commission reacted by narrowly voting to ban further protests planned for this Saturday, a day before Spaniards go to the polls in thirteen regions accounting for 60 percent of the economy.

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