



Controversy in Spain over the halt of military shows on May 2nd in Madrid

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No to the Patrulla Águila and the Paratroopers of the legendary PAPEA: controversy rages in Spain after the decision of the socialist government of Pedro Sánchez to completely exclude the armed forces from the May 2nd celebrations, a deeply felt festival of the Community of Madrid. The debate is particularly focused on the absence not only of the traditional land military parade but also of the acclaimed aerial shows by the Patrulla Águila and the PAPEA paratroopers, who in past years have performed impressive displays over the Puerta del Sol.

The move has sparked a wave of criticism from the president of the Community of Madrid, **Isabel Díaz Ayuso**, who did not hesitate to call the choice a "symbolic censorship." The Madrid regional government has expressed deep dissatisfaction with a decision that, in their view, deprives citizens of an identity and highly symbolic element on the day that commemorates the uprising of the people of Madrid against the Napoleonic invasion of 1808.

According to the regional government's spokesperson, **Miguel Ángel García Martín**, the order to exclude any form of military presence did not come directly from the Minister of Defense **Margarita Robles**, but rather from "higher levels," implying that it is a directive imposed by the President of the Government himself. The institutional rift between the Moncloa and the Real Casa de Correos, the seat of the Madrid government, now seems irreparable.

Already last year, the presence of the **Patrulla Águila** at the Dos de Mayo had raised eyebrows among various members of the central government. The exhibition, although spectacular and appreciated by the public, was poorly received by the Moncloa, especially because it was linked to a regional administration led by a politically opposed figure like Isabel Díaz Ayuso. The same type of tension has now amplified, leading to a total exclusion of the armed forces from the celebrations.

The **PAPEA** – acronym for the

Patrulla Acrobática de Paracaidismo del Ejército del Aire y del Espacio

– has been one of the most impressive attractions of May 2nd for years. Its members p

In response to this decision, the regional government reacted firmly: **no member of the central Executive will receive official invitations** to participate in the *Dos de Mayo* celebrations. Furthermore, any attempts to "show up" by ministers or government representatives will be blocked by institutional protocol, which will inform them that they are not welcome. The veto has also been extended to the Government delegate in Madrid, **Francisco Martín**, with whom the Region has cut off all official relations.

Meanwhile, Ayuso and her staff are working on a **series of alternative activities** that can offer a program “*worthy of the Madrileños and their most cherished festival*”, in an attempt to not overly emphasize the absence of the military component and still ensure a solemn and engaging event.

Meanwhile, far from the political controversies, the **Patrulla Águila** is preparing to celebrate its **40th anniversary** with a major **International Air Festival** called “*Aire 25*”, which will be held in **San Javier (Murcia)** on June 14th and 15th. The event will feature some of the most famous aerobatic teams in the world, such as the Italian **Frecce Tricolori**, the UK's **Red Arrows**, the **Patrouille de France**, and the **Patrouille Suisse**.

The festival will also include other assets of the Air Force, including **Eurofighter**, **F-18**, **A400M**, **NH90** helicopters, and units from the Guardia Civil and the Armada. It will also be an opportunity to bid farewell to the legendary **C-101 "Culopollo"**, a training aircraft in service for almost 40 years, which will soon be replaced by a new generation of aircraft.

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