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EFA MEPS celebrate the work of the PEGA Committee and urges EU institutions to regulate the use of Spyware

Today, EFA Group President, Jordi Solé, and MEP Diana Riba Vice-President of the PEGA Committee intervened in plenary to celebrate the work that the Committee of Inquiry to investigate the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware has done.

“As a member of the Committee of Inquiry, but also as a citizen who has been a victim of Pegasus, I am reasonably satisfied with the recommendations that we will vote on tomorrow and I would like to highlight the enormous amount of work carried out by the rapporteur and by the majority of the members of the Committee of Inquiry.” She said.

MEP Riba pointed out that everything achieved by the Committee was done regardless of all the obstacles that the Spanish State has put in place to avoid this investigation.

“They have not made it easy for us, political games, the protection of national interests and double standards have been a constant feature of these months of investigation. We have seen this with the shameful spectacle of the mission to Spain.” She said.

“The country where the biggest espionage case in Europe has taken place, was almost left out of the scrutiny of this committee thanks to the manoeuvres of the common front formed by PSOE-PP-VOX-Ciudadanos.” She added.

The EFA MEP Mrs Riba explained that Catalan Gate, the 2022 political scandal where Pegasus spyware was used to spy on Catalan elected officials, activists and members of the civil society, was central to the elaboration of this report.

“They have tried everything, but thanks to our perseverance and firmness, Catalan Gate is central to this report. The mission that some feared so much, was carried out and Spain has been singled out along with Poland, Hungary, Greece and Cyprus as champions of abuse and violation of rights.” She explained.

In his intervention, EFA Group President Jordi Solé asked the Spanish government to stop the espionage, he also took the opportunity to address how much these human rights violations affect our democracies. “Every time governments or agencies of European states have tapped the mobile phones of politicians, activists, journalists or lawyers, they have been eroding democracy and the rule of law. Every attack on our mobile phones is an attack on the fundamental rights of all.” He said.

MEP Jordi Solé stressed the importance of shedding light on the issue and for the Spanish state to answer for its illegal activities

“And now I address myself directly to the Spanish state: stop spying on us, and cooperate with the

investigations. We, the victims of your illegal spying, have the right to know when and why we were spied on, and to be held accountable.” He said

“This is not just my demand, today it is demanded by the entire European Parliament, which is asking Spain to cooperate with the courts, to hand over the judicial authorisations - if there are any - and to respond to ALL the victims of Catalan Gate”. He added

In his intervention, MEP Solé addressed the far-right and called for its representatives to stop polluting the public debate.

“A message also to the extreme right of VOX: stop intoxicating with your conspiratorial rhetoric. Your pre-democratic national populism; no longer deceives this house. Your group's constant blocking and sabotage will not prevent us from demanding truth, reparation and non-repetition from Spain and all the States involved.” He concluded

Both MEP Riba and Solé called for both the States and the Commission to keep working and he stressed how important it is for the EU to regulate the use of spyware to protect our democracies.

“Finally, as a member of the Committee and a victim of Pegasus, I would like to thank the rapporteur Sophie Int-Veld for having stood firm in denouncing the illegal use of spyware and in the face of multiple attempts to water down the text.” MEP Solé said.

“This committee has done a great job and here is a good list to get you started. Do not delay. Our democracy is at stake.” MEP Riba concluded

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