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EFA welcomes pardons for Catalan leaders, but recalls that the political conflict is not over

Press release from the EFA Group in the European Parliament

The European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament has welcomed the announcement by the Spanish government of pardons for Catalan leaders imprisoned for their role in organising a peaceful and democratic referendum on self-determination in 2017.

EFA Group President **Jordi Solé MEP** said that whilst the announcement is a positive first step to find a political solution through dialogue, it does not represent an end to the political conflict between Catalonia and Spain, and that Catalonia's right to self-determination must be respected.

He also emphasised that the pardons represent only a partial step, as potentially thousands of Catalans still face legal action for their role in the referendum. This includes action from the Court of Auditors which amounts to economic harassment that could financially ruin many people who simply supported the right to hold a referendum. There also needs to be action to resolve the situation of the Catalan exiles which must be addressed.

EFA MEPs have consistently supported the right to self-determination for Catalonia, and criticised the use of judicial repression in a political conflict.

President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament, **Jordi Solé MEP** said:

“Although limited in scope, this is a first step in what we hope will be a new phase leading to a political solution of the conflict between Catalonia and Spain.

“Whilst limited pardons will certainly improve the situation, we can't ignore that the general crusade against the pro-independence movement by elements of the Spanish state continues.

“Thousands more Catalans still face the prospect of prosecution and economic harassment simply for supporting a democratic vote. Their situation must also be addressed and that is why we call for a general amnesty.

“Nine peaceful democrats have been unjustly imprisoned for four years simply for their role in organising a peaceful and democratic referendum. This should never have happened in the European Union.”

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Jordi Solé

Member

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