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EFA reaction to waiving immunity of Catalan MEPs

Press release from EFA MEPs Jordi Solé and Diana Riba

"Ultimately, Catalonia's future will be determined by the people of Catalonia" - Solé

The EFA Group in the European Parliament has responded to the outcome of a vote in the European Parliament to lift the parliamentary immunity of three Catalan MEPs involved in Catalonia's self-determination movement.

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

"We are grateful to the nearly three hundred MEPs who rejected political pressure and did not vote to lift the immunity of Catalan MEPs, charged only because they dared to stand up for the right of Catalan citizens to self-determination in a democratic and peaceful way.

"Whilst regrettable, Parliament's vote to lift immunity is not a surprise and it is significant that so many MEPs voted against or abstained. This vote has of course for many been primarily driven by partisan political considerations rather than concern for fundamental rights.

"We must remember that whenever these issues have been tested by the independent judiciary in Belgium, Germany or Scotland, then Spain's extradition requests were always turned down. Either because a fair trial could not be guaranteed in Spain or the charges were clearly not credible.

"Political disagreements require political solutions, and the European Parliament has today missed an opportunity to contribute towards resolving the political conflict between Catalonia and Spain through dialogue. Nevertheless, there is obviously significant political support in this parliament and elsewhere for a political solution and we will continue working in that direction.

"Ultimately, Catalonia's future will be determined by the people of Catalonia."

EFA MEP **Diana Riba** (ERC) said:

“It is significant that in a highly charged political atmosphere, so many MEPs stood up to political pressure to defend the immunity of the Catalan MEPs, who are being persecuted because of their support for Catalan self-determination.

“This has been a very controversial procedure within the European Parliament, and many concerns have been raised about the process. Notably, this concerns whether the Spanish Supreme Court is the competent authority to request the waiver of immunity – a notion already rejected by the Belgian courts.

“Moreover, it is clear that the principle of confidentiality was not respected when this was considered by the JURI committee, with leaks being made to the press. It is clear that these requests from Spain to lift the immunity of Catalan MEPs were legally weak, and driven by political rather than legal reasons.

“Throughout Catalonia’s struggle for peaceful self-determination, Spain has rejected political dialogue, and chosen repression, often using the courts to intimidate political opponents and civil society. This is never acceptable. Not in Spain or anywhere else in the twenty first century. Political conflicts require political solutions through dialogue, not through judicial intimidation – this is the only way that these matters will be resolved.”

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Responsible MEPs



Diana Riba i Giner

Member



Jordi Solé

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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