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No double standards on EU's human rights commitment

Press release from EFA MEP Jordi Solé (Catalonia)

Catalan MEP **Jordi Solé** has called upon the EU to avoid double standards in its commitment to human rights and democracy around the world.

The EFA MEP spoke in the European Parliament's debate today about the EU's annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, in the presence of the European Commission.

Whilst supporting the EU's efforts to be a champion of human rights and democracy in the world, the MEP said that the EU left itself open to accusations of double standards.

This was particularly true following the EU's failure to criticise the Spanish state's use of police violence against peaceful voters seeking to exercise their democratic right to self-determination in Catalonia's 2017 referendum on independence.

Nor was the EU vocal in defence of Catalan politicians and civil society leaders jailed for implementing a democratic mandate, without being convicted of any crime.

Jordi Solé MEP said:

"We would all surely want to see the state of democracy and human rights improved throughout the world, and we would wish that the European Union could play an ever-stronger role in its promotion when dealing with third countries.

"However, there is a great need for consistency between the EU's internal and external actions. If we do not achieve coherence between what we do at home and what we'd like others to do abroad, our capacity to achieve real change in the world is seriously hindered.

"Let me give you an example. Some of us will never forget that in 2017 a member state of the EU, Spain, used police violence to try to stop a vote, a democratic exercise, in Catalonia. And that in the run up to that vote and afterwards that same Member State committed breaches of fundamental rights.

"And that we still have politicians and civil society leaders in prison because of that vote. And when that

happened, the EU basically looked the other way instead of trying to defend EU citizens' fundamental rights and core values.

"It is therefore imperative for the EU, and for the credibility of its external action, not to use double standards when it comes to democracy and human rights, whether inside or outside our borders."

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Jordi Solé i Ferrando

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