en

Press release | 28.09.2011

# EU must step up support for Basque peace process

## Press release by EFA MEPs Francois Alfonsi and Frieda Brepoels

MEPs from the European Free Alliance Group in the European Parliament have called on the EU to step up its support for the Basque peace process following recent developments. MEPs **François Alfonsi** (Corsica) and **Frieda Brepoels** (Flanders) have raised the issue in the European Parliament and both are members of the Parliament's Basque Friendship Group.

Last weekend hundreds of Basque political prisoners indicated a willingness to sign the Gernika accord of 2010 which paves the way for a peaceful, democratic and lasting solution to the Basque conflict. The MEPs welcomed this as a major step forward in building a lasting peace, but called on the EU to play a greater role in encouraging the peace process. François Alfonsi also warned of the unacceptable threats to democracy within the EU with Spanish authorities pursuing Basque activists through the courts.

Speaking in the European Parliament, **François Alfonsi** MEP (PNC, Corsica) said:

*"The ongoing situation in the Basque country leads me once again to raise at European level the behaviour of the Spanish state which is worrying for democracy.*

*"In May, only a last minute appeal to the Spanish Constitutional Court, granted by just one vote, was enough to allow the independentist movement Bildu to take part in provincial elections. In those elections, Bildu received some 25% of the vote. The attempt to ban this movement was an attack on Basque popular democracy, which in itself, at the heart of the European Union, is totally unacceptable.*

*"In July, I personally observed a hearing in the case of Mr Otegi, a left wing Basque independentist leader, and of many of his friends. In truth, those people were pursued through the courts for nothing more than the opinions they hold. They've just been sentenced to ten years in prison, a totally disproportionate maximum sentence which has shocked the democratic movements in the Basque Country, and indeed in Madrid.*

*"The European Parliament must make clear its disapproval of the Spanish state's policy with regard to the Basque Country, particularly now when the peace process shows such potential and which could as in Northern Ireland, lead to a lasting peace which is in the interests of the Basque people, of Spanish citizens and indeed of all citizens of Europe."*

**Frieda Brepoels** MEP (N-VA, Flanders) commented:

*"The European Union must now engage in supporting the Basque peace process. I have repeatedly raised the issue at senior level, but the EU has so far preferred to remain silent. This is no longer acceptable, particularly following last weekend's announcement and the genuine possibilities to build a sustainable and lasting peace.*

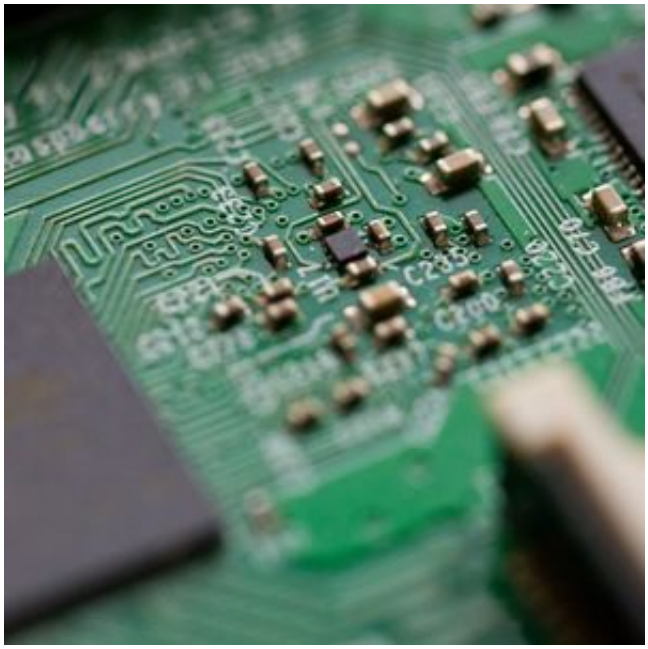
*"The Guernika accord offers the basis to move forward and build a lasting peace and now its acceptance by so many political prisoners has huge symbolic value. I am convinced that the Basque Country has now definitively chosen the path to peace. The break in support for armed struggle forced ETA to renounce violence and choose another path. The victory of nationalist parties in May's local elections was proof that this new way is working.*

*"It's now crucial that the European Union plays a fuller role in actively supporting the Basque Peace Process, as it did with Northern Ireland. Europe must now urge the Spanish state to put in place concrete measures to move forward with the peace process."*

**Recommended**

Press release

chris-ried



[Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design]

11.11.2026

Press release



[Ukrainian children in Russia: Parliament to call for u…]

11.11.2026

Press release

Redek Kozak



[Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…]

11.11.2026

Press release



[Greens/EFA in Vilnius: Lithuanian Presidency must lead…]

05.11.2026

**Contact person**



Steven Cornelius

EFA Press, Communications & Campaigns Officer

**Please share**

- E-Mail