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Press release | 01.10.2013

Herrira - EFA MEPs concern for Basque detentions

Press Release from EFA MEPs Inaki Irazabalbeitia and François Alfonsi

- "Spanish authorities must be held accountable"

Some MEPs from the EFA Group in the European Parliament have expressed grave concerns following the detention yesterday of members of Basque prisoners' rights group Herrira.

The group has been working to improve the conditions of Basque political prisoners held in Spanish jails. Their offices in Bilbao and other towns were raided by Spanish police and 18 members detained.

Several EFA MEPs are members of the European Parliament's Basque Friendship Group. This group works to promote EU support for a negotiated and democratic peace process in the Basque Country.

Commenting, Basque MEP **Inaki Irazabalbeitia** (Aralar) said:

"We condemn this provocative act by the Spanish authorities against a group that is playing an important role in the Basque peace process.

"This is not the behaviour of a government committed to achieving a long term peaceful solution. We will raise this matter at EU level. The Spanish state needs to be reminded of its obligations as an EU member to respect democracy and the rule of law."

François Alfonsi MEP (Corsica), a member of the EP's Basque Friendship Group said:

"Using military police to raid the offices of a peaceful prisoners' rights organisation is totally unacceptable conduct for an EU government. This is an act of intimidation and provocation that undermines efforts to build a peaceful, durable peace in the Basque Country.

"As MEPs, we have been campaigning for a considerable time to encourage wider EU support for building a lasting peace. We need to see the EU send a clear signal that this kind of behaviour by the Spanish authorities cannot be tolerated.

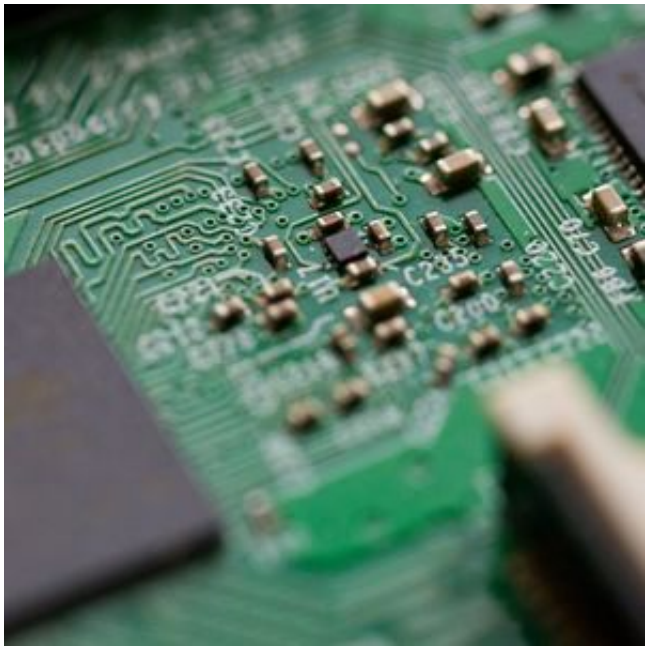
"The EU has a duty to defend and protect human rights and the rule of law within its own borders, and the

Spanish authorities must be held accountable."

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