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Press release | 04.05.2011

MEPs open letter on Basque political situation

MEPs are preparing an open letter citing strong concern at state interference in the democratic process in Spain. The letter relates to the prevention of certain legitimate democratic parties from participating in the forthcoming elections in the Basque Country.

Flemish MEP Frieda Brepoels has written to all MEPs asking for their support. At issue is the decision of the Spanish Supreme Court to prevent the Bildu coalition from taking part in the Basque elections in spite of the fact that this coalition is formed from two unequivocally democratic parties.

The letter is addressed to the President of the European Commission, President of the European Council and the Prime Minister of Spain.

Frieda Brepoels said:

"Last Sunday the Spanish Supreme Court decided to ban the Bildu coalition from standing in forthcoming local and provincial elections in the Basque Country. Bildu includes democratic parties committed to a peaceful resolution of the Basque conflict which have previously condemned all violence.

"This decision is wrong in principle, undemocratic and contrary to the core values of the European Union. It also represents a blow to the Basque Peace Process."

Ends

Note - A copy of the letter is reproduced below.

Open Letter to
José Manuel Barroso
Herman Van Rompuy
José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero

Dear

State interference in the democratic process

We the undersigned Members of the European Parliament write to express our extreme concern with recent developments which have seen legitimate political parties prevented from standing in the forthcoming elections in the Basque Country.

We consider this to be in breach of the core democratic principles of the European Union, and contend that it represents unacceptable state interference in the political process.

We refer specifically to the decision of the Spanish Supreme Court to prevent the Bildu coalition from participating in forthcoming elections in the Basque country. Bildu has expressed its commitment to pursuing its objectives through wholly peaceful democratic means, and indeed includes one party (Eusko Alkartasuna) which has previously been represented in the European Parliament.

We consider that this is a European matter, as well as a matter for the Spanish state and we would emphasise that Spain has commitments as an EU member state.

We believe that preventing legitimate political parties who are committed to pursuing their goals through peaceful, democratic means from participating in the political process runs contrary to the basic right that EU citizens should enjoy to be able to hold and participate in free and fair elections.

We call upon the Spanish Government, the European Council and the European Commission to work to ensure that free and fair elections may be held in all parts of the EU, and express our particular concern at the current situation regarding political parties in the Basque Country.

Yours faithfully,

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Contact person

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