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MEPs outrage at Spain's banning of Basque parties

EFA press release

MEPs from the European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament have expressed their outrage at the decision of the Spanish authorities to prevent certain peaceful, democratic parties from participating in forthcoming elections.

The MEPs condemned the decision as wrong in principle, undemocratic and contrary to the core values of the European Union. They question whether Spain is in breach of its democratic commitments as an EU member state if the decision is confirmed.

On Sunday the Spanish Supreme Court decided to ban the Bildu coalition from standing in forthcoming local and provincial elections in the Basque Country on the pretext of alleged links to extremists. Yet the coalition includes democratic parties committed to a peaceful resolution of the Basque conflict and who have previously condemned violence.

Corsican MEP **François Alfonsi**, a member of the European Parliament's Basque Friendship group said:

"This decision risks depriving Basque voters of a truly democratic choice at the forthcoming elections and could jeopardise a fragile peace process. We are talking about parties who are committed to democratic principles and to a peaceful resolution of the Basque conflict.

"It is shocking that this level of state interference in democratic politics can still happen in the European Union in 2011. This is not an internal issue, it is a European issue, and the European Commission must remind the Spanish state of its commitments as an EU Member State."

Frieda Brepoels MEP (Flanders), also a member of the EP Basque Friendship Group said:

"This declaration is symptomatic of the democratic deficit in the Spanish state where democratic, peaceful parties which condemn violence can still be declared illegal. The decision of the Spanish Supreme Court is very worrying. The Bildu coalition was formed following an agreement amongst legal parties who support non-violent progress towards a peaceful resolution of the Basque conflict.

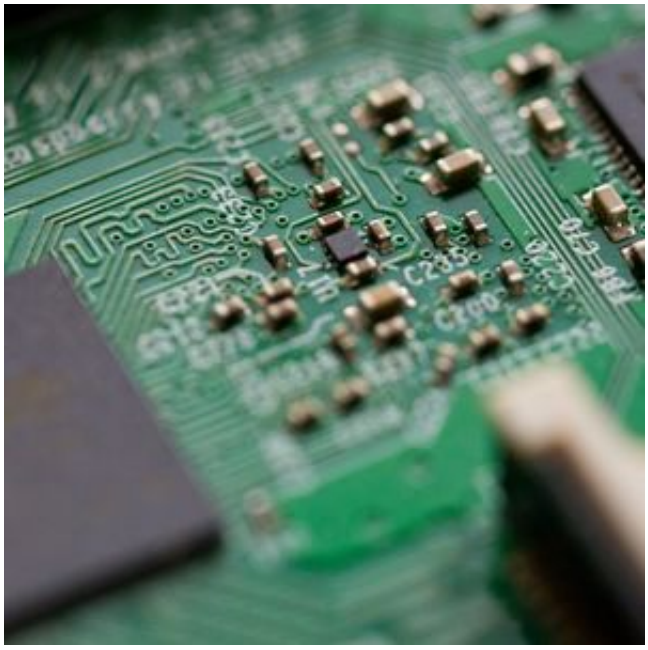
"Banning this coalition which seeks to achieve its goals through exclusively legitimate means, represents a direct attack on the right to hold free and fair elections, and the right to participate freely in the political process."

The European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament includes MEPs from Scotland, Wales, Catalonia, Flanders, Corsica and Latvia, who advance the cause of Europe's stateless nations, regions and disadvantaged minorities. Greens/EFA is an alliance of different parties from different Member States. Press statements on this website do not necessarily bind all parties. The Group respects the rights of minorities within it to take a separate line from the majority.

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