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Press release | 05.05.2011

MEPs send open letter on Basque political situation

EFA press release

At the initiative of Flemish MEP Frieda Brepoels, MEPs from different parties and political groups have today sent an open letter citing strong concern at state interference in the democratic process in Spain. The letter, signed by MEPs from five different parliamentary groups, relates to the prevention of certain legitimate democratic parties from participating in the forthcoming elections in the Basque Country. _____ 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.
The letter has been sent to the President of the European Commission, President of the European Council and the Prime Minister of Spain.
Frieda Brepoels said: _____

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"On my initiative, Members of the European Parliament have prepared 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.
"At issue is the decision of the Spanish Supreme Court to prevent the Bildu coalition from taking part in the upcoming local Basque elections of 22 May in spite of the fact that this coalition is formed from two unequivocally democratic parties.
"My colleagues and I 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."

The letter and signatures is copied below:
Open Letter to

José Manuel Barroso
Herman Van Rompuy
José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero
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,
François ALFONSI (Greens/EFA)
Margrete AUKEN (Greens/EFA)
Izaskun BILBAO BARANDICA (ALDE)
José BOVÉ (Greens/EFA)
Frieda BREPOELS (Greens/EFA)
Bairbre DE BRÚN (GUE/NGL)
Derk Jan EPPINK (ECR)
Jill EVANS (Greens/EFA)
Catherine GRÈZE (Greens/EFA)
Thomas HÄNDEL (GUE/NGL)
Ian HUDGHTON (Greens/EFA)
Jurgen KLÜTE (GUE/NGL)
Fiorello PROVERA (EFD)
Michèle RIVASI (Greens/EFA)
Raul ROMEVA i RUEDA (Greens/EFA)
Vilja SAVISAAR-TOOMAST (ALDE)
Alyn SMITH (Greens/EFA)
Bart STAES (Greens/EFA)
Eva-Britt SVENSSON (GUE/NGL)
Dirk STERCKX (ALDE)
Michalis TREMOPOULOS (Greens/EFA)
Ramon TREMOSA-I-BALCELLS (ALDE)
Oriol VIES JUNQUERAS (Greens/EFA)
Tatjana ZDANOKA (Greens/EFA)

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Contact person

Steven Cornelius

EFA Press, Communications & Campaigns Officer

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