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Press release | 24.01.2013

MEPs welcome Catalan Sovereignty Declaration

A number of MEPs from the European Parliament's EFA Group have welcomed yesterday's vote in the Catalan Parliament to approve a declaration of sovereignty.

The vote is significant in that it begins the process of negotiation by which a majority of Catalonia's elected representatives aim to achieve independence for their nation within the European Union.

Political parties that favour Catalan independence and EU membership won a majority of seats in recent elections to the Catalan Parliament. The declaration that Catalonia is a sovereign entity was passed by 85 votes in favour, 41 against and two abstentions.

The declaration makes clear that the path towards self-determination will be achieved through negotiation with the Spanish state, European Union and international community. Catalonia's leading parties had already indicated that they aim to hold an independence referendum before the end of 2014.

Describing yesterday's vote as a 'significant step forward on the path to self-determination', EFA MEPs **Jill Evans, François Alfonsi, Ana Miranda** and **Frieda Brepoels** said in a joint statement:

"Europe needs to be ready for the prospect of Catalan independence. The European Commission cannot pretend that this isn't happening nor can they ignore the democratic will of the Catalan people.

"The European Union is a great beacon of peace and democracy throughout the world. The principles that we espouse abroad must also apply within our borders.

"Europe must be ready for constructive dialogue based on the democratically expressed will of the Catalan people."

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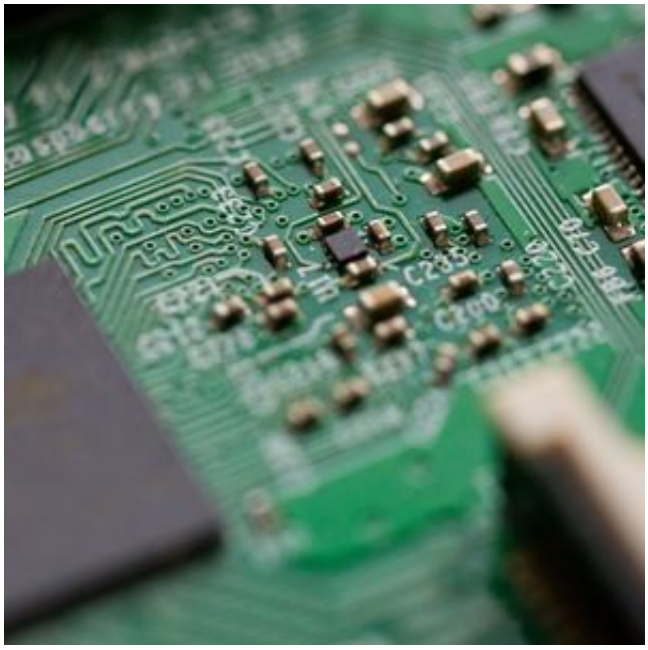


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