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New Basque MEP joins EFA Group

Press Release from the EFA Group

The EFA Group in the European Parliament has welcomed **Inaki Irazabalbeitia** from the Basque political movement Aralar as its newest MEP.

Mr Irazabalbeitia joins the EFA Group this week, replacing Ana Miranda of the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG).

Aralar is a left-wing nationalist Basque political movement which seeks sovereignty for the Basque Country through peaceful democratic means, and which identifies itself as socialist, feminist, environmentalist and internationalist.

Inaki Irazabalbeitia is a Doctor of Chemistry and head of external relations for Aralar. The European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament draws together MEPs who advance the cause of Europe's stateless nations, regions and disadvantaged minorities, and is part of the wider Green/EFA group.

EFA Group President **Jill Evans MEP** (Plaid Cymru) said:

"We're delighted to welcome a Basque member to the EFA group in the European Parliament. It is an exciting time for progressive, democratic nationalism in Europe and in all our nations and regions.

"We visited the Basque Country two weeks ago to learn more about how greater autonomy and strong identity together with economic innovation had stimulated growth and protected jobs. I know that Inaki will make an invaluable contribution to our work as an EFA group and will be an effective representative of the Basque people."

Inaki Irazabalbeitia (Aralar) said:

"The Basque peace process is currently in an impasse because of the attitude of Spanish government. Aralar believes that European authorities could help to change that attitude. So, one of my duties here at the European Parliament will be to lobby in that sense".

The defence of both the welfare state and the cultural, linguistic and political rights of minorities are also a priority for Irazabalbeitia.

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Jill Evans

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