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Press release | 01.03.2016

Otegi - Spanish government must change course in search of peace

European Free Alliance (EFA) press release

Responding to the release from prison of Basque political figure Arnaldo Otegi, and the implications for building a lasting peace in the Basque Country, politicians from the European Free Alliance have called on the Spanish government to revise its approach to Basque political prisoners.

They have also repeated calls for European Union involvement in the Basque peace process, following an important role for the EU in the north of Ireland.



L to R: Lorena Lopez de Lacalle, Mark Demesmaeker, Tatjana Zdanoka, François Alfonsi

Tatjana Ždanoka MEP (Greens/EFA) said:

"I visited the Basque Country recently to meet with prisoners' families and representatives of civil society. It is clear that current Spanish government policy on the issue of prisoners creates distrust and ill-feeling which does nothing to help build a lasting peace.

"We must hope that with the release of Mr Otegi, the Spanish government will reflect upon its spiteful policy. We would also like to see the EU play a greater role in helping build a lasting peace in the Basque Country."

Francois Alfonsi, EFA party President said:

"The release of Arnaldo Otegi corrects a grave legal and political injustice. At the same time, it opens another door of opportunity for the Spanish and French states to finally end vindictive imprisonments, terminate the inhumane dispersion policy and work towards a sustainable peace in the Basque Country."

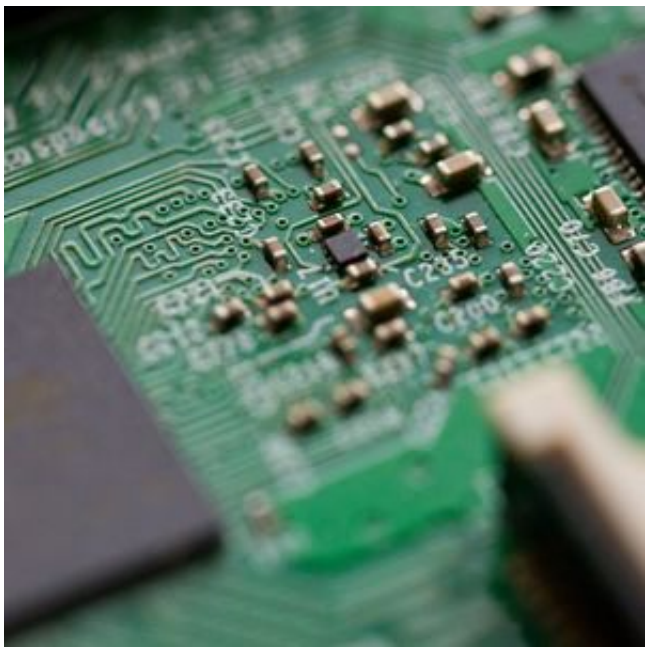
Lorena Lopez de Lacalle, EFA party Vice President from the Basque Country said:

"The desire for peace sent Otegi to prison. Now, six and a half years later, he comes out stronger; repression and oppression have not blurred or weakened his relentless will and vision to pursue peace, social justice and independence for all citizens of Euskal Herria (Basque Country)."

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