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Riba asks Commission and UN to investigate Spanish Supreme Court after threats to public officials

Press Release from EFA MEP Diana Riba (Catalonia)

EFA MEP **Diana Riba** (ERC) has written to European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders and to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, following the Spanish Supreme Court's warning that Prison Board officials could be liable for the offense of 'breach of official duty' if they grant conditional release to the Catalan political prisoners during the Coronavirus pandemic.

In her letter, **Diana Riba** explains:

"The health and well-being of people held in detention in the European Union is extremely worrisome in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Following the call made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, all Governments should work to release vulnerable people, low-risk offenders, people with permission to work or volunteer outside prisons and people without sufficient legal basis including political prisoners."

Diana Riba is concerned that although the Catalan political prisoners held in detention by Spain for their role in the peaceful and democratic independence referendum in 2017 fall into this category, the Spanish Supreme Court has taken it upon itself to proactively warn against conditional release.

Diana Riba MEP commented:

"I am concerned that the Spanish Supreme Court's proactive statement is designed to intimidate public officials.

"Furthermore, it seems discriminatory in that it only applies to nine prisoners in the prison system - all of them Catalan political prisoners, who clearly qualify for conditional release in the circumstances.

"I hope the European Commission and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will urgently look into this matter, and take appropriate action."

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Diana Riba i Giner

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