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Press release | 18.09.2017

Spain must comply with EU fundamental rights charter

Press release from EFA MEPs J-M Terricabras & Jordi Solé

Catalan Greens/EFA MEPs **Josep-Maria Terricabras** and **Jordi Solé** have written to the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs to protest the political and judicial persecution by Spanish authorities against politicians, media, civil servants and civil society who support Catalonia's 1 October independence referendum.

In their letter, they call upon the Committee Chair to *"to intervene and call on the Spanish authorities to abandon the repressive actions against civil and political rights and to ensure the compliance of Spain with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and with the European Convention on Human Rights".*

Over recent days, Spanish authorities have threatened public officials with arrest if they support the referendum, whilst armed police have entered newspaper and TV offices issuing threats. Furthermore, Spanish authorities are seeking to block public access to websites linked to the referendum, and peaceful public meetings have been banned.

In their letter they specifically address three areas where the Spanish government's behaviour should be of particular concern for the EU: political and judiciary persecution, the right to freedom of expression and information, the right to freedom of assembly and association.

The letter is also signed by ALDE MEP Ramón Tremosa.

The MEPs say:

"During the Catalan national day celebrations - 11th of September - and for the sixth successive year, one million citizens demonstrated in the streets of Barcelona to call for the independence referendum in a civic, peaceful and festive environment. This demonstration showed the spirit of this legitimate social and political claim - supported by 75% of the citizens of Catalonia and recognised by International Law – that is confronted by the denial of dialogue and by criminal action of the Spanish state.

"As the European Court of Human Rights put it, "the fact that a group of people calls for autonomy or even requests secession of part of the country's territory – thus demanding fundamental constitutional and

territorial changes – cannot automatically justify a prohibition of its assemblies ... In a democratic society based on the rule of law, political ideas which challenge the existing order and whose realisation is advocated by peaceful means must be afforded a proper opportunity of expression through the exercise of the right of assembly as well as by other lawful means." "

"These are the reasons why, as Chair of the Committee responsible for the democratic oversight of Justice and Home Affairs, we urge you to intervene and call on the Spanish authorities to abandon the repressive actions against civil and political rights and to ensure the compliance of Spain with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and with the European Convention on Human Rights."

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Responsible MEPs



Jordi Solé i Ferrando

Member



Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

Attached documents

Letter_Claude Moraes.pdf

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