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Press release | 26.11.2014

Spanish government criticised on migrant policy

Press release from EFA MEPs Josep-Maria Terricabras & Jordi Sebastià

"The Spanish government wants to legalise illegality" - Terricabras

MEPs have strongly criticised Spanish authorities for their 'unacceptable and wrong' behaviour towards migrants at Spain's overseas enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa.

Spain is accused of the 'summary expulsion of migrants and the excessive use of force' in an Oral question tabled to the European Parliament by MEPs including Greens/EFA Group Vice President and President of the EFA Group **Josep-Maria Terricabras**.

The European Parliament debated the issue in Strasbourg on Tuesday night. MEPs are also concerned that the Spanish government plans to change domestic law in order to allow the expulsion of clandestine migrants without providing the necessary legal safeguards required under international law.

EFA MEPs Josep-Maria Terricabras (Catalonia) and Jordi Sebastià (Valencia) intervened in the debate to criticise Spanish government policy and call for the European Commission to act.

Speaking in the debate, EFA Group President and Greens/EFA Vice President **Josep-Maria Terricabras** said:

"We need to remember that in Spain there have been many tragic cases of the use of force against migrants with very serious consequences for them. Those are not just my words, those are the indisputable facts.

"But now the Spanish government wants to reform the law on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain, so that foreigners – obviously the poor ones – can be expelled without the legal safeguards that ought to be necessary. And this is not something being done to protect the state or protect domestic order, these are illegal expulsions and they are certainly contrary to article 13 of the Spanish constitution and all fundamental rights.

"The Spanish government wants to legalise illegality – that shouldn't be possible in a member state of the European Union. My colleagues and I oppose this – I hope the Commission will do the same."

EFA MEP **Jordi Sebastià** said:

"These so-called 'hot returns' are now usual in Ceuta and Melilla and this is happening because of complicity between the Spanish and Moroccan police forces, acting outside the law.

"The Moroccan police have faced repeated criticism for their human rights abuses. Migrants are being returned to a regime that does not respect their rights.

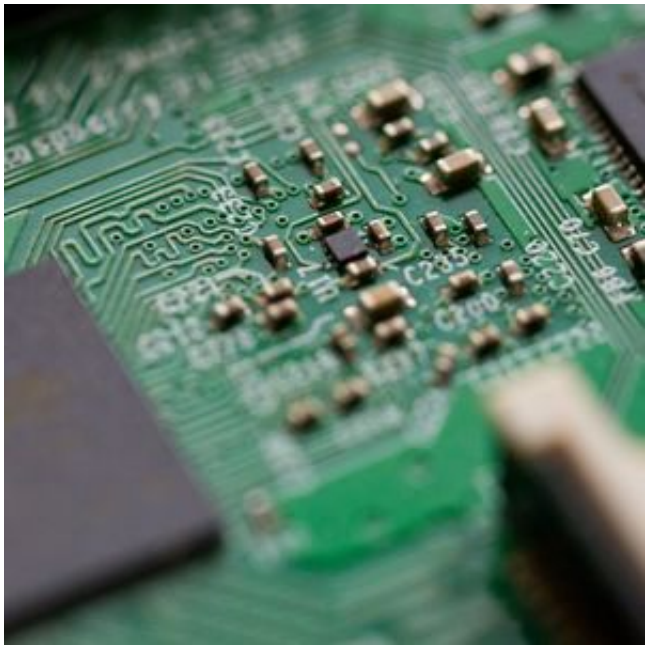
"We are talking about an African population who are desperate, who have no future and who are victims of war and famine.

"We must condemn these practices against them and support a joint migration policy that provides for asylum and where human rights are a priority. I call upon the European Commission to visit these places and meet with local politicians and see for themselves what is going on."

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Josep Maria Terricabras

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

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