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Press release | 17.10.2017

Statement from Philippe Lamberts, President of Greens/EFA group

European Council 19-20 October

Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** comments ahead of the EU Council summit:

*"The EU Heads of State and Government must break their silence on **the Catalan crisis** and help establish dialogue between Prime Minister Rajoy and President Puigdemont. Even more so than the negotiations on **Brexit** and the future of Ireland, which have been severely damaged by the unbelievable amateurism of the British leaders, the Catalan crisis risks becoming uncontrollable, putting at risk the EU's spirit of integration. The arrest last night of two prominent independence leaders will only further exacerbate problems. While the most radical on each side may not be ready to agree on constructive federalism, European leaders must nevertheless offer mediation. The aim is to prevent open conflict within the EU, not to interfere in Spanish internal affairs.*

*"The **migration crisis** should be a reminder to European leaders that respecting the EU's founding values is a duty. Failing to assume their responsibilities towards refugees, the EU instead seeks to strike deals with authoritarian states to outsource the management of migrants. The Libya agreement makes us complicit in human rights violations. To save lives and fulfil their duties, Member States must speed up the resettlement and relocation of refugees, allow humanitarian visas, extend family reunification to all internationally protected people and provide safe passages to the EU. The EU-Turkey migration agreement cannot be the reference point for an asylum and migration policy worthy of European values. Even if the European Union does not have infinite reception capacities, it is clear that Member States are still a long way from doing what they are capable of.*

*"As for the strengthening of the **Common Security and Defence Policy**, the initiative is to be welcomed. But we reject the draft regulation aimed at supporting the defence industry to the tune of half a billion euros. The EU is already spending 200 billion euros a year and the scarce resources of the EU's civilian budget must not be used to finance defence."*

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