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The EU institutions cannot sit on the fence

Catalonia

A debate is taking place in the EU Parliament this afternoon on the situation in Catalonia. The Greens/EFA Group called for the debate after the violence of the Spanish police in Catalonia last Sunday. Greens/EFA Co-President **Ska Keller** strongly condemns the use of police force and urges the EU Commission to mediate in the conflict:

"We urge the Commission to promote dialogue and to offer mediation. The EU Commission could be an honest broker accepted by the Spanish and the Catalan governments to bridge their differences and to find a common solution.

"It is wrong if the Commission shies away and continues to turn a blind eye to the situation in Catalonia. It is its duty as the guardian of the treaties to get involved and offer help in solving the conflict. While no two problems are the same, we must be careful to avoid any impression of double standards in the European Union.

"What happened on Sunday in Catalonia was unacceptable. We witnessed violence so disproportionate that it cannot be justified, regardless of your views on Catalan independence, or on the legality of the referendum. The Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is responsible for this escalation. He has fuelled the conflict, but his strategy has failed. He has refused any dialogue.

"The right to self-determination is firmly anchored in international law. Both sides, the Spanish government and the Catalan government, have to take responsibility and find a common solution for how to put it into place in a peaceful and democratic way."

Greens/EFA Co-President **Philippe Lamberts** comments:

"What is happening in Catalonia now is not only a Spanish issue: it goes to the core of the European Union. This is because the European Union is built on the conscious decision to live together on this continent, settling our differences through dialogue, negotiation and compromise, rather than through violence.

"Our motto is unity in diversity, a diversity we choose to see as an asset rather than as a weakness. All of this is at stake in the constitutional and political crisis in Spain. This is why Presidents Juncker and Tusk cannot sit on the fence. If it is an internal matter, it is also one that concerns the European Union."

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