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Catalan leaders' sentences a 'travesty of justice'

Press Release from Alyn Smith MEP (SNP), President of the EFA Group in the EP

Responding to today's verdict in the trial of Catalan pro-independence leaders which saw them receive sentences of between 9 and 13 years imprisonment, **Alyn Smith**, SNP MEP and President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament described the sentences as '*a travesty of justice which will only serve to worsen already difficult relations between Catalonia and Spain*'.

Catalan leaders who supported a peaceful referendum on self-determination on 1 October 2017 had been put on trial in Spain for crimes including rebellion and sedition.

Two of those are former members of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament (Oriol Junqueras and Raül Romeva).

Oriol was elected to the European Parliament once more in 2019 but was prevented from taking office by the Spanish authorities.

Diana Riba, partner of jailed leader Raül Romeva, was also elected to the European Parliament this year and joined the Greens/EFA group.

Alyn Smith MEP said:

"This is a political verdict in a political trial. Pursuing self-determination through democratic, peaceful means is never a crime.

"These appallingly disproportionate sentences are not justice, they are an act of vengeance which will only worsen an already difficult situation.

"Whether Spain likes it or not, a majority of Catalans want to decide their own future in a peaceful, democratic way. This is not going to go away, indeed with today's verdict the demand for self-determination will only grow stronger.

"The way forward has to be through dialogue and negotiation, respecting Catalonia's right to self-

determination.

"My thoughts today are with my former colleagues Oriol and Raül, and with the other political prisoners and their families.

"Sadly, what has happened today is a travesty of justice which will only serve to worsen already difficult relations between Catalonia and Spain.

"An amnesty for these political prisoners would be one way forward, and a gesture of goodwill by the Spanish government."

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