



FOUNDING MANIFESTO OF THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK OF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS OF CATALONIA

We, Members of National Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament from different European countries, have decided to freely unite and create a Parliamentary Network of Friendship Groups of Catalonia at European level.

Being deeply concerned by the repressive response of Spain to the legitimate and democratic claims of a significant majority of Catalan citizens and institutions; worried about the growing aggressiveness and nationalist rhetoric of certain political and media sectors in Spain; concerned about the lack of clear and constructive proposals to overcome the situation of deadlock in Catalonia, we have agreed that joining our voices and conducting actions together is the strongest way to demand that both the EU Institutions and the Spanish Government make a gesture of responsibility towards pushing for dialogue and amending the wrongdoings committed along the way.

The imprisonment of Catalan political and social leaders on the grounds of crimes they did not commit, the existence of political exiles in several European countries, the violation of basic rights such as freedom of expression, the politicization of the judicial system and the collective conscience that Catalans have been left on their own by Spanish authorities and the European Institutions, all constitute injustices that we as representatives of our own citizens cannot tolerate happening anywhere.

Healthy democracies and proper functioning of the rule of law need dialogue to evolve and should always engage in the promotion of peace, political discussion and the respect of human rights. We call upon the EU Institutions, the Spanish Government and Judiciary to urgently pursue measures to ensure full respect of Human and Fundamental Rights within their borders.

Listening to the voice of citizens is of the utmost importance for the European project and for Spanish democracy in order to develop and make citizens feel closer to their representatives. This also includes the recognition of people's right to choose in a democratic and peaceful way their own collective future.

The actions that this Network will carry out, aim at achieving the following main objectives:

- Calling for the release of elected members and social leaders who are in pre-trial detention, some of them for more than a year now, and for the safe return of the exiled.
- Insisting on the urgent need to find a political solution to the Catalan situation, which is of a political nature
- Urging the European Institutions to mediate in the conflict, which has a clear EU dimension
- Calling for the respect of the right to self-determination of the Catalan People which should be realized through an agreed and binding referendum
- Ensuring the respect, guarantee and full protection of Human and Fundamental rights in Spain and Catalonia, and the normal functioning of the parliamentary work.
- Emphasizing the importance of the separation of powers in order to fight for justice and against the abuse of public power
- Informing our respective public opinion to reinforce awareness of the Catalan cause and promoting solidarity among civil societies

As Members of National Parliaments representing our own citizens we will be closely following developments in Catalonia with a view to defending and ensuring that the fundamental rights and principles, in which our democracies are based, are fully respected. If we want to build a better future and a stronger Europe, we must come together and stand for inclusive and consolidated democracies through dialogue and compromise.

Brussels, 27th of November 2018

Ivo Vajgl

Chair of the EU - Catalonia
Dialogue Platform

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