



Brussels, 8 April 2020

**Prime Minister of Spain, Mr Pedro Sánchez**

Palacio de la Moncloa  
Avenida Puerta de Hierro, s/n, 28071 Madrid, España

Dear Prime Minister Sánchez,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, would like to address you some concerns regarding the current situation of the Catalan pro-independence leaders in jail, who have served more than 2 years in prison and had already been granted regular temporary release in order to perform work or volunteer duties.

As you might be aware, there have been calls<sup>1</sup> by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>2</sup>, urging governments to release vulnerable people, including low risk offenders, women detainees, people with permissions but also prisoners without sufficient legal basis, including political prisoners during the COVID-19 crisis.

Instead of considering the temporary release of the nine Catalan leaders in jail together with all the other prisoners under the same circumstances, the Spanish Supreme Court issued, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, a brief statement to the media warning that if Catalan Prison Boards -on the execution of their legal mandate- allowed the Catalan leaders to spend at home the COVID-19 confinement period, they could face criminal charges. As a consequence, the release of the Catalan leaders was denied. This crystallizes the threats set in motion by the Supreme Court directed towards public officials, generating a discriminatory treatment.

It is our understanding that this poses a risk to the prisoner's right to adequate standard of health, but it is also restricting other fundamental rights and principles which are particularly important to uphold in these times, such as the separation of powers, the principle of equality before the law and non-discrimination for political grounds, the respect for minorities, the right to accountability, among others. For these reasons, we take into account the complaint that Oriol Junqueras has filed against the Tribunal for coercion, threats and violation of fundamental civic rights.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25745&LangID=E>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/covid-19-pandemic-urgent-steps-are-needed-to-protect-the-rights-of-prisoners-in-europe>



Finally and for all the stated above, we inform you that we will be closely monitoring this situation and we encourage you to initiate the appropriate proceedings and measures in order to prevent further unacceptable threats from the judiciary to public officials.

Best regards,

MEP Diana RIBA (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Oriol JUNQUERAS (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Carles PUIGDEMONT (NI)  
MEP Toni COMÍN (NI)  
MEP Clara PONSATÍ (NI)  
MEP Alfred SANT (S&D)  
MEP Alviina ALAMETSÄ (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Chris MACMANUS (GUE/NGL)  
MEP Clare DALY (GUE/NGL)  
MEP Damien CAREME (Greens/EFA)  
MEP David CORMAND (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Francisco GUERREIRO (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Francois ALFONSI (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Grace O'SULLIVAN (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Heidi HAUTALA (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Izaskun BILBAO (Renew Europe)  
MEP José GUSMÃO (GUE/NGL)  
MEP Kateřina KONEČNÁ (GUE/NGL)

MEP Kira PETER-HANSEN (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Marie TOUSSAINT (Greens/EFA)  
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