

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Brussels, 22nd of April 2016

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing you this letter as Members of European Parliament, but also some of us, as victims of the terrorist group ETA. We would like to draw your attention to the visit of Arnaldo Otegi during the act organised by the self-proclaimed 'Basque Friendship' group on April 26th.

We would like to put under your knowledge that Mr. Otegi was first indicted between 1987 and 1993 for the kidnapping of a Basque entrepreneur in 1979. After six years in prison, he has supported time and time again the terrorist activity of ETA. Once again, in 2011 Otegi was sentenced to ten years in prison for trying to rebuild the outlawed pro-terrorist Batasuna party under direct orders from ETA. The judges also attributed him the crime of belonging to a terrorist organization.

He has served his sentence this last March 1. But it must to be remembered that this conviction made him unqualified to hold any elective public office.

For those who have suffered the pain inflicted by ETA and its supporters, having Mr. Otegi in this House, a House which has always shown its commitment with peace, freedom and democracy, is a hurting and painful moment.

In other words, just as we cannot imagine this Parliament providing one of its rooms to receive and give the floor to a jihadist terrorist convicted for the bombing attacks in Brussels Airport and metro, we can't either imagine the voice of ETA being heard at the heart of European democracy.

Almost 1000 people have been murdered and so many injured because of the terrorist actions by ETA. Thousands have been injured or permanently disabled. Tens of thousands are victims of forced displacement as a tool to morally disintegrate those who do not think with ETA's ideology. All these innocent victims are the result of a strategy to destroy freedom and democracy in Spain and in all other open societies in Europe.

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As all of us well know, terrorism has no monopoly in language, religion, nor political nationalism or ideology. Terrorists appear in different shapes and sizes; they bomb people for different reasons. But terrorism is terrorism. And ex imprisoned terrorists trying to reclaim their passed believes, are terrorists.

Having said that, we fully understand that is a difficult task to impede an event organised by a friendship group and sponsored by a political group.

But once Mr. Otegi crosses the gates of this Parliament, we kindly ask you to be vigilant that no single incitement or glorification of terrorism is done during this act on April 26th. Yet, if this happens, directly or indirectly, we strongly urge the House authorities to consider the expulsion of Arnaldo Otegi and his followers from the European Parliament. Moreover, we would urge to express its utmost disdain to those who intend to either harm the dignity of innocent victims unable to defend themselves, or to humiliate the survivors or family members of those that were killed.

To conclude, we strongly believe in the role of this House as a defender and protector of freedom and democracy. We are Members, but we cannot and never will forget that there are victims among us too. We have lost friends and relatives because of terrorism. That is why we have the moral duty to preserve their memory and dignity, which is the memory and dignity of all victims of terrorism.

We have our outmost confidence in your best judgement to avoid such an unpleasant situation.

Yours sincerely,

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MEP Teresa JIMÉNEZ-BECERRIL BARRIO

MEP Maite PAGAZAURTUNDUA

MEP Pilar AYUSO

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