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AVVOCATI EUROPEI DEMOCRATICI
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EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

On the repression in Catalonia on the 1st of October 2017

The events that have taken place on the 1st of October in Catalonia are very concerning for a Democracy. Therefore, we severely condemn the actions taken by the *Policía Nacional* and the *Guardia Civil*, which have violated the fundamental rights of the people, like the right to health and physical integrity, the right to political participation, the freedom of assembly, the right to vote and the freedom of expression. The Spanish police forces have acted in a totally disproportionate and unjustified manner, in a context of passive and peaceful protest, without acts of provocation or violence being committed.

The first aim of the police action was to frighten the population in order to dissuade them from voting - without going into the legality of the vote. Moreover, some of the action on the ground of the *Guardia Civil* and the *Policía Nacional* has exceeded the order of the judicial authority. These police forces needed a justification to act violently, with hatred, against independence, a justification that this judicial decision provided them. This explains the gratuitous and cruel aggressions against citizens who were in the polling stations as well as the systematic destruction public furniture and school buildings.

Police action has violated the law by the widespread and indiscriminate violence against the population with the use of anti-riot materials such as rubber bullets or tear gas, which are strictly prohibited in situations where there is no serious danger. This was not the case, instead there were millions of people exercising fundamental rights in a peaceful manner. Besides the physical - more than 870 wounded - and psychological damage, their actions have prevented thousands of people from voting, through unprecedented repressive action at European level. Their actions did not even respect people in situations of vulnerability such as the elderly, they attacked the sexual integrity of women and caused extensive damage to community-owned equipment.

This widespread and disproportionate repressive action against all citizens of a territory without distinction is contrary to the rules of any democratic state.

The AED considers that the problem lies in the political weakness of the Spanish government to democratically approach a political demand and denounces the instrumental use of the police, of prosecutors and judges who should not be agents or arbitrators in a conflict of political nature.

Finally, the AED stresses the impressive silence of the EU institutions on this conflict.

2nd of October 2017

Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Athens,

AED/EDL (Avocats Européens Démocrates / European Democratic Lawyers)

Founded in 1987, the Association of European Democratic Lawyers (AED) is a confederation of trade unions and lawyers' organizations from France, Germany, The Netherlands, Catalonia, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Italy and Turkey with the same democratic, modern and humane ideals in Europe. The AED intends to defend the rights of citizens by preserving the independence of lawyers with regard to any political, social, economic or ordinal power. As a professional organization, its international purpose is to ensure respect for the rights of the defense and, in particular, to safeguard the physical integrity and political and economic freedom of lawyers. The association also works to ensure that all individuals have access to national and international judicial appeals, particularly those who are in the most precarious situations and whose basic rights are not recognized or poorly recognized.

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