

Ms. Sophie In'T Veld
Rapporteur of the EP PEGA Inquiry Committee

Mr. Jeroen Lenaers
President of the EP PEGA Inquiry Committee
CC: Members of the EP PEGA Inquiry Committee

Barcelona, 16 March 2023

Ms. Sophie In'T Veld, Rapporteur of the EP PEGA Committee, Mr. Jeroen Lenaers, President of the PEGA Inquiry Committee, and members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our deep gratitude for your commitment to investigating the abuse of Pegasus and Candiru mercenary spyware, and its threats to democracy, civil society, and individual liberties. Your diligence in seeking clarity on the misuse of such technology is both commendable and vital to our society.

Regarding the European Parliament (EP) mission scheduled to visit Madrid on March 20-21, we are deeply concerned about the apparent efforts by Spanish authorities to obstruct the mission's progress.

- All Spanish political parties that take part in the PEGA Committee (Partido Popular, Partido Socialista Obrero Espanyol and Ciudadanos - and VOX-) have repeatedly and continuously rejected holding the EP mission to Spain.
- The mentioned Spanish parties are trying, through the introduction of a huge amount of amendments to the draft report, to eliminate proven facts, such as the Catalangate, from the report, and to add inaccurate elements of misinformation with the aim of preventing the Committee from completing its duty.
- When the EP Mission to Spain was finally approved, it wasn't until a week previous to the mission that the Spanish authorities informed the EP it was a bank holiday in Madrid and, thus, forced the entire organisation to reschedule it..
- They block the plural participation of victims of the Catalangate, preventing a wide representation of them. It seems that there is only one slot for victims but it is restricted to the Catalan government representatives and one former MEP. This is precisely relevant for Catalan representatives of civil society organisations, such as Òmnium Cultural and Assemblea Nacional Catalana, whose members have been

Pegasus victims. In order to prevent civil society victims from being in the agenda, Spanish political parties have allegedly referred to Òmnium and Assemblea as unsuitable organisations for being condemned by the Spanish justice system, pointing at their formerly imprisoned leaders Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez..

- 6 days prior to the EP mission, Spanish authorities scheduled a Motion of Censure for Tuesday, 21st March, when the EP mission required the President of the Spanish Parliament, Meritxell Batet, to meet up with a delegation of Spanish Parliament members. As reported, Batet already sent a letter refusing to answer your demand as the Motion of Censure will be ongoing.
- Up to date, we do not have solid information regarding the schedule of the EP Mission, but as it appears, meetings will be mostly limited to the Spanish ombudsman, the Spanish Intelligence Agency (CNI), who already stated in the hearing of the Committee that it cannot reveal any information, as well as some Spanish journalists. Yet the Catalan Parliament, who will be as well met up with by the EP mission, is the only Parliament in Spain that has an ongoing Pegasus Investigation Committee.
- Up to date, we do not have solid information whether meetings scheduled with Spanish authorities will take place.

We believe there is a serious commitment of many MEPs to remedy the situation in all of our countries. Therefore, **we urge you to maintain the EP mission to Spain**, in order to protect our rights as victims as well as European citizens. Moreover, **we formally ask you to reconsider including more victims of the Catalangate**, so as to represent the wide variety of those, specifically regarding civil society members.

We also invite you to reconsider including a visit to Barcelona, where they could meet with many victims of Catalangate, the Catalan Parliament Commission in charge of investigating the facts, and the Catalan Ombudsman, all relevant to the Committee's work.

It is worth reiterating the significance of the Catalangate case, which, as documented by Citizen Lab in their report "[CatalanGate: Extensive Mercenary Spyware Operation against Catalans Using Pegasus and Candiru](#)" and verified by Amnesty International's Security Lab in their report "[Spain: EU must act to end spyware abuse after prominent Catalans targeted with Pegasus](#)", is the largest known cluster of mercenary spyware attacks and infections on record, as well as the most extensive espionage case in Europe involving Pegasus to date. The victims encompass politicians, elected representatives (including MEPs), senior officials, journalists, activists, lawyers, and their relatives. You can find the full list of victims here: <https://citizenlab.ca/2022/04/CatalanGate-extensive-mercenary-spyware-operation-against-catalans-using-pegasus-candiru/#appendix-a-targets>

We remain at your disposal to provide any additional information that may facilitate your decision-making process and sincerely thank you for your unwavering commitment to this crucial investigation.

Signed by:

Xavier Antich - President of Òmnium Cultural

Dolors Feliu - President of Assemblea Nacional Catalana

*Carles Riera - MP and Deputy Secretary of the Board of the Parliament of Catalonia,
Candidatura d'Unitat Popular*

Marta Rovira - General Secretary of Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya

Jordi Turull - General Secretary of Junts per Catalunya