

# **Auctioning Human Rights?**

## **Democracy and the Right to Decide**

### **A European Parliament Conference**

2 July 2015, from 9.30 to 17.00

Room P1C051, European Parliament, Brussels

The [Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization \(UNPO\)](#), in cooperation with the [European Free Alliance \(EFA\)](#) and [Centre Maurits Coppieters \(CMC\)](#), will convene a high-level conference entitled “*Auctioning Human Rights? Democracy and the Right to Decide*”. The conference is hosted by Josu Juaristi Abaunz MEP (GUE/NGL) and will be held at the European Parliament in Brussels, room P1C051, on 2 July 2015, from 9.30 to 17.00.

By bringing together decision makers, academic experts, as well as human rights and political activists, the conference will highlight the political and economic dimensions determining the fulfilment of fundamental human rights of peoples in seeking self-determination and democracy.

The speakers will present a diverse set of cases: from Catalonia to Scotland, from Balochistan to Kosovo, from Ogaden to Abkhazia. Notable experts and representatives of these communities will shed light on why some nations and peoples have been able to exercise their right to self-determination successfully, others have achieved the creation of an independent state, and others yet continue in their struggle to determine their future status or even enjoy their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

The conference will tackle an often forgotten question: is the denial of rights a result of geopolitical considerations and economic interests? Is there a systematic, but ignored pattern of auctioning of human rights? There is no shortage of examples of underrepresented peoples or territories, rich in natural resources. Occupied or exploited by a dominant force (such as a government or state level and multinational corporations) without consultation, approval or compensation, they’ve constantly demonstrated their will to access, own and control their lands and resources, and to be autonomous or even independent.

## PROGRAMME

### Opening remarks:

Josu Juaristi Abaunz MEP, GUE/NGL Group

Ngawang Choephel, UNPO President (TBC)

### Panel I: Building Momentum on the Right to Decide

Where is Scotland Now?

*Ian Hudghton SNP, MEP*

New Country in the Making: Catalonia's case

*Jordi Solé i Ferrando, Secretary General of EFA and Catalan MP*

Empowerment at the Macro-Level: What can the EU offer?

*Zsolt Sylagyi, Hungarians in Transylvania*

### Panel II: "Money Talks": Undermining Self-Determination and Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Evolution of the Concepts of Self-Determination and Democracy: Factors that Support and Undermine their Exercise

*Michael Jewkes, KU Leuven*

Diplomacy of Unrepresented Nations and Paradiplomacy

*Dr Fiona McConnell, Oxford University*

*Lorena Lopez de Lacalle, Secretary of International relations of Eusko Alkartasuna*

Collective Rights Secondary to Economic Interests?

*Nelly Maes, former President of EFA and former president of the Flemish Peace Institute*

### Q & A

### Panel III: Holding Human Rights Hostage: Self-Determination, Democracy & Tolerance

The Unfair Price of Self-Determination: A Human Tragedy in Ogaden  
*Abdirahman Mahdi, ONLF Foreign Secretary*

Blessing or Curse: Resources in Balochistan  
*Nasser Boladaj, Balochistan Peoples Party*

Haratin, Born without Rights: Slavery and Intolerance in Mauritania  
*Abidine Merzough, IRA-Mauritania*

### Panel IV: Working Towards Success? Stories from Europe and Beyond

Seven Years of Independence: Kosovo's Story  
*Agron Bajrami, Editor in Chief of Koha Ditore*

What Recognition Means: the Cornish Nation  
*Joanie Willett, Mebyon Kernow*

Democratic Development amidst Diplomatic Challenges: The Case of Abkhazia  
*Artur Gaguliya, Head of EUSCAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Abkhazia*

### Q & A

Closing remarks