Resolution on the EU-China Summit and the EU /China human rights dialogue

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Following a debate on 12 December 2007, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU-China Summit and the EU/China human rights dialogue. It pointed out that China's engagement and influence in the world had increased considerably over the last decade. Credibility, democratic values and responsibility should constitute the fundamental basis of the relationship between the EU and China.

EU-China Summit: Members welcomed the Joint Statement of the 10th EU-China Summit in which both sides reaffirmed their commitment to developing a comprehensive strategic partnership to meet global challenges, as well as the further development of EU-China relations. They regretted the fact that once again the Council and Commission had failed to raise human rights issues in a firm manner in order to give more political weight to human rights concerns, and that the EU did not take the opportunity of the approaching Olympics to address serious human rights concerns in China.

Parliament called on China and the EU to ensure a more balanced trade and economic partnership which should lead to sustainable growth and social development, in particular in the areas of climate change, environment and energy. It pointed out that the pirating and counterfeiting of European products and brands by Chinese industries constituted a serious violation of international trade rules, and urged the Chinese authorities to improve the protection of Intellectual Property Rights. At the same time it called for greater coherence and consistency between human rights on the one hand and trade and security on the other. The Council must make a comprehensive evaluation of the human rights situation before finalising any new Partnership and Cooperation Framework Agreement (PCFA). Parliament welcomed the launch of negotiations on a PCFA, which would cover the full scope of the EU-China bilateral relationship, including an effective human rights clause, as well as enhanced cooperation on political matters. It reiterated its demand concerning inclusion of the European Parliament in all future bilateral relations between the parties. Without Parliament's formal assent, there could be no PCFA.

Parliament went on to insists that the EU arms embargo on China following the Tiananmen events must remain intact until substantial progress was made on human rights issues, and reminded Member States that the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports included as a criterion respect for human rights in the country of final destination. Parliament urged the Chinese government to ratify the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

EU-China human rights dialogue: Parliament regretted that China's human rights record remained a matter of serious concern, and the EU-China human rights dialogue must be strengthened. The matters discussed in the successive rounds of dialogue with China, such as ratification of the ICCPR, reform of the criminal justice system, including the death penalty and the system of re-education through work, freedom of expression, the situation of minorities in Tibet, the release of detainees following the events in Tiananmen Square, and workers' and other rights, must continue to be raised in the context of the dialogue. The Council was asked to consider extending the time period of the dialogue and allow more time for discussion of the issues raised. Parliament also called for strengthened cooperation in the UN system as well as cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms. It drew attention to the need for China to allow the practice of religion, and deplored the contradiction between the constitutional freedom of belief and the ongoing interference of the state in the affairs of religious communities.

Parliament regretted that the sixth Sino-Tibetan round of talks had brought about no results. Members called on the Chinese government to engage in substantive negotiations taking into due consideration the

demands of the Dalai Lama for autonomy for Tibet, and called on China to refrain from exerting pressure on states that had friendly relations with the Dalai Lama. It reiterated its concern over the reports of continuing human rights violations in Tibet and in the other provinces inhabited by Tibetan people, including torture, arbitrary arrest and detention. Parliament deplored the intensification of the so-called 'patriotic education' campaign since October 2005 in Tibet's monasteries and nunneries, forcing Tibetans to sign declarations denouncing the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist. It called on China to allow an independent body to have access to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama of Tibet, and his parents, as requested by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Parliament went on to call on China, as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, to implement the recommendations of the UN special rapporteur on torture and to issue a standing invitation to China to UN experts. Human rights concerns should receive much more focus in the build-up to the Beijing Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee was asked to publish its own assessment of China's compliance with the undertakings given in 2001 before the Games were awarded to Beijing. The EU must take note of such an assessment and work with its Olympic Network to create a basis for responsible behaviour in preparation for, during and after the Olympics. Parliament was strongly concerned at the recent increase of political persecution related to the Olympics of human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, petitioners, civil society activists, ethnic groups such as the Uighurs, and religious people of all beliefs, especially Falun Gong practitioners. The Chinese authorities must release these people immediately and put an end to these human rights violations. Parliament was equally concerned about the surveillance and censorship of information on the Internet, and called on the Chinese authorities to end the blocking of thousands of websites and to release writer Yang Maodong and the other 50 cyber-dissidents and web users imprisoned in China.

Parliament called on China to take concrete steps to grant freedom of expression, and to respect freedom of the press, both for Chinese and foreign journalists. It repeated its call on the Chinese authorities to establish a moratorium on executions during the Olympic Games in 2008, and to withdraw the list of 42 banned categories of people.

Lastly, Parliament urged China to stop its ongoing support for the regime in Myanmar and the situation in Darfur.