Resolution on the arrest of the Chinese dissident Hu Jia

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Following the debate in plenary, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the arrest of the Chinese dissident Hu Jia on 27 December 2007 on charges of inciting subversion. Hu Jia and his wife, Zeng Jinyan, have thrown the spotlight on human rights abuses in China over the past few years and spent many periods under house arrest as a result of their campaigning. Parliament pointed out that Hu Jia is in bad health, suffering from a liver disease for which he must take medication. It strongly condemns the detention of Hu Jia and demands his prompt release and that of all dissidents who have been arrested and jailed for crimes of opinion. The Chinese authorities are urged to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Mr Hu Jia, his relatives and his lawyers, and to allow Hu Jia and all the other dissidents under arrest to receive medical assistance if necessary, and to bear in mind that detention in inappropriate conditions could damage their health.

Parliament calls upon China to respect its commitments to human rights and the rule of law, in particular the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the General Assembly in 1998, by putting an end to the harassment of Chinese human rights defenders, in order to demonstrate its commitment to human rights in its Olympic year. It urges China not to use the 2008 Olympic Games as a pretext to arrest and illegally detain and imprison dissidents, journalists, and human rights activists who either report on, or demonstrate against, human rights abuses. Members reiterate their opinion that human rights concerns should receive far more attention in the build-up to the 2008 Olympic Games. They highlights the need for respect for universal fundamental ethical principles and the promotion of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity, as enshrined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Olympic Charter.

Parliament goes on to urge China to reform its criminal law to allow greater freedom of expression to journalists, writers, freelancers, reporters etc., who will report to the world on such an important event as the 2008 Olympic Games. Such reform will also make it possible to clarify the scope of certain unclear legal provisions (e.g. Article 105 of China's Criminal Code), and give the world a positive signal that the Seventeenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party paved the way for greater respect for different opinions.

The Chinese authorities are urged to close the so-called 'black jails', places of detention set up to detain 'troublemakers' in advance of the 2008 Olympic Games.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Council of the EU to take action in relation to the Chinese authorities regarding the arrest of Hu Jia and the disappearance on 22 September 2007 of Gao Zhisheng, a noted human rights lawyer and friend of Hu Jia, who has come to represent the plight of the many thousands of human rights defenders currently imprisoned in China.