EU-China relations

2012/2137(INI) - 14/03/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on EU-China relations.

It highlights that the EU-China strategic partnership is of great importance for relations between the EU and China and that this relationship is paramount for finding answers to global concerns, such as global and regional security, the economic crisis, energy security, the promotion of democracy and human rights, as well as in creating a framework to address bilateral concerns between the EU and China.

Members, Parliament considers that a strategic partnership requires a **strong commitment to mutual responsibility** and a good level of confidence, and must be based on universal values.

Members go on to make a series of recommendations on the main themes of the EU-China partnership.

(1) EU-China Strategic Partnership and cooperation: Parliament supports and encourages the almost 60 sectoral dialogues between the EU and China, with the conviction that an enhanced and highly developed partnership will be mutually beneficial to both the EU and China. Members wish, however, to see a strengthening of these dialogues in the fields of human rights, the environment, security, energy and in particular the fight against **counterfeit products**, in view of its impact on public health and safety. They believe, moreover, that the concept of strategic partnership must be better defined and call for increased trade and economic relations with China.

It also expects Member States to give the European External Action Service (EEAS) and especially its Delegation in Beijing a clear mandate to strengthen a long-term strategy EU-China Strategic Partnership.

Moreover, they state that the **concept of strategic partnership must be better defined** and call for increased trade and economic relations with China to go hand in hand with considerable progress in the political dialogue on human rights and the rule of law.

Members expect Member States to give the European External Action Service (EEAS) and especially its Delegation in Beijing a **clear mandate** to strengthen the EU-China Strategic Partnership. They also call for the EU to implement a **long-term strategy** vis-à-vis China, providing operational coordination both between the institutions of the Union and between the Union and its Member States.

(2) Internal situation: Parliament recognises the significant progress made as regards social policy. However, a successful economic policy is seriously threatened by **corruption** scandals, a lack of transparency and a **‘red aristocracy’** of close family members of former and present party leaders who possess enormous fortunes owing to their political and economic connections.

Members believe that only **effective political reforms** aimed at shaping inclusive, democratic and accountable institutions that reflect China’s ethnic, religious, political and social diversity will pave the way for building sustainable growth and stability.

As regards **forced abortions**, although they are **strictly illegal** in China, family-planning officials repeatedly coerce women into inhumane practices, such as forced abortions or sterilisation. Members support Chinese voices calling for an **end to the one-child policy.**

(3) Human rights and democracy: the resolution admires and supports the courage and activism of those Chinese citizens acting in socially responsible ways to promote and defend universally recognised social

and human rights. It urges the Chinese leadership to **encourage civil responsibility** and to comply with **minimum social standards**. Members underline the importance of compliance with, and rapid implementation of, **all International Labour Organisation rules**, including the right freely to form independent trade unions. Members take the view that **the EU should not allow market access for goods that have been produced by means of child labour** or in facilities that gravely violate international labour standards and human rights, such as prison camps.

It also underlines the importance of the rapid implementation of all International Labour Organisation rules, and takes the view that the EU should not allow market access for goods which have been produced by means of child or prison camp labour.

The Chinese authorities are called upon to reconsider their policy on **capital punishment**.

As regards the freedom of the **media**, Parliament stresses that the Strategic Partnership between the EU and China includes freedom of the media on a reciprocal basis and it deplores the control and **censorship of the internet** by the Chinese authorities.

On **religion**, Parliament urges the Chinese authorities to pull back on policies and practices that curtail any citizen's fundamental right to **freedom of religion and belief**. It recalls that the Chinese state recognises only five religions, namely Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity (both Catholicism and Protestantism), and that all of these religions have centralised governing bodies loyal to the CCP. It also recalls that China has banned Falun Gong since 1999 with the aim of eradicating the practice, and as a consequence of this ban, human rights organisations have reported extralegal coercive measures sometimes resulting in death.

Recalling that since 2009 at least 90 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibetan-populated areas of China, Parliament urges the Chinese Government to act in a politically responsible way by meaningfully engaging the Tibetan and Uighur peoples in governance issues, rather than through forcible assimilation.

(4) External situation: Parliament urges China to use its **global position** in a more responsible way. It stresses, in this connection, the need for China to abandon its veto position on any UNSC resolution allowing intervention in Syria in order to halt the civil war. Members call on China to review its policy of "non-interference in countries' internal affairs" in cases of severe breaches of international humanitarian law. Parliament considers that China can play a pivotal role in stabilising **Afghanistan** through a soft power approach and urges the development of close cooperation between the EU and China on this issue.

Members call on the EU to remain vigilant about the political, economic, social and environmental impact of China's growing investments in **Africa**.

Parliament underlines the global importance of the **South China Sea**, through which one third of the world's trade passes and is alarmed at the escalating tension. It urgently appeals to all the parties involved to refrain from unilateral political and military actions, to tone down statements and to settle their conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea by means of international arbitration. It considers it regrettable, that the survival of the dictatorial and repressive North Korean regime depends essentially on China. It looks forward to China continuing to take responsibility for stability on the Korean Peninsula, a swift resumption of the six-party talks on the **North Korean nuclear threat.** It is seriously worried about the escalating tensions between China and Japan. It calls on all parties concerned (**China, Japan and Taiwan**) to demonstrate restraint and to take steps to calm the situation on the disputed islands.

Parliament encourages China, the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide, to play a more proactive and constructive role in promoting cooperation within the global community in order to tackle **climate change**.

Lastly, Members urge China to make it an absolute priority to ensure legal certainty for foreign companies, by upholding the principles of equality, reciprocity and corporate social responsibility.