Resolution on the PRC national security law for Hong Kong and the need for the EU to defend Kong Kong’s high degree of autonomy

2020/2665(RSP) - 19/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 565 votes to 34, with 62 abstentions, a resolution on the People’s Republic of China national security law for Hong Kong and the need for the EU to defend Kong Kong’s high degree of autonomy.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Condemnation of the national security law

Parliament deplored Beijing's unilateral imposition of the National Security Act on Hong Kong, which constitutes a comprehensive assault on the city's autonomy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms and seriously threatens the principle of ‘one country, two systems’ enshrined in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the 1990 Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR).

According to Members, the introduction of the planned national security legislation would be seen as a breach of the People’s Republic of China’s commitments and obligations under international law, in particular the Sino-British Joint Declaration, threatens to severely damage the relationship of trust between China and the EU, and affect future cooperation, as well as business confidence in Hong Kong as a major global financial centre.

Parliament condemned China's continued and increasing interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs, stressing that China should not undermine the wide autonomy of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It called on the Chinese authorities to respect China's international obligations, including the introduction of universal suffrage, to stop pressuring the business community to support the national security law and to refrain from labelling international support for Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms as ‘interference in its internal affairs’ and acts of subversion and separation.

Parliament recommended that the EU and Member States should consider filing a case before the International Court of Justice alleging that China’s decision to impose national security legislation on Hong Kong violates the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Members also strongly condemned all human rights violations committed in Hong Kong and called for an independent investigation into the excessive use of force by the Hong Kong police against demonstrators. They expressed concern about the increasing deterioration of civil and political rights and press freedom.

Adopting a new European strategy towards China

Calling for a new, more assertive strategy towards China, Parliament called on the EU to treat the issue of the National Security Law for Hong Kong as a top priority at the next EU-China summit, as well as other human rights issues, including the situation of the Uyghurs.

Members stressed that the EU - as the leading destination for Chinese exports - should use its economic leverage to crack down on human rights violations committed by China. They called for respect for

human rights and fundamental freedoms to form an important part of negotiations on any comprehensive investment or trade agreement with China.

The Council is called on to finalise in 2020 the work on an EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism and to adopt targeted sanctions and assets freezes against Chinese officials responsible for devising and implementing policies that violate human rights.

Member States shall furthermore:

- work towards the establishment of appropriate export control mechanisms, including cyber-surveillance items to deny China, and in particular Hong Kong, from gaining access to technologies used to violate fundamental rights;

- examine ways to avoid economic, and in particular technological, dependence on China, including in their decisions on the development of 5G networks;

- consider the creation of a ‘lifeboat’ scheme for Hong Kong citizens in the event of further deterioration of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Parliament called on the HR/VP and the Member States to closely monitor the situation in the run-up to the Legislative Council elections scheduled for September and to report back regularly on the situation.