Resolution on violations of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong

2022/2503(RSP) - 20/01/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 585 votes to 46, with 41 abstentions, a resolution on violations of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong.

Context

Between 1 July 2020 and the end of 2021, police in Hong Kong arrested or ordered the arrest of at least 139 people in relation to the National Security Law (NSL). At the end of 2021, 94 people were formally charged, 60 of whom were in pre-trial detention. Peaceful political expression has been disproportionately restricted and even criminalised under the NSL. The political opposition in Hong Kong was effectively obliterated following the arrests of 55 people under the NSL on 6 and 7 January 2021, most of whom were pro-democracy lawmakers and activists.

Over 60 civil society organisations closed due to repression between 1 January 2021 and 4 January 2022, including 12 trade unions, eight media organisations, eight neighbourhood groups, seven professional groups, five student organisations and four religious groups.

The EU continues to have deep concerns regarding China's National Security Law (NSL) for Hong Kong.

The EU has a strong stake in the continued stability and prosperity of Hong Kong under the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and attaches great importance to the preservation of Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, in line with the Basic Law and international commitments. However, Parliament condemned in the strongest terms the fact that freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of the press are as severely restricted in Hong Kong as they are in China and reiterated its solidarity with the people of Hong Kong in their fight for freedom and democracy. It deplored the political persecution to which many journalists who are now in exile or in prison have been subjected. China is called on to ensure that all journalists can conduct their work freely and without impediments or fear of reprisals. Freedom of the press and media should be ensured.

The Hong Kong Government is called on to:

- release all political prisoners;

- immediately and unconditionally release and drop of all charges against all peaceful Hong Kong protesters arrested in the last few years, who simply exercised their right to freedom of expression or other human rights.

National Security Law

The resolution stressed that the NSL prevents a relationship of trust between China and the EU, which is undermining future cooperation and leading to a further erosion of Beijing's credibility on the international stage, while also significantly damaging Hong Kong and Macao's international status and reputations. Parliament urged the Chinese authorities to **repeal the NSL**, which is a breach of the Peoples Republic of China's commitments and obligations under international law. It urged the Hong Kong and

Macao authorities to fully respect the rule of law, human rights, democratic principles and the high degree of autonomy under the 'One country, two Systems' principle, as enshrined in the Hong Kong and Macao Basic Laws and in line with their domestic and international obligations.

Targeted sanctions

The Council is called on to introduce targeted sanctions under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (the EU's Magnitsky-style sanctions) against the Hong Kong and Chinese officials responsible for the ongoing human rights crackdown. The resolution called on both the Council and the Commission to agree to draw up a list of companies which should be subject to sanctions and investment bans for their complicity in the ongoing human rights crackdown in Hong Kong.

Parliament called for the diplomatic and political boycott of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

Lastly, the Commission is encouraged to step up the application of and work on appropriate **export control mechanisms** to deny China and Hong Kong access to technologies used to violate human rights.