

Resolution on the abduction of Tibetan children and forced assimilation practices through Chinese boarding schools in Tibet

2023/3025(RSP) - 14/12/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 477 votes to 14, with 45 abstentions, a resolution on the abduction of Tibetan children and forced assimilation practices through Chinese boarding schools in Tibet.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR groups and Members.

Chinese authorities have established an expansive system of de facto compulsory, highly politicised boarding schools for children aged 4 to 18, requiring them to undergo mandatory education in Mandarin without any opportunity for substantive study of the Tibetan language, history or culture. Approximately 80 % of Tibetan children, totalling around one million, have been separated from their families by this system, which aims to forcibly assimilate them culturally, religiously and linguistically into the Han majority. Moreover, there are almost no private alternatives to these government schools.

UN experts are concerned that Tibetan children are thus suffering from severe psychological and emotional distress, including loneliness and isolation, and are losing the ability to communicate easily in their native language with their families, contributing to the erosion of their individual and social identity, which violates international human rights and may amount to genocide.

Parliament strongly condemned the repressive assimilation policies throughout China, especially the boarding school system in Tibet, that seek to eliminate the distinct linguistic, cultural and religious traditions among Tibetans and other minorities, such as Uyghurs. It called for the immediate abolishment of the boarding school system imposed on children in Tibet and the practice of family separations.

The resolution further called on the Chinese authorities to:

- reengage with the representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama to establish genuine autonomy for Tibetans within China;
- allow the establishment of private Tibetan schools.

Arguing that efforts to forcibly assimilate Tibetan children violate international human rights law, the resolution welcomed the U.S. decision to restrict visas on Chinese officials tied to the boarding school system in Tibet, with Members also urging the EU to adopt similar targeted sanctions.