EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 09/02/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The resolution of Pierre Bernard-Reymond (PPE, F) on the Communication from the Commission - building a Comprehensive Partnership with China was approved by the European Parliament. The report expresses the Parliament's continuing profound concern about recent human rights violations and condemns the drastic treatment of a large number of political prisoners. The Parliament proclaims itself to be disturbed by China's current system of administrative detention and urges China to implement measures to guarantee the right to a fair trial open to international observers and to improve prisoners' conditions in custody. It asks for a human rights clause to be included when the 1985 trade and cooperation agreement with China is renewed and wishes to see the proposed comprehensive partnership with China based on the following principles: - respect for human rights; - the rule of law, based on legislation conforming to internationally recognised standards; - freedom of expression; - a pluralist society with multiple political parties; - respect for the rights of free trade unions and recognition of the importance of social dialogue; - abolition of the death penalty. The Parliament further supports a constructive dialogue aimed at: - helping China to accomplish a carefully prepared and considered transition to a market economy; - enabling China better to integrate itself into the international economy; - convincing China that freedom and democracy are the only means of ensuring individual fulfilment and human progress in the future. Within the framework of legal and judicial cooperation programmes, the report wishes to see the European Union and Member States foster the democratic rule of law and justice in China and coordinate closely their political and economic policies on China and asks that the relevant parliamentary committees be kept informed of such EU initiatives. It proposes that the EU should also encourage democratic development and respect for human rights in the field of trade policy, using the GSP scheme and environmental and social incentives. Referring to China's signature of the United Nations conventions on economic, social and cultural rights and on civil and political rights, the report calls for the immediate application of their standards and their prompt ratification. China is called upon directly to end repressive action against the victims of the Tienanmen massacre, take measures to allow the country rapidly to join the WTO, adhere to ILO rules, take environmental protection more fully into account when drawing up development projects, complete its promised reform of the taxation and legal systems and increase its efforts to sharply reduce regional disparities. Furthermore, China is asked to use its influence on North Korea in a constructive way, sign and ratify the Ottawa Treaty banning Anti-Personnel Mines, sign the Statute of the International Criminal Court, undertake negotiations with the Tibetan people on the basis of recognition of their administrative, cultural and religious autonomy, apply the principle of "one country, several cultures" to its territory and relax tensions with Taiwan. Member States are called upon to increase their consular representationto China, together with the Council to comply scrupulously with the embargo on trade with China in weapons and military supplies and with the Commission to introduce or strengthen cooperation on environmental protection and support for SMEs. Further action is called for to combat drug trafficking, money laundering, organised crime, international terrorism and illegal immigration while ensuring full compliance of such policies with the rule of law and democracy. The report finally calls for the dropping of all support to totalitarian regimes, welcomes the circumstances of Hong Kong's retrocession to China but wishes to be sure that democratic values are developed and safeguarded in the Special Administrative Region and similarly hopes that the joining of Macao to China will comply with all points of the Agreement of 13/4/87.