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Olympic Games

Greens/EFA call for EU boycott of opening ceremony

The highly controversial issue of a possible boycott of the Olympic Games will be debated today, Wednesday 26 March, in the European Parliament. **Daniel Cohn-Bendit** and **Monica Frassoni**, **Co-Presidents of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament**, said:

"The Greens/EFA group regards the Olympic Games in China as much more than a sporting event: they must also be an opportunity to debate and contribute towards a visible improvement in democracy and human rights in China, as well as the situation of the Tibetan people and other ethnic and religious minorities.

We must be prepared to openly consider a boycott of the Olympic Games because the conditions of freedom and democracy required to organise such events go beyond the current case of China and its human rights situation.

The next step is to launch a debate on a boycott of the opening ceremony by Heads of State, athletes and journalists.

Finally, we must consider action we can take to show our support to the Tibetan people and other minorities, as we have done in the past with 'passports for freedom' to Chinese dissidents, by wearing a green ribbon as proposed by the French athletes' spokesperson, or with orange scarves to be worn by athletes, spectators and the press.

These actions must lead the Chinese Communist Party to make concrete steps towards greater openness to democracy and the respect of human rights, or else to regret having organised the Olympic Games in conditions that are currently inadequate. It is unacceptable that for the sake of selling nuclear power stations or car factories, the EU remains quiet on the situation of the Tibetan people and Chinese dissidents.

The Greens/EFA Group call on the Slovenian Presidency and the forthcoming French Presidency to take the initiative for a collective EU boycott of the opening ceremony."

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