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Situation in China after the earthquake and before the Olympic Games

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

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on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to its previous resolutions on Tibet, in particular that of 15 February 2007 on thedialogue between the Chinese Government and Envoys of the Dalai Lama and that of 10 April 2008,

 having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2007 on the EU-China Summit and the EU/China human rights dialogue,

 having regard to its resolution of 22 May 2008 on the natural disaster in China,

 having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2006 on EU-China relations,

 having regard to its resolution of 6 September 2007 on the functioning of the human rights dialogues and consultations on human rights with third countries,

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the protests which started in Lhasa on 10 March 2008, the 49th anniversary of the failed Tibetan national uprising against the Chinese administration, and then spread to other inhabited areas of Tibet were followed by a brutal crackdown by the Chinese police and security forces on anyone suspected of involvement in the demonstrations, of providing aid to the injured or possessing pictures of the Dalai Lama, involving the arrest of almost 6000 people and punitive searches of monasteries,

B. whereas after this uprising the Chinese authorities stepped up the 'patriotic education' campaign condemning Tibet's 'dark feudal society' and depicting the Communist Party as a saviour bringing happiness to the Tibetan people; whereas the second part of this re?education requires Tibetans to sign documents denouncing the Dalai Lama and his separatist activities,

C. whereas the movements of the Tibetan people are restricted and subject to strict surveillance and those Tibetans from places outside Lhasa are not allowed to remain in Lhasa,

D. whereas, despite the statements by the Chinese authorities, the situation in Tibet is far from normal and access to the region is still being denied to the international media and international monitoring agencies and tight restrictions imposed on the flow of information; whereas, according to independent reports leaked to the international media, the police and security forces have confiscated mobile phones, computers and other communication equipment in hundreds of raids on monasteries, nunneries and private homes, thereby preventing thousands of Tibetans from communicating with the outside world,

E. whereas following the demonstrations around 40 people have been so far been found guilty of and sentenced for disrupting public services, looting and destroying local government offices and attacking police; whereas, although the proceedings were announced as public trials, the sentences were imposed behind closed doors and were out of proportion to the crimes, ranging from three years to life imprisonment; whereas the trial proceedings were in no way transparent and defendants were not given the chance to mount a meaningful defence,

F. whereas on 20 June 2008 the state news agency Xinhua reported that more than 1000 people detained after the protests in Tibet had been released,

G. whereas His Holiness the Dalai Lama urged the demonstrators to protest peacefully and non-violently and has since reiterated, on many occasions, his call for a resumption of negotiations with Beijing with a view to securing full and genuine political, cultural and spiritual autonomy for Tibet within China,

H. whereas on 21 June 2008 the Olympic torch was carried though the streets of Lhasa surrounded by soldiers wearing riot gear and under heavy security; whereas only a selected and limited number of foreign correspondents representing about 30 international news organisations were allowed into the city to cover the torch relay; whereas according to some of their reports each member of the crowd had a badge, suggesting that spectators were specially chosen for the ceremony,

I. whereas the Communist Party secretary in Tibet, Zhang Qingli, openly politicised the event, saying during the Olympic flame ceremony in Lhasa that 'in order to bring more glory to the Olympic spirit, we should firmly smash the plots to ruin the Beijing Olympic Games by the Dalai clique and hostile foreign forces inside and outside the nation',

J. whereas in the Beijing Olympic Action Plan China promised 'free and open Olympics'; whereas the complete crackdown in Tibet is completely at odds with the Chinese Government's pledge to grant foreign journalists freedom of movement all over China and greater press freedom in the run-up to the Olympic Games,

K. whereas the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expected that awarding the 2008 Olympic Games to China would open up the country and improve the human rights situation; whereas the President of the Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) publicly promised on 27 September 2006 to honour commitments made during the bid to host the Olympic Games to improve the human rights situation,

L. whereas every effort should be made to take advantage of the Olympic Games in Beijing as an extraordinary opportunity to bring about democratic reforms in China and achieve significant progress on the issue of Tibet,

M. whereas the human rights situation in China has shown no sign of improvement, as demonstrated by the detention on 10 June 2008 of the leading Internet human rights activist Huang Qi, who has since been denied access to legal counsel, on suspicion of illegally possessing state secrets, after he visited the Sichuan earthquake zone and published news about the plight of parents who lost children in the disaster, and by the arrests of Pastor Zhang Mingxuan and his interpreter as they were travelling by bus to the Yanshan

Hotel to meet with MEP Bastiaan Belder, who was in Beijing for the fifth meeting of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership,

N. whereas the EU-China human rights dialogue established in 2000 has so far achieved no tangible results; whereas the lack of results is also the consequence of an uncoordinated and ineffective EU common foreign policy towards China,

O. whereas the recent General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meetings and the European Council of 19-20 June 2008 deliberately turned a blind eye to human rights violations in China and Tibet and the possible initiatives to be taken with regard to the Olympic Games,

1. Expresses its deep concern at the situation in Tibet and at the human rights situation in China in general; takes the view that the ongoing persistent violations constitute a blatant breach of the undertakings given by China when the country was awarded the Olympic Games;

2. Calls on the Chinese authorities immediately to put an end to the violent crackdown in Tibet, withdraw security forces from monasteries and end the patriotic education campaign;

3. Welcomes the recent release of Tibetan detainees, but calls on the Chinese Government to re-evaluate the cases and uphold the principles of freedom and justice during the retrial of the convicted Tibetans; urges, at the same time, the Chinese authorities to facilitate similar free and fair legal proceedings for all of those Tibetans presently languishing in prison by offering them the right to a defence and independent counsel and the possibility to meet relatives;

4. Takes note of the decision to allow foreign tourists back into Tibet, but urges the Chinese authorities to grant unfettered access to all Tibetan areas for international observers, international fact-finding missions, diplomats and foreign correspondents;

5. Welcomes the seventh round of talks between the Beijing authorities and the representatives of the Dalai Lama, which were held on 1 and 2 July 2008; expects the negotiations to achieve substantial and tangible results before the Olympic Games and calls on the Chinese authorities to invite the Dalai Lama to the opening ceremony of the games as a sign of goodwill;

6. Deplores the lack of any clear reaction so far by the Council to the latest developments in Tibet and the overall human rights situation in China; urges the Council, in this respect, to place the human rights situation in China and Tibet under immediate close scrutiny and to adopt a common position committing EU leaders not to attend the opening ceremony should no progress be made on the Tibetan question, the human rights situation in China and the honouring by China of the undertakings given in connection with the Olympic Games;

7. Reiterates, in this regard, its call to the Council to appoint a special envoy for Tibetan issues in order to facilitate dialogue between the parties and closely monitor the negotiations;

8. Takes note of the multilateral discussions among EU Member States and other governments on coordinated efforts to press the Chinese Government for progress on Tibet and calls for a continuation of this approach, including the setting-up of a Contact Group that would work with the Tibetans and Chinese to ensure that both parties are making all possible efforts to achieve a negotiated agreement for Tibet;

9. Criticises the failure by the IOC to comment on the Olympic torch relay staged in the streets of Lhasa at a time when Tibet is de facto under martial law and closed to the outside world; deplores the statements made by Zhang Qingli at the torch relay ceremony in Lhasa; takes note of the criticism of these statements expressed by the IOC and condemns the refusal by the Chinese authorities to apologise publicly for what

happened; takes the view that the IOC has a responsibility to press the Chinese Government to allow foreign media access to any leg of the torch relay or any other Olympic event without burdensome restrictions and that it should always stand up for Olympic values;

10. Calls for the release of Huang Qi and Zhang Mingxuan and his interpreter and reiterates its call for the release of Hu Jia, a nominee in 2007 for the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, and Yang Chunlin, Gao Zhisheng and the other human rights activists who have been detained, arrested, imprisoned or harassed for either voicing their discontent with the Beijing Olympic Games, protesting against forced evictions resulting from Olympic building work or defending such protesters; expresses its concernat the situation of the cyber-dissident and wife of Hu Jia, Zeng Jinyan, and their six month-old daughter, who are currently subject to constant police surveillance and harassment;

11. Reiterates its call to China to grant an independent body access to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama of Tibet, and his parents, as requested by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and to stop interfering in religious affairs;

12. Calls on the Chinese authorities to issue a standing invitation to the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and UN agencies to visit Tibet;

13. Emphasises the need to considerably strengthen and improve the EU-China human rights dialogue and deplores, in this regard, the lack of consistency between the legal seminars organised prior to EU-China human rights dialogues and the human rights dialogue itself; regards it as crucial that the other party should have no final say in the selection of the representatives of civil society organisations involved in these legal seminars;

14. Criticises the lack of a coordinated and coherent European policy towards China and points out that relations with China have so far been marked by wild competition among EU leaders, whose only interest has been to sign lucrative contracts with the Chinese authorities at the expense of human rights; deplores the fact that respect for human rights is not a criterion for the award of the Olympic Games;

15. Calls on the Council to invite the Dalai Lama to a General Affairs Council meeting to present his assessment of the situation in Tibet and explain to the 27 Foreign Affairs Ministers the middle-way approach and his concept of genuine autonomy to be implemented for all Tibetans within China;

16. Calls, therefore, on the European Union and the Member States to seriously consider joint measures vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China should the situation not improve and to reassess the strategic partnership with China;

17. Urges China to ratify without any further delay, and in any event before the Olympic Games, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments of the Member States, the President and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China and the International Olympic Committee.

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