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Violation of Human Rights in the People's Republic of China with regard, in particular, to the freedom of religion

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

*Tabled by **Raiül Romeva i Rueda, Hélène Flautre, Helga Trüpel and Claude Turmes***

on behalf of the Green/EFA Group

The European parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights violations in China,
 - having regard to the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Communities of 14 April 2005,
 - having regard to on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter of 28 April 2005,
 - having regard to its resolution on the EU's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (14 March to 22 April 2005) of 24 February 2005,
- A. whereas democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are EU founding values that the Union is deeply committed to promoting in its relations with third countries;
- B. whereas the EU has developed with China a strategic partnership based in principle on the above-mentioned shared values;
- C. whereas in spite of the gradual liberalisation of the Chinese economy and the growing amount of economic and trade relations between China and the EU no substantial progress has been achieved in the field of human rights and the human rights dialogue has proved to be so far ineffective,
- D. whereas the EU-China human rights dialogue sets out the freedom of religion or belief, both public and private, as a priority matter;
- E. whereas religious freedom has particularly suffered from this situation with the People's Republic of China authorities seeking to restrict religious practice to government-sanctioned organizations and registered places of worship and to control the growth and scope of activities of religious, philosophical and spiritual groups;

F. whereas, amongst other Christian and various religious denominations, the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China has endured a long-time persecution and was forced to go underground as a consequence of these practices;

G. whereas many Christian clergy and authorities of other religious and spiritual doctrines have suffered brutal repression, being prevented not only from practising public worship but also being prevented from carrying out their ministry;

H. deeply concerned about the increase in arbitrary arrests, torture, unexplained disappearances, penal servitude, isolation and re-education camps, endured by Chinese Catholics and in general by followers of other philosophical and spiritual disciplines and political dissidents;

I. whereas the EU-China summit of 5 September 2005 has marked the 30th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic ties with the agreement on a new strategic dialogue; whereas the question of human rights is one of the key issues which was to be dealt with,

J. whereas the EU imposed an arms embargo on China in 1989 as a direct response to the tragic events of Tiananmen Square and this embargo is still in force because of the poor human rights record of China,

1. Calls on the Chinese Government to put an end to religious repression and to ensure that it respects international standards of human rights as well as religious rights guaranteeing democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of the media and political and religious freedom in China;

2. Calls on the Chinese government to ratify and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which was signed by China in October 1998;

3. Urges the Chinese Government to abolish the difference between approved and non-approved worship communities, as suggested by the UN Commission on Religious Intolerance since 1994;

4. Takes note that the Chinese government finally accepted the requests made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit China before the end of the year;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Council to make clear to the Chinese authorities that a genuine partnership can only develop when shared common values are fully respected and put into practice;

6. Urges the Commission and the Council to raise strongly and firmly the question of human rights violations during the bilateral meetings with regard, in particular, to EU-China summits including the issue of the persecution of Chinese Catholics and members of other religious confessions and spiritual disciplines;

7. Urges the Chinese Government to abstain from conditioning the internal structure and religious activities of the Chinese Catholic Church, of other Christian denominations as well as any other religious believer and practitioner;

8. Urges the Chinese Government to adopt balanced, non-arbitrary, legislation that fully guarantees the freedoms of speech, association and practice of religion;

9. Expresses its concern at the lack of substantial results as regards the EU-China human rights dialogue; calls for a thorough assessment of its effectiveness based upon the specific benchmarks defined in the framework of this dialogue and expects a more active and constructive commitment by the Chinese authorities;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, the Member countries of the UN Human Rights Commission and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

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