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Press release | 07.04.2011

China - Ai Weiwei arrest

EP calls for release of Ai Weiwei and for human rights to be central to EU-China relations

The European Parliament today debated the arrest of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei (1) and adopted a resolution calling for his immediate release. The Greens welcomed the vote, with Green MEP and chair of the EP's subcommittee on human rights **Heidi Hautala** saying:

"We welcome the clear call by the European Parliament for the immediate and unconditional release of Ai Weiwei by the Chinese authorities. The EU and its foreign policy high representative must apply pressure on China to this end.

"The arrest of Ai Weiwei is just the latest chapter of the recent crackdown on human rights activists and dissidents in China. By accusing Ai Weiwei of economic crime, China seems to have compared notes with Russia, Kazakhstan and Venezuela, which turn political prisoners into normal criminals.

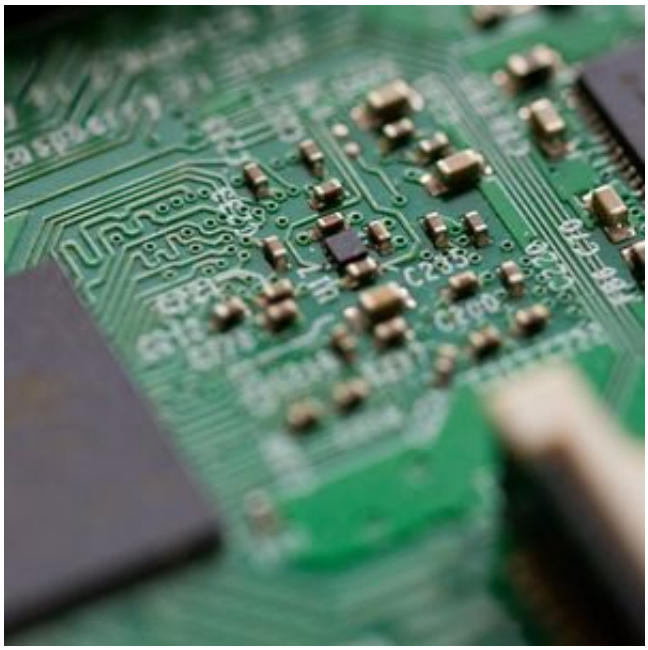
"The persistent litany of human rights abuses raises questions about the EU-China human rights dialogue and its effectiveness. The EU must prioritise the defense of human rights in its relations with all third countries and this must form an integral part of the new framework agreement being negotiated with China."

(1) Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, who famously co-designed Beijing's 'Bird's Nest' Olympic stadium, and has been a vocal critic of the Chinese regime, was arrested four days ago. The Chinese authorities last night confirmed his arrest, while denying political motivation.

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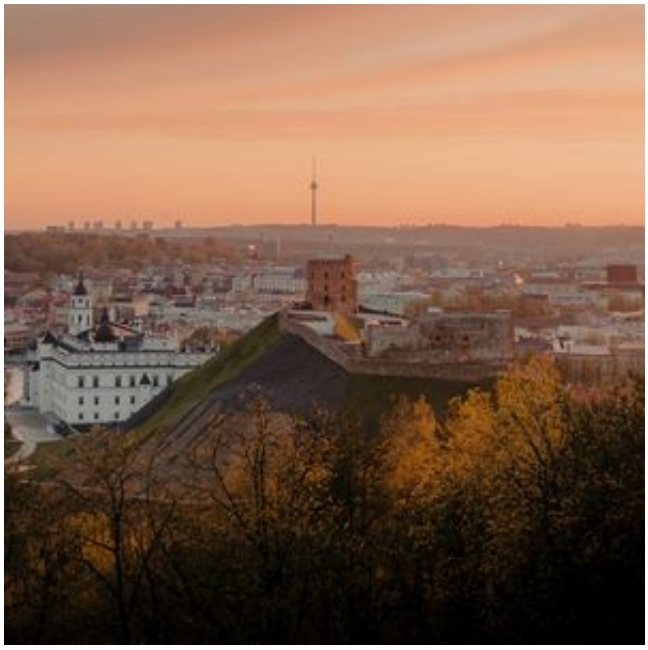
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Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

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