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Growing concern over human rights in Hong Kong

Press release from EFA MEP Jordi Solé

MEPs have today expressed growing concerns about the state of human rights and democracy in Hong Kong.

EFA MEP Jordi Solé spoke in the debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, which had been prompted by the recent closure of independent newspaper Apple Daily, and the deterioration in rights and freedoms since the controversial National Security Law entered into force a year ago.

He called for the progress on the EU – China investment agreement to be paused for as long as this erosion of human rights continues, not just in Hong Kong but also in Xinjang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and elsewhere.

Speaking in the debate **Jordi Solé** said:

"A year ago almost to the day, the National Security Law entered into force. Our concerns and those of the people of Hong Kong proved to be right. Today we have clear evidence of the real purpose of such legislation: a pretext for restricting human rights, with Beijing silencing dissident voices and dismantling democracy and freedom in Hong Kong.

"The case of the forced closure of Apple Daily is the latest regrettable example.

"The once vibrant, democratic civil society in Hong Kong that should have been protected under Hong Kong's basic law, as well as its high degree of autonomy, are - as a matter of fact - being destroyed at full speed.

"And it has to be remembered over and over that all this is happening in breach of the international commitments undertaken by China, by which Hong Kong's existing system and way of life had to remain unchanged for 50 years.

"It is commendable that despite the crackdown, Hong Kongers still demonstrate support for human rights and democracy, as happened a couple of weeks ago when, despite the police ban, hundreds commemorated the

anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre outside Victoria park.

“We need to cooperate closely with like-minded countries to halt the erosion of Hong Kong’s freedoms. And we reiterate that as long as human rights violations continue in Hong Kong (and Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and elsewhere in China), and targeted sanctions against EU officials and Members of this chamber are in place, no further steps on the EU-China Agreement on Investments should be taken. The Council should take good note of that.”

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Jordi Solé

Member

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