



WORLD UYGHUR CONGRESS

Weltkongress der Uighuren.e.V.

Dunya Uyghur Qurultiyi

Registration No: VR 18781

RE: China-EU Summit

Munich, June 27, 2015

Dear President Tusk,

Dear President Juncker,

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) writes in light of the upcoming China-EU summit taking place on June 29, 2015, in Brussels, Belgium, to urge EU representatives to substantively raise the issue of widespread Chinese rights abuses against its population. In particular, we wish that you discuss the issue of mounting abuses perpetrated towards the Uyghur population living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The event marks the 17th bilateral meeting between the two sides and presents the international community with an opportunity to urge real change with regards to human rights.

We recognize that it is in the best interest of the European Union (EU) to forge a strong relationship with states outside of its own membership in order to sustain amicable social, political and economic ties. It must also be reinforced, however, that the EU maintains a position that requires the promotion of the most basic human rights standards internationally. In your Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy from 2012, you set out some of the guiding principles with regards to foreign policy, outlining the fact that the EU is founded upon the shared principles of "respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law". In addition, the document sets out the intention of the EU to "promote human rights in all areas of its external action without exception".

We therefore call on the EU to act sensibly and to follow its own mandate when dealing with external affairs in this situation. Human rights should be of paramount importance and must be considered in tandem with all aspects of negotiations. Though we cannot superimpose our beliefs onto Chinese leadership, we must take a more strategic tack and demonstrate the advantages of a mutual agreement on the role of basic human rights protections for the civilian population and conversely, the clear disadvantages of callously restricting civil and political rights. Stability is in the interest of both the government and the people, but stability is not borne out of purposeful division and intolerance, but of fair and equal treatment.

The stated aims of the meeting will be to discuss the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation with particular emphasis on peace, security, sustainable development and the promotion of human rights. From the perspective of a human rights organization, when we talk about peace and security, we must inevitably consider the immediate implications and repercussions of security strategies. Security may imply safety for some, but invariably imposes a cost on another. In the context of Xinjiang today, aggressive securitization is aimed at protecting the civilian population (read: Han Chinese) at the direct expense of harshly restrictive and discriminatory policies against Uyghurs and others.

The importance of the relationship between liberty and security should not be understated. It is clear that the immediate impact China's current security policy will be to remove the inherent rights, viz. religious and cultural freedoms, from the Uyghur people in an ostensible attempt at fostering a stable environment, but the medium and long-term effects must be understood as well. We have witnessed only growing discontent for a number of years between the Uyghur people and the government as well as between ethnic groups in the region as a clear consequence of overt policies of discrimination that foment division.

The WUC would therefore like to offer some concise recommendations to be included in your dialogue on Monday, June 29th:

- (1) Substantively raise the issue of the violation of the human rights of the Uyghur people – too often is the Uyghur issue completely suppressed from any dialogue in favour of political and economic considerations.
- (2) Discuss the recently passed counter-terrorism laws in relation to its legality under international law as well as EU standards. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (among others) have publicly stated that the recently adopted legislation contains elements that are in clear violation of international human rights standards act as little more than a license to commit further human rights abuses.



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- (3) Urge Chinese leaders to release Uyghur-rights activists whom remain in prison. Ilham Tohti is the most prominent Uyghur who has been imprisoned since January, 2014, and was sentenced to life imprisonment back in September. His case is held up as an example by the Chinese government for all those involved in criticism of the state. Along with dialogue with China, the EU must work to galvanize public support for his release.
- (4) Develop a more transparent environment in relation to these discussions. The people of China as well as citizens of the member states of the EU deserve the opportunity to observe and critique the actions of their governments. EU leaders must be accountable and responsive to their citizens demands that human rights must be a crucial aspect to bilateral relationships such as these. The EU must also stress to China the importance of accountability and the advantages and necessity of the promotion of democracy.

The EU stands in a unique to position with regards to China and it should demonstrate its priorities by stressing the mutual importance and significance of the respect for human rights, particularly with regards to Uyghurs. It is not just in the interest of the Uyghur people to have their most basic rights protected, but also in the interest of Chinese and European leaders who wish for genuine stability and cooperation on all sides.

We therefore call on President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, along with the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, to make a concerted effort to focus some substantive attention to the issue of human rights in China today.

Sincerely,

Dolkun Isa
Executive Committee Chairman
World Uyghur Congress