



**Herman Van Rompuy**  
President of the European Council

Brussels, 14 October 2011  
Our Ref: B1106

Dear Mr Van Rompuy,

**Place human rights on the EU-China agenda**

The 14<sup>th</sup> EU-China Summit, to be held in Tianjin on 25 October 2011, presents an invaluable opportunity to demonstrate that human rights are genuinely at the heart of the European Union's foreign policy. EU Foreign Ministers at the Council meeting on 10 October set out that the summit will discuss "bilateral cooperation as well as global economic governance and climate change". While discussing these matters, we urge you not to shy away from raising key human rights concerns with your Chinese counterparts.

Since we wrote to you last year, prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit, China has taken repression of human rights to new heights, driven in part by its fear of repercussions in China of the popular movements in the Middle East this spring, and on-going persecution of ethnic minority and religious groups.

- Hundreds of little-known bloggers and 'netizens', as well as better-known human rights defenders and lawyers were arbitrarily detained in the aftermath of popular movements in the Middle East in the spring, many of them for several months. Some of those released described torture and ill-treatment while in custody, as a means to intimidate them into silence. Many others were too afraid to speak out about their treatment in detention.
- Repression of religious freedom in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan regions of China has also, since March, resulted in increasingly desperate acts of protest in the form of self-immolation by young monks.
- Thousands of Falun Gong practitioners continue to be imprisoned and held in administrative detention on account of their religion, with those who refuse to renounce their beliefs subject to increasingly severe torture and ill-treatment, resulting in the deaths of many in custody.

The intensified use of repression by the Chinese authorities as a reaction to growing demands by people in China for freedom and for respect of their rights is increasing the risk of political and social instability in the country. This in turn further erodes the legitimacy of the Chinese government. In the long run, this increases the risk of regime instability in China, as it has elsewhere, with negative impact on the health of China's economy and repercussions for the global economy. With a new Chinese leadership preparing to take office in China next year, EU leaders must use all their diplomatic resources to persuade Chinese leaders that sustainable development and cooperation can only be achieved in a society which respects, protects and promotes the rights and freedoms of its individuals.

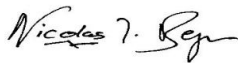
Turning a blind eye to ongoing human rights violations in China and elsewhere would damage the EU's efforts to remain a credible global actor. Human rights must be an integral component of any bilateral cooperation between the EU and China. Putting trade and cooperation above human rights may lead to short-term economic gains, but put longer-term growth and stability in China, and globally, at risk.

At its meeting on 10 October, the Foreign Affairs Council also set out that leaders will discuss “global and regional peace and security issues, including the latest developments in the southern Mediterranean, in Iran and in Afghanistan”. China, as a key UN member state, must contribute more constructively to realising the purposes of the UN Charter, including in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. We urge you to impress on China the need to take a more constructive role in the promotion and protection of human rights on the international scene, and to rise to its responsibility as an emerging political power.

In upholding the EU's treaty commitments of ensuring that respect for human rights is genuinely placed at the core of all foreign policy decisions, we urge you to communicate the following to your Chinese counterparts:

- Chinese authorities must cease to use arbitrary detention and imprisonment of individuals who peacefully hold or express political or religious views and beliefs at odds with those of the authorities.
- Chinese authorities must give genuine freedom to ethnic minorities, including Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians, to enjoy their culture and religion, and to ensure that they also enjoy the benefits of economic development in their regions.
- The Chinese authorities must cease the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners for their spiritual beliefs and practices. Individuals imprisoned or held in administrative detention on such grounds must be released.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Nicolas J. Beger  
Director

Cc:

José Manuel Barroso, President, European Commission

Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice President of the European Commission

Viorel Isticioaia-Budura, Managing Director Asia Department, EEAS

James Moran, Head of Asia Department, EEAS

Véronique Arnault, Head of Human Rights and Democracy Department, EEAS

Markus Ederer, Head of the EU Delegation to China