

Donald Tusk
President of the European Council
Rue de la Loi 175
1049 Brussels

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

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Dear President Tusk,

EU MUST NOT COMPROMISE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY FOR CHINA

Ahead of the 22 June European Union (EU) Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and the 29 June EU-China Summit, Amnesty International calls on the EU and its member states to agree on a consistent and strategic approach to fully engage China on human rights at the summit and beyond.

Over the past few years, Amnesty International has regularly called on the EU to ensure that human rights remain at the centre of its exchanges with the Chinese authorities¹ even as the human rights situation in the country continues to deteriorate. Repression of dissent and freedom of expression and association has escalated, with increasing numbers of human rights defenders harassed and detained²; the government's crackdown on civil society is obstructing the legitimate and vital work of numerous NGOs³; and new laws including a draft National Security Law and Anti-Terrorism Law, still contain overly broad definitions of "terrorism" and "extremism" that allow the authorities to prosecute minorities, human rights defenders and others who criticise government policies.⁴

With 2015 marking the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations, it is crucial that the EU and its member states adopt a pro-active, public and consistent approach regarding human rights in China, starting with this month's FAC and summit. Only by strengthening its critical partnership with China beyond security, trade relations and investment opportunities, will the EU see progress in the human rights situation for people in the country.

If in face of these gravely concerning human rights abuses the EU and its member states fail to speak out and ensure substantive discussions on human rights, they will undermine their own foreign policy including the commitment to place human rights at the centre of relations with all third countries, including strategic partners. Furthermore, to compromise on raising human rights issues at this summit will also damage the EU's own efforts to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

The EU and its member states should therefore:

- Take the opportunity of the upcoming Foreign Affairs Council on 22 June to speak with one strong voice and publicly define a collective strategy on China, including on human rights
- Put China regularly on the FAC agenda in order to allow systematic review of this key partnership, including human rights engagement, with a view to ensuring greater coherence and cooperation across the EU institutions and member states

¹ See Amnesty International, "EU and China must put human rights at centre of dialogue", 17 April 2015. http://www.amnesty.eu/content/assets/Letters2015/B1674_HR_in_EU_China_Strategic_Dialogue_17042015.pdf; "EU must put human rights at the centre of relations with China", 27 March 2015. http://www.amnesty.eu/content/assets/Letters2014/B1534_China-EU.pdf

² Amnesty International, "China: Deplorable prison sentence against prominent journalist an attack on press freedom", 17 April 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/04/china-deplorable-prison-sentence-against-prominent-journalist-an-attack-on-press-freedom/>; Amnesty International, "China: Chinese activist detained following protest: Wu Gan", 8 June 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/1831/2015/en/>

³ Amnesty International, "China: Submission to the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission on the second draft Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations Management Law", 1 June 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/1776/2015/en/>

⁴ Amnesty International, "China: Draconian anti-terror Law an assault on human rights", 4 March 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/03/china-draconian-anti-terror-law/>

- Mainstream human rights concerns at all levels of the EU-China relationship, including at the highest levels, and not only limited to human rights dialogues and meetings with an explicit human rights angle
- Ensure that any and all cooperation between the EU, its member states and China on security and/or counter-terrorism upholds human rights and does not resort to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, nor the criminalisation of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The EU and its member states must also ensure internal-external coherence on human rights in order to ensure credibility and legitimacy in such exchanges with Chinese counterparts
- Ensure that human rights discussions with China are based both on equality and mutual respect, as well as on universality of human rights and on the international human rights commitments undertaken by China and the EU and its member states.

Both the EU and its member states have a significant role to play to achieve a consistent, collective effort to promote and protect the human rights of the people of China. We look forward to your concerted engagement and concrete outcomes on human rights at the forthcoming FAC and the EU-China Summit, and stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Ivorna McGowan
Director of Programmes
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Cc:

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