



To the attn. of:

Members of the European Parliament

19 May 2026

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

Ahead of your forthcoming visit to China, we urge you to put human rights at the centre of your engagement with your Chinese counterparts.

Our organizations have long called on European decision-makers to move beyond abstract expressions of concern to seek to meaningfully address the human rights crisis affecting people across China and take concrete actions to mitigate it.¹ This is because we believe in the universality of human rights, and in the human rights commitments the European Union (EU) has made to the international community and to its own citizens. Yet we repeatedly see the human rights track in EU-China relations de-prioritized and deprived of the same determination dedicated to security, trade and other areas of EU external action.

Since President Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012, the Chinese authorities have launched a wholesale assault on human rights including widespread [arbitrary detention](#), [forced assimilation](#), [forced labour](#) and [torture](#); as well as [transnational repression](#) outside the country, including in Europe – all with impunity, as few Chinese officials are known to have been held accountable for these serious violations.

The Chinese authorities exert unrelenting control over information and public discourse, suppressing dissent and peaceful assembly, surveilling human rights defenders and other civil society actors, and prosecuting many of them under vague national security provisions. Groups that earlier enjoyed some space to operate – such as feminists and members of the LGBTI community – now face further restrictions and harsher punishment. Chinese authorities not only [refuse](#) to comply with many of the country's international human rights obligations, but also seek to rewrite global human rights [norms](#) and weaken key international [institutions](#).

While the EU [considers](#) China as simultaneously a cooperation partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival, the European institutions need to take into account all aspects of Chinese authorities' actions – above all, China's mounting rights violations at home and abroad, and its active undermining of global human rights norms and the international institutions that safeguard them.

During your visit, we strongly urge you to reiterate the European Parliament's unequivocal commitment to the universality and indivisibility of human rights, and your readiness to engage your counterparts on China's serious human rights violations:

¹ See [Joint NGO letter ahead of EU-China Summit](#), 17 July 2025; [NGOs call for suspension of EU-China human rights dialogue as government continues assault on human rights at home and abroad](#), 13 June 2024; [NGOs urge European Council to keep human rights at the core of EU relations with China](#), 12 June 2023; [The EU must double down on human rights in its relations with China](#), 5 May 2023.

- Call for the immediate and unconditional release of human rights defenders who have been detained for their legitimate work, naming individuals explicitly and echoing the EU's most recent [statement](#) at the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council.
- In line with the European Parliament's recent [resolution](#) on the new Chinese Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, urge your Chinese counterparts to repeal this legislation which violates the cultural, linguistic and religious [rights of Tibetans, Uyghurs and other ethnic groups](#) in China and which risks being applied to restrict rights abroad.
- Request that the Chinese authorities clarify the whereabouts of individuals whose families have been seeking information about their loved ones in the Uyghur Region, including the [40 Uyghurs deported from Thailand to China](#) in February 2025, and press for them to be allowed to communicate freely with their families.
- Express full support for independent, international investigations into allegations made by the [UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) and the [UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) of possible Chinese government crimes against humanity, including but not limited to, crimes targeting Uyghurs and other non-Han ethnic groups.
- Conclude your visit with a public statement expressing solidarity with people across China who seek to exercise, promote and defend human rights and calling for the immediate and unconditional release of human rights defenders who have been detained for their legitimate work.

Follow up on this visit with sustained efforts to:

- Keep human rights in China high on the agenda across all work in the European Parliament, including by engaging with the EU and its member states toward a robust and strategic engagement on China that centres on human rights.
- Urgently redouble efforts toward the protection of, and genuine consultation with, independent civil society and human rights defenders from China and in exile, including adopting and following up on strong urgency resolutions when human rights defenders are targeted for their work in or on China.
- Urge the European Commission to place human rights at the centre of its economic and political discussions by addressing how [China's low-rights economic model](#) distorts competition, undermines European economic security and requires trade measures that account for its social and environmental costs.
- Going forward, use parliamentary scrutiny powers to ensure the EU and its member states anchor their China policy in binding human rights due diligence and enforceable corporate accountability and make human rights a structural criterion of EU trade and investment policy toward China.

We look forward to meeting with you upon your return, to discuss further about meaningful actions for human rights in China.

Amnesty International

China Human Rights Defenders

Front Line Defenders

Human Rights Watch

International Campaign for Tibet

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

World Uyghur Congress