



Plenary sitting

B9-0563/2022

13.12.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China

(2022/2992(RSP))

Reinhard Bütikofer, Yannick Jadot, Henrike Hahn, Francisco Guerreiro, Hannah Neumann, Ignazio Corrao, Alviina Alametsä, Rosa D'Amato
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

European Parliament resolution on Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China

(2022/2992(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions and reports on the situation in China, in particular that on the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including the Xinjiang police files of 9 June 2022,
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 12 March 2019 entitled ‘EU-China – A strategic outlook’ (JOIN(2019)0005),
 - having regard to the Sakharov Prize 2019 awarded to Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur economist fighting peacefully for the rights of China’s Uyghur minority,
 - having regard to the decision of the Council of the EU of 5 December 2022 to prolong the measures taken under the Council Regulation (EU) 2020/1998 of 7 December 2020 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses,
 - having regard to the Remarks by President Charles Michel following the meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping of 1 December 2022,
 - having regard to the EEAS’s press communication EU-U.S.: Consultations between the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and European External Action Service Secretary General Stefano Sannino of 2 December 2022,
 - having regard to the European Council’s statement EU-China summit: Restoring peace and stability in Ukraine is a shared responsibility of 1 April 2022,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966, which China signed in 1998, but which it has never ratified,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law should remain at the centre of the long-standing relationship between the EU and China, in line with the EU’s commitment to upholding these values in its external action and China’s expressed interest in adhering to them in its own development and international cooperation;
- B. whereas, China has, since the start of the pandemic, adopted a strict COVID zero-

tolerance policy as the main means to fight against the spread of the coronavirus; whereas China's vaccination campaign has been less than successful with roughly 90 million elderly people not sufficiently vaccinated until now; whereas this has resulted in frequent and protracted lockdowns, massive and systematic testing requirements and quarantining, disproportionate and severe limitations to freedom of movement inside China and to trans-border mobility, with severe impacts to China's economy with worldwide ramifications;

- C. whereas the Chinese leadership and Xi Jinping personally have considerably staked their political reputation on the zero-tolerance policy and pursued it relentlessly with measures that have greatly violated Chinese citizens' expectations hopes, interests and rights;
- D. whereas days and weeks before the widespread protests erupted, high levels of tension had materialised in some factories, such as in Foxconn factories, where workers massively fled in order to escape radical total factory lockdowns following COVID outbreaks inside the production sites and in protests against the recurrent non-payment of bonuses during lockdowns; whereas factory protests turned violent as social media videos showed workers being beaten by the police;
- E. whereas, as of 26 November, an apartment fire that took at least 10 lives in Urumqi, Xinjiang, in a predominantly-Uyghur residential building, where residents have been subject to strict lockdowns for 100 days in some cases, and the delayed emergency response, allegedly due to covid measures, was the last deplorable event triggering an unprecedented wave of public unrest throughout the country, leading to what have constituted the largest and nation-wide demonstrations since Tiananmen in 1989;
- F. whereas protesters articulated their criticism in many provinces and directly-administrated municipalities and reportedly in more than 100 universities; whereas Chinese protesters used direct criticisms as well as indirect expressions; whereas many protesters used blank sheets of paper to express their anger over the oppression of free speech;
- G. whereas Chinese authorities immediately deployed large numbers of police at the sites of planned protests in major cities in order to prevent fresh demonstrations from taking root and have massively tracked messaging apps, social media and cellphone data considered suspicious and use of VPNs to identify, intimidate and harass those supposed to be organizing and participating in protests, which is a further demonstration that China has expanded its ability to track every movements and activities of its citizens under Xi Jinping;
- H. whereas, since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a very concerning expansion of state surveillance of citizens through advanced technology, including artificial intelligence; whereas Chinese corona-tracking applications have been used to severely restrict freedom of movement and in one instance allegedly to prevent Chinese citizens in Henan to protest against the failure of rural banks by indiscriminately manipulating their health codes;
- I. whereas, in a nationally-coordinated move, students were sent home from universities

one month early in order to prevent them from continuing organised protests;

- J. whereas following the protests, local authorities as well as the national government have started lifting some of the most oppressive COVID-related restrictions;
1. Expresses its strongest support and sympathy to the brave Chinese citizens who have taken the streets and organised protests in spite of very high risks for their safety and integrity; deeply deplores the reaction by Chinese authorities that led to a systematic harassment of the citizens who participated or may have intended to participate in the peaceful demonstrations and urges the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been detained;
 2. Urges Chinese authorities to respect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association enshrined in China's Constitution and international human rights law, by stopping pursuing people involved in peaceful protests and letting people express their thoughts freely and peacefully without fear of retaliation;
 3. Considers the violent assault and detention of a foreign journalist extremely disturbing; urges Chinese authorities to guarantee unfettered access to report in China as provided by Chinese law and to prevent any intimidation of journalists;
 4. Welcomes the fact that the protest movement has united people from very different contexts and has taken place nationwide; highlights that it remarkably included solidarity with the victims of a fire in Xinjiang, after the terrible fate of the Uyghurs had been without relevant reaction over the last six years among China's Han population;
 5. Underlines that the relationship between oppressors and oppressed in China has changed dramatically in a few days and that inhumane and degrading COVID 19-related restrictions and the deplorable crackdown of the recent demonstrations show that Xi Jinping's authoritarian excess have inexorably broken up the social contract with the Chinese people; denounces that the dreadful effects of such Zero COVID policy have been extremely hard on social conditions of workers who are not protected by social safety nets in case of lockdowns or factory shutdowns due to the current economic slowdown;
 6. Is alarmed at the fact that Chinese authorities and police have assembled one of the world's most sophisticated surveillance systems by getting access to powerful facial recognition software and technology to heavily restrict fundamental freedoms in a generalised fashion or even massively violate human rights, up to committing crimes against humanity, for instance against Uyghurs; is concerned about mounting evidence that Chinese authorities are externalising oppression, including by monitoring Chinese diaspora groups abroad; Urges the Commission and the Member States to scale up export control tools to avoid transferring critical and dual use technology to the Chinese regime;
 7. Condemns the involvement of Chinese technology companies TikTok and Tencent in working with the Chinese Government to gather evidence of the identity of protestors so they can be arrested and censoring the internet and calls on European pension funds to

divest from Chinese companies that undermine human rights;

8. Notes that European Council President Charles Michel claims to have raised the protests with Xi Jinping on the occasion of their recent bilateral meeting; also notes that all European leaders should clearly signal to the Chinese side the EU's determination to react to the protests' crackdown by raising it in international organisations and to possibly initiate additional sanctions if necessary; stresses that all human rights issues in China must be raised prominently and openly in all bilateral meetings with the Chinese counterparts at EU and Member States' levels and especially at high political level;
9. Welcomes that several European leaders have reiterated the offer to provide China with European vaccines;
10. Stresses the urgent need to update the EU strategy towards China, in light of the current context where rivalry has clearly become a more prominent facet of the relation; calls on HRVP Borrell to concretely follow up to the recent European Council's discussions by intensifying exchanges at the level of Member State's foreign affairs ministers, with a view to adopting a new strategy in the course of 2023; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to set up a permanent discussion and exchange on China in the framework of COASI; welcomes the decision to prolong the sanctions against human rights violations in Xinjiang until 8 December 2023;
11. Considers that the widespread use of strict and protracted lockdowns, and the high degree of unpredictability thereof, have put a great burden on EU companies and personnel present in China; warns about the fact that companies' confidence with regard to the business environment in China has seriously deteriorated and that companies, especially mid-sized ones, are definitely reconsidering their presence or planned investments in China; highlights the widespread understanding that the EU is too dependent on China on strategic and crucial inputs, and that such critical vulnerabilities must be solved as a matter of urgency and with a strategic approach;
12. Asks the EU and its Member States to continue to work with like-minded partners towards the establishment of an investigative mechanism at the UN Human Rights Council to monitor, assess and publicly report on serious human rights violations across China; in particular, urges the EU and its Member States to call for the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to brief states on the report issued by his Office documenting the Chinese government's likely crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, with a view to eventually establishing a long-overdue investigation by the UN Human Rights Council; urges all EU Member States to continue supporting all cross-regional joint statements and other initiatives condemning those abuses; encourages EU Member States' authorities to consider initiating prosecution against Chinese officials deemed responsible for crimes against humanity, through the principle of universal jurisdiction;
13. Reiterates its calls on the Commission to propose an import ban on all products produced by forced labour and on products produced by all Chinese companies listed as exploiting forced labour; reiterates its position in favour of an ambitious corporate sustainability due diligence directive;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the

Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China.