The EU closely monitors the developments surrounding COVID-19 in China. As the Chinese authorities redouble their efforts to control the virus, there is no doubt that the strict COVID-19 prevention measures are having a very significant impact on the lives of the residents of Shanghai, Beijing and – increasingly – other cities, including on the European residents and the diplomatic community. Coercive decisions, which include strict quarantine and testing measures, are often taken without prior notice, are arbitrary and consular protection is not guaranteed in a lockdown.

The EU and its Member States have, in a coordinated effort, urged the Chinese authorities to, inter alia, not to transfer EU nationals in China to centralized quarantine facilities and to ensure regular flights between China and Europe. The EU and its Members States have also asked for unconditional access for EU nationals to airports in order to return to their home country. The Chinese authorities have not given an official response to these requests yet, but the EU and its Member States will continue their efforts to protect the rights of EU nationals in China and to keep commercial routes open.