

Question for written answer E-001329/2023

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

Mikuláš Peksa (Verts/ALE), **Antoni Comín i Oliveres** (NI), **Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó** (NI), **Clara Ponsatí Obiols** (NI), **Miriam Lexmann** (PPE), **Markéta Gregorová** (Verts/ALE), **Fabio Massimo Castaldo** (NI), **Reinhard Bütikofer** (Verts/ALE), **Hannes Heide** (S&D), **Aušra Maldeikienė** (PPE), **Salima Yenbou** (Renew)

Subject: 34th birthday of the Panchen Lama

On the occasion of the 34th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama, the second most important religious figure in Tibetan Buddhism, we wish to express our concern over his abduction by the authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 17 May 1995.

28 years on, the PRC authorities continue to deny members of the international community and Tibetans access to the Panchen Lama. The PRC authorities have not provided proof that he is alive, have not accounted for his whereabouts and have prevented him from exercising his fundamental freedoms.

The Panchen Lama's abduction raises concerns about the safety of other central figures of Tibetan Buddhism, such as His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

In view of this:

1. Has the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) discussed the disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama with his Chinese counterparts at any point in the past?
2. Will the VP/HR bring up the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance during the upcoming EU-China strategic dialogue?
3. Will the European External Action Service consider adopting an official position, similar to the bill adopted by the US, stating that the Dalai Lama's succession is a strictly religious matter, to be decided upon only by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhist community?

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