

P7_TA(2013)0097

EU-China relations

European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 on EU-China relations (2012/2137(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and China in May 1975,
- having regard to the main legal framework for relations with China, namely the EC-China Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement¹, signed in May 1985, which covers economic and trade relations and the EU-China cooperation programme,
- having regard to the negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that have been ongoing since 2007,
- having regard to the EU-China Strategic Partnership launched in 2003,
- having regard to the structured EU-China political dialogue formally established in 1994 and the High-Level Strategic Dialogue on strategic and foreign policy issues established in 2010,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 October 2006 to the Council and the European Parliament entitled ‘EU – China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities’ (COM(2006)0631),
- having regard to the Commission policy paper entitled ‘A maturing partnership: shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations’ (COM(2003)0533), endorsed by the European Council on 13 October 2003,
- having regard to the Council’s East Asia Policy Guidelines,
- having regard to the General Affairs and External Relations Council conclusions of 11-12 December 2006 entitled ‘EU-China Strategic Partnership’,
- having regard to the Commission Strategy Paper for China 2007-2013, the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-2013, and the 2010 mid-term review of the Strategy Paper and review of the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-2013,
- having regard to the first ever policy paper by China on the EU, issued on 13 October 2003,
- having regard to the EU-China dialogue on human rights, launched in 1995, and to the latest two rounds of the dialogue, the 30th round held in Beijing on 16 June 2011 and the 31st round held in Brussels on 29 May 2012,
- having regard to the almost 60 sectoral dialogues ongoing between China and the Union

¹ OJ L 250, 19.9.1985, p. 2.

concerning, *inter alia*, the environment, regional policy, employment and social affairs, and civil society,

- having regard to the establishment in February 2012 of the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue, which will accommodate all EU-China joint initiatives in this field,
- having regard to the scientific and technological cooperation agreement between the EC and China signed in December 1998, which entered into force in 2000¹ and was renewed in 2004 and 2009, the Science and Technology Partnership Agreement signed on 20 May 2009 and the EC-China Joint statement on energy cooperation of 8 December 2010,
- having regard to the agreement with China on cooperation in the EU's Galileo satellite navigation programme, signed on 30 October 2003,
- having regard to the 15th EU-China Summit, which took place in Brussels on 20 September 2012, and to the Joint Press Communiqué issued at the conclusion thereof,
- having regard to the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change agreed, and the Joint Declaration on Climate Change issued, at the 8th EU-China Summit in September 2005,
- having regard to the EU-China Joint Declaration on Energy Security made in Brussels on 3 May 2012, and to the 5th meeting of the Energy Dialogue between the EC and China held in November 2011,
- having regard to the China-EU Round Tables,
- having regard to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which took place from 8-14 November 2012, and to the leadership changes in the Politburo Standing Committee as decided at the congress,
- having regard to its most recent Interparliamentary Meeting with China, which took place in Brussels on 11 and 12 July 2012,
- having regard to its recent resolutions on China, in particular those of 23 May 2012 on EU and China: Unbalanced Trade?², of 2 February 2012 on the EU foreign policy towards the BRICs and other emerging powers: objectives and strategies³, and of 12 September 2012 on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)⁴,
- having regard to its resolutions of 7 September 2006 on EU-China relations⁵ and of 5 February 2009 on trade and economic relations with China⁶,
- having regard to its human rights resolutions of 21 January 2010 on human rights violations

¹ OJ L 6, 11.1.2000, p. 40.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0218.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0017.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0334.

⁵ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 219.

⁶ OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 132.

in China, notably the case of Liu Xiaobo¹, of 10 March 2011 on the situation and cultural heritage in Kashgar (Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China)², of 7 April 2011 on the case of Ai Weiwei³, of 5 July 2012 on the forced abortion scandal in China⁴, of 26 November 2009 on China: minority rights and application of the death penalty⁵, of 16 December 2010 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union's policy on the matter⁶,

- having regard to the EU arms embargo introduced after the Tiananmen crackdown of June 1989, as supported by Parliament in its resolution of 2 February 2006 on the main aspects and basic choices of Common Foreign and Security Policy⁷,
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2005 on relations between the EU, China and Taiwan and security in the Far East⁸,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Tibet and the human rights situation in China, in particular its resolutions of 25 November 2010 on Tibet: plans to make Chinese the main language of instruction⁹, of 27 October 2011 on Tibet, in particular self-immolation by nuns and monks¹⁰ and of 14 June 2012 on Tibet: the human rights situation¹¹,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A7-0434/2012),
- A. whereas the EU-China strategic partnership is of great importance for relations between the EU and China, and whereas this relationship is paramount for finding answers to global concerns, such as global and regional security, the economic crisis, global financial and market regulation, energy security, weapons of mass destruction and nuclear non-proliferation, climate change, the economic and social development of a market economy, the promotion of democracy and human rights and the fight against organised crime, terrorism and piracy, as well as in creating a framework to address bilateral concerns between the EU and China;
- B. whereas a strategic partnership requires a strong commitment to mutual responsibility and a good level of confidence, and must be based on universal values;
- C. whereas EU-China relations have developed considerably since the signing of the EU-China cooperation agreement in 1985; whereas the Commission adopted its main political strategy on China in 2006 and, in this context, launched negotiations in January 2007 on a comprehensive partnership and cooperation agreement with a view to further improving relations between the EU and China, in particular in the field of trade and investment;

¹ OJ C 305 E, 11.11.2010, p. 9.

² OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 185.

³ OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 137.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0301.

⁵ OJ C 285 E, 21.10.2010, p. 80.

⁶ OJ C 169 E, 15.6.2012, p. 81.

⁷ OJ C 288 E, 25.11.2006, p. 59.

⁸ OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 471.

⁹ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 118.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0474.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0257.

- D. whereas China is undergoing a process of socio-economic transition from an extensive model based on a state-controlled economy to a model based on more economic freedoms, which in turn has allowed a large proportion of the Chinese population to raise its standard of living;
- E. whereas, however, similar progress has not been made in the field of political liberties;
- F. whereas human rights are complementary, universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent; whereas China shows its preoccupation with economic and social human rights (e.g. food, clothing, economic development) while the EU takes a broader approach to human rights, including and with a particular emphasis on civil and political rights (e.g. freedom of speech, religion and association);
- G. whereas Chinese civil rights activists have reported on the deprivation of their liberty when they disappeared in police custody for several months, without any arrest warrant, indictment, contact with their families or legal aid;
- H. whereas already in 2007 President Hu Jintao instructed the highest level of the judiciary that judges should be guided by three ‘supremacies’ – the party, the people and the law, in that order – and whereas the Chinese Ministry of Justice decreed in March 2012 that all lawyers should swear an oath of allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in order to obtain or renew their licence;
- I. whereas the shocking news of mid-June 2012 regarding the extremely cruel forced abortion of the unborn daughter of seven-month-pregnant Feng Jianmei fuelled the debate on the abolition of the official one-child policy;
- J. whereas, despite the Chinese Government’s progress in promoting some economic and social rights, the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, press freedom and the right to join a trade union is persistently repressed; whereas human rights organisations continue to report serious human rights abuses by the Chinese authorities, including the sentencing of high-profile dissidents such as imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, expanded restrictions on media and internet freedom, tightened surveillance and harassment of lawyers, human rights defenders and non-governmental organisations, broadened control and oppression of Uighurs, Tibetans and their freedoms, and increasing numbers of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions, including in secret, unlawful detention facilities known as ‘black jails’; whereas repressive policies against Tibetans’ basic freedoms have triggered a worrying number of self-immolations in recent years;
- K. whereas China is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council; whereas this status entails a special duty for China to abide by its international legal obligations under the ICCPR and the Charter of the United Nations;
- L. whereas Hu Jia, the 2008 Sakharov Prize laureate, remains under house arrest and is subject to extensive surveillance and restricted communication;
- M. whereas the Chinese state recognises only five religions, namely Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity (both Catholicism and Protestantism); whereas all of these religions have centralised governing bodies with headquarters in Beijing and are staffed by officials loyal

to the CCP; whereas the CCP appoints top religious leaders and has banned non-approved religious groups such as Falun Gong since 1999 with the aim of eradicating the practice; whereas, as a consequence of this ban, human rights organisations have reported extralegal coercive measures such as arbitrary arrests, forced labour and physical torture, sometimes resulting in death;

- N. whereas the Tibet Autonomous Region, other Tibetan autonomous areas and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region have become increasingly important as regards China's strategic, regional, military and economic considerations and are therefore seen by the Chinese Government as core issues for China's territorial integrity; whereas since 2009 at least 90 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibetan-populated areas of the People's Republic of China (PRC), including the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan autonomous areas within the Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces;
- O. whereas, although the opening-up of the Chinese economy has brought major benefits such as better access to the employment market and a fall in rural unemployment, not all segments of the Chinese population have benefited equally from China's economic growth and there are large disparities emerging between urban and rural parts of the country;
- P. whereas inequalities between urban and rural populations in terms of income and access to employment, social welfare, healthcare and education constitute a significant cohesion policy challenge for China;
- Q. whereas EU-China cooperation in the field of science and technology is a matter of common interest; whereas internet use has spread in China and there are now more than 500 million users forming an online body of public opinion; whereas, however, the country's internet environment remains very restrictive;
- R. whereas the EU is the world's leading tourist destination, whereas 100 million Chinese are expected to travel abroad by 2020 and whereas it is therefore necessary to support initiatives aimed at attracting these new tourist flows;
- S. whereas China is the world's biggest carbon dioxide emitter and whereas emission levels are still increasing rapidly; whereas China's per capita CO₂ emissions reached 6.8 tonnes in 2010 and are expected to overtake US per capita emissions by 2017;
- T. whereas China is stepping up its efforts as regards market-based emissions trading systems; whereas China is carrying out seven pilot projects in this area with the purpose of establishing a national emissions trading scheme in 2015;
- U. whereas the 21st century is seeing China return to the world scene as an economic and commercial power, on account of its rapidly growing economic power and opaque military build-up;
- V. whereas the EU adheres to its one-China policy in the context of cross-Strait relations between the PRC and Taiwan;
- W. whereas the positive role played by the PRC in South-East Asia in terms of economic regionalisation and dynamics is becoming increasingly overshadowed by territorial disputes in the South China Sea with Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan, and in the East China Sea with Japan and Taiwan – all areas rich in fish and in oil

and gas reserves;

- X. whereas China maintains close relations with North Korea, the latter being largely economically dependent on the former, with an inflow of Chinese money and tourists being vital to the survival of the Pyongyang regime in its current state;
- Y. whereas China is cooperating with Russia, four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and four observer countries (India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan) in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); whereas Chinese investments in Central Asia will rise in the next decade from USD 20 billion to USD 100 billion, as announced at the SCO Summit in Beijing on 6 June 2012;
- Z. whereas the deepening relations between Beijing and Washington, along with the strong financial and economic ties between the two countries, constitute one of the world's most significant bilateral relationships; whereas Europe is China's first trading partner;
- AA. whereas nowhere in the world is China's explosive growth more visible than in Africa and Latin America; whereas this is illustrated in particular by the impressive rise in China's mutual trade volume in Africa, which increased by 80 % between 2009 and 2011 to USD 166,3 billion, according to statistics released by the Chinese Trade Ministry; whereas Chinese foreign direct investment in Africa rose by 58,9 % in 2011 to USD 1,7 billion; whereas Chinese interests in Africa are visible through major development projects such as railways, roads and social welfare projects;

EU-China Strategic Partnership and cooperation

1. Supports the public commitment made by the EU and China during their High-Level Strategic Dialogue of 9-10 July 2012 in Beijing to setting a good example of international cooperation in the 21st century through their Strategic Partnership based on shared interests and mutual understanding; supports and encourages the almost 60 sectoral dialogues between the EU and China, with the conviction that an enhanced and highly developed partnership will be mutually beneficial to both the EU and China; wishes, however, to see a strengthening of these dialogues in the fields of human rights, the environment, security, energy and in particular the fight against counterfeit products, in view of its impact on public health and safety; encourages efforts to actively seek synergies between China's 12th Five-Year Plan and the Europe 2020 strategy with a view to deepening pragmatic cooperation in various fields; believes, moreover, that the concept of strategic partnership must be better defined; calls for increased trade and economic relations with China to go hand in hand with considerable progress in the political dialogue on human rights and the rule of law;
2. Expects Member States to give the European External Action Service (EEAS) and especially its Delegation in Beijing a clear mandate to strengthen the EU-China Strategic Partnership by speaking with one voice to the Chinese Government, and to refrain from implementing bilateral foreign policy initiatives that may jeopardise the efforts being made by the EEAS; calls for the EU to implement a long-term strategy vis-à-vis China, providing operational coordination both between the institutions of the Union and between the Union and its Member States; expects the Chinese authorities, at all political levels, to strengthen the EU-China Strategic Partnership through the consistent and transparent application of mutual and international agreements and rules;

3. Welcomes the agreements reached during the 15th EU-China Summit held in Brussels on 20 September 2012; urges their swift operationalisation and implementation, which will strengthen relations between the Union and China;
4. Welcomes also the commitments made at the 15th EU-China Summit, in particular regarding the negotiation of an agreement on investment and the establishment of a regular dialogue on defence and security issues;
5. Considers that relations between the EU and China, both at the economic and trade levels and at the cultural and social levels, could be one of the major factors in the development and betterment of both societies and therefore sees this cooperation as vital for the interests of both sides;
6. Welcomes the launch and successful first round of the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue; expresses satisfaction with the progress and achievements of the EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue and takes note of the agreement reached at the 15th EU-China Summit on a series of follow-up actions in various areas relating to education, culture, multilingualism and youth;
7. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the relevant Chinese authorities to facilitate, in cooperation with Parliament, tourist flows from China to the EU by harmonising and accelerating procedures for issuing visas for Chinese nationals, particularly in the context of business and conference travel;
8. Welcomes the call made by both sides at the 15th EU-China Summit for the launch of a comprehensive EU-China dialogue on mobility and migration at an appropriate level and their mutual undertaking to continue to explore ways of facilitating exchanges for Chinese and EU citizens, including mutual visa exemptions for holders of diplomatic passports;
9. Emphasises that China is not only the world's second-largest economy and biggest exporter in the global economy, but also an increasingly important political power;

Internal situation

10. Stresses that China, in recent decades, has achieved significant social progress; emphasises that such an improvement in the quality of life in a huge country in such a short period of time is unique in history; notes that China's economic growth has lifted more than half a billion people out of poverty since 1990;
11. Takes note of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), approved by the National People's Congress in March 2012, which is intended to tackle the negative side-effects of an unparalleled period of sustained high economic growth, such as acute environmental threats, regional imbalances, rising income inequality and continuing collective protests centred on social, economic and legal grievances;
12. Notes the importance of identifying common ground between the Europe 2020 strategy and China's 12th Five-Year-Plan;
13. Welcomes China's successful economic policy, but shares the criticism made by independent Chinese scholars and observers that the preservation of this trend is seriously threatened by corruption scandals, a lack of transparency and a 'red aristocracy' of close

family members of former and present party leaders who possess enormous fortunes owing to their political and economic connections, a grave situation which was recently laid bare by the Bo Xilai affair;

14. Looks forward to the speedy implementation of the repeated calls for democratisation and political reforms inside the CCP by the new party leadership; believes that only effective political reforms aimed at shaping inclusive, democratic and accountable institutions that reflect China's ethnic, religious, political and social diversity will pave the way for building sustainable growth and stability and curb the semi-independence of high-handed provincial, district and local party bosses, who badly damage the reputation of China's national leadership both internally and externally through their abuses of power, with particular reference to the very costly and endemic cases of corruption; considers that such cases should be tackled through the introduction of accountability mechanisms, as acknowledged by Chairman Hu Jintao during the 18th CCP Congress of November 2012;
15. Shares and supports the vehement rejection by Chinese lawyers of a compulsory oath of allegiance to the CCP on the grounds that it is an attack on the legal system which blatantly disregards international legal standards, because any lawyer should swear allegiance to the constitution and not to a political party or organisation;
16. Emphasises that, although forced abortions are strictly illegal in China, family-planning officials repeatedly coerce women into inhumane practices such as forced abortions or sterilisation; condemns the so-called 'social maintenance fee', an often-exorbitant fine that parents have to pay in the event of extra births, as was the case in the tragedy of Feng Jianmei; points out that official statistics show that in 2011 there were 8 400 complaints from victims about misconduct by family-planning authorities; wholeheartedly supports Chinese voices calling for an end to the one-child policy, with its many loopholes, particularly in the light of demographic trends in China, while stressing its severe negative social and psychological consequences such as social disparities, a worsening gender equality situation, widespread negative feeling about the birth of a female child and the still-growing imbalance between baby boys and girls, which is creating 'little emperors', disrupting the traditional family structure and, moreover, reducing the intake of young people in the labour market; calls on the Chinese leadership to consider it a top priority to find a solution to this problem;
17. Takes serious account of the vigorous protests by workers at the Foxconn plant and demands that workers' rights be respected; supports the pursuit of decent pay and decent working conditions;
18. Welcomes China's efforts to establish a nationwide emissions trading system by 2015, which could in the future be integrated with other carbon trading systems, in particular the EU's Emissions Trading System; notes, however, that China does not yet have a fully-functioning, mature market economy, which is a clear prerequisite for a well-functioning emissions trading system;
19. Urges the Chinese Government to step up the measuring of pollutants and emissions in order to overcome the lack of reliable carbon emission data, to establish a better legal infrastructure and to increase capacity-building at an administrative level; welcomes, in this connection, the financing agreement of 20 September 2012 between the EU and China, which promotes the environment, the transition towards a low-carbon economy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in China;

20. Takes note of the decision of Hong Kong's Chief Executive not to force the implementation of a controversial 'national education' curriculum following mass demonstrations and widespread opposition; calls on the Beijing authorities fully to respect the 'one country-two systems' principle in compliance with the agreement signed before the handover of the former British colony to the PRC; welcomes the high turnout in the recent Legislative Council elections and expects universal suffrage to be introduced for the election of all the members of this assembly as soon as possible;

Human rights and democracy

21. Admires and supports the courage and activism of those Chinese citizens acting in socially responsible ways to promote and defend universally recognised social and human rights, and to challenge and correct well-known social dangers and/or criminal acts such as corruption, abuses of office, environmental damage, AIDS infection, food poisoning, construction fraud in relation to schools, and illegal land and property expropriation, often committed by local party authorities; denounces all instances of official retaliation against these Chinese citizens; urges the Chinese leadership to encourage civil responsibility in terms of observing social human rights and to rehabilitate officially persecuted and punished defenders of these rights; reminds the Chinese leadership to comply strictly with domestic and international human rights law;

22. Strongly endorses the critical comments of Chinese lawyers and jurists that the humiliating detainment of suspects for more than 15 days conflicts with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which China signed in October 1998; expresses its concern at the unwillingness of the Chinese Government to ratify the ICCPR, a situation which is still pending; deplores the fact that under the new Criminal Procedures Law of 2013 police and state security authorities can even detain a suspect for more than 14 months without any assistance from a lawyer; fully supports the criticism of Chinese jurists that the police retain the option not only of keeping suspects under house arrest, but also of detaining them under the rules on 'arrest at a determined place'; backs all initiatives by Chinese jurists with a view to real reform of the PRC's Criminal Procedures Law;

23. Calls on China to comply with minimum social standards; underlines the importance of compliance with, and rapid implementation of, all International Labour Organisation rules, including the right freely to form independent trade unions; welcomes the implementation of the labour contract law and calls for the legislative framework to be supplemented by the adoption of a law on collective bargaining; urges both the Chinese authorities and European investors and companies operating in China to observe international labour standards and to guarantee decent pay and working conditions and respect for human rights in China; takes the view that the EU should not allow market access for goods which have been produced by means of child labour or in facilities which gravely violate international labour standards and human rights, such as prison camps;

24. Takes the view that the trade imbalances between the EU and China reflect their differing social, economic and democratic models; takes the view that the limited or non-existent degree of respect for certain rights in China is a contributing factor; stresses the importance of identifying a strategy for dialogue with China, starting with labour market issues;

25. Fears that the number of prisoners being executed under China's death penalty legislation, as well as the expediency of their trials and subsequent executions, goes against the spirit of the human right to a free and fair trial, in that the speed used by Chinese authorities means

that mistrials and other errors could be overlooked, leading to the execution of innocent people; considers that the application of the death penalty within an opaque judicial system, which lacks full transparency and in which the rights of the prisoner are as yet still not fully developed, is a grave error; calls on the Chinese authorities to reconsider their policy on capital punishment;

26. Stresses that the Strategic Partnership between the EU and China includes freedom of the media on a reciprocal basis, which implies press freedom for the Chinese media in Europe and also press freedom for European media in China; expects all the European institutions strongly to advocate this fundamental human rights principle in their contacts with their respective Chinese partners;
27. Deplores the control and censorship of the internet by the Chinese authorities; notes with concern that the Chinese Government is tightening its surveillance of the internet by means of a new law that forbids people from betraying state secrets, harming national pride, endangering the country's ethnic unity or making calls for 'illegal protests' or 'mass meetings'; notes that there is therefore no longer any real limit on censorship or persecution; is concerned by the lack of safeguards provided under the new law, making it possible to use it in an abusive way; emphasises that the terms 'illegal protests' and 'mass meetings' should only be used in situations where a law on peaceful and legal protests exists and is effective; encourages the Chinese Government to allow the expression of a plurality of opinions on the internet, in the media and, more generally, in the public sphere; recalls that the right to freedom of expression on the internet has recently been recognised by the UN Human Rights Council;
28. Is concerned about the entry into force of the new provisions relating to control of the internet, which legalise the closure of blogs and lay down stiff penalties for bloggers, journalists, and lawyers who defend them;
29. Stresses that in a country with more than 500 million internet users, digital freedoms are the only way to achieve a flourishing and developed cyberspace; calls on the Chinese authorities both to secure and to protect the huge cybersphere developed in their country and to target their efforts towards its enhancement and not towards censorship and control;
30. Takes note of the significant efforts made by the Chinese Government to develop Tibet and Xinjiang economically, and of the impact of those efforts on nomad communities and traditional livelihoods; urges the Chinese Government to act in a politically responsible way by meaningfully engaging the Tibetan and Uighur peoples in governance issues, including resource management and economic development priorities, and respecting rather than diluting cultural elements such as language and religion; strongly asserts that the Chinese Government will not achieve lasting stability in Tibet or Xinjiang or comity among the Chinese, Tibetan and Uighur peoples through forcible assimilation, cultural destruction or repressive police and security methods, but only by seriously addressing all indigenous complaints in order to create genuinely shared responsibility for the well-being of both autonomous provinces; urges the Chinese Government to put an end to the ban on independent observers visiting these regions;
31. Stresses that, notwithstanding a harsh policy of repression, a religious revival is taking place in China which is demonstrated by the reopening or reconstruction of countless places of worship; urges the Chinese authorities to pull back on policies and practices that curtail any citizen's fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief;

32. Calls on the Chinese authorities to grant Protestant house churches and underground Catholic churches, as well as those of other religions, official recognition; recalls, in this connection, that international human rights law recognises freedom of religion or belief regardless of registration status, meaning that registration should not be a mandatory precondition for practising one's religion; strongly condemns all attempts by the authorities to deprive these non-registered churches of their fundamental right to freedom of religion by imposing the requirement to operate under government-controlled management boards, confiscating their property and even using detention and imprisonment in an effort to silence them, thereby interfering with their religious autonomy and seriously restricting their activity;
33. Shares the criticism of Chinese jurists that the fundamental shortcomings of China's legal code on religion reside in the constitution, since the principle of 'religious freedom' provided for in clauses 1 and 2 of Article 36 conflicts with the principle of 'restrictions on religion' provided for in clauses 3 and 4, with no clarification as to which takes precedence; joins the call by Chinese jurists religious freedom to be established as the principle of precedence in the constitution;
34. Acknowledges efforts made in the area of controlling and carefully applying the death penalty in China, but remains concerned at the fact that the Chinese Government is still maintaining its policy of not releasing details of the number of prisoners executed annually, keeping information on the death penalty a state secret; further urges the Chinese authorities to stop the politicised use of the death penalty and to ensure that there are procedural safeguards in the country's legal system which guarantee the protection of people sentenced to death, including the right to a fair trial in accordance with international standards;
35. Considers regrettable, as regards the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, the continuing lack of any substantial progress and the failure to produce concrete and visible results; recalls that, on the adoption of a new EU human rights strategy, EU foreign ministers pledged in June 2012 that the EU would now 'raise human rights issues vigorously in all appropriate forms of bilateral dialogue, including at the highest level'; calls on the newly appointed EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the EEAS, the Council and the Commission to step up their efforts in order to give this process new impetus and make this dialogue more effective and result-oriented, including through preparatory meetings with both international and local civil society organisations and NGOs in the presence of the authorities of both sides; takes the view that such dialogue should be included in all contacts with officials from strategic partners such as China; stresses the importance of addressing thoroughly all the problems relating to human rights and the rule of law in China and in the EU; takes the view that EU-China summits and human rights talks should include a set of transparent issues to be discussed and concrete benchmarks; urges the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to voice her concerns regarding human rights abuses in China and to refer publicly to the concrete cases and issues discussed with Chinese officials in all encounters; encourages Member States' officials to follow the same lines in a coherent and coordinated manner; calls on EU companies with activities in China to comply with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and urges the EU and its Member States to monitor such compliance closely;

Cross-Strait relations

36. Reiterates the EU's one-China policy; welcomes the increasing contacts between the PRC

and Taiwan; stresses the improvement in cross-Strait relations, although they are still being seriously undermined by Chinese missiles aimed at Taiwan and by China's international isolation of Taiwan; supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations, as endorsed by Council Declaration 9486/09 of 8 May 2009;

37. Is pleased at the great interest taken by millions of Chinese citizens in the presidential and parliamentary elections in Taiwan on 14 January 2012, which could be followed instantly on the internet for the first time;
38. Salutes the strong and flourishing cross-Strait economic ties, as well as the new opening-up of Taiwan to Chinese tourists and cultural cooperation; considers the internationalisation of trade and investment to be the best guarantor of Taiwan's stability; urges Taiwan's government, therefore, to accompany its investment in the PRC with investments elsewhere;

External situation

39. Urges the PRC to use its global position in a more responsible way, in particular in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where it holds a permanent seat and a right of veto; stresses, in this connection, the need for China to abandon its veto position on any UNSC resolution allowing intervention in Syria in order to halt the civil war and to enable the Syrian people to take the future of their country into their hands, as part of a democratic and free process; stresses that China should also act in a responsible manner that is commensurate with its global contribution, at G20 level to deal with the world financial crisis, by aligning itself with World Trade Organisation rules, and by observing all international conventions and treaties to which it is a party;
40. Urges the PRC unequivocally to commit itself to observing the UN Charter and international law in the pursuit of its goals abroad;
41. Appreciates that China is the biggest contributor of peacekeeping troops among the permanent members of the UNSC, thanks mostly to its rapidly modernising navy; welcomes, in this connection, the increased cooperation with the EU in the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden; calls on China, as a permanent UNSC member, to cooperate in a responsible way with the international community on important global security concerns, such as the situation in Syria and Iran;
42. Recognises China's responsibility both to provide security to its citizens and to assume a role in promoting peace and stability in the world, and welcomes its increased participation in the UN; calls, however, for the Chinese side to show more transparency and cooperate more closely with the EU and the UN on these issues, and for it to avoid isolation in the development of its foreign policy;
43. Calls on China to review its policy of 'non-interference in countries' internal affairs' in cases of severe breaches of international humanitarian law;
44. Welcomes the EU-China dialogue initiated in July 2012 on the Common Security and Defence Policy; proposes that this dialogue be extended to include the entire Asia-Pacific region;
45. Asks China to dispel growing international concerns about its non-transparent military

budget;

46. Underlines the global importance of the South China Sea, through which one third of the world's trade passes; is alarmed at the escalating tension and therefore urgently appeals to all the parties involved to refrain from unilateral political and military actions, to tone down statements and to settle their conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea by means of international arbitration in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, in order to ensure regional stability;
47. Is seriously worried about the escalating tensions between China and Japan; appeals strongly to China and Japan to combat perceptions of one another as mutual enemies, and considers regrettable their failure to use the 40th anniversary of their diplomatic relations for constructive negotiations;
48. Calls, in view of the European Union's significant interests in the security and stability of East Asia, on all parties concerned (China, Japan and Taiwan) to demonstrate restraint and to take steps to calm the situation on the disputed islands; urges all parties concerned to settle disputes peacefully in a spirit of cooperation and in compliance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and agree on de-escalating measures of engagement in the event of unforeseen incidents;
49. Takes note of Taiwan's initiative with a view to reaching a consensus on a code of conduct for the East China Sea and the establishment of a mechanism allowing all sides to cooperate in the joint exploitation of the region's natural resources, including capacity for the generation of electricity from renewable sources;
50. Notes that China's role in the cooperation between the two parties on the Korean Peninsula is vital and calls on the PRC more actively to seek enhanced cooperation between the North and the South;
51. Notes, and considers it regrettable, that the survival of the dictatorial and repressive North Korean regime depends essentially on China; welcomes China's responsible behaviour in voting in favour of the UNSC's strong condemnation on 15 April 2012 of the failed rocket launch by North Korea, widely considered as an attempted ballistic missile test; looks forward to China continuing to take responsibility for stability on the Korean Peninsula, a swift resumption of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear threat, and, above all, a drastic improvement in the day-to-day living conditions of North Korean citizens brought about through Chinese incentives;
52. Notes China's growing role in the Central Asian region through trade, economic and energy projects; considers that China can play a major role in the development of countries in Central Asia and calls on the PRC to promote better relations between states there as a pivotal step towards regional cooperation; remarks that China's main objectives within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are to achieve peace and stability in Central Asia by collectively combating the so-called 'three evils' of extremism, separatism and terrorism; notes China's great strategic and economic interest in the region through the exploitation of its vast oil and gas reserves and the connection of Central Asia to China's coastline via railways and highways;
53. Welcomes the developing ties between China and Afghanistan, with talks taking place at a senior leadership level for the first time in history; considers that China can play a pivotal

role in stabilising Afghanistan through a soft power approach and urges the development of close cooperation between the EU and China on this issue;

54. Observes that the new American strategy of renewed focus on Asia is perceived by the Chinese leadership as an attempt by the USA to contain China's rapid economic and political ascension; encourages China and the USA to avoid tensions and an arms race in the Pacific; urges China to ensure freedom of circulation on the seas;
55. Believes that very serious consideration should be given to the economic, social and environmental impact of increasing investment by China in developing countries;
56. Notes that the increasing Chinese presence in Africa has contributed to economic development, with a particular focus on infrastructure projects; appreciates the Chinese leadership's acknowledgement of the serious criticism of its imbalanced, raw-material-centred African policy during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), held in Beijing on 20 July 2012, as demonstrated by its current open promotion of a diversification of its activities on the African continent; welcomes the pledge by State and Party leader Hu Jintao at this FOCAC meeting of a record credit of USD 20 billion to African countries over the next three years for developing their infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing and SMEs; welcomes the support expressed by China for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and encourages the Chinese authorities to follow the global trend towards more transparency and to increase their concrete commitments in this area; calls on the EU to remain vigilant about the political, economic, social and environmental impact of China's growing investments in Africa;
57. Is concerned that the increasing Chinese presence in Africa has led to grave social tensions, but welcomes the fact that Chinese companies have expressed their willingness to place greater emphasis on corporate social responsibility in their African activities; urges the Chinese authorities to anchor their policies in Africa on the principles of, and respect for, human rights, the promotion of sustainable development and human security;
58. Takes note of China's increasing involvement in the exploitation of natural resources in Latin America, with Chinese imports of such resources having increased by more than 50 %;
59. Encourages China, the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide, to play a more proactive and constructive role in promoting cooperation within the global community in order to tackle climate change; welcomes the White Paper issued by the Chinese authorities in November 2011 on the policies adopted and action taken to combat climate change and calls for it to be implemented swiftly;
60. Notes that people-to-people contacts can play a crucial role in reaching a better mutual understanding both between China and the EU and between China and some of its other partners, such as the USA; welcomes, in this connection, the programmes intended to facilitate mobility between China and the EU;
61. Urges China to make it an absolute priority to ensure legal certainty for foreign companies, by upholding the principles of equality, reciprocity and corporate social responsibility;

62. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the EEAS, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the accession and candidate countries, the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese National People's Congress, the Taiwanese Government and the Taiwanese Legislative Yuan.