

**Situation and cultural heritage in Kashgar (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China)**

**European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2011 on the situation and cultural heritage in Kashgar (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China)**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to previous resolutions on China, notably those concerning human rights and minority rights, and in particular those of 26 November 2009 and 24 November 2010,
  - having regard to the 13th EU-China Summit of 6 October 2010, held in Brussels, which included the first EU-China High-Level Cultural Forum aimed at strengthening EU-China cultural dialogue and cooperation,
  - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, which stipulates that ‘[s]tates shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories’,
  - having regard to Articles 4, 22 and 119 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which provide for, respectively, governmental assistance in the cultural development of regions inhabited by minority nationalities, state protection of valuable cultural monuments and relics, and the protection of the cultural legacy of the nationalities,
  - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in 2009 the Chinese Government announced a USD 500 million 'Kashgar Dangerous House Reform' programme of urban reconstruction, which, since 2009, has been progressively destroying the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, the plan being to demolish 85% of the traditional Old City, replace it with modern apartment blocks, and convert the remaining old parts of the city into mixed Sino-Uyghur tourist sites,
- B. whereas Beijing continues to exclude the city of Kashgar from bids for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) world heritage status, such as the planned transnational application to achieve protection of several cultural sites on Central Asia’s Silk Road,
- C. whereas the city of Kashgar is an internationally significant site of unique architectural heritage with historical and geographical importance as an ancient centre of trade and tourism,
- D. whereas the city of Kashgar retains highly symbolic value for the cultural identity of the region’s Uyghur and Hui populations, as well as for China’s cultural diversity,
- E. whereas the reconstruction programme’s official justification of earthquake fortification does not necessitate complete demolition of traditional buildings, one other option being

culturally sensitive renovation,

- F. whereas Beijing has engaged in destructive housing modernisation in other parts of China through its various local 'development plans', demolishing historic buildings and forcibly resettling residents without considering the loss of priceless historical and cultural heritage and without giving priority to the preservation - in protected areas or in museums - of relics or principal building artefacts and architecture in order to pass on to future generations, and to the world, objects illustrating the thousands of years of Chinese historical and cultural development,
  - G. whereas Beijing is continuously implementing repressive ethnocultural policies in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which reached a grim peak during the violent crackdown on Uyghur protesters in 2009's Urumqi unrest,
  - H. whereas the Uyghur and Hui population suffer ongoing violations of their human rights and whereas many are denied adequate political representation and cultural self-determination,
1. Calls on the Chinese Government to immediately stop the cultural destruction threatening Kashgar's architectural survival and to carry out a comprehensive expert inquiry into culture-sensitive methods of renovation;
  2. Calls on the Chinese Government to end all forced resettlement and social marginalisation of Kashgar's Uyghur population, which is being caused by the destruction of residential areas, and to adequately compensate all previous victims for the losses suffered;
  3. Calls on the Chinese authorities to make every effort to develop a genuine Han-Uyghur dialogue, to adopt more inclusive and comprehensive economic policies in Xinjiang aimed at strengthening local ownership, and to protect the cultural identity of the Uyghur population;
  4. Urges the Chinese Government to adhere to its constitutional obligations by adequately supporting Kashgar's and XUAR's cultural traditions, which are strongly influenced by the Uyghur identity;
  5. Calls on the Chinese authorities to take more measures to prevent illegal trade and smuggling activities, which contribute to the loss of Chinese civilisations' heritage;
  6. Calls on the Chinese Minister of Culture to review the existing regulation and law on the protection of cultural relics in order to adapt the current changing lifestyle of the minority ethnic group which sometimes, unaware of its treasures, makes inappropriate use or declines protection of its cultural heritage; states that an educational campaign at national level on this issue should be promoted;
  7. Urges the Chinese Government to assess the possibility of including the city of Kashgar in the joint application with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for the Silk Road's UNESCO world heritage designation;
  8. Calls on the Chinese Government to stop all discriminatory and repressive policies towards the Uyghur and Hui populations, and to respect their fundamental right to freedom of cultural expression, having regard in particular to Tursunjan Hezim, a former history teacher, who, after a secret trial, has been sentenced to seven years in jail, and also other

activists who have been sentenced in recent months;

9. Calls on the European External Action Service to devise additional measures in the context of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in order to protect the human and cultural rights of China's ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups;
10. Calls on EU representatives and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to increase and intensify talks on human rights and minority rights with the People's Republic of China, and to make the human rights dialogue more effective and results-oriented;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNESCO, the National People's Congress (and its Standing Committee) of the People's Republic of China and the XUAR Regional Party Standing Committee.