**Catherine Rowett (Verts/ALE).** – Madam President, in its old objectionable imperial days my country thought of itself as the mother of the free, but whose freedom did that empire guarantee, and where has it gone now? Yesterday, protesters holding Union Jacks demonstrated at the British Consulate in Hong Kong, and rightly so, for Britain surely retains a duty to defend their freedoms accorded in the Joint Declaration of 1984.

The recent response from the UK ambassador for human rights seems too sanguine, for the withdrawal of the infamous extradition bill can’t in itself resolve the concerns. If Britain itself will not challenge China’s oppressive response, let us in this European Union step up. Let us be the ones defending human rights without borders and securing universal suffrage for Hong Kong. Let us become truly the mother of the free, and not by building an empire, but by challenging imperial interference.