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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.5.2025)

The EU and China held the 39th session of their Human Rights Dialogue in Chongqing, China on 16 June 2024. The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights was informed (in camera) about the discussions held during the Dialogue on 4 December 2024. The Dialogue was preceded by a side visit to Tibet that was organised by the Chinese authorities. During the side visit and in the Dialogue itself, visiting diplomats of the European External Action Service had access to experts on Tibetan issues and specifically inquired about the whereabouts and wellbeing of the 11th Panchen Lama. The official reply received was that he 'currently conducts a normal life and does not wish to be contacted'. It was also stressed by the Chinese side that the identification of the 11th Panchen Lama was done without the approval of China's central government and that as such, it was considered illegal.

The 30th anniversary of the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance will be certainly raised during the next 40th iteration of the Human Rights Dialogue, as will the ongoing suppression of religious freedoms in Tibet. The EU will continue to speak out against human rights violations occurring across China, including in Tibet in multilateral fora (e.g. the Human Rights Council) and will continue to convey its concerns to the Chinese leadership including at the highest political level during EU-China summits.

The EU will also continue to reiterate the rights of individuals or religious communities to conduct their basic affairs and freely choose their religious leaders without government interference – whether in Tibet, or elsewhere in the world.