

Situation in China after the earthquake and before the Olympic Games

European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2008 on the situation in China after the earthquake and before the Olympic Games

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 22 May 2008 on the natural disaster in China¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on Tibet²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2007 on the EU-China Summit and the EU-China human rights dialogue³,
 - having regard to the outcome of the 25th round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in Brdo, Slovenia, on 15 May 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas both China and the EU are committed to contributing to peace, security and sustainable development in the world,
- B. having regard to the scale of the destruction wrought by the violent earthquake in South-west China on 12 May 2008; whereas that earthquake claimed tens of thousands of victims, in particular in Sichuan province; whereas, according to the latest estimate, 10 million people were affected by the earthquake and almost 70 000 killed, including thousands of schoolchildren who died when their classrooms collapsed,
- C. whereas the Chinese Government took exceptional emergency measures, deploying personnel – including part of the army – and medical teams to aid the inhabitants of the stricken region,
- D. having regard to the extraordinary mobilisation and solidarity of the entire Chinese people and of the international community in efforts to aid the victims of the disaster,
- E. whereas the opening of Tibet to tourists and the media should not be used as a ‘public relations event’ but as a real opening, which will allow journalists, the media and tourists to visit the region of Tibet,
- F. having regard to the concluding statements of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which underlined that granting the 2008 Olympic Games to China would help to open up the country and improve the human rights situation,
1. Expresses satisfaction at the developments in EU-China relations, the sectoral dialogues and

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0232.

² Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0119.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0622.

the closer cooperation on various globalised issues;

2. Calls on the Chinese authorities to bear in mind that earthquake warnings constitute one benchmark of the development of a country; stresses, therefore, the vital importance of responding actively and promptly to any warning that the scientific community can give the authorities in the unlikely but possible situation of another natural disaster in China;
3. Welcomes the resumption of contacts, after the events of March 2008 in Lhasa, between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities; encourages the two parties to intensify these contacts so as to establish the bases for mutual trust, without which it will be impossible to arrive at a mutually acceptable political solution;
4. Regrets that while there has been major progress in relations with China as regards trade and economics, that progress has not been accompanied by substantial achievements as regards issues relating to human rights and democracy;
5. Deplores the fact that China's human rights record remains a matter of concern owing to widespread and systematic human rights abuses; recalls the commitments to human rights made by China when the country won its bid to host the Olympic Games;
6. Condemns China's frequent use of the death penalty and calls on the Chinese authorities to establish a moratorium on executions;
7. Deplores the fact that no international calls have succeed in stopping the Chinese authorities from pursuing their follow-up to the riots of 14 March 2008 in Tibet, with participants in the protest in Lhasa still being traced, detained and arbitrarily arrested, and their families being given no information as to their whereabouts, although this is required by Chinese law; calls on the Chinese authorities to halt its 'patriotic re-education' campaign, which has been intensified since the beginning of April, during the Olympic Games in the name of the long-established 'Olympic Truce';
8. Notes with satisfaction that China rapidly agreed to accept the assistance of the international community in helping the victims of the earthquake in the Sichuan region and facilitating the operation of voluntary humanitarian aid organisations in distributing aid;
9. Stresses the importance of the support of the European Union, of its Member States and of the international community for the reconstruction phase in the affected region;
10. Calls on China to abide by the public commitments which it made with regard to human rights and minority rights, democracy and the rule of law and which the IOC announced when it decided to allow China to organise the Olympic Games;
11. Urges the Chinese authorities to take this historic opportunity to demonstrate to the world that the granting of the Olympic Games to Beijing has provided a unique chance to improve their human rights record by displaying clemency to all political prisoners and human rights activists in gaol, including those in gaol in Tibet following the uprising of March 2008 (except, of course, for perpetrators of violent crimes); calls, moreover, on the Chinese authorities to stop discrimination against rural migrants and ethnic minorities and to refrain from harassing trade-union activists, lawyers and journalists when they denounce violations of fundamental freedoms; reiterates its conviction that the imprisonment of such people is against the universal and accepted spirit of the *ius gentium* (law of nations);

12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee.