

Press release – Human rights breaches in China and Iran



Forced labour and the situation of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China

Parliament strongly condemns the Chinese government-led system of forced labour – in particular the exploitation of Uyghur, ethnic Kazakh and Kyrgyz, and other Muslim minority groups – in factories within and outside internment camps in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. It also denounces the continued transfer of forced labourers to other Chinese administrative divisions, and the fact that well-known European brands and companies have been benefiting from forced Chinese labour.

MEPs are deeply concerned about the increasingly oppressive regime that many religious and ethnic minorities, in particular Uyghurs and Kazakhs, are facing in mainland China. These “violate their human dignity, as well as their rights to freedom of cultural expression and religious belief, to freedom of speech and expression, and to peaceful assembly and association”.

They also deeply deplore the continued persecution and the serious and systematic human rights violations that amount to crimes against humanity, while urging the Chinese government to put an immediate end to the practice of arbitrary detention without charge, trial or conviction for criminal offences of members of the Uyghur and other Muslim minorities. MEPs call on the Chinese government to end the “mass incarceration” of ethnic minorities in camps and detention centres and demand the immediate and unconditional release of those detained.

The text was approved by 604 votes in favour, 20 against and 57 abstentions. For all the details, it will be available in full [here](#). (17.12.2020)

Iran, in particular the case of 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh

MEPs strongly condemn the arbitrary detention, sentencing and, recently, return to prison of woman human rights defender, lawyer and 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh in Iran. They urge Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release her and allow her to receive the healthcare she requires.

In addition, the resolution condemns the recent executions in Iran of France-based journalist Ruhollah Zam, editor of the Amad News Telegram channel, and wrestler Navid Afkari, while urging Iran to immediately halt the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali. It calls on EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell and all EU countries to urgently intervene to try to halt plans to execute Mr Djalali, quash his death sentence and secure his immediate release.

The text asks all EU member states to jointly issue public statements and undertake diplomatic initiatives to monitor unfair trials and visit prisons where human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience, including EU nationals, are being detained in Iran. It also demands targeted EU measures against Iranian officials who have committed serious human rights violations, including the recent executions of Ruhollah Zam and Navid Afkari, as well as against those involved in gross human rights abuses, such as judges who have handed the death sentence to journalists, human rights defenders, political dissidents and activists.

The text was approved by 614 votes in favour, 12 against and 63 abstentions. For all the details, it will be available in full [here](#). (17.12.2020)

The situation in Egypt

The vote on a third resolution on the situation in Egypt has been postponed until tomorrow, Friday 18 December. The outcome of the final vote on this resolution will be announced at 17.00 CET.

[Press release – LIFE: Deal reached to invest €5.4 billion in climate and environmental projects](#)



On Thursday, Parliament's negotiating team agreed with member states on a provisional deal on LIFE+, the only programme at EU-level solely dedicated to the environment and climate. The deal will allow the Commission to start preparing to implement the programme.

The total budget allocated for LIFE in the [compromise on the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework](#) is EUR 5.4 billion (current prices), of which EUR 3.5 billion will go to environmental activities. EUR 1.9 billion will go to climate action; 61% of the total budget must be climate-related. The programme will contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and to achieving the overall target of at least 30% of the EU budget expenditure supporting climate objectives.

The programme aims to contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy, to protect and improve the quality of the environment and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

When granting funds, the Commission should prioritise projects that have a clear cross border European interest and the highest potential of being successfully replicated and taken up by the public or private sector or of mobilising the largest investments. LIFE will also promote the use of green public procurement.

Boosting biodiversity spending

LIFE will support many biodiversity projects and contribute to spending 7.5% of the annual EU budget on biodiversity objectives from 2024 and 10% in 2026 and 2027.

The Commission shall regularly monitor and report on mainstreaming of climate and biodiversity objectives, including tracking the expenditure.

Quote

The rapporteur [Nils Torvalds](#) (Renew Europe, FI) said: “When we look at what has been achieved by LIFE so far, it is clear that a bigger budget can help us achieve even more in the future. Although I would have preferred an even bigger budget for LIFE, I am very pleased that we have reached a new level of commitment towards nature and climate, so the programme can continue to test ideas and showcase future green solutions. LIFE can now mobilise additional funding for actions on nature, climate and energy much better.”

Next steps

The provisional deal will now have to be adopted by Parliament’s Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee and Plenary as well as the Council.

Background

The [LIFE](#) programme was launched in 1992 and is the only EU programme dedicated specifically to environmental and climate action. It therefore plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of EU legislation and policies in those areas by co-financing projects with European added value.

[Press release – MEPs express support for the priorities of the EU Security Union Strategy](#)



The non-legislative resolution was adopted with 543 votes in favour 64 votes

against and 82 abstentions. It presents an overview of current security issues, as identified by the Commission for the period 2020-2025 in the [EU Security Union strategy](#), including the fight against terrorism and organised crime, child abuse on and offline, disinformation and hybrid threats, migrant smuggling, action against illicit drugs and firearms trafficking.

MEPs consider that any new legislative proposal should be accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment, in particular on fundamental rights aspects. They also stress that gender equality is crucial to combat radicalisation, reduce domestic violence and child abuse. Gender equality should be included further into the strategy as a preventative tool, they say.

Countering radicalisation to prevent terrorist attacks

MEPs welcome the Commission's recent [Counter-Terrorism Agenda](#) and stress that terrorism, irrespective of its nature, is a threat to democratic societies in Europe and targets European values. A holistic approach to preventing and countering radicalisation, combining security, education, social, cultural and anti-discrimination policies involving all stakeholders is necessary, MEPs believe.

Enhance Europol's role

On the recently tabled [proposal to update Europol's mandate](#), the resolution notes that the agency should have suitable tools to cooperate more effectively with all partners. This should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen Europol's political accountability and enhance judicial and parliamentary oversight. Moreover, MEPs call for adequate funding and staffing of EU agencies in the Justice and Home Affairs field.

Step up the fight against child abuse online and offline

By June 2021, MEPs expect the Commission to present a legislative proposal to better detect and report online child sexual abuse. They reiterate Parliament's call to appoint an EU representative for children's rights, who should serve as a point of reference for all EU matters and policy related to children.

Assess encryption rights and challenges

MEPs ask the Commission to assess whether a regulatory solution could be found to enable lawful and targeted law-enforcement access to encrypted data while complying with fundamental rights. They stress that end-to-end encryption contributes to citizens' privacy and is indispensable for investigative journalists and whistle-blowers.

Quote

The rapporteur [Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR](#) (S&D, ES) said : "The EP welcomes

the new EU Security Union Strategy but reminds the Commission that it must be grounded in the values enshrined in Article 2 of Treaty on EU, including the principles of democracy and the rule of law, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. There is already a significant legislative framework on internal security, which means that efforts should now be devoted to ensuring existing EU legislation is effectively implemented and enforced in all member states.”

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Press release – Climate change adaptation: MEPs want the EU to be better prepared



The resolution on adaptation to climate change will provide input on a new adaptation strategy, expected from the Commission in 2021 as part of the European Green Deal, and was approved with 550 votes to 80 and 59 abstentions.

In order to minimise the adverse impact of climate change, the resolution calls for a renewed focus on adaptation. The new strategy must include

binding and quantifiable goals both at EU and member state level to ensure that EU countries are on track to meet the adaptation goals in the [Paris Agreement](#). It must also show EU global leadership in building global climate resilience and promote EU science, services, technologies and practices for adaptation.

As the adverse impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect some regions as well as poor and disadvantaged groups, the resolution stresses that the EU must be ready for climate “refugees”, and that the human rights of populations under threat from the effects of climate change must be protected.

How to help the EU adapt to climate change

The resolution urges member states to develop prevention and rapid response plans for climate disasters such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts, and include mechanisms for cross-border action and solidarity.

MEPs also call for increased funding at global, EU, national, and regional levels, and for public and private investments in adaptation. The new 30% climate-related spending target for EU funds should contribute to both climate mitigation and adaptation, they say, recalling that the cost of inaction would be far greater.

The resolution also underlines that only climate-proofed infrastructure should receive EU funding. The Commission must also ensure that costs arising from a failure to take adaptation measures are not passed on to citizens and enforce the “polluter pays” principle, making the polluter take responsibility for adaptation, MEPs say.

As climate change is currently the third driver of biodiversity loss worldwide, the resolution calls for greater coherence between adaptation and biodiversity conservation efforts. It also stresses the need to ensure and promote healthy and resilient seas and oceans as they play a vital role in adapting to climate change.

You can watch a recording of the debate [here](#).

Background

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has estimated that [weather and climate-related extremes accounted for EUR 426 billion in monetary losses in the period 1980-2017 in the EU-28](#).

Adaptation means anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage. Well-planned adaptation through early action is proven to save money and lives in the long-term. As the ability to adapt differs across populations, economic sectors and regions, the EU can ensure that disadvantaged regions and those most affected by climate change are capable of taking the necessary measures to adapt. The EU also has a special role to play when the impact of climate change transcends the borders of member states, e.g. rivers.

Update from the Executive Director of the EUIPO

December 17, 2020 [General](#)

Update from the Executive Director of the EUIPO

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, Christian Archambeau, has released a new video update on the latest developments at the Office.

Mr. Archambeau gave an update on filing trends at the EUIPO throughout the year, and the development of SME-focused initiatives at the Office, including the forthcoming SME Fund launched under the Ideas Powered for Business umbrella.

Watch the video: