

Joint statement by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk on the passing away of Liu Xiaobo

It is with deep sadness that we have learned of the death of Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and one of the most prominent human rights defenders in China. We send our most sincere condolences and respect to his wife, Ms Liu Xia, his family and friends.

Liu Xiaobo was one of the authors of Charter 08, calling for peaceful democratic reform and rule of law in China. His personal intervention during the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

We consistently expressed our opposition to his conviction and asked for his release. Most recently, we urged the Chinese authorities to respect his wish to receive medical care in Germany. Unfortunately these calls were not heeded.

At this time, we appeal to the Chinese authorities to allow his wife, Ms Liu Xia and his family to bury Liu Xiaobo at a place and in a manner of their choosing, and to allow them to grieve in peace. We call on the authorities to remove all restrictions on the movement and communications of his family members and allow Ms Liu Xia and her brother Mr Liu Hui to leave China, if they wish to do so.

We reiterate the European Union's call for all prisoners of conscience in China to be released.