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Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China

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MINUTES

Thursday, 17 April 2008, 10h00-11h00

Brussels

Room A5E-2

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Mr STERCKX opened the meeting at 10h00 on Thursday, 17 April 2008.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 403.243)

The agenda was adopted without amendment.

2. Approval of minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2008 (PE 401.217)

The minutes were adopted without amendment.

3. Chairman's announcements

Mr Sterckx noted that this was an additional delegation meeting that had been arranged in view of recent developments in China. He welcomed all those present, including the visitors. Apologies had been received from Mrs Doyle, Mr Bushill-Matthews, Mr Karas and Mr Visser.

4. Follow up on developments in the case of Hu Jia

Mr Sterckx referred to the press release that he had issued jointly with Mrs Flautre, Chair of the Human Rights Sub Committee, on the case of the activist Hu Jia who had been sentenced to three and a half years on charges of "inciting subversion of state power". Mr Hu had been convicted for writing five articles and giving two interviews. He had raised the issues of the environment, HIV/Aids and human rights.

Mr Sterckx noted that Beijing's First Intermediate Court had interpreted these acts as an attempt to "subvert the state's political and socialist system". According to the official Chinese News Agency, Mr Hu had written articles criticising the Chinese political system, and had accepted interviews from foreign journalists. *"Hu spread malicious rumours, libel and instigation in an attempt to subvert the state's political and socialist systems."* The article also claimed that Mr Hu had been given a lenient sentence because he had confessed to his "crimes".

Mrs Truepel stressed that the response of the Chinese embassy had been unsatisfactory and there was inadequate information. She stressed that Hu Jia had the right to freedom of expression. The verdict that had been handed down on him was an "absolute scandal". She referred to the undertakings of the Chinese government regarding the respect for human rights that had been made at the time that Beijing was awarded the Olympic Games.

Mr Zhong Ronglai from the Chinese embassy stated that he had no further information to provide other than to note that Mr Hu had been convicted for subverting the state. There was no link between this case and the organisation of the Olympic Games. He stressed that China was a country underpinned by the rule of law.

Mrs Gebhardt stated that the case of Hu Jia was a matter of regret for people in the EU. Mr Hu had made use of his rights of freedom of expression and was being

punished for this.

Mr Weber asked whether why Mr Hu would not have the right of appeal and whether he was being treated for hepatitis.

Mrs Lichtenberger stressed that people should be able to make criticisms of their government and what was happening in the country without being accused of subversion. She also referred to the pledges made by the Chinese government regarding human rights but was concerned at increased restrictions being imposed in the run-up to the Games.

Mr Zhong stated that Mr Hu had received treatment for his illness and was now fully recovered. He noted that some 10,000 foreign journalists had applied to cover the Games. He had no further information about the possibility of Mr Hu making an appeal and suggested that this could be discussed at future meetings between the European Parliament and the National People's Congress.

Mrs Truepel stated that dialogue should not simply mean a reply but a discussion of the criticisms.

Mr Papadimoulis stated that the right of a citizen to appeal against a sentence was very important.

Mr Sterckx also asked for more information on the health of Hu Jia and the possibility of an appeal against the sentence. He noted that the Bureau would be meeting the new Chinese ambassador for lunch on 14 May and that this would provide an opportunity for further discussion on the matter.

5. Update on the negotiations for the EU-China Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)

Mr Sterckx introduced Mr Michalis Rokas from the Commission and asked him to update members on the current negotiations for the EU-China Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA).

Mr Rokas stated that the PCA was a top priority and there were encouraging signs from the last round of negotiations in March 2008. He hoped that before the summit in France on 1 December 2008 it would be possible to agree on a number of clauses. Consultation was underway internally and with the member states on the Chinese proposals. He was optimistic that there would be progress in coming months. The next negotiating round was likely to take place in June or July 2008. Particularly good progress had been made in areas where there was a long history of EU-China cooperation such as science and technology, education and employment. There were also difficult issues such as weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism.

He noted that President Barroso and nine other Commissioners were going to China in the following week. The main topic was climate change and sustainable development. Issues such as Tibet and other human rights issues would also be addressed. There

would be meetings with President Hu and Premier Wen. He stressed the commitment of the Commission to push forward the relationship. He informed Mr Sterckx that the agreement would have a human rights clause and a clause on the International Criminal Court and that proposals on these subjects had been submitted to the Chinese.

Mrs Gebhardt asked for more detail in what was being discussed. Mr Rokas reiterated that particular progress had been made on science and technology, education, regional policy, employment and culture. It was hoped to have up to 25 clauses agreed by the summit. He was happy to provide more information either in writing or orally.

6. Update on developments in Tibet

Mr Sterckx noted that he had held a meeting on the previous day with Mr Huang Huaguang, Director General of the Western Europe Department of the International Department of the Communist Party of China. He had been struck by the fact that Mr Huang had stressed that the door for discussions between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Beijing government was open.

Mrs Lichtenberger noted the considerable concern in the international community over the events in Tibet and the statements made by the Beijing authorities. The Chinese government was missing out on a great opportunity to resolve the problem. It was not true that the Dalai Lama was a separatist and she stressed that he wanted genuine autonomy. She wanted to know why there were no discussions between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Beijing government.

Mrs Gebhardt emphasised that there was a lack of information about what was happening in Tibet and that full information was essential in order to obtain an objective picture about what was happening. She recognised that there had been improvements in the infrastructure in Tibet in recent years. She was dismayed by the responses that she had received from the Chinese authorities to her enquiries about Tibet during her recent visit to China.

Mrs Truepel asked for a delegation to visit to Tibet in order to receive information that was unfiltered. Dialogue would serve Chinese unity more than the current course of confrontation that was being followed.

The representative of the Chinese Mission, Mrs Solang, noted that she was a native of Tibet. She referred to the dialogue between the central government and the Dalai Lama that had undergone six rounds between 2002 and 2007. She was sure that the dialogue would continue, although there had been no positive results. She believed that the riots had been organised by the Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, as long as he gave up his separatist activities and stopped instigating violence, there was the possibility of further talks. The Dalai Lama had not really renounced his position of calling for Tibetan independence. She recognised that there were shortcomings about the situation in Tibet but this did not excuse the violence perpetrated by a tiny minority. She argued that the violence was premeditated and was aimed at sabotaging the

Olympic Games and undermining the unity of China.

Mr Sterckx asked about the possibility of another session of the dialogue taking place before August. Mrs Solang underlined the position of the Beijing government: i.e. that dialogue was possible as long as the Dalai Lama ceased his attempts to sabotage the Olympic Games. Mr Sterckx referred to a statement by the Dalai Lama in which he stressed that he did not support a boycott of the Olympic Games.

Mrs Roure stated that the unrest was clearly organised but she had doubts about whether it was organised by the Dalai Lama. She did not believe the Dalai Lama was engaging in "double speak" and he was not advocating full independence for Tibet. She considered that some people were exploiting the monks to get their voices heard. She considered that China should open up to the outside world and allow a delegation to travel to Tibet. She drew parallels with the situation in France two years ago when young people had rioted and how some people outside the country had wrongly believed that there was a revolution in France. It was obvious therefore that one should not believe everything that one saw on television and it was important to see what was happening on the ground.

Mr Hans-Peter Martin asked why it was so difficult for the Chinese authorities to accept neutral visitors to come to Tibet in order that they could gain a more objective picture.

Mrs Solang stressed that Tibet was very open to visitors. Media and foreign diplomats had already been invited to Tibet. The situation in Lhasa was stable now and it was anticipated that tourism would resume by 1 May. The Dalai Lama had set up a so-called government-in-exile after he fled in 1959 and celebrated independence day on 10 March. The events in Tibet had been prepared for a very long time and she considered that the "Dalai clique" was behind the incidents.

Mr Sterckx stressed the need to open up the dialogue again in order to reach a sustainable settlement.

7. Preparations for the 26th EU-China Interparliamentary Meeting, 2-5 June 2008

Mr Sterckx informed members that a draft of the programme and the agenda for the forthcoming IPM had been distributed.

Mr Mavrommatis noted that the IPM was taking place from 2 to 3 June. He was keen to speak on culture and education, particularly concerning bursaries for learning Chinese which were very scarce.

Mr Sterckx stated that a mail would be sent round requesting volunteers to be first speaker.

8. Any other business

Mr Sterckx stated that the meeting scheduled for 6 May had been cancelled as Mr Henry Tang, the Chief Secretary of Hong Kong, had been unable to attend. However Mr Tang would meet with the European Parliament-Hong Kong Friendship group on the following day.

9. Date and place of next meeting

The next regular meeting would take place on 22 May at 1000hrs in Strasbourg

The meeting closed at 1110hrs.

**LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/
ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI
PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SAŖAŠAS/JELENĻĒTI ĪV/REĢISTRU TA'
ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/ LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM
NAVZOČIH/LĀSNĀOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Mesa/Předsednictví/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/ Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Dirk Sterckx (P) Henri Weber (2VP)
Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselek/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Philippe Busquin, Evelyne Gebhardt, Toine Manders, Hans-Peter Martin, Manolis Mavrommatis, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Martine Roure, Helga Trüpel
Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/Aizstājēji/ Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Náhradníci/Namestniki/Varajäsenet/ Suppleanter
Edite Estrela, Johannes Lebech, Eva Lichtenberger

178 (2)
183 (3)
46 (6) (Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktā/Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/ Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Bod programu schůzde/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/Novērotāji/ Stebētāji/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Observatorzy/Observadores/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

<p>Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/ Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/ Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina taç-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/Na pozwanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/ Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan</p>	
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<p>Rokas(RELEX), Sommerschild(RELEX)</p>	
<p>Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/Άλλα θεσμικά όργανα/ Other institutions/Autres institutions/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/Más intézmények/Istituzzjonijiet oħra/ Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut toimeelimeet/Andra institutioner/organ</p>	
<p>Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/ Autres participants/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/ Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare</p>	
<p>Zhang Hong(Mission of the PR of China), Solang (Mission of the PR of China), Diana Tellarini(RSF),</p>	
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<p>PPE-DE PSE ALDE Verts/ALE GUE/NGL IND/DEM UEN NI</p>	<p>Mazza, Essad Latella, Vergis De Crayencour Koch Markova Saerel</p>
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Boden	
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Mollet	

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Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Avtyπρόεδρος/Vice-Chair(wo)man/ Vice-Président/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/Víci 'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/ Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-
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