



Dear President von der Leyen
Dear President Michel
Dear Vice-President/High Representative Borrell

30/06/2021

Today marks one year since the imposition of the so-called national security law for Hong Kong, and the de-facto dismantling of the city's freedoms and high-degree of autonomy.

The handover of Hong Kong to mainland China under the 'One country, two systems' principle, as stipulated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, was meant to guarantee Hong Kong's freedoms for 50 years and accompanied with the promise of universal suffrage. However, 24 years on, as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is taking an increasingly aggressive posture on the international scene, and intensifying repression in mainland China, it broke the promises made to Hong Kong citizens.

In Hong Kong, there is a clear desire of the people to maintain the city's high level of autonomy and rule of law, exemplified by the umbrella protest movement in 2014 and the pro-democracy protest that began in 2019, during which over one-million Hong Kongers took the streets in an unprecedented fashion. Unfortunately, the Chinese government and the Hong Kong authorities have responded with an onslaught of repressive measures against pro-democracy activists and political opposition leaders.

The so-called national security law, the subsequent electoral reform law and the recent ban of the yearly-organised Tiananmen Vigil represent an unprecedented assault on the city's identity, its autonomy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, as well as on international agreements. The very integrity of the 'One country, two systems' principle has been destroyed.

The situation in Hong Kong is an important test case for the European Union's commitment to upholding freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law internationally and for its credibility as a global actor. Reluctance to act would only serve to embolden the Chinese Communist Party and other authoritarian perpetrators.

It is, therefore, important that the European Union stands in solidarity with the people of Hong Kong, not just in words, but also in deeds. We call on the implementation of the Council Conclusions of July 2020, as well as the imposition of Magnitsky-style sanctions against those Chinese and Hong Kong officials responsible for the growing repression, in particular Xia Baolong and Carrie Lam, the establishment of an international Hong Kong Contact Group, and the suspension of extradition treaties, as demanded by the European Parliament in its resolution of January 2021. We further call on the Member States to consider coordination of a 'lifeboat scheme' for citizens of Hong Kong.

Signed:

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