



European
Commission
The President



European External
Action Service
High Representative
Vice President of the
European Commission

Brussels, 02.03.2021

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2020, where you show your deep concern with aggressive actions by the Chinese government towards Australia and raise the important issue on how open, pluralistic societies like ours, committed to fundamental freedoms, democratic accountability, the rule of law and market-economy principles, should respond.

China's is a necessary partner to address global challenges such as the pandemic, climate change and economic recovery. At the same time, China's increasingly assertive behaviour in advancing its political and economic model without due regard for the international rules based system is a matter of deep concern. It has led the EU to pursue a more robust, realist and assertive strategy as set out in the Joint Communication "EU-China: Strategic Outlook" of March 2019. The European Council endorsed and reaffirmed this multi-faceted approach on 1-2 October 2020. In line with this approach, we will continue to engage with China while standing up firmly for our interests and values. We will continue to call on China to uphold its international obligations, refrain from coercive actions, and show responsibility as befits a major global power that it aspires to be.

We have been following the specific developments with respect to Australia closely. We have expressed our full solidarity with Australia in the face of unilateral pressure and conveyed our concerns to our Chinese counterparts.

Mr Reinhard BÜTIKOFER, MEP
Ms Miriam LEXMAN MEP
European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli
08G162
60 Rue Wiertz
1047 Bruxelles

For our part, we will continue to further strengthen our already excellent relations with Australia. On 26 November 2020, we held the first annual EU-Australia Leaders' Meeting with Prime Minister Morrison. In this context we discussed relations with China as part of a wider exchange of views on regional matters.

Today more than ever we are committed to work with like-minded partners protect our democratic institutions, enhance the resilience of our societies and promote the values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law on the global stage.

We thank you for your engagement and your contributions to raise awareness on this matter.

Yours faithfully,



Charles MICHEL



Ursula VON DER LEYEN



Josep BORRELL FONTELLES