

## *Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l*

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### **Religious Freedom in Tibet in 2007**

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) but persistently refuses to ratify the latter. China is therefore under no international obligation under treaty law to protect freedom of religion and belief or any other universally recognized human right. The Constitution is the fundamental legal base regulating freedom of religion and belief in the limits of the political ideology.

#### ***The Chinese Constitution and Freedom of Religion or Belief***

Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees freedom of religion but remains ambivalent. It indeed states that:

- (1) Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief.*
- (2) No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion.*
- (3) The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt the public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state.*
- (4) Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.*

On one side, the constitution protects "normal" religious activities without providing a clear definition of what is to be considered normal. On the other side, it prohibits religious activities that impair public order, health, or education and proscribes "foreign domination" of religious bodies and religious affairs without clearly defining the scope of such activities. Moreover, the freedom to express one's religion through activities is NOT guaranteed by the constitution. This has been noted by the *U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention*, which in its 2004 report reiterated its recommendation that the Constitution be revised to include such a guarantee.

## **Recognition of Religions**

The government of China recognizes five "normal" religions: Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Taoism and Islam.

State recognition is all the more important since only state-sanctioned groups are afforded "protection" under China's religious freedom rules. The counterpart of this so-called protection is however that they must accept strict government supervision and they can only preach inside designated temples, churches and mosques.

The registration of particular religious groups is a prerogative of the state. For each of the five officially recognized religions, there is a government-affiliated association that monitors and supervises its activities: the *Chinese Buddhist Association*, the *Catholic Patriotic Association*, the *Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement*, the *Chinese Islamic Association* and the *Chinese Taoist Association*. All religious groups must register with the appropriate religious organization to be allowed to carry out their activities legally.

Tibetan Buddhism however presents some characteristics that make its situation more complicated than the other religions in the Chinese context. It is indeed an integral part of Tibetan identity and Tibetan nationalism, and it is therefore perceived by the Chinese Government as a potential threat to the authority and the unity of the state. After Tibet was occupied by Chinese troops in 1950, the young Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan Buddhists, was forced to flee the country, together with a considerable part of the Tibetan population. He settled in India on the invitation of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. There is now a parliament and a government in exile. The Dalai Lama's Special Envoy, Lodi G. Gyari, is the official interlocutor of the Chinese Government in talks that were initiated by both parties in 2002.

## **Instrumentalization of the National Religious Leaderships**

The *State Council's State Administration for Religious Activities* (SARA) is responsible for monitoring and judging the legitimacy of religious activity. The SARA and the *CCP United Front Work Department* (UFWD) provide policy "guidance and supervision" on the implementation of government regulations regarding religious activity, including the role of foreigners.

Using the national religious leaderships as the advocates of the government's religious policy is one of the missions of the state control agencies.

In 2003, the new chairman of the *Chinese Buddhist Association* said in Beijing that the Buddhists in China are in firm opposition to the Dalai Lama separatist group. Since then, this statement has remained posted on many Chinese governmental websites

The chairman, 76, whose Buddhist monastic name is Yicheng, a new member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), said: "We resolutely oppose the Dalai Lama's scheme to push forward the independence of Tibet."

On 16 March 2000, Arjia Rinpoche, an abbot of Kumbum Monastery who defected from China two years earlier, said in a hearing on religious freedom in China held

in the US<sup>1</sup>: "Had I remained in Tibet I would have been forced to denounce the Dalai Lama and my religion and to serve the Chinese Government. This meant also participating in government practices that went against my religion and personal beliefs. As Abbot of the Kumbum Monastery, I would have been forced to help the government have its choice of the Panchen Lama accepted by the Tibetan people. This would violate my deepest beliefs. It was at this point that I knew I had to leave my country."

### ***The 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama Issue***

On 14 May 1995, the Dalai Lama announced that Gendun Choekyi Nyima was the new Panchen Lama. The boy was born in the town of Lhari, in Northern Tibet, in April 1989. His parents worked in the local hospital. As soon as the news was announced, troops surrounded the town and took the child and his family away. Since then, their whereabouts have been unknown and have been one of China's most keenly guarded secrets. Gendun Choekyi Nyima was denounced in the People's Daily because he "once drowned a dog" and his parents were condemned as "notorious for scrambling after fame and profit."

The Chinese state then appointed a second six-year-old child, Gyaincain Norbu, as the right reincarnation. He was moved to an unknown place of safety in Beijing to protect him from supposed threats of revenge. Surprisingly, the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama made his debut on the world stage last year at China's first international religious forum since 1949 organized by the state-controlled *Chinese Buddhist Association*.

Lodi Gyaltzen, Special Envoy of the Dalai Lama, explained: "The system of reincarnation is one of the core beliefs of Tibetan religious tradition. China's state custody of Gedun Choekyi Nyima and imposition of its own candidate is nothing less than a violation of this core belief system, one of the fundamental tenets of Tibetan religious life. It is a source of deep resentment among Tibetans that an atheist state has claimed the legitimacy to preside over a centuries-old religious practice."<sup>2</sup>

"TAR Measures for Implementation of the Regulations on Religious Affairs passed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee of TAR People's Government and promulgated on 1 January 2007 aggravated the Panchen Lama issue. The previous regulations on religion dating back to 1991 were just providing that recognizing tulkus could not be used as a means for 'foreign infiltration' but the new measures enforced one year and a half before the Olympic Games stated in article 36:

"The reincarnation of Tulkus in traditional Tibetan Buddhism is handled, at a place of religious activity under the guidance of a religious organization, in accordance with relevant provisions of the state and autonomous region, and in accordance with religious traditions and historical systems. Organizations and individuals may not, without the authorization of the autonomous region religious affairs department, search for or recognize Tulkus and soul boys."

This brutal and total interference of the Chinese state in the internal matters of the Tibetan Buddhist religion means that the search for any new Panchen Lama and his appointment is entirely in the hands of the Government and the

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<sup>1</sup> Statement to a hearing on religious freedom in China organized by the Commission on International Religious Freedom in Los Angeles on 16 March 2000.

<sup>2</sup> The Communist Party as Living Buddha, The crisis facing Tibetan religion under Chinese control, p 9 ([www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org)).

Communist Party. The authorities also want to manage the entire education of reincarnate lamas, especially through a 'school for tulkus' in Beijing, far away from Tibet.

### ***The 2007 TAR Measures for Implementation of 'Regulations for Religious Affairs'***

In 2005, the Chinese Government promulgated the National Regulations on Religious Affairs, the main legal tool for administering all religions throughout the PRC, except for the five autonomous regions, including the TAR. The Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law provides indeed a specific framework for autonomous regions to adapt state laws "in the light of existing local conditions."

This adaptation of the 2005 legislation was promulgated on 1 January 2007 under the name "TAR Measures for Implementation of 'Regulations for Religious Affairs'" and made thereby obsolete the "TAR Temporary Measures for the Management of Religious Affairs" of 20 December 1991.

The new regulations which comprise 56 articles maintained the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party<sup>3</sup> and reinforced the already tight control of Beijing over religious practice and teachings. For numerous activities, approvals from multiple tiers of government are required.

The Dalai Lama is not named explicitly in the 2007 Regulations but his shadow is perceptible in a number of articles. Article 3 states that religious organizations, places of religious activity, professional religious personnel should respect the laws, rules and regulations, (...) and protect the unity of the nation, the unity of the nationalities and social stability. It also says that they "may not use religion to endanger state security or public security." Similarly, Article 4 stresses that religions "will not be subject to domination of foreign forces or extra-territorial forces." Article 34 echoes and clarifies Article 3 when it says that "Professional religious personnel and religious citizens may not distribute books, pictures or other materials which harm the unity of the nationalities or endanger state security." Books by and about the Dalai Lama fall into this category; monks, nuns and laypeople have been sentenced to prison terms for distributing such material. In November 2006, the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court sentenced a Tibetan monk, Sonam Gyalpo, to 12 years in jail on charges of "endangering state security". He had been arrested at the end of August 2005 around the time of celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the setting up of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" (TAR) because the secret police had discovered four videotapes containing teachings of the Dalai Lama in his home as well as some political literature and pictures of the Buddhist spiritual leader.

Reducing the possibilities of religious education of the Tibetan Buddhist clergy is another priority target of the 2007 Regulations. Mobility of the monks and nuns is a crucial aspect of their spiritual instruction as they travel to a specialized teacher to receive additional training. Strictly controlling and forbidding travels by monks and nuns therefore constitute a considerable obstacle. The 1991 Regulations providing that monks needed permission to the TAR – permission that was often

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<sup>3</sup> The Communist Party as Living Buddha, The crisis facing Tibetan religion under Chinese control, p 106 ([www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org)) : "The monastery practices democratic management and adheres to the following fundamental principles: a) Uphold the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, love the country and love religion, and progress in unity (...)" (Excerpt from a poster at a monastery in Kardze but it is typical of all Tibet.)

denied – already deprived them of any access to their chosen seat of learning. Approximately a third of the monks who escaped into exile in 2006 said they had received no religious education at all. The 2007 measures dramatically complicate the authorization procedures and aggravate the restrictions on the freedom of movement between monasteries and regions for the purpose of religious study (See Articles 42, 43 and 44). Travels to pilgrimage places are also strictly regulated by Article 41. Interaction between Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns and their co-religionists abroad is also seriously limited.

Beijing prides itself on re-instituting the Geshe, the highest degree in Tibetan Buddhism, the conferral of which was interrupted at the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, briefly restored in the years of relative liberalization afterwards, and banned again in the late 1980s. However, the whole management of Geshe is in the hands of the Communist Party and is the perfect illustration of the vision of former Chinese President Jiang Zemin who was saying in 1993 that religion should be “guided to adapt to socialism.” This tenet has been fully integrated in Article 5 of the 2007 Regulations which says that “Every level of the people’s government shall actively guide religious organizations, places of religious activity and professional religious personnel to love the country” first before loving religion and to implement the mutual adaptation of religion and socialism. In practice, the examinations are not set by high monks but by officials of the Chinese Buddhist Association, who are lay people. The TAR has indeed established a Geshe Degree Examination and Appraisal Committee comprising 16 people, all under supervision of lay people and government offices. Moreover, the candidates for the Geshe are selected before the exam not on the basis of their knowledge of Buddhism but on the basis of their political studies. So, they first have to take an exam on politics organized by the work committee at their monastery and only if they pass the test, can they take the Geshe.

### ***Tibetan Buddhist Monks and Nuns in China as Birds in a Cage***

In monasteries and nunneries throughout Tibet, governmental posters clearly set the limitations of the space of freedom imposed on the monks and the nuns in the practice of the Buddhist religion.

Monks may not receive or propagate instructions from religious organizations outside the country. They may not recite scriptures, proselytize or seek alms outside the religious venue. They may not distribute religious proselytizing material such as religious books and video materials which have not been approved by the government departments in charge. They may not without authorization extend invitations to religious organizations and religious people outside the country for a visit. They may not use religion to interfere with the administration and laws of the state. They may not interfere with schools or social public education. They may not harm citizens’ physical and psychological health. They may not use religion to establish illegal societies or organizations, to rally, demonstrate or engage in other illegal criminal activities.

Moreover, the prohibition of creating religious disputes clearly targets the Buddhist monks and groups loyal to the Dalai Lama as opposed to those obedient to the government-affiliated *Chinese Buddhist Association*. Similarly, the obligation for monks to oppose all activities of backwardness and returning to the past refers to the religious practices and the loyalty rules determined by the Dalai Lama.

## ***The Guardians of the Cage***

The guardians of the cages in which Tibetan Buddhists are “free” to move their wings are the so-called democratic management committees (DMCs). They are composed of monks and nuns who have been elected by other members of the monastic community but their appointment needs to be approved by local government officials. Quite understandably, no monk or nun will sit in a DMC if he/she is not politically correct and if he/she has not accepted all the limitations of his/her freedom and has not given up his/her loyalty to the Dalai Lama. That is how the Communist tightens its control over religion and undermines the influence of the Dalai Lama among the Tibetan Buddhists.

To guarantee the political correctness of all the monks and the nuns, the DMCs are charged by the Communist Party to devise and implement patriotic education campaigns. The main aim of this religious re-education is to bring the monks and nuns to oppose the Dalai Lama and denounce him. A special form has even been designed on which they must put their names and their fingerprints.

## ***China’s Limitations of the Freedom of Movement of the Dalai Lama and his Teachings Imposed to EU and other countries***

China is the only state in the world whose government tries and manages to hinder the contacts between the believers in a specific religion and their spiritual leader living abroad.

In 2005 and in 2007, the Dalai Lama endeavored to make a pastoral visit to Belgium in order to meet Tibetan Buddhists in exile but in response to pressure from Beijing, which opposes foreign trips by the exiled Tibetan leader, the Belgian government asked the Dalai Lama to cancel his long-planned visit to Brussels.

On 11-12 May of this year, the Dalai Lama was due to meet with members of the European Parliament in Brussels and to attend a conference of NGOs supporting Tibet but he agreed to cancel his visit. The Belgian request was linked to the planned visit of a Belgian trade delegation to China, led by the Crown Prince. The cancellation of the visit also came on the eve of the EU-China human rights dialogue which was to be held on May 15-16 in Berlin.

The cancellation of the Tibetan leader’s Brussels trip follows the postponement under similarly controversial circumstances of an earlier visit meant to take place in June 2005. The date had coincided with a state visit by the Belgian King Albert II to China.

Belgium’s decision to yield to Chinese pressure was widely criticized. It also posed the question on how to respond to further similar intimidation maneuvers by China and on how to protect member states from such coercive diplomacy prior to visits by the Dalai Lama to the EU.

It is disturbing that in the run up to the Beijing Olympics in 2008, the Chinese government is being allowed to silence the Dalai Lama right at the heart of Europe and to prevent him from meeting his believers.<sup>4</sup>

A similar event took place in June 2007 in Ukraine where the Dalai Lama’s ideas are quite appreciated.

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<sup>4</sup> Dalai Lama cancels Brussels visit on request of Belgian government, Press release of HRIC/Phayul and ICT [Wednesday, May 09, 2007 17:23].

A representative of the Tibetan Buddhist Order of Donetsk and young scholars from the Hryhorii Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy, the Krymsky Institute for Oriental Studies, and the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Art Museum announced a roundtable dedicated to the Dalai Lama. It was the first time that a public event dedicated to the Dalai Lama was to take place in the Ukrainian capital city. The participants included scholars and a number of people who were simply interested in the Dalai Lama's life, activities, and teachings.

However, the roundtable's work did not fully correspond to the program that, apart from papers presented by the young scholars, included a highly successful exhibit at Ukraine House, called "The Power of Empathy" and a screening of the film *Kundun*. Much to the regret of the assembled guests, both the exhibit and the film were removed from the roundtable's program because of the intervention of the Chinese embassy in Ukraine.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Dialogue Between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's Envoys***

The relations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities are still in a total deadlock.

On 26 April 2007, the European Parliament adopted its Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2006. On the Tibetan issue, the European Parliament called on the Council and the Commission "to raise the issue of Tibet and to actively support the strengthening of the dialogue between the Chinese Government and envoys of the Dalai Lama".

Since 2002, the Tibetan and the Chinese sides have completed five rounds of discussions and a sixth round started in July of this year but on 10 May 2007, the Special Envoy of the Dalai Lama, Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, said at a conference organized by the Asia Centre in Paris: "I have to report to you that in recent times, the Chinese side has been coming out with statements and action that not only do not contribute to the creation of such a congenial atmosphere, but are direct attempts to undermine the Tibetan position and discredit the person of the Dalai Lama." In a few words, it can be said that such talks have proved to be unproductive.

In its 15 February 2007 Resolution on the Dialogue between the Chinese Government and Envoys of the Dalai Lama, the European Parliament also recognized the "absence of tangible results on substantive issues."

The European Union has also experienced the same lack of concrete results through its Human Rights Dialogues with China and many members of the European Parliament have raised their voices not only to criticize the absence of progress but also to question the relevance of such meetings.

Until November 2006, the Dalai Lama's Envoys had chosen not to reveal any details about their bilateral talks with representatives of the Chinese Government. They knew that China preferred to operate cautiously and free of scrutiny and recognized that to publicize the contents of their talks could adversely impact the process. However, in recent times, articles have been published in the Chinese media, under a pseudonym, detailing the contents of the discussions. Similarly,

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<sup>5</sup> *The Day*, 27 June 2007 (Ukraine): His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama: "School programs should eradicate all negative portrayals of 'strangers'", by Klara GUDZYK.

the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party has been briefing foreign diplomats based in Beijing about these discussions in its own way.

The danger of instrumentalization of such purposely unproductive dialogues by the Chinese Government is real and should not be underestimated.

Before the Olympic Games, the Chinese Government needs to show its willingness to make such a dialogue productive with a concrete move if it wants to be credible: for example a pilgrimage of the Dalai Lama to the Five Peaked Mountain in China. On several occasions, the Dalai Lama has expressed this wish that was highlighted by the last resolution of the European Parliament. Will the Chinese Government fulfill his wish before the Olympic Games? Its answer, whether positive or negative, will need to be recorded in its human rights assessment.

### ***Freedom of Religion in China in the Resolutions of the European Parliament***

In the last eighteen years, the European Parliament passed no less than 25 resolutions on China, which shows a long-standing interest in and genuine concern about human rights in China.

The first resolution was adopted on 15 March 1989<sup>6</sup> and concerned the bloody repression of demonstrations in Tibet by the Chinese authorities, the imposition of martial law, the prohibition of any petition and public meeting, and the deportation of foreign journalists. It is in September 1991 that the issue of religious freedom was raised for the first time.<sup>7</sup> The Parliament was thereby drawing attention to the increased persecution of Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants and Moslems. It was also calling for the release of the Catholic Bishop Paul Li Thenrong and of several Tibetan monks and laymen. One of them, Tamdin Sithat, had been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in 1984 by the Chinese authorities because he had in his possession a statement by the Dalai Lama. The appeal of the European Parliament failed however to secure the early release of these prisoners of conscience.

In a resolution dated 15 February 2001 and entitled "Religious Freedoms in the People's Republic of China, the European Parliament stressed that the repression of religious activity is pursued systematically and implacably in Tibet while it varies depending on the attitude of the local governments in other parts of China<sup>8</sup>. It reiterated its condemnation of the continued and severe violations of

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<sup>6</sup> See full text of the resolution at <http://www.tibet.com/Resolution/ep15mar89.html>

<sup>7</sup> See full text of the resolution at <http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/ep/ep4.html>

<sup>8</sup> *Quotation from the resolution adopted on 15 February 2001:*

The Parliament (...)

C. whereas State control over religion is already evident in the restricted number of religions that are officially recognised, and whereas any religious activity that has not been registered by the official associations is regarded as illegal,

D. whereas, although the zeal with which the policy of repressing religious activity is enforced varies depending on the attitude of the local governments, in the supposedly autonomous Region of Tibet that policy is pursued systematically and implacably,

1. Calls on China to release all those detained or imprisoned for peacefully exercising their internationally recognised rights to freedom of belief, religion and conscience;

2. Calls for the constitutional right to freedom of religion and belief to be fully guaranteed, together with the exercise of the associated rights of freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly;

4. Reiterates its condemnation of the continued and severe violation of human rights in Tibet and the ongoing discrimination practised against the Tibetan people by the PRC authorities on the basis of race or ethnic origin or religious, cultural or political beliefs;

human rights in Tibet and the ongoing discrimination practised against the Tibetan people by the Chinese authorities on the basis of race or ethnic origin or religious, cultural or political beliefs. It called on China to release all those detained or imprisoned for peacefully exercising their internationally recognised rights to freedom of belief, religion and conscience. The PRC however turned a deaf ear and did not modify its religious policy in Tibet.

In a resolution dated 5 July 2001 and entitled "Beijing's application to host the Olympic Games 2008"<sup>9</sup>, the European Parliament regretted that the PRC clearly failed to uphold universal human, civil and political rights, including freedom of religion and therefore believed that this negative record and the repression in Tibet as well as in Ouighouristan and in South Mongolia, made it inappropriate to award the 2008 Olympic Games to Beijing. It also invited the International Olympic Committee to reconsider Beijing's candidacy when the authorities of the PRC would have made a fundamental change in their policy on human rights, and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. Unfortunately, this voice was not heard.

In its resolution dated 11 April 2002 and entitled "EU strategy towards China"<sup>10</sup>, the European Parliament noted that in both the regions of Xinjiang and Tibet, religious freedom continued to be severely restricted and people suspected of nationalist activities or sympathies were still subject to particularly harsh restrictions. It also expressed its concerns about the large number of nuns and monks who remained imprisoned. It said it was extremely preoccupied by the ongoing question of religious, political and cultural freedom and appealed to the Chinese Government to respect and protect the religious and cultural identity of the people of Tibet. Unfortunately, no progress was recorded after this severe assessment.

On 7 September 2006, the European Parliament drew the attention of the PCR to the need for the state to abstain from regulating religion and expressions thereof and to adopt a comprehensive law on religion meeting international standards and guaranteeing genuine religious freedom. It deplored the contradiction between the constitutional freedom of belief (enshrined in Article 36 of the Constitution) and the ongoing interference of the State in the affairs of religious communities, in particular as regards to the training, selection, appointment and political indoctrination of ministers of religion. It regretted the fact that the State accords the right of legal existence to only five religions and, moreover, placed them under the control of the corresponding Chinese "patriotic" religious associations, protecting only "normal" (zhengchang) religious activities and making their official registration subject to acceptance of the principles underlying the umbrella organization the "Three Autonomies".

As it can be seen, little progress in the level of religious freedom in China, and particularly in Tibet, has been registered since 1989 despite the 25 resolutions of the European Parliament, the Political Dialogues, the Human Rights Dialogues and the Summits between the EU and China.

In its 11 April 2002 resolution, the European Parliament reiterated its "call to the Council of the European Union to appoint an EU Special Representative for Tibetan Affairs so as to contribute effectively to the peaceful resolution of this issue, facilitating the resumption of negotiations and cooperating with the Tibetan

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.tibet.com/Resolution/ep5jul01.htm>

<sup>10</sup> See the full text of the resolution at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2002-0179+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN#def\\_1\\_3](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2002-0179+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN#def_1_3)

Government in exile.” The European Parliament once more repeated this call in its 15 February 2007 Resolution on the Dialogue between the Chinese Government and Envoys of the Dalai Lama.

The appointment of an EU Special Representative would send a strong signal to Beijing that the European Parliament is taking the Tibet issue in all its dimensions very seriously if he/she were involved in the decision-making process concerning the enhancement or not of the EU policy with regard to China according to the level of progress made Beijing in the search for a solution of the Tibet issue. An EU Special Representative would thereby guarantee some continuity in the monitoring and the regular assessment of the situation in Tibet.

### **Conclusions**

On the eve of the Olympic Games, China makes a lot of efforts to convince the international community that progress in human rights and in religious freedom follows and will follow the same pace as its economic development. Nothing is so far away from the reality.

When the Chinese Government has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including freedom of religion and belief and the right to profess and practice it individually and collectively,

When the Chinese authorities have allowed the Tibetan Buddhists to express their religious devotion to the Dalai Lama and to have unrestricted access to him,

When they have released the Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, from state custody,

When they have put an end to their intervention in the identification and training of Tibetan reincarnate lamas,

When they have repealed the laws and regulations that are inconsistent with international standards that protect freedom of religion and belief,

When they have put an end to the interference of the state in the internal matters of the Tibetan Buddhist institutions,

When they have disbanded the democratic management committees,

When they have extended their invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Ms Asma Jahangir, so that she can carry out a fact-finding mission about the alleged violations of religious freedom in China,

the international community will be able to start to believe that China has become a democratic country sincerely willing to respect human rights and freedom of religion.

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