



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.7.2021
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Dear President,

The European Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Annual Report for 2020 to the European Parliament and the Council on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region {JOIN(2021) 6}.

The European Commission shares the concerns of the Senát as regards the deterioration of the situation in Hong Kong, notably on the respect of rule of law, human rights, democratic principles and Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.

Hong Kong is high on EU's political agenda and the situation has been discussed by European Foreign Ministers on four occasions since December 2020. In July 2020, the EU agreed on a package of measures as a response to the adoption of the National Security Law by the National People's Congress. This covers inter alia measures related to asylum and visa policy; export controls; observation of trials; support for civil society; scholarships and academic exchanges; reviewing extradition agreements; and refraining from launching any new negotiations.

The EU remains committed to support the Hong Kong people. Key actions taken under the Council Conclusions include the suspension by six EU Member States of their extradition agreements, or negotiations for such an agreement, with Hong Kong following the adoption of the Council Conclusions (Germany, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Finland and Italy); heightened scrutiny by Member States' authorities of relevant exports for end-use in Hong Kong; coordinated attendance by EU and Member States diplomatic representatives in Hong Kong to observe court hearings of pro-democracy activists; and intensification of their contacts with civil society organisations. Hong Kong students, academic and university staff continued to participate in a wide range of higher-education exchanges under Erasmus+ and bilateral exchange schemes run by Member States. No new negotiations with Hong Kong were launched.

*Mr. Miloš VYSTRČIL
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ –118 01 PRAGUE 1*

Since July 2020, the situation in Hong Kong has further deteriorated with the recent changes in the Hong Kong electoral reform. The EU reacted quickly with a EU27 declaration and in a coordinated way with a G7 statement. As the Declaration of 11 March by the High Representative on behalf of the EU made clear, these changes are yet another breach of the “One Country Two Systems” principle, and another violation of China’s international commitments and the Hong Kong Basic Law. This regressive electoral reform will have another negative impact on fundamental freedoms and political pluralism in Hong Kong.

The European Commission is pleased that the Senát is closely following the situation in Hong Kong and supports the EU’s response to the deterioration of the situation in the Special Administrative Region as enshrined in the Council Conclusions adopted in July 2020.

The EU remains committed to support the people of Hong Kong and to continue addressing the deterioration of the political situation in Hong Kong and the dismantling of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle by China, in violation of its international commitments and the Hong Kong Basic Law.

The Commission believes that the political dialogue with national Parliaments is essential for linking the institutions and the citizens of the European Union, and looks forward to continuing it with the Senát in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative/Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*