

GERMAN BUNDESTAG
Berlin
18 April 2002

Motion tabled by the members of the German Bundestag Volker Neumann (Bramsche), Heide Mattischek, Rudolf Bindig, Dr. Peter Struck and the SPD parliamentary group, Christa Nickels, Kerstin Müller (Cologne), Rezzo Schlauch and the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group, Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, Herman Gröhe, Hartmut Koschyk, Dr. Rainer Jork, Friedrich Merz, Michael Glos and the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, and Dr. Irmgard Schwaetzer, Dr. Wolfgang Gerhard and the FDP parliamentary group.

Human rights and development in Tibet

The German Bundestag notes:

The German Bundestag is following closely the policy of the People's Republic of China towards the Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region and the provinces populated by Tibetans. The Bundestag expressed its concerns regarding the human rights situation in Tibet in a cross-party motion tabled in 1996.

The People's Republic of China is currently engaged in strenuous efforts to further economic development in the Tibet Autonomous Region. In order to close the gap between the poorer western regions and the richer areas on the east coast, no less than 8 billion Yuan were purposely channelled into Tibet in the course of the last planning period. In the current Five Year Plan period (2001-2005), these investments in infrastructure, agriculture, technology, education and environmental protection are to be increased almost fourfold. There has been a marked improvement in the living standards of the population in recent years. Such achievements merit respect and recognition.

However, the efforts to develop the economy have been accompanied by continued repressive measures against the Tibetan people. On average, 4,000 Tibetans still flee abroad each year because they feel that they are discriminated against by the policies of both the central government and the provincial administration, and face severe restrictions on the practice of their religion. The refugees include Communist Party officials, recognised religious dignitaries, and between 500 and 600 children each year.

These children are sent to Dharamsala by their parents out of concern for their education. The campaign against the Tibetans' spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has intensified both in China and abroad, and has heightened the Tibetans' mistrust of the Chinese leadership. In his report of 25 January 2001, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture refers to several instances of maltreatment of Tibetans held in prison in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Monks and nuns, in particular, were the victims of maltreatment. Further, the German Bundestag is deeply concerned about the twelve-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, whose whereabouts remain unknown. This boy, who was named by the Dalai

Lama as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, disappeared with his family from their home in Lhari in the Tibet Autonomous Region in May 1995.

By ratifying the UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 27 May 2001, the People's Republic of China sent out a positive signal, not least to the Tibetans. Among other things, this involved a commitment under international law on China's part to promote understanding and tolerance among all racial, ethnic and religious groups. At the same time, China also recognises the right of every individual to take part in cultural life.

A dialogue that is expressly inclusive of human rights issues has been established between China and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as at European level with the European Union.

The German Bundestag welcomes the dialogue on the rule of law agreed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of China on 30 June 2000. Seminars and symposia have met with a positive response from politicians, experts and academics in both countries. The German Bundestag calls upon the participants to make use of this dialogue to discuss the issue of Tibet as well.

The German Bundestag also supports wholeheartedly the dialogue on human rights between the European Union and the People's Republic of China, in which human rights issues are being debated with increasing honesty. In matters concerning the Tibetan people, however, it has not yet been possible to achieve progress.

As the problem of Tibet is a shared European concern, the German Bundestag appeals to the parliaments of the European Union's member states and the European Parliament, and calls upon the European Union and the governments of its members states to press for the speedy uptake of a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership in their bilateral contacts with China.

The German Bundestag considers a direct dialogue about the situation in Tibet, as proposed by the Dalai Lama on a number of occasions, to be indispensable to a lasting political solution. It would be a great gain for China and the people who live in China if the dialogue about the situation in Tibet were to commence without delay and lead to a lasting political solution.

The German Bundestag wishes to engage in a constructive dialogue with the members of the People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and requests them

1. to persist in their efforts to bring about economic and social development in the Tibet Autonomous Region and, at the same time, to ensure that the natural resources of the Tibet Autonomous Region and other areas populated by Tibetans are preserved, and that mineral resources are exploited in an ecologically sustainable manner;

2. to engage in a debate in the People's Congress on the current situation and political future of the Tibet Autonomous Region and of the areas populated by Tibetans;
3. to press for a direct dialogue to be taken up with the Dalai Lama, with the aim of negotiating a Statute on Tibet that would be based on the Tibetans' right to self-determination and guarantee them extensive rights of autonomy within the structure of the People's Republic of China;
4. to press for the person and office of the Dalai Lama to be respected and no more damage to be done to them;
5. to work to ensure that the Tibetan people are able to preserve their own ethnic and cultural identity, and practice their religion unhindered in accordance with to the 17-Point Agreement of 23 May 1951;
6. to press for clarification of the whereabouts of the 12-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family;
7. to press for an amnesty for all Tibetan political prisoners;
8. to press for the systematic implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
9. to work to ensure that it is possible for the situation in Tibet to be discussed openly in the dialogue on human rights with the European Union.

Berlin, 14 March 2002