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## Olympics characterised by broken promises to respect human rights

As the Beijing Olympics draw to a close, the European Green Party has criticised the Chinese authorities for having broken their promises to respect human rights, including the right to protest openly and freely. The European Greens have also called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to improve the mechanisms for reporting human rights abuses and curtailment of media freedom during the Olympic Games.

**EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts** said: "The 2008 Summer Olympics were a not-to-be-missed opportunity for the Chinese authorities to demonstrate that change was underway in China. While it would be naïve and unrealistic to expect instant democracy from China, the Olympics offered a perfect occasion to welcome the free expression of dissent and an open debate on the urgent challenges - soaring inequalities, environmental destruction, - facing Chinese society in the 21st century. Similarly, the Olympics gave China a perfect opportunity to be a showcase of sustainability, in terms of construction, of mobility, of energy production and consumption. In all those respects, the hopes of all those in China who aspire to a democratic, open, just and sustainable society have been severely disappointed. In terms of human rights, the Chinese authorities claimed that China hosting the Olympics would lead to a real and significant improvement in the human rights situation in China. In reality, as we Greens and many human rights organisations feared, the opposite has proved to be the case and these Olympic Games have been characterised by an increase in human rights abuses including forced evictions, arrests, detention and intimidation of critics of the government and human rights activists and the harassment of journalists and media professionals."

**EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek** continued: "We share the concern of many human rights organisations and activists that China's authoritarian regime will tighten restrictions on the right to protest once the foreign media that have been in the country to cover the Olympics have left. That is why it is vital that the international community, including EU institutions and member states, do everything they can to put pressure on

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## Press release

The Greens | EFA  
in the European Parliament



China to release the thousands of human rights activists that have been detained. The arrest of foreign pro-Tibet activists in the past few days is another example of the Chinese regime's blatant disregard for the fundamental and universally recognised right of all people to peacefully protest. The world leaders who have been attending the Olympic Games or who are travelling to China for the closing ceremony must be much more outspoken than they have been in defending the human and democratic rights of all Chinese and Tibetan people. We applaud the "Olympic rights for Human games" Campaign launched by our colleagues in the Greens/ EFA group in the European Parliament and we European Greens will continue to call for the EU and its member states to do much more to defend human rights in China. "

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