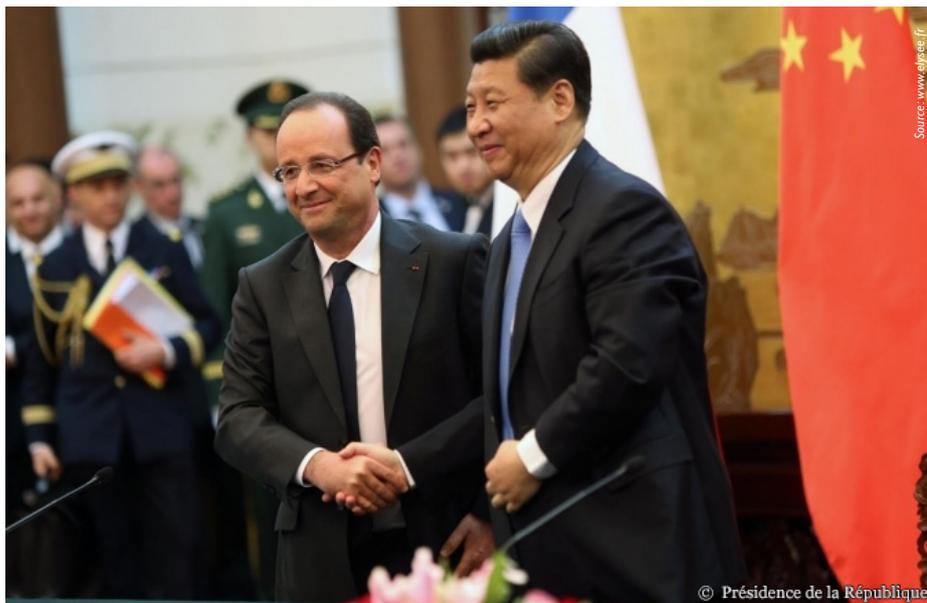


European Leaders Visit the New Chinese Leadership



During the month of April 2013 several European leaders went on official visits to China in order to meet with the new Chinese leadership.

French President Francois Hollande travelled to China (Beijing and Shanghai) from April 25 to 29 to meet his Chinese counterpart President Xi Jinping on a mission mainly focused on economic relations and trade issues between the two countries.

Even though human rights concerns in China were not a central issue, it seems that Hollande did touch upon human rights in both mainland China and Tibet during official meetings.

In this regard, Hollande stated: *“human rights and democratic principles are both part of the dialogue that we are having. It should not be seen as an obligation, we should simply put this issue as it should be: as part of frank*

and respectful political dialogue” and that self-immolations in Tibet *“create legitimate emotion”*.

Interestingly, a few days before Hollande’s official visit to China Ifop published a survey for Green Lotus (Centre for Sustainable Development in Asia). This survey revealed that at least two-thirds of the French population expected Hollande to tackle the human rights situation in China (68%) and to express concern over the situation of Tibetans (66%) during his meetings with Xi. Moreover, eight out of ten French want Hollande to invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama for an official visit to the Elysee (80%).

To read the results of the survey, [click here](#).

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Also the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton travelled on an official visit to China and Mongolia from April 25 to 30.

The visit came at an important moment in the development of EU-China relations, as both sides are intent on taking the EU-China relationship forward through a so called Strategic Partnership.

Ashton’s visit to China was prompted by an invitation by Foreign Minister Wang Yi. According to an EEAS official press release, the High Representative held meetings with Politburo Standing

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Committee Member and Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Yu Zhengsheng, State Councilor Yang Jiechi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi and State Councilor and Defence Minister General Chang Wanquan. In this case also, Tibet and human rights concerns were not the primary topics of discussion, as her agenda

focused on international strategic challenges, including those relating to Iran, Syria, North Korea and Afghanistan. ■

ICT's Light of Truth Awards

Five remarkable individuals were presented with the International Campaign for Tibet's (ICT) Light of Truth Award by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in Switzerland on April 13, 2013, for their outstanding contributions to the Tibetan cause.



They included 90-year old Mr. Robert Ford, who witnessed China's invasion of Tibet and had his first audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama when the latter was 11 years old. Two of the award winners, Professor Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling and Professor Theo van Boven, cited their experience of living under foreign occupation

and oppression in Europe when they were young as the reason for their support for Tibet's freedom struggle. The other two awardees were The International Commission of Jurists, which has produced groundbreaking reports on Tibet, and Ms. Sigrid Joss-Arnd, in recognition of the important role played by the Swiss Red Cross when Tibetan refugees began flowing out of Tibet in the 1960s.

The Light of Truth Award recipients were each presented with a Tibetan butter-lamp, which represents the light they have shed on the Tibetan cause, in a moving private ceremony in Fribourg, Switzerland, where the Dalai Lama was giving Tibetan Buddhist teachings.

At the award ceremony, His Holiness the Dalai Lama paid tribute to each honoree saying "All of you have been long-standing friends and supporters of Tibet, for which we are immeasurably grateful. As you know, the spirit of the Tibetan people is undiminished and the power of truth remains strong." He further stated that "the closed, authoritarian society under the Chinese Communist Party could not be sustained in the future but the Tibetan spirit will carry on from generation to generation."

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, head of the Central Tibetan Administration since 2011 and ICT's special guest at the reception, offered congratulations and "heartfelt gratitude" to the ICT, the Light of Truth Award honorees, and friends across the globe for their generous support of Tibet. Dr. Sangay spoke at length about Tibetan democracy in exile, stressing the Dalai Lama's commitment to government reform and the extreme lengths Tibetans have gone to in order to participate in the election process in exile. ■

Declaration on Self-Immolations by the German Parliament

On April 24, 2013 the Human Rights Committee of the German Parliament, the Bundestag, passed a Joint Declaration on Self-Immolations in Tibet.

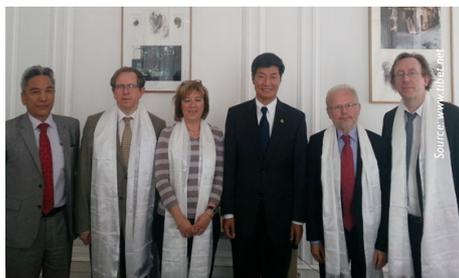
A Joint Declaration, by protocol, is not a resolution, but more than a mere press release or statement. The Committee has only passed five such declarations in the past four years, notably on Syria, Russia and Iran.

The Declaration underlined that the rise of self-immolations among Tibetans is an expression of deep desperation over the lack of freedom as well as over the non-existent freedom of religion and the refusal of the Chinese leadership to respect this unique cultural identity.

Moreover, the Committee urged the new Chinese leadership to open up a new chapter in their relations with the Tibetans by re-starting the Sino-Tibetan dialogue (stalled since 2010), to look into the causes of these desperate acts and to bring about necessary reforms. The committee further stressed that the Chinese leadership must respect the human rights of Tibetans and their right to live according to their own culture and religion. ■

To read the Declaration in German, [click here](#).

Lobsang Sangay Meets French MPs



On April 18, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was received at the French National Assembly by one of the co-presidents of the Study Group on the Question of Tibet, Mr Jean-Patrick Gille, along with four other officials.

He spoke on the current situation inside Tibet and answered questions asked by different members on how to reinvigorate the awareness and support for the Tibetan cause. Dr. Sangay further informed them about CTA's position on solving the Tibet issue through peaceful dialogue within the principles of the Middle Way policy.

In this regard, the Sikyong strongly urged the deputies in the National Assembly to support the CTA in its quest to re-open the dialogue process with the Chinese leadership, reiterating that the CTA does not seek to take power in Tibet when it regains its freedom.

On the same day, Dr. Sangay met with around 300 members of the Tibetan community in France. ■

One of Tibet's Longest-Serving Political Prisoners Released After 17 Years

One of Tibet's longest-serving political prisoners, Jigme Gyatso, has been released from prison after 17 years. Images received from Tibet show Tibetans waiting to receive him with khatags (white blessing scarves) to indicate respect and welcome him back to his home area in the Tibetan area of Amdo following his release on March 31. He was described as "very weak" upon his arrival back in Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) County in Gansu province's Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, where he had been a monk at Labrang Tashikyil monastery before his imprisonment in 1996.



Jigme Gyatso was originally sentenced to 15 years in prison on November 23, 1996 for "leading a counter-revolutionary organization". He received the longest sentence of a group of five Tibetans who carried out various acts of peaceful resistance, including putting up a Tibetan national flag at Ganden monastery and raising the issue of Tibetan independence. The sentencing document issued by the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court makes it clear that the Chinese authorities regarded Jigme Gyatso as the ringleader.

Jigme Gyatso's sentence was extended after an incident in March 2004 in which he shouted: "Long live the Dalai Lama," for which he was kicked and beaten, including with electric prods.

During his initial detention, Jigme Gyatso managed to smuggle out a letter to a comrade saying that he was likely to receive a long prison sentence, but that he had no regrets. He referred to the 10th Panchen Lama's long prison sentence and to others who served terms in jail for freedom, including the South African civil rights leader Nelson Mandela. When prison officials discovered that he had sent this letter, he was beaten.

During his imprisonment, Jigme Gyatso endured severe torture on several occasions and was imprisoned in Gutsa detention center as well as in Drapchi and Chushur prisons in Lhasa. In 2006, he was hospitalized and was unable to walk properly due to an injury apparently incurred through torture. There were fears for his life in 2007 after he spoke about prison conditions on a rare visit by the then UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak to the Chushur (Chinese: Qushui) prison where he was then being held. Dr Nowak was the first official international observer to visit Chushur; he noted that in the prison there was "a palpable level of fear and self-censorship" and called for Jigme Gyatso's release. ■

Panchen Lama's Birthday in Chinese Custody

April 25, 2013 marks the 24th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, taken into Chinese custody on May 17, 1995 at the age of six. He has not been seen in public since.

On this date last year, the International Campaign for Tibet released its report, "60 Years of Chinese Misrule: The Case for Cultural Genocide in Tibet." The report found in part that Chinese policies and practices of cultural repression and destruction are so systematic and persistent in Tibet, and their effects are so serious, that they contain elements of cultural genocide. The intense control over Tibetan Buddhism – including the manipulation by the Chinese authorities of religious figures, as personified by the Panchen Lama's experience – is an area where cultural repression has been most visible and intensely felt by Tibetans.

The historic role of the 10th Panchen Lama as an authentic representative of the Tibetan people and Tibetan Buddhist culture during the early years of the Communist occupation clearly inspired the Chinese government's plan to undermine the Dalai Lama's authority to name his reincarnation and to manage and control its own replacement. ■



See also:

- ▶ [ICT report: "60 Years of Chinese Misrule: The Case for Cultural Genocide in Tibet"](#).

Henri Malosse is the new EESC President

Henri Malosse, former President of the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), was elected President of the Committee in April 2013. The swearing in ceremony was held on April 18 in the European Parliament.



The ceremony was attended by more than 600 people ranging from European dignitaries, ambassadors, and representatives of various public organizations. One of the speakers was Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration, who arrived in Brussels on April 14 on an official four-day visit.

In his inaugural speech Henri Malosse said that he was most inspired by four prominent figures, one of which was His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

While explaining his admiration for the Dalai Lama, Mr. Malosse said "I have been privileged to meet him twice – thanks to Mario Sepi, in fact. When we met him, the Dalai Lama expressed admiration for the work of Europe's founding fathers and admitted that he had once had similar hopes for Asia. The Dalai Lama and his words should remind us that there are still many people in the world living without freedom: the European project is also an example that gives us a responsibility to convey the values of freedom, democracy and solidarity loudly and clearly across the world, without ever betraying them in the name of so-called realpolitik, which is nothing short of cowardice".

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, while addressing the 344 EESC delegates, highlighted the importance and substance of the Middle Way policy of the Central Tibetan Administration in resolving the Tibet issue. She also emphasized the importance of continued support and solidarity of the European Union and the people of Europe in resolving the longstanding conflict between the Tibetan people and the Chinese government. ■

Tibet Brief

A report of the International Campaign for Tibet



May 2013

Political prisoners focus

Tritsun



On March 11, 2013, the day after the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising, Tritsun (pen name: Tri Bhoë Trak), a monk from Tongkyap Monastery, was detained on unknown charges by the People's Armed Police in Gade County (Chinese: Gandel). The police gave no explanation for the sudden detention. Although the Chinese authorities have yet to disclose the charges against Tritsun, it is likely that he has been detained in connection with a book he authored and published in

March 2013. The book, entitled "Denpai Khalang" (English: Breath of Truth), was released and distributed on March 8 at Tongkyap Monastery. The book contains essays on fiery sacrifices made by Tibetans in a series of self-immolation protests. In particular, it features a biography on Lama Soeba, a reincarnated lama from Tongkyap Monastery who died in a self-immolation protest last year. Tongkyap Monastery is under tight security. The presence of armed police around the monastery spiked after monks held a prayer ceremony on March 14—the 2008 protest anniversary—to mourn the loss of lives linked to self-immolation protests. The prayer ceremony was held to observe the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising and the fifth anniversary of the 2008 protest. The ceremony, held at a sacred rock cairn located near the monastery, saw monks offering butter lamps, doing prostrations and circumambulating around the cairn, covered in Buddhist teachings carved on stones. ■

This number's reading suggestion

Jonathan Green: "Murder in the High Himalaya. Loyalty, Tragedy and Escape from Tibet."

Murder in the High Himalaya is the account of the brutal killing of Kelsang Namtso—a seventeen-year-old Tibetan nun fleeing to India—by Chinese border guards. Witnessed by dozens of Western climbers, Kelsang's death sparked an international debate over China's savage oppression in Tibet.

Adventure reporter Jonathan Green has gained rare entrance into Tibet. In his affecting portrait of modern Tibet, Green raises enduring questions about morality and the lengths we go to achieve freedom. ■

To read a review by *The Economist*, [click here](#).

Upcoming Events

- ▶ **FIDH Congress May 23 – 28 in Istanbul:** ICT, as a member of FIDH, will participate
- ▶ His Holiness the Dalai Lama will visit Latvia and Lithuania from 9 - 14 September



ICT Europe

Vijzelstraat 77
1017HG Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
ict europe@savetibet.nl

ICT Brussels

15, rue de la linière
1060 Brussels
Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@savetibet.eu

ICT Germany

Schonhauser Allee 163
10435 Berlin
Germany
Telefon: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT United States

1825 Jefferson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20036
United States of America
Phone: +1 (1) 202-785-1515
Fax: (202) 785-434
info@savetibet.org