



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Tibet friendship group reestablished in European Parliament

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The European Parliament's Friends of Tibet group held today its first meeting following last year's European elections, marking a significant step forward in continued support for Tibet within the European Union.

Convened by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Dainus Žalimas (Renew, Lithuania), the meeting brought together MEPs or their assistants from various political groups to discuss the current situation in Tibet and explore potential parliamentary initiatives to support the Tibetan people. MEPs present were: Petras Auštrevičius (Renew, Lithuania), Hannes Heide (S&D, Austria), Mariusz Kamiński (ECR, Poland), Beatrice Timgren (Sweden, ECR), Brunno Tobback (S&D, Belgium), Sebastian Tynkkynen (ECR, Finland) and Dainus Žalimas (Renew, Lithuania).

Žalimas, who was nominated as Chair of the group, highlighted the importance of this group in light of the bleak situation in Tibet. He raised a number of upcoming opportunities that MEPs could join - including the 66th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10; the 9th World Parliamentary Convention on Tibet (taking place this year in Tokyo from June 2-4); and the 90th birthday of the Dalai Lama. The group also agreed to explore the possibility of pushing the adoption of urgency resolutions on Tibet by the European Parliament – for example about the situation following the [recent earthquake in Tibet](#).

The meeting was also attended by Rigzin Genkhang, the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Brussels, and of ICT, who provided an overview of the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet – including the forced assimilation policies including the boarding schools system for Tibetan children, restrictions on religious freedom and environmental destruction.

“As Chinese assimilation policies are being implemented at a rapid pace, threatening the preservation of Tibetan culture and identity, we welcome the reestablishment of this Tibet friendship group within the European Parliament,” ICT’s EU Policy Director Vincent Metten said. “It is crucial that Members of the European Parliament from different political groups meet regularly and launch coordinated initiatives on Tibet to ensure the issue remains high on the EU's agenda,” Metten added.

The reestablishment of the group followed the [EU4Tibet campaign](#), a coordinated effort by the Office of Tibet in Brussels and ICT ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections. Through this campaign, candidates were encouraged to publicly pledge their support for Tibet, which helped lay the groundwork for the group's relaunch. The campaign also garnered strong support from Tibet Support Groups across Europe, whose tireless work played an essential role in raising awareness about Tibet among the European public. On the occasion of a meeting of Tibet Support Groups in Copenhagen on January 30 and 31 – which was convened by the Office of Tibet in London for the

Nordic and Baltic countries - the attendees expressed their great joy at the reestablishment of the Tibet friendship group, and wished Mr. Žalimas and his colleagues much success in their work.

The Tibet Intergroup, established at the beginning of the European Parliament's third legislature in 1989, was one of the institution's oldest intergroups. Since 2014, it was reestablished as a more informal group, which has been pivotal in maintaining Tibet on the political agenda of the EU.



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