

The European Parliament in Brussels commemorates the 52nd anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising

Brussels March 16 : Mr. Edward McMillan-Scott, Vice President of the European Parliament responsible for Democracy and Human Rights and Ms. Kristiina Ojuland, MEP hosted a seminar on Tibet in the European Parliament in Brussels "52 Years since the Tibetan Uprising: Common Ground for Tibet and China?" This event was organized to commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the National Uprising of the Tibetan People in Lhasa March 1959.



From left to right : Mr. Roy Strider, Mr. Thomas Mann, Ms. Kristiina Ojuland, Mr. Kelsang Gyaltsen, Mr. Vincent Metten & Mr. Edward McMillan-Scott.

The conference was very well attended despite falling amidst a very busy committee week, by Members of the European Parliament, their Assistants, Representatives of Non-governmental Organisations such as Human Rights Without Frontiers, Amnesty International EU, members of the Belgian Tibetan Community and a number of journalists accredited to the European Parliament.

"We in the EU must not turn a blind eye to the continued abuses of human rights and repression of democracy," said **McMillan-Scott**. "The European Union was founded on the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and it is our duty to work together to end the persecution of the Tibetan people; the imprisonment and torture of those whose only crime is the practice of their traditional lifestyle."

Ojuland stressed that the Tibetan issue must be raised every single time, when meeting the representatives of the Peoples' Republic of China. She said: "We need to insist that the Peoples' Republic of China applies her own constitution, providing autonomy to national minorities."

She also noted that it is important that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is received in all democratic and free countries as the legitimate head of state of Tibet, especially in Estonia.



The audience

Kelsang Gyaltzen, Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, appealed to the European Parliament to send a Parliamentary delegation to Tibet. "Opening Tibet to parliamentarians, international observers, press etc contributes to better treatment of the Tibetans," he told. "The Chinese authorities become very careful, when there is a constant presence of international observers."

Roy Strider, activist of Friends of Tibet, Estonia and columnist to Tibet Sun, reflected upon the environmental aspects of the Chinese occupation of Tibet and asked the EU to stick to its values. "We are accustomed to placing economic interests and the interests of the system of international relations above human sense of justice and humane values," said Strider. "It is time to demand an economic blockade to China, because nothing can be more important than the values that keep the human world together."

The panel also included Members of the European Parliament Thomas Mann and Csaba Sógor as well as Vincent Metten, EU Policy Director of International Campaign for Tibet.

After the intervention of the panelists, the floor was open to the audience for a question and answer session where diverse issues on Tibet were raised.

The conference ended with a cocktail.

The full statement of some of the panelists will be made available on Envoy's website; <http://www.tibet-envoy.eu/content/?p=439>

* Report filed by Rigzin Choedon Genkhang, Office of Tibet, Brussels.