

## **OPEN LETTER TO THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AND SPONSORS OF THE WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES BEIJING 2022**

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, would like to express our deepest concern at the ongoing situation in China, in light of the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics Games.

The Chinese Communist Party, who are organising the 2022 Games, are responsible for a growing list of Human Rights violations across their country. Various reports have found that the rights of multiple minority groups in the country have been stripped, from the Uyghur People in Xinjiang, to pro-democratic protestors in Hong Kong, to Tibetans and Chinese Christians. Further to the internal issues, China has been openly aggressive to its neighbours, mounting an increasing number of armed flights into Taiwanese territory, and continuing its policy of militarising the South China Sea.

On top of this, there is growing evidence of a genocide taking place in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. As many as 2 million Uyghur people are currently being held in internment camps, where they are exported across the rest of the country to be used for forced labour. Additionally, they are subject to forced sterilisation and abortions, as a means of population control. Those Uyghurs living outside of the camps have been denied their right to travel freely, practice their own religion, or speak their own language.

Whilst we appreciate the right for private companies to invest and sponsor whichever organisations and events they so please freely, we would like to express our concern for the reputational damage the these games will have on your brands. We believe that as major sponsors of the Olympic games, and as reputable brands, you have a responsibility to take a stance against the actions of the Communist Party of China. There should be a commitment to corporate responsibility it standing up to authoritarianism, especially in a state that uses forced labour.

Equally, we express that the International Olympic Committee must withdraw the games from China and move it to another country. The IOC failed to act in 2008 when the Summer Games were held in Beijing, despite warnings about human rights, or in Sochi, in 2014, despite Russia's aggressive policies against its neighbours. Now is the time to rectify that mistake, and prevent the Chinese Communist Party from exploiting these games for their own gain.

The Olympics, from the beginning, have been organised in the spirit of cooperation between nations, and towards the promotion of peace around the world. In the past dictators have tried to subvert this message to give legitimacy to their cause, from the Nazi Germany in 1936, to the Soviet Union in 1980, when democracies have boycotted the games. The case of China in 2022 is no different.

In the event this does not happen we call on major sponsors to pull their support from the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, and call on democratic states and civil societies to hold a boycott in protest through various forms of disapproval, from not attending the opening ceremony, designing delegations in order to send a message to Beijing and global public opinion to boycotting of games-related products and events.

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