Beat: Politics

EUROPEAN COUNCIL EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN OVER NATIONAL SECURITY LAW IN HONG KONG

SUPPORT HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY

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USPA NEWS - Following an initial discussion in the Foreign Affairs Council on 13 July 2020, the Council today adopted conclusions expressing grave concern over the national security legislation for Hong Kong adopted by the Standing Committee of China´s National People´s Congress on 30 June 2020.
The conclusions restate the EU's support for Hong Kong´s high degree of autonomy under the “˜One Country, Two Systems´ principle, and its solidarity with the people of Hong Kong, whilst setting out a coordinated response package of measures in various fields.
These include among others:
“¢ asylum, migration, visa and residence policy;
“¢ exports of specific sensitive equipment and technologies for end use in Hong Kong;
“¢ scholarships and academic exchanges involving Hong Kong students and universities;
“¢ support to civil society;
“¢ the operation of member states´ extradition arrangements and other relevant agreements with Hong Kong
Lastly the conclusions call for a review of the implementation of the national security law and of the impact of the EU response package before the end of the year.

CONCLUSIONS OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON HONG KONG
The EU considers the national security legislation for Hong Kong adopted by the Standing Committee of China´s National People´s Congress on 30 June to be a matter of grave concern. China´s actions and the new legislation are not in conformity with China´s international commitments under the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 or with the Hong Kong Basic Law. These actions call into question China´s will to uphold its international commitments, undermine trust and impact EU-China relations.
The EU´s concerns relate both to the substance of the new legislation and to the process by which it was adopted. As regards the substance, the EU is particularly concerned about the extensive erosion of rights and freedoms that were supposed to remain protected until at least 2047; about the lack of safeguards and clarity in the law; and about its extraterritorial provisions. The EU expects the Hong Kong authorities to guarantee the citizens their rights and freedoms provided in the Basic Law. The EU also expects the possibilities for cooperation on the part of the EU Office, Member States´ Consulates-General and European civil society with Hong Kong´s civil society and political institutions to continue unchanged following the entry into force of the new legislation.
As an initial response, the EU has decided to endorse a coordinated package responding to the imposition of the national security law, to be carried out at EU and/or Member State level, as deemed appropriate, within their respective areas of competence, in the following fields:
ï€ Considering the implications of the national security legislation for asylum, migration, visa and residence policy in accordance with the applicable law, including by discussing relevant aspects at EU level; “¨
ï€ Further scrutinising and limiting exports of specific sensitive equipment and technologies for end-use in Hong Kong, in particular where there are grounds to suspect undesirable use relating to internal repression, the interception of internal communications or cyber- surveillance; “¨
ï€ Exploring possibilities for stepping up and coordinating scholarships and academic exchanges involving Hong Kong students and universities; “¨
ï€ Further engaging with and supporting civil society in Hong Kong; “¨
ï€ Ensuring continued observation of the trials of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong; “¨
ï€ Discussing at EU level the potential risks to EU citizens presented by the national security legislation; “¨
Monitoring the extraterritorial effect of the national security legislation; “¨
ï€ Reviewing the implications of the national security legislation on the operation of Member “¨States´ extradition and other relevant agreements with Hong Kong; “¨
ï€ For the time being, not launching any new negotiations with Hong Kong. “¨The purpose of the various measures and of the package as a whole is to express political support for Hong Kong´s autonomy under the “˜One Country, Two Systems´ principle, and solidarity for the people of Hong Kong. “¨The EU will follow closely the political situation in Hong Kong in the lead-up to the Legislative Council elections on 6 September. The EU considers it essential that these elections take place in an environment which remains conducive to

the exercise of democratic rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Basic Law. “¨While coordinating with international partners, including in multilateral fora, the situation in Hong Kong and the implementation of the national security legislation will be raised both at EU and national level at every opportunity with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities as appropriate. “¨The European Union has a significant stake in the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. Accordingly, it attaches great importance to the preservation of Hong Kong´s high degree of autonomy, in line with the Hong Kong Basic Law and with international commitments, as well as to the respect for the “¨One Country, Two Systems´ principle. “¨The Council requests the High Representative, in consultation with the Member States, to review the implementation of the national security law, its effects on rights and freedoms and the business environment in Hong Kong, and the impact of the EU response package before the end of the year. “¨Source: European Council

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