



RESOLUTION

IN SUPPORT OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN HONG KONG SAR

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting
in Belgrade, Serbia on 4th of October 2014

Recognising:

- That as part of the handover agreement between the United Kingdom and Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the People's Republic of China, effected on 1st July 1997, Hong Kong was given "Special Administrative Region" (SAR) status. With this China agreed that the city would have "a high degree of autonomy" for 50 years post-handover;
- This SAR status, known as "one country, two systems" framework, guaranteed Hong Kong limited self-governance and civil liberties, including an independent judiciary and unrestricted press, with Beijing responsible for defence and foreign affairs;
- Under the SAR status, the Chief Executive was to be the head of Hong Kong government, replacing the Governor of Hong Kong post-handover, who was to be elected by a 1,200 member Election Committee, an electoral college consisting of private citizens and special interest groups elected from 28 functional constituencies;
- Hong Kong's constitution, the Basic Law, as agreed by the UK and China in 1997, says that "the ultimate aim" is to elect the Chief Executive "by universal suffrage" in free and fair elections;
- The Chinese government promised direct, universal suffrage, elections for the Chief Executive by 2017;

Acknowledging:

- That in August 2014, China's top legislative committee reneged on their promise of a directly elected Chief Executive, by ruling that prospective candidates will be selected by a Chinese government nominating committee, this not allowing Hong Kong citizens to have a free and democratic choice of Chief Executive;
- Pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong and China believe that China will use the nominating committee to block candidates that Beijing disapproves of;
- In June 2014, Occupy Central, led by academic Benny Tai, organised an unofficial referendum on political reform in Hong Kong with almost 800,000

citizens, or one in five registered voters, casting ballots in favour of democratic political reforms;

- Following this unofficial referendum, tens of thousands of peaceful protesters took part in the largest pro-democracy rally in over a decade on 1st July, which marked the day Hong Kong was handed-over to China in 1997;
- On Sunday 28th September, Hong Kong police attempted to clear the protests, by firing teargas and launching multiple baton charges on the protesters, with a stand-off ensuing and the police withdrawing early on Monday morning;
- On Sunday evening, the Beijing government's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office condemned the protest as an illegal gathering, and expressed confidence that the Hong Kong government would "handle the Occupy Central movement according to law";
- Many pro-democracy activists and international observers fear that Beijing will forcibly suppress the protests, forcing a Tiananmen Square-style situation.

YEPP calls on:

- The People's Republic of China to respect the "one country, two systems" values and Hong Kong Basic Law that protects the right to democracy, free speech and free press in Hong Kong SAR;
- The European Union, as the leading democratisation force in the world, to strongly condemn any attempts by the Beijing administration to suppress freedoms or further undermine democracy in Hong Kong SAR or Macau SAR.