

PRESS RELEASE

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**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY
ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
IN SUPPORT OF THE CHINESE DISSIDENT, Mr WEI JING XENG**

The European Union deeply deplores the extremely long period of time during which Mr Wei Jing Xeng has been under arrest without a formal accusation, as well as the sentence pronounced against him today. His defence of human rights in general and of freedom of expression in particular, makes him worthy of the international community's most sincere and firm respect.

The European Union regrets that, in spite of the demarche carried out to the Chinese authorities on 6 December, Mr Wei Jing Xeng has been sentenced and therefore, demands that this emblematic champion of human rights is promptly freed without conditions.

Norway, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia associate themselves with this declaration