

Tibet Brief

A report of the International Campaign for Tibet



November 2014

ICT welcomes the investiture of new High Representative Federica Mogherini

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) welcomes the investiture of **Mrs. Federica Mogherini** as the new High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. It looks forward to her continued interest in the issue of Tibet.



Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

On October 22, after formal hearings with all Commissioner-designates, the European Parliament voted on the new European Commission led by its President **Jean-Claude Juncker**. It approved the 27 candidates, including Mrs. **Mogherini**. The new European Commission took office on November 1. **Federica Mogherini** is the second EU High Representative after Baroness **Catherine Ashton** and is responsible for coordinating the EU's foreign policy.

During her hearing with the European Parliament, Mrs. **Mogherini** stressed that she was committed to "promoting human

rights in all areas of foreign relations without exception", defining them as the "core business" for a country's stability. Moreover, she underlined the importance of the rights of ethnic minorities, saying that it is in her DNA.

"We look forward to working actively with Mrs. Mogherini on the issue of Tibet, and her commitment to engage regularly with NGOs and civil society groups", said Mr. **Vincent Metten**, EU Policy Director at ICT's Brussels office.

China is a strategic partner to the EU, but its repressive policies in both mainland China and Tibet are completely incompatible with international human rights standards, which the EU wishes to promote through its external action.

In light of the gross human rights violations perpetrated by China and the EU's consistent failure to address these in its exchanges with the Chinese leadership, as well as the lack of concrete progress of the EU-China human rights dialogue, ICT urges the new EU High Representative to take action. It needs to send a clear message that the Chinese government's current policy on human rights in both Tibet and China is unacceptable and a threat to bilateral

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relations. ICT asks her to incorporate the issue of Tibet in all her relations with the Chinese government, including at the highest level.

[Click here](#) to read ICT's extensive blog article on the need for a new EU strategy on human rights in Tibet with the new High Representative. ■



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Towards the re-establishment of the Tibet Intergroup in the European Parliament

As a follow-up to its pledge campaign “2014 for Tibet”, the **International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** helped collect the signatures of constituent members of the new **Tibet Intergroup** in the European Parliament. By the deadline on October 22, some 45 MEPs had signed up.

“We are pleased that despite the growing economic and political influence of the People’s Republic of China, 45 MEPs have had the courage to stand up to it and joined the Tibet Intergroup,” said **ICT’s** EU Policy Director **Vincent Metten**. *“We are confident that those voices in the European Parliament speaking up for Tibet cannot be silenced and that the non-violent struggle of Tibetans for greater freedom will stay in the spotlight.”*

Members of the **Tibet Intergroup** have raised awareness of the situation on the ground in Tibet and advocated human rights and civil liberties of the Tibetan people. They have also denounced excessive militarisation of the Tibetan Plateau and depletion of its natural resources, while calling for the resumption of Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

This has been an important platform to discuss various political, cultural and environmental aspects of this region. The **Tibet Intergroup** have had the opportunity of studying issues related to Tibet in greater depth, organising conferences and inviting experts and analysts. By doing so they have been better able to participate in the parliamentary work and speaking up on behalf of the Tibetan people.

Intergroups can be formed by MEPs from any political group or committee, with a view to holding informal exchanges of views on particular subjects and promoting contact between MEPs and civil society. ■

Sikyong Lobsang Sangay visits to Europe

The Tibetan political leader, **Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay**, visited several EU Member States during the month of October. He met with officials in the Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain.



Meeting between Dr. Sangay and Dutch Tibet-related organisations in Amsterdam, October 2014.

In Czech Republic, Dr. **Sangay** was a speaker at the Forum 2000 conference [“Democracy and Its Discontents: A Quarter-Century After the Iron Curtain and Tiananmen”](#). He gave a speech on the panel “The Significance of Václav Havel’s Value-Based Foreign Policy”. **ICT** also participated in this conference (see article 4).

In Brussels he met with officials of the European External Action Service and was invited by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Thomas Mann (EPP, Germany) to meet other MEPs, such as Tunne Kelam (EPP, Estonia), Natalie Griesbeck (ALDE, France) and others.

ICT’s Amsterdam office co-organised Dr. **Sangay’s** visit to the Netherlands. His program there included meetings at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Immigration Department, the Dutch Parliament and a special audience with over 23 Dutch Tibet-related organisations.

He ended his visit to Europe in Barcelona with a meeting at the Catalan Parliament and the Deputy Mayor of the city. ■

ICT's mission to Scandinavia and Czech Republic

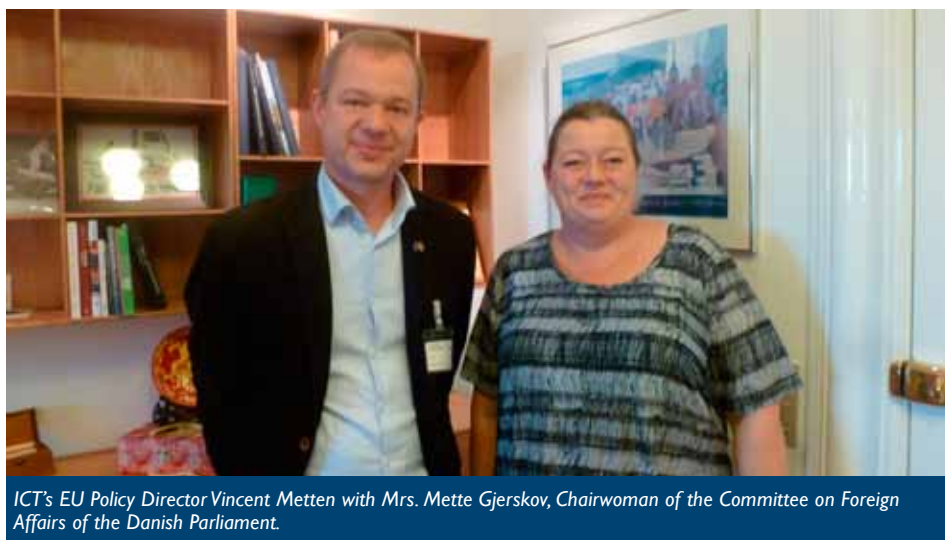
Between November 27 - 30, ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten visited Copenhagen and Stockholm to meet policy-makers and brief them about the current situation in Tibet. He presented the findings of ICT's latest reports (in particular on self-immolations) and proposed concrete recommendations to move the issue forward.

Mr. Metten met with several members of Parliament in both countries (from the ruling parties and oppositions) as well as diplomats of Foreign Affairs Ministries. These visits also provided an opportunity to talk with local Tibet Support Groups, whose members took part in several meetings with MPs, to discuss how ICT can support their activities in the future.

Early next year, the Dalai Lama has been invited to Copenhagen by seven Buddhist organisations. On February 11 and 12, 2015, he will give two teachings on « How To Strengthen Compassion » and « Eight Advises for Mental Training ».

Before his visit to the Nordic countries, Vincent Metten also joined the 18th annual edition of the Forum 2000

in Prague, mentioned earlier. This year's conference, titled "[Democracy and Its Discontents: A Quarter-Century After the Iron Curtain and Tiananmen](#)" reflected on the last 20-30 years of transitions to democracy. Lobsang Sangay was one of the panelists. ■



ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten with Mrs. Mette Gjernskov, Chairwoman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Danish Parliament.

ICT asks German company Bosch for information on its involvement in China Surveillance and Security Fair

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has asked German company Bosch for information about the products it was selling at a major surveillance and security fair, China International Exhibition on Public Safety and Security, in Beijing between October 28 to 31. In a letter to Bosch sent on October 27, 2014, ICT asked Bosch CEO Volkmar Denner whether they made a Human Rights Impact Assessment prior to the decision to attend the Fair. So far ICT has not received a reply.

Kai Mueller, Executive Director of ICT in Germany, said: "*The Chinese Communist Party-state seeks to cover up its repression and has deepened surveillance in order to maintain its authoritarian rule, but a German company should not be complicit. There has to be a red line. Bosch should not be endorsing the ethos of this event in Beijing. It is not in line with its corporate guidelines.*"

Bosch sells surveillance and safety systems on the Chinese market. This year, the 'China Security 2014' event

displays "urban-anti-terror" equipment, and is "supported" by the "Anti-Terrorism-Department" of the Ministry for Public Security.

This has led to a dramatic and costly expansion of the powers of China's military and policing personnel that is increasingly regarded by progressive Chinese and the international community as a flawed tool of Chinese Communist Party control.

The provision of such equipment to an

authoritarian Party-state which suppresses its own citizens counters the principles of corporate social responsibility outlined on Bosch's website. It states: "*Combining the pursuit of economic objectives with consideration for social and environmental factors is a priority at Bosch. We accept that our actions must accord with the interests of society. Above all else, we place our products and services in the interests of the safety of people, the economic use of resources, and environmental sustainability.*" ■

New cases of self-immolation in Tibet

The current wave of self-immolations in Tibet seemed to have ceased in April 2014, as no further cases were reported since. However, self-immolations resumed in September.



Lhamo Tashi

Two cases occurred on September 16 and 17.

The first one concerned a 42-year-old man named **Kunchok**, who set himself on fire outside a police station in the Golog (Chinese: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. An image of **Kunchok** with his face completely burnt has reached Tibetans in exile.

Kunchok's self-immolation took place in Tsangkor town in Gade (Chinese:

Gande) county in the Prefecture but Tibetans nearby managed to extinguish the flames. **Kunchok** was rushed to hospital, and was deeply distressed that he had survived, according to Tibetan sources. Although the self-immolation happened on September 16, news only reached Tibetans in exile on October 5 due to restrictions on information and tightened security in the area.

The following day, a Tibetan student, **Lhamo Tashi**, set fire to himself and died outside a government Public Security Bureau headquarters in Tsoe City, northeastern Tibet, where he was studying.

After self-immolating, he was taken away by the police. Tibetan sources said it was not clear whether he had died at the scene or not. When they realised that he had set fire to himself, his family approached the authorities, who refused to return his body if he had died. Two days later on September 19, **Lhamo Tashi**'s family was given his ashes.

A Tibetan in exile with contacts in the area said: "We do not know whether **Lhamo Tashi** had a specific message or left a note. But some local people believe that he chose the timing to coincide with Xi Jinping's visit to India." China's President and Party Secretary Xi Jinping began his first visit to India as China's leader on September 17, the day **Lhamo Tashi** self-immolated.

These self-immolations take the total number up to 133 since February 2009.

Instead of addressing the causes of unrest in Tibet, which led to these extreme acts of political protest, the Chinese government has recently responded with a more pervasive crackdown. It seeks to punish those allegedly 'associated' with self-immolators, including friends, families and even entire communities, leading to charges of 'international homicide'. [\[See edition 45 of ICT's Tibet Brief of September 2014 on its new report 'Acts of Significant Evil' on the criminalisation of self-immolations in Tibet\].](#)

Tibetan demonstrations over land and education policy

News has emerged of two separate demonstrations – over education and loss of land – that occurred on November 1 and 3 in different areas of Amdo, despite intense security in both areas and the risks of participating in protests in Tibet.

Images emerged from **Sangchu** (Chinese: Xiahe) showing a large deployment of armed police in response to a group of Tibetans, possibly including Chinese, who peacefully expressed their concerns over unfair compensation for land in their home areas, according to information from Tibetan sources.

The images showed demonstrators surrounded by ranks of armed police and barricades outside the Xiahe county hospital in **Sangchu** county, Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province (the Tibetan area of Amdo). Tibetan sources said that the

protestors had wanted to walk to the county government headquarters, but many of them were blocked by police.

One image shows metal barricades being driven to the scene on trucks and erected to block the demonstrators. In another of the pictures a banner is partially visible, written in Chinese, indicating that the protest is about land. The protestors may have also included some Chinese from the area.

The same Tibetan sources said that this was one of three protests by local people seeking fair payment for their land

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Demonstration in Sangchu county, November 3, 2014

from the authorities. According to sources and reports in exile Tibetan media, land had been acquired from the same area by the local authorities at different times for different rates; the protestors sought a uniform and fair rate of payment for the land.

Issues over payment for land and its seizure have caused protests in the area before - all were suppressed. Earlier this year, hundreds of Tibetans in Hortsang township in **Sangchu** county staged protests about the seizure of farm land earmarked for the construction of highways. They claimed state-linked gold mining and industrial activities are polluting the environment and destroying livestock (Radio Free Asia report, March 22, 2014).

Moreover, in Dzoegé, Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), a group of Tibetan middle school students gathered on November 1 calling for equality of education. Their protest was sparked by an official meeting about nationality and bilingual education in the prefecture. [Footage uploaded to Youtube](#) by Tibetan exiled media shows students shouting slogans in Tibetan including: "Better to help a hundred than help one" and "Equality of education". The students were from Dzoegé county middle school, in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Amdo).

The protest is thought to be linked to a meeting on October 29 where officials discussed education issues in the Ngaba area, detailed on a county government website, and discussions among officials about teaching in the area.

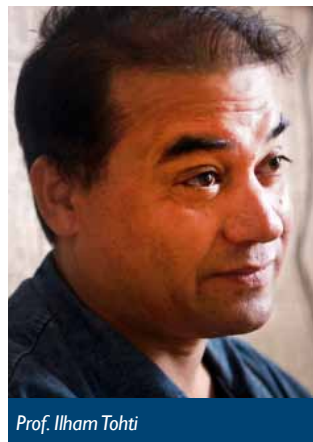
Tibetan sources said that a proposal was discussed to separate classes in Dzoegé according to the abilities of students and teachers. Students feared this would lead to a more 'elite' form of education where students of less ability would not benefit from the same opportunities.

To Chinese officials, 'bilingual education' policy should mean that Chinese is the main language of instruction, with Tibetan relegated to just Tibetan language classes. Government efforts to prioritise Chinese language teaching over Tibetan have led to widespread peaceful protests by Tibetan schoolchildren and students from 2010-11 onwards in the Tibetan area of Amdo. Tibetans seek to preserve their language by giving it at least equal footing with Mandarin.

The protests in **Sangchu** and Dzoegé in the last few days demonstrate that despite a political climate in which almost any views expressed by Tibetans not directly sanctioned by the state can be characterised as 'criminal' by the authorities, Tibetans continue to take bold steps in peacefully asserting their views and defend their culture and values. ■

ICT expresses solidarity with the Uyghurs and Hong Kong protestors

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) wishes to express its solidarity with the Uyghur minority in China and demonstrators of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.



Prof. Ilham Tohti

On September 23, Uyghur scholar **Ilham Tohti** was sentenced to life in prison. The sentence from Beijing sends an extremist and negative message both to moderate non-Chinese who are trying to find a space within the People's Republic of China, and to China's foreign partners, including the United States and the European Union, which have objected to his incarceration.

The EU issued a [statement](#), condemning the fact that the due process of law was not respected. It called for his unconditional release.

ICT believes that **Ilham Tohti** was fully exercising his right to freedom of expression when sharing his views on the marginalisation of

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Uyghurs, and matters concerning their language and culture. Therefore, **ICT** calls on the Chinese authorities to reconsider the decision and release **Ilham Tohti**.

His case, like those of Tibetans who have tried to protect their identity and culture in China against the policies of assimilation, is a reflection of China's misperceived ethnic policy and does not contribute to the "unity and stability" of the People's Republic of China.

Moreover, **ICT** believes the ongoing peaceful citizens' movement in Hong Kong, led primarily by students, is a result of the Chinese authorities backtracking on their commitment to Hong Kong under the "One Country, Two Systems" arrangement, which promised them

democratic universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017.

Whether in Tibet or Hong Kong, Chinese authorities are making bad and dangerous policy decisions by clamping down on peaceful protests or by blaming foreign elements for 'instigating' unrest.

Chinese Communist Party statements have increasingly centred on the need for the rule of law in China, but it has not shown to its citizens and the international community that it is serious in its implementation.

The ongoing events represent an important test for the direction to be taken by China, and the alternative for the Chinese Communist Party is clear: either China implements much needed political reforms

in Hong Kong and on the mainland, or it strengthens its authoritarian grip. This would fuel aggressive nationalism, leading China along the wrong path in the future while sending a bleak message to the international community. ■



Demonstrators in Hong Kong

Political prisoners focus

Khenpo Kartse



Khenpo Kartse after his arrest

The religious teacher Khenpo Kartse, who has been held in detention since December 2013 [[See edition 44 of ICT's Tibet Brief of July 2014](#)], has been sentenced to two and a half years in prison. Radio Free Asia cited a Tibetan source as saying that his trial was held two or three months ago at a court in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu), in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Khenpo Kartse's detention caused widespread distress. Hundreds of Tibetans gathered peacefully to protest his arrest at a prayer ceremony, and organised a rare

silent vigil for him outside a prison earlier this year. In a further demonstration of the strength of local feeling about the lama's arrest, officials from his home area of Nangchen travelled to Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) where Khenpo is being held. They expressed their concerns about his detention, but to no avail, according to Tibetan sources in exile in touch with people in the region.

Full details of sentencing and the charges against him are not known; the news that he will serve two and a half years in prison emerged from two Tibetan sources in contact with others in the region. One of the sources said that it was believed that **Khenpo Kartse** would be transferred from Chamdo to Powo Tramo prison east of Lhasa in remote Pome County, Nyingtri (Chinese: Linzhi) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region.

Karma Tsewang is a highly-educated and respected abbot (Khenpo) at the Gongya Monastery in Nangchen, Yulshul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in Qinghai Province. He is believed to be unwell with a liver condition and has not

been allowed access to doctors treating his medical condition for some time. His relatives have also been denied access to him.

Khenpo Kartse's Chinese lawyer Tang Tianhao travelled several times to Chamdo and was only allowed to meet him twice, for a short time, according to the same Radio Free Asia report and other sources. Tang Tianhao was later compelled to withdraw from the case due to pressure from the authorities. Following his initial detention on December 6, 2013, the lawyer was told by Chamdo police that the case involves endangering state security.

According to the Radio Free Asia report, **Khenpo Kartse** "was later specifically accused of harbouring a fugitive monk — linked to a bombing incident — from Chamdo's Karma monastery at his own Japa monastery in Nangchen county." (Radio Free Asia, October 17, 2014). It was on this amended charge that he was convicted and sentenced, the same source said. His lawyer had rejected the charge as "not compatible with reality". ■

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Video suggestion

« Struggle for Tibet »



Jury and this year's awardees of the Snow Lion, Chinese journalist Chang Ping and ICT-Germany's board chairman Prof. Jan Andersson.

The documentary "[Struggle for Tibet](#)" (available only in German at the moment) by film-makers and authors Thomas **Weidenbach** and **Shi Ming** is a compelling film, which reveals the strategic significance of Tibet to the Chinese leadership. Mr. **Weidenbach** and Ms. **Shi** were awarded the International Campaign for Tibet Germany's "Snow Lion" award, which recognises excellence in independent reporting on Tibet, at a ceremony attended by senior correspondents, writers including Chinese dissident Liao Yiwu and supporters of ICT in Berlin on October 18.

The 'Snow Lion' awards jury, comprising German journalists Eva Corell and

Andreas Lorenz and German actor, filmmaker and author **Hannes Jaenicke**, also gave a research grant of 2.000 Euro.

A prominent Chinese journalist, **Chang Ping**, the former chief commentator of the ground-breaking newspaper Southern Weekend, now lives in Germany after being forced to leave China and Hong Kong. He spoke at the award ceremony about the dangers of reporting on China due to the Chinese government's restrictions on journalists and extended reach to the outside world with the creation of new media outlets.

Chang Ping cited a Chinese saying: "*If a bird is born in a cage, he believes flying is a disease*" to refer to his Chinese compatriots' lack of freedom. He said: "*Like so many of my Chinese fellow countrymen, I have been silent for many years when it came to voicing one's opinion on Tibet, Turkestan (Xinjiang) or about Hong Kong. Democracy, freedom, human rights and justice, the suffering of others and about my own individual rights – it has been difficult for me to give my point of view. With regard to morality*

and justice in this entire world I have been silent for years. And when we Chinese really resolve to open our mouths, we have already unlearned it." ■

Upcoming Events

- ▶ **4 – 5 DECEMBER : EU NGO FORUM**
- ▶ **16 DECEMBER : 16 + 1 MEETING IN BELGRADE**
- ▶ **JANUARY 2015 : START OF THE LATVIAN EU PRESIDENCY**



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