

Hong Kong: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the electoral system



The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China adopted today a Decision that will have a significant impact on democratic accountability and political pluralism in Hong Kong.

The Decision will lead to a concentration of power and influence in the Hong Kong Election Committee, which is not a democratically elected body. The Decision will lead to a reduction in the proportion of directly elected representatives in the Hong Kong Legislative Council. It also erodes the ability of Hongkongers to be legitimately represented and to directly influence the decisions it takes. These changes run counter to the commitments to greater democratic representation through universal suffrage as the ultimate aim for the selection of the Chief Executive and the election of the Legislative Council as enshrined in article 45 and 68 of the Basic Law.

The European Union regrets that the fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and the political pluralism that are central to Hong Kong's identity and prosperity are under increasing pressure by the authorities. These freedoms were meant to be protected until at least 2047. They were agreed in the Sino-British Declaration registered by the Chinese and British governments at the United Nations and enshrined by the National People's Congress in the Hong Kong Basic Law.

Today's Decision is therefore yet another breach of the "One Country Two Systems" principle, and another violation of China's international commitments and the Hong Kong Basic Law.

The European Union calls on the Chinese and the Hong Kong authorities to restore confidence in Hong Kong's democratic process and to end the persecution of those who promote democratic values. At the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 February 2021, EU Foreign Ministers agreed to work on a set of short- and longer-term actions, in addition to the initial response package adopted in July 2020. In light of this most recent Decision, the European Union will consider taking additional steps and pay increased attention to the situation in Hong Kong as part of the overall relations between the European Union and China.