

Conference on Kashgar City Closes with Pledge for Urgency Resolution

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MEPs Promise to Place Kashgar Firmly on the European Parliament's Agenda

Brussels, 28 January 2011 – Members of the European Parliament have joined together to support an urgency resolution on the desperate situation of Kashgar after hearing testimony from **Rebiya Kadeer**, President of the World Uyghur Congress and Nobel Peace Prize nominee. The pledge comes after a conference convened by **Frieda Brepoels MEP** saw **Kinga Gál MEP**, **Nicole Kiil-Nielsen MEP**, **Edward McMillan-Scott MEP**, **Niccolò Rinaldi MEP**, **Helga Trüpel MEP** express support for the Kashgar campaign.

Attendees learned of the importance and prospects for Kashgar from **Haiyun Ma** (Laogai Research Foundation), **Mehmet Tohti** (World Uyghur Congress), and **Henryk Szadziwski** (Uyghur Human Rights Project) before **Ulrich Delius** (Society for Threatened Peoples), **Vincent Metten** (International Campaign for Tibet) and **Suzanne van Haeverbeeck** (former World Heritage Expert) discussed both the cost of inaction and the opportunities still remaining to protect Kashgar.

Time is pressing if Kashgar, as a symbol of Uyghur culture and the Silk Road, is to be saved from the bulldozers but **Marino Busdachin**, UNPO General Secretary, welcomed the urgency resolution, reminding those present that the problems of China's minorities remained "too long to list today." **Rebiya Kadeer** noted that "one culture does not belong to one people... [but inside China]... people do not have that right" to question the state's actions – hence the importance of the urgency resolution. In this vein, **Helga Trüpel MEP** noted that if Beijing wanted to be seen as a world power it had to recognize the "cultural diversity and cultural autonomy" of its people.

Frieda Brepoels MEP remarked after concluding the conference that "China is clearly lacking the capacity to give essential rights to its ethnic minorities... without the participation of the local population and the Chinese refusal to let Kashgar compete for UNESCO world heritage status is characteristic of the way in which the Chinese Communist Party handles cultural diversity."

For more information on the conference, please refer to

<http://www.unpo.org/article/12104>

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Note to Editors: Ms. Kadeer testified before the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights in 2009 and made a call for dialogue with Beijing. The modalities of a dialogue was the focus of a conference sponsored by Niccolò Rinaldi MEP and Ivo Vaigl MEP in April 2009 and is a priority for WUC activities in 2011.



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