

Parliamentary questions

1 September 2011

E-007543/2011

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission

The European Union is profoundly concerned at the ongoing restrictions on the liberty of Chen Guangcheng and of his wife and daughter. Both before and immediately after his release from prison, the EU sought assurances that Mr Chen would not be placed under house arrest; the Chinese authorities provided assurances that Mr Chen would be a free man following his release, as house arrest does not exist under Chinese law. Reports indicating that Mr Chen remains under house arrest are of particular concern since Mr Chen is in poor health and requires medical treatment.

Following reports that Mr Chen had nevertheless been placed under house arrest following his release from prison, an official from the EU Delegation in Beijing, accompanied by officials from other concerned countries, attempted to visit Mr Chen's home at Dongshigu village, Shandong province on 14 October 2010. Their car was, however, intercepted by unidentified individuals on its approach to the village and violently turned back; it was, accordingly, impossible to visit Mr Chen. The EU subsequently protested to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning this incident.

The EU raised Mr Chen's case again at the EU-China human rights dialogue on 16 June 2011. The Chinese authorities reiterated that house arrest does not exist under Chinese law and claimed that Mr Chen, having been released, was living a normal life. China noted that any further attempt by the EU to visit Mr Chen would constitute interference in China's internal affairs.

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