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**OPEN LETTER FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO EU  
GOVERNMENTS CONCERNING THE EU-CHINA HUMAN  
RIGHTS DIALOGUE**

*As the European Union (EU) holds the next round of its human rights dialogue with China on 28-29 September 2000, Amnesty International is calling on EU governments to re-evaluate their approach and use all the means available to them to ensure that the serious human rights violations in China are effectively addressed.*

*The human rights situation in China has seriously deteriorated over the past two years, while the human rights dialogue held by the EU and other governments with China has failed to bring any concrete improvements on the ground or progress in the area of China's cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms.*

*In February 1999, Amnesty International addressed a letter to the EU expressing concern about the new crackdown on dissent in China since the end of 1998. Referring to the human rights dialogue with China, it noted that dialogue relies for its effectiveness on*

accompanying public pressure, both bilaterally and through the UN's mechanisms. The organization was concerned that EU and other governments were at risk of becoming captive to the dialogue process in the face of Chinese pressure to abstain from action on human rights in other forums. These fears appear to have been confirmed.

At the 1998 UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the EU promised to keep the question of a resolution on China "under close review in the light of progress in the dialogue and developments on the ground..." However, despite the continued deterioration in human rights in China and the lack of progress in the dialogue - which the EU has acknowledged, the EU did not table or co-sponsor a resolution at the CHR in either 1999 or 2000. Amnesty International has been disappointed by the unwillingness of the EU to take such action.

Amnesty International believes that engagement in a dialogue should not preclude other unilateral or multilateral action to improve human rights. It is not acceptable that bilateral co-operation programs, opportunities to discuss human rights and bilateral relations in general, are openly held hostage to inaction in relevant international human rights mechanisms.

Amnesty International has made clear on several occasions that it is not, and has never been, opposed to dialogue, but it believes that the value of dialogue can only be measured over time in terms of concrete improvements for victims of human rights violations. No such progress has been made in the dialogue with China.

In addition, the dialogue continues to be marked by a lack of openness, public accountability, and benchmarks to measure progress. Dialogue sessions are held behind closed doors with a selected audience. Participation remains narrow and restricted: the key participants are

government representatives and others are vetted by governments. Even though the EU has otherwise reported on the human rights concerns it raises with China, there is still no public reporting on the discussions held during dialogue sessions. Equally, while the EU has stated it is pursuing specific objectives through the dialogue, there is no time frame for the achievement of these objectives.

Amnesty International believes that these and other issues should be addressed in the context of an evaluation of the dialogue which the EU has recently undertaken. As a first step, Amnesty International calls on the EU to report publicly on the discussions that will be held during the forthcoming round of dialogue, including the responses given by China to specific concerns raised during the talks. The EU should also make public its own assessment of the perceived successes and failures of the dialogue to date, and re-evaluate its approach in the light of the conclusions drawn from this assessment.

Anne Burley,  
for the Secretary General  
Amnesty International