



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT commends outgoing European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group

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At a meeting of the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group (TIG) in Brussels yesterday – the last in the Parliament's 8th term – the International Campaign for Tibet expressed its deep appreciation for the determined and sustained support of its members for the Tibetan people, and its hope for the group to be reinstated in the next term.

The meeting, which was attended by TIG members or their assistants, several newly elected MEPs, the representative of the Dalai Lama in Brussels Tashi Phuntsok as well as ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten, mainly aimed at highlighting the achievements of the group in the past four years, at showing gratitude for the important efforts of its members to keep the Tibet issue on the European Union's agenda and welcoming new MEPs attending the meeting.

In particular, participants thanked German Member of the European Parliament Thomas Mann, the Chair of the TIG since 1999, for his incredible dedication to the Tibet movement. Vincent Metten said: *"For 20 years, Thomas Mann has been "the face of Tibet" within the European Parliament and has taken many different initiatives to bring attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet at the heart of European institutions. His leading role has been highly recognized and appreciated by the Tibetan community and Tibet Support Groups around the world".* It was Mr. Mann and Mr. Sogor last TIG meeting, as they will not be sitting in the next European Parliament.

Participants also discussed action steps in view of reestablishing the TIG in the next parliamentary term of the European Parliament, which will officially start on July 2 following the European elections held at the end of May. Several newly elected MEPs present at the meeting showed serious interest in maintaining the TIG active in the future.

"It has been a great honor and privilege to serve the Tibetan people and the Middle Way vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for so many years," Thomas Mann said. *"Thanks to the efforts of its committed members, the TIG has been at the front line of the battle for human rights and justice in Tibet, keeping the issue on the agenda of the European Parliament and other EU institutions. But as the situation in Tibet remains dramatic, much remains to be done, and I would therefore like to actively call on our successors to be active and strong supporters of the Tibetan non-violent struggle for human rights and to push for the reestablishment of the TIG during the next term of the European Parliament."*

Founded at the beginning of the third European Parliament's legislature in 1989, the TIG has since been an essential base of support for Tibet in Europe, and has done much to create awareness within the European political realm about the plight of the Tibetan people - including for example by regularly organizing conferences, exhibitions and films screening and delivering statements on Tibet during parliamentary debates. Its reestablishment following the 2019 EU elections will be crucial, as this body is essential in encouraging discussion on possible actions at the EU level to support the

non-violent struggle of Tibetans for human rights and justice, and ICT hopes that many new Members of the European Parliament will join it.