



Strengthened China-Kazakhstan Relations: What Impact on Human Rights?

When: Tuesday November 19, 2019 from 15:00 to 17:00

Where: Room ASP 1E1, European Parliament, Brussels

Open Dialogue Foundation and the **Italian Federation for Human Rights** are pleased to invite you to an event co-hosted by MEPs **Nacho Sanchez Amor** (S&D; Spain) and **Niklas Nienau** (Greens/EFA; Germany).

Since 2004, economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China has been growing. President Xi Jinping's announcement of the Silk Road Economic Belt in September 2013 made the economic ties between the two countries even stronger.

As Chinese investments intensify, economic interests prevail over human rights issues. This has led, over the past few months, to the resurgence of the anti-Chinese expansion sentiment, with people taking to the streets of Kazakhstan to protest against the country's increasing dependence on China.

Despite the people's demands, authorities in Kazakhstan have continued to sign deals with Chinese authorities and to repress peaceful protesters. In the wake of the mass Hong Kong protests this summer, worrying similarities in suppressing dissent in the two countries were noted (including internet surveillance, use of facial recognition technology, criminalization of peaceful assembly, mass arbitrary detentions and travel bans).

While presenting itself as led by a "new leadership", committed to enhancing democratic values, Kazakhstan is not fulfilling its obligations regarding fundamental political freedoms and human rights. Moreover, for the sake of bilateral relations, Kazakhstan turns a blind eye to human rights violations committed against the sizeable Kazakh minority in China. Repeated appeals by international NGOs and organisations (including the European Parliament, the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE), seem to have remained unheard.

In light of this situation, what leverage can the EU use to seek improvement of the human rights situation in Kazakhstan?

Panel:

- **Lyudmyla Kozlovska** – President of the Open Dialogue Foundation
 - **Eleonora Mongelli** – Vice-President of the Italian Federation for Human Rights
 - **Ryan Barry** – Project Coordinator & Researcher, World Uyghur Congress
 - **Bota Jardemalie** – Lawyer and human rights defender, sister of political prisoner Iskander Yerimbetov
 - **Patrick Henry** – Member of the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)
 - **Zhanbota Alzhanova/Aliya Izbassarova** – Activists, Members of the Qaharman human rights initiative
 - **Nacho Sanchez Amor** (S&D; Spain) – Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and of the Subcommittee on Human Rights
 - **Niklas Nienau** (Greens/EFA; Germany) – Member of the Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia
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