



BM 77 – Malta

Solidarity with Students' Demands for a functional Democracy in Hong Kong

Students in Hong Kong have been at the forefront of a movement for their rights and democracy and, as a result, have faced heavy oppression, and violence by state forces. On the 9th of June 2019, more than one million people, including university and high school students rallied around Hong Kong's government headquarters, demanding the withdrawal of the Extradition Bill, braving arrests, tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets as they marched day after day to claim their rights.^{1,2}

The government's response has been significantly lacking both to the protesters' demands and accusations of police violence. Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam's announcement on the 4th of September of her government's formal withdrawal of the Extradition Bill³ was considered as "too little - too late" and answered only to one of the "five demands" that have propelled the movement. To this day there has been no recognition of the other demands: the government retracting its characterization of protests as "riots"; an independent investigation into use of force by police; the unconditional release of everyone arrested in the context of protests, and political reform that ensures genuine universal suffrage - the ability to choose Hong Kong's leaders themselves - as set under the city's mini-Constitution, the Basic Law.⁴

The violence against students has also continued to escalate to alarming levels on the 11th of November, the Hong Kong Police began to target campuses, including the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In doing so breaching the protocol of not entering universities in Hong Kong unless asked by the universities themselves.⁵ This move brought disastrous levels of violence to the heart of the universities.^{6,7} As of now it is estimated that around 5,000 arrests have been made with the youngest detainee being just 11 years old; around 10,000 canisters of tear gas have been fired alongside of thousands of rubber bullets; 3 protesters have been shot with live rounds, and more than 2,500 casualties have needed treatment in public hospitals.⁸

The pivotal role of student activism in the global history of movements for democracy has been evident since 1939 when thousands of protestors, including students and academics in Prague, were sent to their death in concentration camps for standing against the Nazi regime. On the 17th of November, the European Students' Union (ESU) marked [International Students' Day](#), the day recognizing 80 years of sacrifices from students and student unions fighting for democracy, respect for human rights and academic freedom. Defending these values is as relevant today as it was in 1939, not just in Europe but across the world. In light of this, ESU declares its full solidarity with the protest for democracy in Hong Kong and strongly condemns oppressive actions.

Furthermore, ESU urges the Hong Kong state forces to preserve the integrity of its university campuses by adhering to the rule of law and stopping the use of violence against its students and citizens. Campuses should foster peace and civility, and not become battlegrounds.

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.



Finally, ESU calls upon the European Union, its member states, and national student unions to condemn the breach of protocol of the Hong Kong police force by entering university campuses and to call upon the Hong Kong government to ensure the safety of the protesters, particularly safeguarding elected officials like student representatives.

List of references:

1. <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/06/09/just-no-china-extradition-tens-thousands-hong-kong-protest-controversial-new-law/>
2. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/timeline-of-the-2019-hong-kong-p>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/04/hong-kong-lam-to-withdraw-extradition-bill-say-reports>
4. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/08/13/asia/hong-kong-airport-protest-explained-hnk-intl/index.html>
5. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3019048/do-hong-kong-police-have-right-enter-public-premises>
6. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3037262/tear-gas-fired-campus-first-time-student-protesters>
7. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191120144805155>
8. <https://www.inkstonenews.com/politics/rising-numbers-mass-arrests-and-tear-gas-shots-hong-kong-protests/article/303858>

Proposed by: EC

Seconded by: EUL, CREUP, SRVS, LSVb, SSU, UAS, UNEL, FZS, LSVb, UNEL, NUS-UK

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.