

TIBET INTERGROUP

The President Thomas MANN
Member of the European Parliament



**President of the Tibet Intergroup:
Events in China are cultural genocide
European Parliament is urged to act**

Let Tibetans participate at the Olympic Games!

**Press release:
Brussels, March 18th, 2008**

Thomas Mann, the President of the Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament, has fiercely condemned the most recent Chinese excess of violence against Tibetans. Around one hundred of them have died up to this point. These targeted arrests and killings by the Chinese authorities are a "cultural genocide".

According to Thomas Mann, Beijing attempts to turn the "gathering of the youth" into a propaganda show, presenting the illusion of an ideal world that does not exist. "The Tibetans have been provoked intentionally by leading the Olympic Torch Relay through their homeland, all the way to the peak of Mount Everest. I believe that communist China's treatment of minorities and its true face as a totalitarian regime will become apparent during the worldwide media-attention of the Olympic Games. That's why a boycott would not lead us very far."

The hope of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), that awarding the games to China would open up the country and improve the human rights

situation, has not been fulfilled. At his speech on Tiananmen Square last year, IOC-President Jacques Rogge did not even once mention the situation of human rights. Apparently, China concluded that also the Olympic community practices a "culture of looking away". Thomas Mann urged the IOC as "worldwide active civil society organization to not only fulfill its sporting but also its social responsibility. I recall the European Parliament Tibet-Conference in November 2007 in Brussels, where Olympic champion Dieter Baumann called on the IOC to let Tibetan athletes march under the Olympic flag."

Thomas Mann suggests a similar initiative as was practiced at the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, where the Olympic cauldron at the opening ceremony was lit by an Aborigine, the athlete Cathy Freeman. Back then the IOC pointed towards the social and cultural repression of the Aborigines in Australia and made an impressive contribution to international understanding.

The Christian-Democratic Member of the European Parliament, Thomas Mann (EPP-ED), has appealed to the President of the EP, Hans-Gert Pöttering, to intervene against the violence of the Chinese regime in Beijing. Furthermore, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, should place the brutal course of action of Chinese security forces against the Tibetans high up on the agenda of the EU-China-Dialog. Mann advocated an emergency-debate of the European Parliament and the passing of a pertinent resolution.

Thomas Mann MEP, President of the Tibet Intergroup

Background Information:

Thomas Mann, Member of the European Parliament, has been President of the Tibet-Intergroup of the EP (approx. 100 members) since 1999. The TIG organizes regular meetings in the European Parliament, where exile-Tibetans as well as international experts provide information on social, cultural and religious questions. The Tibet-Intergroup substantially influences the European Parliament's human rights resolutions.