



## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Latvian MPs call for European Coordination on Tibet. Inspiring support from Richard Gere**

*Riga, 3 June 2026* — Longtime Tibet advocate Richard Gere, Chair of the International Campaign for Tibet, was the keynote speaker at a Tibet Conference hosted by Latvian Saeima MP Juris Viļums, Chair of the Group for the Support of Tibet, bringing together politicians, civil society representatives, and the international Tibet movement in a show of Baltic solidarity. Parliamentarians from Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania are set to release a joint statement on the situation in Tibet in the coming days.

Richard Gere, Chairman of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), gave a speech in which he called on the European democracies – to act decisively for the rights of Tibetans. Gere emphasized the parallels between the historical experiences of the Baltic peoples and the ongoing struggle of the Tibetan people for cultural survival and self-determination. ICT President Tencho Gyatso stressed: "It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with our friends in the Baltics. Thank you, Juris Vilums."

Tsering Yangkey, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed her gratitude to the parliamentarians for attending the conference and for working on the Joint Tibet Declaration: "This gathering reflects a powerful Baltic solidarity for Tibet's just cause consistent with the Baltic people's unwavering admiration and love for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama."

Mr. Jan Paternotte, Member of Dutch Parliament, and Mr. Dainius Zalimas, Member of the European Parliament, sent video messages encouraging the representatives present to actively promote the demand for an EU Special Representative for Tibet in their national parliaments. The appointment of such a representative was one of the requests put forward in a [Tibet-related motion adopted by the Dutch parliament in April 2025](#) and would allow a coordinated European approach to Tibet. Mr. Michael Brand, Member of the German Parliament also expressed his support for



“initiatives that call out and stand up against that racist Chinese regime as a global threat to stability, peace, and human rights.”

The conference focused on China's Law on the Promotion of Ethnic Unity and Progress, adopted on 12 March 2026, which will come into force on 1 July 2026. Participants described the law as a serious turning point that codifies the forced assimilation of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongols and Hong Kongers, violates China's own constitution and violates international human rights law. The European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the law on 30 April 2026 with 439 votes in favour. In view of the imminent entry into force of the law on 1 July 2026, the conference called on all European parliamentarians to introduce resolutions condemning the law in their national parliaments. At the same time, they called for stronger EU coordination in Tibet policy – including the establishment of an EU Special Representative for Tibet.

A Riga Joint Declaration will be forthcoming for parliamentarians to join together.

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ICT Chairman Richard Gere (right) and Member of Latvian Parliament Juris Vīlums (left) during the event.



*Member of Latvian Parliament Juris Vīlums (left), ICT Chairman Richard Gere (second from left), ICT President Tencho Gyatso (third from left) and ICT Europe Executive Director Wangpo Tethong (fourth from left).*