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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.3.2021)

The EU stands in full solidarity with Ireland in its efforts to safeguard Richard O'Halloran's rights.

As part of its bilateral engagement with China, in particular in the framework of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, the EU regularly raises human rights issues and calls for credible measures to improve the situation in the country. Topical human rights issues include the equal treatment of persons belonging to minorities, protection of human rights defenders, and full respect for freedom of expression, as well as individual cases of particular concern.

When it comes to cases concerning EU citizens, EU actions are pursued in full support of the efforts of the Member State concerned, and in close coordination with its relevant authorities that exercise this national competence.

Regarding the case of Mr O'Halloran, the EU understands that the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland has been providing ongoing consular advice, support and assistance to their citizen in Shanghai. The EU understands that the Irish Government has raised the situation of this citizen frequently at senior diplomatic and political level with the relevant authorities in China. The EU stands ready to support the Irish authorities in these efforts, as appropriate.

The Honourable Member may rest assured of the EU's commitment to support its Member States in protecting the rights of EU citizens worldwide.