

EU stands by China arms embargo

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(BBC) The European Union (EU) stands by its conditions for lifting an arms embargo on China, the EU head of foreign relations has said at bilateral talks. Benita Ferrero-Waldner said lifting the embargo was dependent on China meeting certain conditions. The embargo was enforced after the Tiananmen Square killings in 1989. The EU-China talks will last up to two years and cover such areas as trade, the environment and human rights. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing issued a renewed plea at the talks in Beijing for the embargo to be lifted, denouncing it as *"political discrimination."* But Mrs Ferrero-Waldner, the EU External Relations Commissioner, re-listed three conditions, saying China must: Ratify the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; free those jailed for involvement in the Tiananmen Square demonstrations; and Abolish the *"re-education through labour"* system of imprisonment without trial. She also said environmental issues were a key concern. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Liu Jianchao however, criticised Japan for putting pressure on the EU to maintain the embargo, accusing Japan of *"obstruction"* and *"interference"*, after it emerged that the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had urged French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and other leaders not to lift the embargo. *"It is the business between China and the European Union. There is no connection with Japan"*, Liu said when asked to comment on the embargo.

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