To His Majesty
Carl XVI Gustaf
King of Sweden
Kungl. Slottet
SE-111 30 Stockholm
Sweden

Darmstadt, 5th December 2012

Your Majesty,

on 10th December, the writer Mo Yan will receive the Nobel Prize in Literature 2012 from your hands. In this regard, please kindly allow a comment by the German PEN Centre, member of the World Association of Writers, which is also addressed to the Swedish Academy and the prime minister of the Constitutional Monarchy of Sweden:

We, the seven hundred writers of the German PEN, do not presume to disapprove of the decision of the highly esteemed Swedish Academy. The first writer living in the People's Republic of China to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature by you, Your Majesty, surely is an important writer. Nevertheless we implore you, the laureate, the members of the Swedish Academy and the whole world to pause for a second in this ceremonial moment.

When handing over the prize, please remember the other, not less important Chinese writer Liu Xiaobo, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in Oslo two years ago but was not allowed to receive this prize from the hands of Norway's King Harald V. Back then, we were looking at an empty seat.

In December of 2009, the former president of the Independent Chinese PEN (ICPC) was condemned to eleven years of imprisonment. His wife, the poet and photographer Liu Xia, has been living under strict house arrest since then.
Your Majesty, I beg you to stand up for the release of the other Chinese Nobel Prize winner and his wife. We will not be able to enjoy this year’s Nobel Prize in Literature as long as Liu Xiaobo cannot live and publish as a free writer in China. This year’s ceremonies in Stockholm and Oslo should send a signal.

Yours respectfully

Herbert Wiesner     Tienchi Martin-Liao
The elected Secretary General     President of the Independent
of German PEN Centre     Chinese PEN Centre