



European Economic and Social Committee



Joint Statement

15th meeting of the China-EU Round Table

Beijing, 29 and 30 June 2017

1. The China-EU Round Table held its fifteenth meeting in Beijing on 29 and 30 June 2017;
2. At the meeting, delegates from both sides held discussions under the theme *Partnership for growth, civilization for mutual benefit* on a) Innovation driven and economic vitality; b) Upholding equality and inclusiveness and enhancing people's wellbeing; and c) Cooperation and win-win outcomes;
3. The meeting was held on the 10th anniversary of the launch of the China-EU Round Table. The two sides assessed their work over the past decade and reconfirmed their commitment to future cooperation.

The Round Table:

On Innovation driven and economic vitality

4. recognises that complementary, open and win-win innovation cooperation will favour the exchange of new knowledge and technologies for the EU and China to promote innovative, harmonious, green, open and shared development, allowing both sides to benefit from their partnership;
5. underlines that Europe and China should jointly foster growth areas such as health, culture, energy conservation, environmental protection, renewable energy, new generation of information technology, high-end equipment manufacturing and tourism;

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6. points out that the identification of synergies between China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the EU's policies and initiatives under the EU-China Connectivity Platform helps to foster cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, telecoms and people-to-people contacts, resulting in both economies becoming intricately connected;
7. believes that closer cooperation in Research and Innovation (R&I) between the EU and China is crucial to improve the respective socioeconomic conditions, in the framework of sustainable development. Science diplomacy can significantly contribute to the political dialogue and the pursuit of common objectives for growth and development. Hence governments of both sides should provide reciprocal access to each other's research programmes and better policy and financial support to the exchange of students and researchers;
8. notes that the results of the 3rd EU-China Innovation Co-operation Dialogue (2 June 2017) are encouraging: for the first time, the EU and China have set common objectives in the area of research and innovation, to be achieved through shared initiatives. It provides guidance and basis for the cooperation between the two governments in scientific research and innovation;
9. acknowledges that the Horizon 2020 (H2020) calls for proposals explicitly intended for cooperation between European and Chinese stakeholders were also increased, so as to grant mutual access to additional stakeholders, especially universities and research organisations;
10. calls for the involvement of the organised civil society in detecting and monitoring the achievement of "Societal Challenges" in the context of the research and innovation process.

On Upholding equality and inclusiveness and enhancing people's wellbeing

11. while acknowledging the widespread and far reaching benefits of the globalisation process of the economy, recognizes the need for an improved governance, in order to compensate the asymmetries in the distribution of those benefits, the risks and the costs whenever they occur;
12. notes that, while progress on decreasing income inequality was made in both the EU and China in the past, both sides need to make efforts to prevent that inequalities increase in the future;

13. considers that it is essential to safeguard social equity and justice, strengthen social cohesion and inclusiveness, and ensure that everyone enjoy the opportunities and benefits brought by development;
14. believes that the EU and China should be committed to building a fairer and more sustainable social security system, constantly improving their respective social security systems through reform and development, gradually raising the level of social security benefits, and making efforts to enhance people's well-being;
15. notes the policy measures adopted and great achievements made by the EU and China in establishing and improving their social security system covering all citizens. The EESC and CESC can share experience and learn from each other on good practices that strengthen the system of industrial relations;
16. underlines the necessity for both the EU and China to take decisive action to reaffirm the importance of decent jobs and working conditions, on the basis on agreed international labour conventions;
17. reaffirms that the legitimate rights and interests of workers should be respected and effectively protected;
18. recognizes that the development of social and labour rights, as well as consumer rights, cannot be seen separately from the overall objective of sustainable development, welcomes the continued and reinforced dialogue between China and the EU in the area of climate change, involving organised civil society and a wide range of societal and economic stakeholders, with a view to attaining tangible results while working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
19. underlines that reinforcing the fight against climate change and promoting a global, clean and low-carbon energy transition, especially towards sustainable, affordable, reliable and modern energy services, are mutually reinforcing objectives in order to achieve sustainable, secure and competitive economies; it also stresses that these policies are significant drivers of job creation, investment opportunities and economic growth;
20. acknowledges the existing gap in the development of rural and urban areas and express their willingness to work towards reducing such gaps.

On Cooperation and win-win outcomes

21. recognizes that EU-China economic and trade cooperation is the foundation and corner stone of the EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The EU and China

shoulder the important responsibility of contributing to an open world economy and achieving common prosperity, in an innovative and interconnected context;

22. underlines that as important trade and investment partners, the EU and China should, on the basis of consolidating existing cooperation, continue to align the development of the BRI and TEN-T under the Connectivity Platform, strengthen dialogue and consultation, deepen cooperation in trade, investment facilitation, e-commerce, connectivity, infrastructure, energy and other fields;

23. recognises the potential of the BRI to unleash huge growth with benefits for all, as it aims to build trade, investment and infrastructure links among countries, including developmental, financial and people-to-people contacts;

24. stresses that, for the BRI to boost trade, connectivity and to be “win-win”, it needs to be open and inclusive, based on the principles of cooperation, transparency, interoperability, reciprocity, social and environmental sustainability and work in both directions; if successfully conceived and applied in mutually beneficial way, BRI could be a means to ensuring that globalisation effectively improves our lives;

25. emphasizes that the implementation of BRI should contribute to the realisation of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

26. supports the ongoing negotiations leading up to the conclusion of a future EU-China Investment agreement, urges that these be speeded up, and opposes trade and investment protectionism. The EU and China should jointly safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the WTO and to this end supports boosting EU-China cooperation in jointly promoting an open and rules-based international trading system;

27. stresses that providing a level-playing field, and transparent and non-discriminatory business environment for the enterprises to compete are essential to promoting China-EU trade and investment;

28. welcomes the fact that the Joint Communiqué of the Leaders Roundtable of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, issued in Beijing on 15 May 2017, echoes some of the outcomes of earlier China-EU Round Table meetings, in particular concerning small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and includes references to sustainable development and specifically the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to the role of civil society;

Future work

29. Both sides agree that relevant matters concerning the 16th meeting of the China-EU Round Table will be decided upon following consultation in due course;

30. This Joint Statement shall be submitted to the next EU-China Summit, scheduled to take place in 2018, as well as to the political authorities on both sides.



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