

Cabinet Newsletter

Newsletter n. 20, 10 November 2010

Dear Reader,

Last week, Vice President Tajani and I travelled to China to take part in a number of key meetings. We are extremely pleased with the outcomes and look forward to our next encounter with Chinese representatives.



Antonio Preto
Head of Cabinet

On 5 November, Vice President Tajani co-chaired the Group on Earth Observations Ministerial Summit in Beijing, which reviewed progress in the construction of a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). GEOSS is important in that it will provide comprehensive and coordinated earth observations from thousands of instruments worldwide, transforming data into information that is vital for our society. This includes information on natural and human-induced disasters, agriculture and desertification, human health and well-being, energy resources, climate change and biodiversity, among others. As the Vice President adds, "In order for effective observation to be possible, collaboration between nations across the globe is essential. By co-chairing this Ministerial summit, the Commission aims at strengthening such global and constructive collaboration".

However, receiving such information is not only essential; it is also highly time-sensitive. Had such an instrument been operational at present, quicker and more comprehensive data could now be gathered on the current crisis in the region of Veneto, which has been struck by severe flooding. Urgent advances are therefore needed in this domain, making our Summit last week opportune and necessary. Following the Summit, the Vice President held bilateral meetings with the other co-chairs, in order to build on the work of the Summit and highlight the need for reinforced and effective cooperation on space matters.

However, this was not the sole success of the trip. Later that day, Vice President Tajani launched the Centre for European Union Small and Medium Enterprises (EU SME Centre) in Beijing. This new venture will provide information, advice, training and matchmaking opportunities for European SMEs wishing to export or invest in the Chinese market. This is particularly significant as it will help European SMEs overcome challenges faced when operating on the Chinese market, particularly in the early stages of business development.



"The launch of the EU SME Centre in Beijing is an important step in the implementation of the Small Business Act, the EU's main initiative in support of SMEs," Vice President Tajani noted, adding that it is also useful "in the realisation of the 'think small first' principle that embodies European SME policy. Growth beyond domestic markets and the internationalisation of SMEs is crucial for European competitiveness, and the Commission has a significant role to play as a facilitator of this process". The Centre will therefore contribute to strengthening trade relations between the EU and China, whilst intensifying cooperation and foreign direct investment. In fact, future EU-China trade relations depend on the growth and innovation potential of SMEs.

Finally, Vice President Tajani led a Delegation of European regions to China to strengthen cooperation on tourism on 6 November. Witnessing the signing of a Memorandum of Understand for 'a common experimentation of operative models for the sustainable and competitive development of tourism' between China and Europe, Vice President Tajani observed, "With my presence here today, I wanted to testify to the importance that the Commission, and myself, attach to the strengthening of cooperation on sustainable tourism between European and Chinese regions". The Memorandum stressed this cooperation as a way to enhance innovation and improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector, as well as to increase information exchanges and develop new tourism initiatives.

Thus, our trip to China on behalf of the European Commission proved highly successful, with key initiatives coming out of our meetings. We will build on this momentum in order to continue making progress in these domains.