

Beijing, 17 September 2003

EU and China launch a political dialogue on industrial policy and regulation

Today in Beijing, EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society Erkki Liikanen and Minister Ma Kai of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) signed an agreement setting up a dialogue on industrial policy. This agreement will deepen EU-China cooperation and build upon an existing successful dialogue set up by the European Commission and the Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ). The signing of the agreement marks the conclusion of the second official visit of Commissioner Liikanen to China. During his visit, Mr Liikanen met with Minister Wang Xudong of Information Industry, Minister Xu Guanhua of Science and Technology, and Minister Li Changjiang of AQSIQ. Mr Liikanen also met the Chinese Vice Premier Huang Ju.

Discussions focused on ways to promote and strengthen e-governance, EU-China cooperation on IT research, telecom legislation and standards, and industrial policy in a wide range of important sectors. Liikanen said: "I am very pleased that the EU and China are now taking steps to the next level in our cooperation on important issues such as industrial policy. This is a clear proof that our relationship is maturing. Today's agreement will be crucial to boost our bilateral trade and to deal with potential problems before they arise."

Mr Liikanen also attended the opening of the Joint EU-China WTO conference on China Compulsory Certification (CCC) together with AQSIQ Minister Li Changjiang. In his opening speech, Liikanen said: "it is imperative that we understand each other's regulations better. This offers great benefits and will help improve trade in industrial products between the EU and China".

Background

The agreement signed today aims at enhancing mutual understanding of current and forthcoming policy approaches, legislation and related issues in the industrial sector, so as to contribute to smooth and sustainable trade relations between the EU and China. The dialogue will address both horizontal issues and sector-specific industrial policies, in annual meetings that will be held in Beijing or Brussels. The dialogue will encourage contributions from both Chinese and European companies and ensure a business-friendly level playing field for industrial operators.

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