

Joint Declaration on
EU-China Research Cooperation:
Building a Knowledge for Growth Pact

The European Commission and the Government of China held a High Level Forum on S&T Policy and Development in Beijing on 12/13 May 2005. This major event coincides with the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the European Union. Both sides agreed on guidelines for the future cooperation in research and technological development (RTD), thus giving a further boost to the rapidly developing strategic partnership. Leading personalities representing the governments, science, and industry reviewed the RTD relations between China and Europe and made recommendations for future developments.

1. A new political and economic paradigm for our RTD cooperation

The partnership that links China and Europe has a long history. This history has always included a significant scientific research and technological dimension. Through the signing of a science and technology (S&T) cooperation agreement in 1998, the EU-China cooperation received a strong impetus and significant progress was recorded in research fields such as ITER, SARS, Galileo, energy, new materials, biotechnology, aeronautics, space, hydrogen economy and information technology. Our cooperation is a success and is growing in vigour and stature.

S&T relations between Europe and China are contributing to mutual understanding of their people. Based on common goals and understanding, cultural values and scientific goals, the S&T relations reached a level such as to make a significant contribution to the overall good relations between Europe and China.

We feel that the present cooperation should be further developed in the spirit of mutual benefit and progressive convergence of research policies so that it contributes directly to the improvement of economic competitiveness and to the achievement of common solutions to problems faced by our societies. The EU-China RTD cooperation is entering a new development stage due first, to the continuous improvement of China's comprehensive national strength and remarkable enhancement of its S&T capacity, and taking into account the fact that China will face deeper reform and a more opened market, and second, considering the development of the European Research Area along with the Lisbon strategy and Barcelona objective and following the enlargement of the European Union. .

Demonstrating our political willingness to address together global issues, we are determined to adopt a strategy of "reaching out" for RTD cooperation and to promote thriving EU-China exchanges with research and technological innovation.

The convergence of formerly separate forces such as research users and creators, public and private stakeholders, intellectual property ownership and open collaboration, small and large

businesses, has profound implications for public research policies and for business strategy as well as for scientific development.

These changes create a real urgency for a new and comprehensive approach to strengthen the EU - China RTD cooperation. It is the rationale behind the EU -China RTD cooperation for sustainable and environment friendly growth and the key to understanding why we need both a quantitative and a qualitative change in our cooperation to promote our common interests.

Our pact is our determined commitment to bring Europe and China together. It is the formal translation of European and Chinese expression of a common willingness to lay the basis for a dynamic and harmonious cooperation that ensures sustainable prosperity and welfare for our societies.

2. Guiding principles

Our research cooperation will be based on two guiding principles:

à Expanding the scope of our RTD cooperation to the knowledge based economy

In the 21st century, the engine for growth is the process through which an economy creates, applies and extracts value from knowledge. Scientific research and technological innovation, as the main source of new knowledge and a major field for its application, are at the heart of the knowledge-based economy and society which is currently developing rapidly on a global scale.

To become together more competitive, Europe and China must capitalise on a balanced and intense cooperation to better produce, transmit and exploit knowledge, and turn it into new products, new services and economically successful applications for the well being of their citizens.

The economic growth of China and the EU and their increasing integration in the world economy represents a positive development. Their important domestic markets and prospects of rising incomes offer great and long term opportunities to economic cooperation. At the same time, China's lower labour costs and increasingly qualified workforce make it a tough competitor and an ever expanding commercial power. Hence the importance of ensuring that the EU -China RTD cooperation brings mutual and well balanced benefits.

à Ensuring mutual interest and overall balance between China and Europe

In a global knowledge-based economy, it is becoming more and more necessary to engage globally, in order to keep up with the frontiers of knowledge and attract the best talent.

Location of plants, R&D activities and investment will inevitably have to take into account where the growing markets are.

We do not live in a zero-sum global economy where someone's gain is necessarily someone else's loss. We live in a positive-sum economy, where, through cooperation, the standard of living is rising for everyone. In a world that is global, the best way to increase innovative capacity is that Europe and China engage actively and collaboratively with each other.

Prosperity in China and the EU creates multiplier effects that are positive for both. Our economic opportunities are enhanced by growing economies around the world. The focus of the China-EU RTD cooperation is therefore to foster “win-win” situations that improve our own research, technological innovation capacity and national competitiveness while engaging actively and collaboratively with each other. S&T advancement has become increasingly dependent on extensive international cooperation, such as in the fields of marine, atmosphere and environmental protection that relate to the present and future habitat of mankind, and in the “mega-science” field that call for close cooperation of different countries in the world.

Equality and reciprocal benefits, results sharing, protection of intellectual property (IP) rights, observance of international norms are the basis for RTD cooperation. In this perspective, to enhance and diversify our RTD cooperation, particular attention will be paid to the issue of intellectual property rights.

3. Objectives and actions

We believe that Europe and China have an ever greater interest to work together as strategic partners for creating wealth from knowledge. It implies overall objectives, an action plan and a mechanism enabling the evaluation for results and possible adaptation to a fast changing world. Success of the EU-China cooperation depends on our capacity to mobilise talent (in people), the enterprises (large and small ones) investment (public and private) and research capacities (research infrastructures).

The scale of changes needed to adapt the EU-China S&T cooperation to a knowledge based economy cooperation will require that a broader range of policies and instruments are mobilised and coordinated more closely than has been the case until now (such as intellectual property rights, standards, regulations of products, and human resources).

à Objectives

- Developing joint EU-China RTD projects and large research infrastructures in key technology areas such as information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology etc ..;
- Developing global scientific knowledge, through mobilising a wide range of stakeholders from research, industry and financial institutions in Europe and China, and a more proactive use of the EU-China S&T Cooperation Agreement;
- Increasing public and private investment in EU-China RTD cooperation projects;
- Accelerating and leveraging the implementation of China’s and Europe’s internal RTD strategies;
- Mobilising all EU Member States to get critical mass and improve coordination between national and Community actions;
- Ensuring mutual interest and balance of the EU-China RTD cooperation and its proper adaptation to scientific, environmental, social and economic evolution;

- Ensuring protection of IPR.

à A non exhaustive list of actions

- Prepare strategic research agenda for EU -China cooperation on global issues and in key scientific and technological sectors, in particular taking into account the need for research and innovation to tailor products and services of common interest and benefit specifically to the sustainable evolution of our world;
- Fully exploit the possibilities of the EU RTD Framework Programme and of the Chinese programmes (863 / 973) for international cooperation, joint activities in priority research and global issues and research infrastructure domains;
- Stimulate and develop common initiatives in fields such as environment, nanotechnologies, hydrogen, aeronautics etc...through e.g. an increased cooperation of China in the European Technology platforms.
- Increase mobility of researchers between China and Europe, including through improved visa conditions for long and short term stays, formulating an EU -China Scientists Exchange and Access Programmes, and facilitating the procedures for Joint degrees between European and Chinese universities and institutions.
- Based on improved scientific and technological knowledge, promote standardisation for the development of key technologies and approaches, as an essential enabling factor for sustainable development including for environment, safety, health, consumer protection purposes, etc...;
- Mobilise the EU and Chinese financial institutions to support EU -China RTD cooperation projects and joint research infrastructures;
- Inform and mobilise the European and Chinese S&T communities;
- Set up a network of European researchers in China and Chinese researchers in Europe;
- Set up a scoreboard to monitor the EU -China RTD cooperation and its impact.

