

Joint Statement
between
The Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of
The European Commission
and
The National Development and Reform Commission of
The People's Republic of China
On Comprehensively Deepening EU-China Regional Policy Cooperation

29 June 2015, Brussels

To comprehensively deepen EU-China regional policy cooperation, the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Urbanization of European Commission (hereinafter referred to as "both sides") have reached the following consensus:

1. Both sides share the view that as 2015 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the EU and China, the EU and China enjoy closer links in the field of economic and social development including a promising outlook for EU-China cooperation on regional policy. Both sides attach great importance to the issue of balanced development of regions. China has been implementing a master strategy for regional development, making positive contributions to the sustainable and healthy development of the national economy. The EU has also made achievements in cohesion policy, accumulated rich experiences on narrowing regional disparities, and facilitated integration.

2. Both sides reviewed actions taken since the launch of EU-China Regional Policy Dialogue mechanism and expressed satisfaction with the fruitful results in various fields.

1) Since the EU and China signed the Memorandum of Understanding in 2006, nine high-level dialogues and seminars have been successfully held. Both sides held exchanges and undertook research on major policy issues in regional development, further intensifying EU-China cooperation on regional policy.

2) Under the framework of the EU-China Regional Policy Cooperation Dialogue mechanism, experts from both sides have jointly conducted several fundamental and forward-looking researches on regional development and presented a group of high-level research reports.

3) Since the beginning of the Chinese European Training on Regional Policy (CETREGIO) Programme, over 220 Chinese government officials and scholars from 31 provinces, cities and autonomous regions have shared experiences with and visited good practices in more than 45 regions of 17 European Union member states; while about 100 government officials, scholars and business representatives from European Union member states visited China for mutual exchanges. Under the framework of the CETREGIO Programme, both sides expressed their support for regional cooperation projects and bilateral cooperation agreements signed among local governments, regional development institutions, chambers of commerce and SME promotion bureaus from Europe and China.

4) Both sides have recognized important contributions made by local government to cooperation. They welcomed cooperation between Guangzhou Development District, the first EU-China Regional Policy Cooperation Pilot Area, and Upper Austria of Austria. Cooperation between Tianjin, Chengdu and Wuhan with Lazio Region of Italy, Lower Silesia of Poland as well as other European regions has also made clear progress. Pilot areas on both sides led to close exchanges and MOUs signed between governments and businesses for multilevel

cooperation, which promoted regional cooperation in such fields as economy and trade, technology, education and culture, and played an important role in developing bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation relations.

3. Both sides envisage to work further on the implementation of the *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation* and meet together the challenge of unbalanced regional development, both sides will learn from and draw upon each other in proactively conducting the following work:

1) Deepen cooperation mechanism. Both sides envisage to strengthening EU-China cooperation on regional policy in a longer term perspective, subject to availability of funding, jointly designing a multi-annual development road map, and strengthening ties with relevant agencies and public institutions for better communication and cooperation.

2) Ongoing strengthening of the cooperation and exchanges on regional policy. Maintaining EU-China regional policy dialogues and seminars and conducting exchanges on major policy issues concerning regional development and regional cooperation such as regional balanced development, regional integration, regional innovation, support to start-ups and SMEs, industrial transformation and upgrading, and coordinated development between urban and rural areas, in an effort to promote mutual understanding and cooperation on regional policy.

3) Deepen joint study. Exploring through joint studies on strategic and hotspot issues relating to regional and urban development, providing intellectual support that could feed the preparation of China's regional development policy and national economic and social development plan, and the next generation of EU regional development programmes for post-2020. Supporting the translation and application of research results into actual practice.

4) Strengthen cooperation among regions. Expanding the scope of pilot areas of EU-China regional policy cooperation by supporting more cities and regions to participate in such cooperation.

5) Supporting practical cooperation in various fields between pilot areas, prioritizing cooperation among SMEs, and boosting cooperation between businesses and research institutions. Both sides welcome that Tianjin, Wuhan, Chengdu, Guangzhou Development District, and Shantou City on the Chinese side and Lyon, Barcelona, Birmingham/West Midlands, Dublin and Andalucía on the European side will participate in the city-to-city cooperation as EU-China regional policy cooperation pilot areas.

6) Innovation cooperation platform. Encouraging both sides to initiate a regional cooperation platform and establish a mechanism for knowledge sharing in specific areas between cities of both sides. These cities will form working groups to examine how to promote integrated approaches to sustainable urban development while addressing social, economic, demographic and environmental challenges. Through this city-to-city cooperation, a knowledge base on “urban policy solutions” will be developed based on specific cases of actions and a great amount of business opportunities will be created through developing and providing goods and services for urban development.

7) Strengthen capacity building and exchanges of personnel. Building and improving a long-term mechanism for exchanges and cooperation of personnel from both sides, continuing the implementation of capacity building projects in EU-China regional policy, support representatives from EU member states and China for cooperation and exchanges through field visits, workshops and seminars, strengthen understanding and awareness between both sides, and improve the knowledge level and working capability of relevant personnel.

8) Other cooperation activities in other fields upon consent by both sides.

4. To achieve the above goals, both sides envisage seeking, as far as possible and subject to the respective budgetary procedures, to make appropriate resources available to ensure smooth progress in the ongoing cooperation.

Both sides envisage to review this Joint Statement after a period of 5 years from the date of signing.

This Joint Statement does not intend to create rights or obligations under international law.

Signed on 29 June 2015 in Brussels, this Joint Statement is made in duplicate. Both copies are in the English and Chinese languages.



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