Meeting Minutes of the 4th Chairs’ Meeting
of the EU-China Connectivity Platform

The 4th Chairs’ Meeting of EU-China Connectivity Platform took place on 8th April in Brussels. The EU delegation was led by Ms Bakran Marcich, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE, delegated by the co-Chair of the EU side Ms Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport, and comprised of the officials from the services of the European Commission and the European External Action Service. The Chinese side led by Mr Ma Qiang, Deputy Director General of Department of Infrastructure Development of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), delegated by the Chinese Co-chair Mr He Lifeng, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Chairman of NDRC, and comprised of officials from the NDRC and China Development Bank. The representative of the Chair of Chinese side expressed his gratitude to the European Commission for organising this meeting.

The meeting was held in a very constructive spirit and friendly atmosphere. Both sides listened to the reports from the Working Group and the Expert Group on the Investment and Financing on the latest progress of the platform and provided guidance for the next steps. The minutes of the meeting read as follows:

1. Both sides pointed out that the connectivity of infrastructure is a priority and important foundation for EU-China cooperation and development. The Connectivity Platform has played a unique and positive role in promoting EU-China infrastructure connectivity, enhancing EU-China experience exchanges and cooperation, and contributing to a friendly relationship between the two sides. The Platform will continue to strengthen synergies and exchanges regarding the strategies, planning, policies, pilot projects and the infrastructure development of green smart transport.

2. Both sides look forward to the “Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation” at the end of April, emphasizing that both sides should continue to strengthen the synergies between China's Belt and Road Initiative and the EU's Trans-European Transport Network policy, promoting the sustainable development of the connectivity and infrastructure development.
3. Both sides recalled their commitment to a comprehensive strategic partnership and underscored the importance of the EU-China Connectivity Platform as a tool to strengthen cooperation and work in an open, transparent and constructive way.

4. Both sides highly appreciated work carried out by the Working Group and the Expert Group on Investment and Financing based on the EU-China Connectivity Platform Short-Term Action Plan since the 3rd Chairs’ meeting in July 2018, especially the results achieved in November in Brussels at the Thematic Workshop of Working Group and 4th Expert Group Meeting of Investment and Financing; assessed the EU-China Connectivity Platform Action Plan for 2019 and decided to annex the Action Plan to the meeting minutes. Both sides asked the Working Group to implement the Action Plan, enrich exchanges and cooperation in the areas of strategic planning, policy, investment and financing, and promote progress in the cooperation on pilot projects. Both sides agree to share the relevant information on the project planning and construction in a timely manner and based on openness, transparency and a level playing field.

5. Both sides agreed on the outline of the key elements for the Joint Study on Sustainable Railway-based Comprehensive Transport Corridors between Europe and China. The Study will assess the current situation of railway-based corridors between Europe and China, and analyse these corridors’ problems (in terms of hard connectivity and soft connectivity), and propose the most sustainable corridors and, as a result, the related key projects. All relevant countries will be consulted during the implementation of the study.

6. Both sides will commit to developing green smart transport infrastructure, strengthening in the appropriate fora bilateral communication and the communication with relevant international organisations, actively deepening and expanding the cooperation, and promoting the green and low-carbon development of transport.

7. Both sides highly appreciated the results achieved at the Technical Seminar on TEN-T Methodology, held on 26th February in Beijing, where the EU side shared an extensive and long-standing experience on transport policy and network planning and construction, as well as project identification, while Chinese side shared its methodology and practices in China’s comprehensive transport network planning.
Both sides agreed to continue to promote interactive exchanges within the EU-China Connectivity Platform on transport infrastructure through technical seminars, special training and expert exchanges.

8. In accordance with the signed minutes of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Chairs’ meetings, both sides agree to work on the basis of market-based principles and international standards and to promote openness, transparency and a level playing field in the area of infrastructure connectivity, and jointly promote these principles in EU-China Connectivity Platform projects.

9. Both sides agree to hold the 5th Chairs' meeting in 2020. The specific date will be further discussed.

Signed in Brussels, in Chinese and English versions, both texts being equally authentic.

Representative of the European side
Maja Bakran
Deputy Director-General for DG Mobility and Transport of the European Commission

Representative of the Chinese side
Ma Qiang
Deputy Director-General of Department of Infrastructure Development of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s Republic of China
Annexes:

1. List of Meeting Participants

2. EU-China Connectivity Platform 2019 Action Plan

3. Terms of Reference of the Joint Study on Sustainable Railway-based Comprehensive Transport Corridors between Europe and China
EU-China Connectivity Platform 4th Chairs’ Meeting

Participants List

Co-Chairs: DDG Mrs Maja Bakran Marcich, DG MOVE
           DDG MA Qiang, NDRC

European Union:
Maja BAKRAN
   Deputy Director General, DG Transport and Mobility (DG MOVE)
Alessandro CARANO
   Cabinet Expert (Cabinet BULC)
Harvey ROUSE
   Head of Unit, International Relations, DG MOVE
Stefano PACI
   Deputy Head of Unit, International Relations, DG MOVE
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   Head of Unit, Rail safety and Interoperability, DG MOVE
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   Policy officer, Transport Networks, DG MOVE
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   Trainee, International Relations, DG MOVE
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   EU Delegation – Beijing
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   EU Delegation – Beijing
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   Special Coordinator for Connectivity, European External Action Service
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   Policy officer, China Division, European External Action Service

China:
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   DDG, Department of Infrastructure Development, NDRC
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   Division Director, Department of Regional Openness, NDRC
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   Deputy Division Director, Department of Infrastructure Development, NDRC
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   Program Officer, Department of Infrastructure Development, NDRC
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   Deputy Director General of Global Cooperation Department - Eurasia, CDB
PAN Dapeng
   Director of Global Cooperation Department - Eurasia, CDB
JIA Jingwen
   Director of Project Appraisal Department I, CDB
FU Shuai
   Assistant to the CDB International Cooperation Team, CDB
EU-China Connectivity Platform 2019 Action Plan

In order to implement the meeting minutes of the 3rd Chair's Meeting (15th July, 2018, Beijing) of the EU-China Connectivity Platform and the requirement of the EU-China Connectivity Platform Short-Term Action Plan, promote the development of the EU-China Connectivity Platform, enrich the contents of the platform cooperation, and achieve concrete cooperation results, both sides reached an agreement on the EU-China Connectivity Platform 2019 Action Plan.

1. Carry out one study

Based on building the synergies between China’s Belt and Road Initiative and the EU’s Trans-European Transport Network policy, including its extension to the West Balkan and other EU Eastern partner countries, both sides jointly launch the study on the sustainable railway-based comprehensive transport corridors, identifying and prioritise the missing links and bottlenecks, improving the capacity of the hubs as well as the quality of transport services. The two sides shall jointly identify the key points by the end of April 2019. To enhance the independency of the research, both sides agree to invite a third party with practical working experience and professional capacity to carry out the joint study.

2. Promote a number of cooperative projects

By the end of 2019, under the frame of the EU-China Connectivity Platform Expert Group, both sides will organize in-depth exchanges among interested investors around project planning and construction, and promote cooperation agreements, which ideally can be formally signed by the end of 2019. To ensure full involvement of relevant stakeholders, in particular investors, both sides will share information through appropriate tools. In accordance with the principles of openness, transparency and a level playing field, the list of projects provided should take Trans-European Transport Network planning and China's published transport network planning
into account as a whole. Relevant information (such as contact information, planned starting time, bidding and procurement rules, etc.) should be provided at the early stage of project planning and construction.

3. Carry out a round of policy exchanges
By the end of 2019, both sides will communicate with each other on investment approaches in transport infrastructure fields, and aim to organise a view exchange activity in 2019, helping investors from both sides to better understand the investment rules.

4. Organize a technical seminar
By the end of 2019, promote the technical discussion between the research institutions and universities of both sides on the “soft connectivity” issues of EU-China infrastructure connectivity, conducting academic exchanges and providing valuable suggestions on topics such as compatible and standardized transport rules, construction of transnational public information platform, standardization and informatization of the waybills, and facilitation of customs clearance, etc.

5. Organize expert exchanges
By the end of 2019, both sides will organise expert exchanges on planning synergies, policy research etc. The first exchange took place on 26 February in Beijing, focusing on the planning methodology of the Trans-European Transport Network. Both sides will discuss the feasibility of holding such policy exchanges under the framework of the Working Group, promoting further in-depth exchanges among experts on issues related to smoothing transport corridors between China and EU.
Both sides agreed to strengthen communication and coordination by holding regular video conferences to support the timely implementation of various tasks and ensure the achievement of satisfactory and mutually beneficial results.
Annex to the Minutes of the 4th Chairs’ Meeting

Terms of Reference of the
Joint Study on Sustainable Railway–based Comprehensive Transport Corridors between
Europe and China

1. Background and context

The Chairs of the EU-China Connectivity Platform held their 3rd meeting in July 2018 in Beijing, where they agreed to implement a Short Term Action Plan and enhance cooperation in corridor infrastructure development. They also agreed, in the Action Plan to conduct a joint study “to define the most appropriate railway corridors, identify bottlenecks, identify and prioritise the missing links to improve the capacity and efficiency of rail corridors”. The 4th Chairs’ meeting of the EU – China Connectivity Platform, held in April 2019 in Brussels, has endorsed the terms of reference of such a study, as set out in this document.

The Study is contracted and financed by the European Commission and the NDRC of the People’s Republic of China (henceforth, the Contracting Authorities).

The Study will define the most appropriate and sustainable railway-based comprehensive transport corridors (henceforth, corridors) between Europe and China. Sustainable railway-based comprehensive transport corridors means transport corridors where rail is the main transport mode and that may be complemented by other modes, including multi-modal connectivity and transhipment points. Substantiated by sound corridor analyses, the study will recommend the most viable and sustainable corridors. On this basis, it should identify and propose missing sections to be filled, solutions for interoperability and operational bottlenecks as well as safety and security issues and various non-technical barriers, and it should propose measures to improve the capacity and efficiency of the thus identified corridors (a “project pipeline”). Trade flows assessment and forecast will underpin the identification of corridors.

The study shall be carried out by an independent entity, based on the main elements indicated below.

2. Objectives and scope of the study

2.1 Objectives

The following objectives are set for the Study:

- Identifying the most feasible and sustainable railway-based comprehensive corridors between the EU and its neighbouring countries on the one hand, and China on the other (through consultation of stakeholders and evaluation of corridors using agreed methodology and criteria).
- Establishing a method for the identification of key actions for corridors enhancement, including for their prioritisation based on overall corridor development scenarios and considering operational and non-technical obstacles.
- Identifying key actions, based on a coherent and sustainable corridor development approach.

2.2 Geographical scope
In terms of corridor assessment, as well as the identification of a project pipeline, the Contractor should explore corridors in the countries, located between (not including) territories covered by the EU’s TEN-T policy on the one hand and territory of the Peoples Republic of China on the other. The TEN-T policy territory includes the 28 EU Member States and the areas for which indicative extensions of the TEN-T to neighbouring countries have been adopted, i.e. the Western Balkans Region, the Eastern Partnership Region, Turkey, and the Mediterranean Region for which the adoption is expected in near future.

The study shall pay due attention to two aspects: 1) the connecting points between the network of the EU (i.e. EU 28 plus indicative extensions) and the Europe – China corridors; 2) the connecting points between China and the Europe – China corridors. For this purpose, the Contractor shall cooperate closely with both Contracting Authorities.

2.3 Modal scope

The focus of the study shall be on railway corridors, as this mode is most appropriate for the transport of large volumes of freight in a sustainable, safe, secure and time-efficient manner over very long / trans-continental distances. This implies that these corridors are developed from a multi-modal perspective, so as to ensure sufficient connectivity and transshipment facilities – especially at major nodes and regional distribution areas. Notably rail, inland waterway or maritime as well as rail-road connections may therefore be included as necessary, in the same way as technological transfer points.

3. Structure and components of a study

3.1. Mapping of existing corridors’ infrastructure

The study will start with the assessment of the existing situation, mapping the existing railway-based infrastructure, focussing on key connections between Europe and China and existing operations in the geographical area of the study.

The mapping of infrastructure will include information on the general characteristics of rail infrastructure (track gauge, electrification).

The Contractor should review existing literature and studies for the mapping of existing rail infrastructure¹.

3.2. Corridors’ assessment

Based on the mapping of the railway-based infrastructure, a high-level assessment of all corridors shall be performed. The assessment includes two key components – freight flows assessment and corridor assessment for the entire length of the corridors.

At the end of this task, the most feasible and sustainable corridors in socioeconomic, operational, legal and environmental terms shall be identified, taking into account the results of the two assessment components and their relevant indicators. The Contractor shall review existing literature and studies for the corridors assessment.

3.2.1. Freight Flows Assessment

Firstly, this component will measure the level of service and trade between EU and China as well as with the countries along the routes. It will analyse the trade and transport patterns,

¹ After the agreement of the outline, the Contractor will keep close contacts with Contracting Authorities to discuss the scope and details of the literature review.
broken down by commodity type and value, evaluate transportation links, and freight rates per TEU or similar cargo load.

Secondly, this component will forecast the trade and resulting freight flows up to 2040 (in steps, including 2025 and 2030 and 2035). It shall give appropriate consideration to bi-directional demand development between the EU and China. Scenarios for expected traffic growth in countries along the corridors should be given due attention.

The forecast will consider the most likely industry and technological developments and will be based on available railway data, forecasts of trade and of the railways modal share. Complementarity and possible competition with other long-distance transport modes should be given due attention in the forecasting.

The forecasting task includes a comparison of the costs per unit per mode and shall consider competition among the modes. The forecasts will consider possible evolution of incentives and subsidies regimes that may affect the cost per unit per mode.

In assessing potential freight flows in the countries covered by the study, the analysis should consider the potential development of economic hubs in those countries.

3.2.2. High level Assessment of corridors

This component will assess the infrastructure and operational conditions as well as non-technical stumbling blocks along the corridors, including:

(i) Assessment of constraints affecting transport operations: technical and operational interoperability; integration with other modes; legal and regulatory conditions and compatibility (including network access rules); customs procedures; existing bilateral/regional/international agreements and arrangements between the various countries concerned;

(ii) The relative advantages and disadvantages of corridors in terms of political viability, socio-economic factors (economic efficiency, costs, construction feasibility, construction risks); environmental impacts, decarbonisation benefits, climate and weather conditions; geographical factors; financial sustainability of corridor projects and fiscal impact on recipient countries;

(iii) Identification of missing links and bottlenecks along these corridors (including the main hubs and terminals) and connection with the TEN-T core network (including indicative extensions to neighbouring countries) on the one hand, and with internal railway corridors in China, on the other. This will include the assessment of other potential constraints linked to the development of corridors.

(iv) Assessment of other potential constraints, such as safety and security.

3.3. Stakeholder and country consultations

After the identification of the most feasible and sustainable corridors, a consultation of relevant stakeholders and representatives of countries that lie on the route of these corridors shall be conducted.

The stakeholders under this definition will include, as a minimum, the UN bodies and other relevant international organisations, relevant IFIs, investors, industry (including transport
operators), interest groups/civil society, the EU Member States and relevant countries along the corridors and other public entities as appropriate.

3.4. Selection of preferred corridors options

The Contractor shall submit a proposal for the most sustainable corridors options to the two Contracting Authorities. Based on this proposal and the findings of the tasks defined in 3.1 - 3.3, the Contracting Authorities will examine “preferred corridor options”.

4. Establishing a method for corridor enhancement

This task includes the elaboration, to be agreed with the Contracting Authorities of the study (weighting of criteria for instance), of a method for project identification.

5. Identification of key actions for corridor enhancement

This deeper analysis of the “preferred corridor options” shall enable the identification and prioritisation of sustainable projects, including infrastructure projects as well as the interoperability, operational and administrative measures, which are necessary for development of the preferred corridors.

Examples of projects in the "project pipeline" may notably cover the following categories:

- New rail infrastructure projects;
- Railway upgrading projects to enhance capacity, quality or interoperability standards;
- Multi-modal infrastructure between rail and waterborne transport (new construction or upgrading);
- “Last mile connections” (notably transshipment facilities between long-distance and regional rail and, where appropriate, between rail and road);
- “Technological” transshipment facilities (gauge changing, innovative technologies, etc.);
- Transport-related measures of small scale or administrative nature, aiming to enhance service quality and capacity use (such as digital systems for efficient freight logistics, corridor data management or information systems, the promotion of a wide application of existing international frameworks etc.), safety and security equipment for freight services etc.
- Non-transport-related measures, aiming to remove operational barriers along the corridor (such as the enhancement of customs).

In identifying such projects, evolving demand situations, technical and environmental feasibility, socio-economic and fiscal viability should also be duly taken into account.

In the context of ensuring the most sustainable corridors, the study should also assess the current procurement rules in the pertinent countries, as sustainability can only be assured through the respect of procurement rules consistent with relevant international procurement procedures and based on transparent international standards. This will help attract investments from a wide range of sources: States (directly concerned and others), private investors as well as International Financial Institutions.
6. Implementation and timeline

The study will be assigned to a mutually agreed, independent institution, experienced in transport infrastructure and economic analysis in the relevant geographical areas.

After assignment of the study to the contractor, the Contractor shall organise an inception meeting. In view of this meeting, the Contractor shall submit the approach it proposes to pursue in implementing the Terms of Reference of the study (as presented in this outline), including a work plan and a schedule. The contracting authorities shall discuss the proposed approach, and if agreed, will instruct the Contractor to implement it.

The following reports shall be delivered to the contracting authorities in the course of the study:

Two intermediary reports on

1. The results of the work for the identification of feasible and sustainable corridors based on the freight flows assessment and the high-level assessment of corridors.

2. The method for project identification and prioritisations.

The Contractor shall submit work results to the Contracting Authorities, allowing sufficient time for comments (at least two weeks).

A final report, including all results of the study, to be made public after the approval of the Contracting Authorities.

The duration of the study is one year after the assignment of the contract.

7. Steering of the study

A joint steering committee composed of representatives of both contracting authorities will follow the implementation of the study, and decide upon the publication of the results of the study.

At the end of each month, the Contractor shall submit short progress reports on the advancement of the study. This should also include the envisaged involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

All reports should be addressed to the joint steering committee established by the contracting authorities for the implementation of this study. This committee will approve all deliverables and the planning for deliverables, as necessary and following debate with the contractor, request clarification, and provide guidance. A minimum of 3 meetings shall be scheduled to follow the study during a 1-year duration. All communications by the Contractor should be made simultaneously to both contracting authorities. The contracting authorities should be responsible for providing information on processes and developments in their respective areas.

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2 Individual development projects, located on the territory of either of the Contracting Authorities, shall not be subject to this study.
8. Payment

The two contracting authorities shall finance the Joint Study equally (50/50).