



Joint Statement
Fifth Meeting of the China-EU Round Table
Tianjin, 19 May 2009

1. The China-EU Round Table held its fifth meeting in Tianjin, China from 18 to 19 May 2009.
2. The Round Table was co-established by the China Economic and Social Council (CESC) and the EU Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in accordance with the Joint Statement of the 9th China-EU Summit released in Helsinki on 9 September 2006.
3. The results achieved at the past Round Table meetings as well as the pertinent recommendations jointly made by both sides have been appreciated by the leaders in the Joint Statements of the China-EU Summits. They are convinced that the role of organised civil society is important and that its voice must be heard in developing the China-EU relationship and in the ongoing dialogues.
4. The fifth meeting of the China-EU Round Table was co-chaired by Mr Gang Wang, Chairman of the CESC and Mr Mario Sepi, President of the EESC.
5. During the meeting, delegates from both sides held extensive discussions on the themes "Recycling Industries" and "Economic and social rights in China and in the EU". They exchanged views in an atmosphere of equality, frankness and friendship.
6. The Round Table expressed grave concerns over the current financial crisis and its negative impact on the people in the EU and in China. A tripartite workshop on combating the financial crisis was held in Tianjin, with the participation of members of the CESC delegation, EESC delegation and the Tianjin Economic and Social Council. The organisation of this workshop demonstrates the need to involve civil society in the reflection on the current crisis and in the definition and implementation of the measures to be taken.
7. **On recycling Industries**
 - 7.1 The Round Table agrees that the huge amount of waste produced constitutes a major challenge to both developing and developed countries and is convinced that waste should be seen as both a source of pollution and a source of value in recycling. In particular, the Round Table stresses the potential negative consequences of waste on public health.
 - 7.2 The Round Table acknowledges the urgency with which the problems posed, especially by the rapid increase of hazardous waste and electronic waste, must be tackled. In addition, there

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is a strong need to find integrated cross-sector solutions to these problems based on the principle of "reducing, reusing and recycling resources".

- 7.3 The Round Table recognizes the progress made in legislation and the management of waste treatment both in China and the EU and urges more efforts be made for effective and genuine implementation of the relevant regulations and directives at the level of municipal governments and individual businesses in particular.
- 7.4 The Round Table reiterates its request to see full involvement of civil society organisations in waste management policies as the key to success of those policies, especially in raising public awareness and the sense of responsible ownership.
- 7.5 The Round Table acknowledges the willingness from both sides to have more bilateral exchanges and cooperation initiatives to promote recycling industries, and the delegates are satisfied with the fruitful dialogue to date in this area.
- 7.6 The Round Table takes note of the existing framework of the EU-China cooperation and insists on its importance, in particular in the development of technology transfer, exchange of good practices and technical expertise.
- 7.7 The Round Table asks the authorities to encourage a joint platform for scientific and technical cooperation between researchers of both regions to develop circular industry programmes.
- 7.8 The Round Table supports cooperations and exchanges of good practices between civil society organisations of China and of Europe and recommends that pilot projects in this field should be supported.
- 7.9 The Round Table decides to continue its reporting on issues related to sustainable development and to discuss the topic of sustainable urban development in the next tripartite meeting in Stockholm with the Swedish Presidency of the EU.
- 7.10 The Round Table urges Chinese SMEs, industrial associations and other civil society organizations to work closely with their counterparts in the EU to set up SWITCH Programmes in China, focusing on electric waste collection, recycling and hazardous waste management, which are increasingly drawing concerns from relevant authorities and civil society at large.
- 7.11 The Round Table encourages the proposal that relevant authorities and co-partners from China and the EU establish a demonstration park in the field of waste management and recycling industry, preferably in Tianjin, considering the ongoing endeavours and initiatives the Tianjin municipal government have taken in building up a resource-saving and eco-

friendly city in China. This can set an example for eco-cooperation between China and the EU in the area of maintaining sustainable development and combating climate change.

8. On Economic and social rights in China and the EU

- 8.1 The Round Table pursues the shared goal of building a harmonious society and a peaceful world with full acknowledgement of the challenges brought by globalisation, the need for greater progress in social welfare, and the commitment to realize the MDGs. In this context, the respect and promotion of economic and social rights play a central role. China and the EU Member States have ratified the main international instrument related to the respect of these rights, and in particular the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (1966 – ICESCR). The Round Table calls for ratification of the other relevant international instruments.
- 8.2 The Round Table takes note of the recent adoption of the optional protocol to the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and welcomes all efforts to improve the implementation of the ICESCR.
- 8.3 The Round Table also recommends that both China and the EU need further improvement in policy-making, which should bring more benefits to disadvantaged regions and social groups.
- 8.4 The Round Table notes with satisfaction that, in April 2009, China has adopted a first action plan on human rights for 2009/2010 which includes economic and social rights.
- 8.5 The Round Table recommends that children's rights must be given special consideration and welcomes China's huge efforts to achieve universal education. It considers education as the central pillar to harmonious development and social progress. The Round Table calls for a reinforcement of efforts to fight child labour in Europe and in China.
- 8.6 The Round Table members recall that, to a very great extent, social partners pursue shared goals of harmonious industrial relations and sustainable employment which can be maintained through social consultation and dialogue on equal basis. The Round Table recognises that freedom of association and collective bargaining provided for in both ICESCR and ILO create a framework for conflict prevention and resolution. The Round Table also shares the views that the social consequences of the present crisis further increase the challenge of balancing interests between all parties and the importance of having conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution mechanisms.
- 8.7 The Round Table calls for more substantial cooperation between China and the EU at bilateral and multilateral level in overcoming the difficulties posed by the current economic crisis, in particular in helping people escape poverty and in fulfilling the MDG commitments

and other obligations required by the United Nations and other legally binding international agreements.

- 8.8 The Round table calls for support to stronger cooperation between civil society in China and in the EU for better implementation of economic and social rights. It proposes that an exchange of good practices and training should be organised between Chinese and European social partners so as to take advantage of all positive experiences to implement ILO Conventions in the national context.
- 8.9 The Round Table calls on the European Commission and the Chinese authorities to involve its members in the dialogues and projects they are undertaking or supporting in the field of economic and social rights.
- 8.10 The Round Table welcomes the joint EU-China agreement reached in January 2009 on cooperation in the field of health and safety at work and calls for support to joint civil society initiatives in this area.
- 8.11 The Round Table agrees that the dialogue on the rights-related issues should be continued with the aim of increasing mutual understanding and promoting people's social and economic rights.
- 8.12 Both sides agree that the sixth meeting of the EU-China Round Table will focus on the two issues: "Economic and Social Rights in China and the EU" and "Water Resources and Sustainable Development".
- 8.13 The present Joint Statement shall be submitted to upcoming EU-China Summit. Both sides agree that the sixth meeting of the China-EU Round Table shall take place in Stockholm on 26/28 October 2009.

Tianjin, 19 May 2009.

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President
European Economic and Social Committee

Zhao Qizheng
Vice Chairman
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