Joint Statement

Preamble

1. The EU-China Round Table held its ninth meeting in Xi’an, China on 9 and 10 May 2011.
2. The Round Table was jointly established by the China Economic and Social Council (CESC) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in accordance with the Joint Statement of the 9th China-EU Summit in Helsinki on 9 September 2006.
3. The dialogue between members of organised civil society which takes place at the EU-China Round Table is part of the EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership and contributes to people-to-people friendship and mutual understanding.
4. At this meeting, members from both sides held extensive discussions on the themes “Inclusive Regional Development” and “A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development”.
5. A tripartite workshop on cultural heritage protection was held after the roundtable, which saw the involvement of the Shannxi Provincial Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. The participants of this tripartite meeting agree that cultural heritage, as treasure of human civilization, should be preserved and utilized wisely and also call upon that China and the EU work together to cope with challenges facing the protection of cultural relics and historic sites brought about by rapid urbanization and construction of big projects.

Inclusive Regional Development

6. The Round Table considers that inclusive regional development means that economic, social and territorial cohesion should be pursued in parallel with the aim to ensure that people in different regions enjoy equal opportunity for development and shared prosperity.
7. Cohesion should not be understood solely in terms of GDP. There should be more representative indicators in addition to GDP, such as employment levels, the extent of social protection, the level of access to general interest services, environmental sustainability etc.
8. While China’s main task is reducing the disparities between east and west, rural and urban areas, among different regions and securing a fair access to public services, the challenge for EU is to promote development and structural adjustment for member states lagging behind. The Round Table agrees that the different conditions in China and EU ask for different policies and measures to cope with specific issues cropping up in the process towards inclusive development.
9. The Roundtable believes that regional development should be promoted through specific funding of programmes aimed at reducing disparities between citizens and regions. Such a policy should foster the development of less favoured groups and regions.

10. The Round Table recommends that a review of the mechanisms governing the use of resources earmarked for regional development is done regularly in order to make them consistent with changes in growth and social circumstances in beneficiary areas.

11. The active involvement of civil society, through dialogues with political authorities in the implementation of such programmes needs to be guaranteed in order to ensure the success of regional development.

12. Such dialogue requires a wide participation of social partners and other civil society organisations at all levels. The capacities of these organisations have to be reinforced through targeted policies. The Round Table is convinced that in this way a stronger legitimacy and sustainability is given to public policies.

13. The Round Table expresses its satisfaction for the positive exchanges of practices during this meeting and is committed to enhance such exchanges.

A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development

14. The Round Table holds that a green economy must be understood in the context of sustainable development and requires transformation of development patterns with an equal focus on economic growth, social inclusion and environmental preservation.

15. The Round Table calls for developing suitable policy frameworks at the multilateral, regional and national levels to ensure transition towards a green economy, promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns and preservation of ecosystems.

16. The Round Table believes that a well-designed regulatory framework at international level is needed, which can define rights and create incentives that drive green economy activities forward.

17. The Round Table recognizes the progress already made in green economy transition both in China and the EU and urges more efforts be made for effective and genuine implementation of the relevant regulations and directives.

18. The Round Table takes note of the adoption of China’s 12th Five-year Development Programme (2010-2015) and of Europe 2020 Strategy and calls for more targeted action plans and monitoring process to be implemented with the participation of all stakeholders including civil society organizations.

19. The Round Table encourages the ongoing academic researches and initiatives to adopt more comprehensive and balanced tools and indicators that go beyond GDP to reflect the extent to which production and consumption activities can be detrimental to natural and human capital.

20. The Round Table recommends that environmental concerns and social inclusion be mainstreamed into national policy-making and public and private spending. Public sector must play a leading role in promoting sustainability.

21. The Round Table also calls for facilitating trade on environmental goods and services at the multilateral, regional and national levels. It also considers that assistance and transfer of know-how to developing countries should be promoted, in compliance with intellectual property rights, to ensure their access to environmental technologies.

22. The Round Table encourages stronger government support to innovation and research in green economy through measures such as increasing research funding and providing subsidies to R&D programmes. Creating an effective regulatory environment for encouraging industries’ own initiatives is also essential.
23. The Round Table notes that a shift to a green economy also means a shift in employment. It believes that social protection as well as skill-training for workers from sectors affected by the transition and more international development assistance on the greening the economy are necessary.

24. The Round Table acknowledges the willingness from both sides to have more bilateral exchanges and cooperation initiatives to promote green economy.

25. The Round Table attaches great importance to the role of the information campaigns and education on green economy to raise public awareness.

26. The Round Table hopes and expects that the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 will give a major contribution to the path towards a more sustainable economy and will set clear targets for greening the economy and achieving resource efficiency. The Round Table is convinced that a strong engagement of civil society organizations is essential to create the momentum and pressure needed to achieve a significant outcome at this Conference. The CESC and the EESC will continue to cooperate in order to contribute to this process.

27. The two sides agree to discuss two topics at the next meeting: 1) Sustainable Development and Urbanization; 2) Ageing Population and Social Security. The tenth meeting will take place in autumn in Warsaw, Poland.

28. This Joint Statement will be submitted to the 2011 China-EU Summit.

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Staffan Nilsson
President
European Economic and Social Committee

Yang Chonghui
Vice Chairman
China Economic and Social Council