Preamble

1. The EU-China Round Table held its tenth meeting in Munich, Germany, on 1 and 2 December 2011.

2. The Round Table was established jointly 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 of sustainable urban development and the ageing population and social security.

Sustainable urban development

Issues and challenges

5. Cities today consume more than two-thirds of the energy produced in the world and account for close to 80% of CO₂ emissions. More than half of the world's population are city-dwellers; by 2050 this will have risen to three-quarters of mankind.

6. The Round Table notes that urbanisation raises issues that are common to all large cities, which are vulnerable to climate change, since the majority of them are in coastal areas that are exposed to the dangers of rising sea levels.

7. The challenges posed globally by urbanisation on a massive scale and climate change in the 21st century call for a common approach and the pooling of experience and research. They raise a number of problems, but also represent opportunities to be seized. The challenges identified by the Round Table include the following:
7.1 How to reshape policy and the institutional framework to support economic recovery in industrialised economies and promote continuous growth in developing economies?

7.2 How to help developing economies create low-carbon and sustainable development patterns within urban master plans?

7.3 How to deal with social justice issues arising from growing inequality and marginalisation among weaker groups? How to integrate persons with disability into town planning?

7.4 How to improve urban governance and include both scientific knowledge and the interests of all stakeholders, especially civil society, in the decision-making process?

7.5 How to secure transparency of city management information?

Proposals

8. The Round Table is committed to intensifying its discussions to identify ways and means of helping to enhance well-being in the cities of the future. These discussions will cover the areas of health, education and employment, and consider civil society players in their role as vectors of behavioural change and as champions of the need to make a fair transition towards a world less dependent on carbon.

9. It is essential to involve a wide range of players in the design, formulation and implementation of public policy (regulations, incentives, taxation, investment) and to include public-private partnerships in that process. Civil society organisations are instruments that facilitate mediation between diverse interest groups (the public, residents, taxpayers, workers, employers, pensioners, etc.) through public debate.

10. Urban change calls for innovation, the transfer of best practice, accountability among local politicians and new forms of governance. Going one step further, in its conclusions, the Round Table proposes continuing discussions on the following themes:

10.1 promoting accountability among the various stakeholders and securing civil society a role in monitoring and evaluation, with a view to ensuring transparency;

10.2 taking into account both the social and the environmental dimensions, which means defining indicators and applying a measurement, verification and reporting method to the evaluation of the three pillars of sustainable development;

10.3 encouraging research into ground-breaking technologies, making it possible to combat climate change in terms of the emissions produced by cities;
10.4 exploring cooperative opportunities in investment, trade, finance, technology transfer and distribution in the context of promoting sustainable urbanisation;

10.5 analysing and drawing conclusions from joint pilot projects as part of integrated master plans, comprehensive management, sustainable urban transport, building, environmental quality, the interaction between urban and rural development, and improvement of weaker groups' welfare through education, employment and social security, optimisation of spatial planning and population management. The transfer of experiences and technology in the above areas should be enhanced;

10.6 supporting an integrated approach to urban development based on the participation of civil society in the various stages of planning and implementing sustainable urban policies;

10.7 encouraging exchanges and visits with a view to pooling good practices and all the accumulated knowledge of city and scientific networks; seeking more thematic and systematic dialogues, and communication. Joint studies on urbanisation should be conducted with a view to learning from past practices and finding solutions.

11. The Round Table also recommends making all this collective expertise available to the EU-China consultation mechanisms, especially on the issues of emission trading system and low carbon city planning. Platforms bringing together researchers and civil society representatives could also be formed.

12. The Round Table would like to be involved with the China-EU partnership on sustainable urban development and above all with the EU-China Urban Forum.

**An ageing population and social security**

13. By 2050, the world will number 1.5 billion people aged 65 or older. The EU will have nearly 34.7 million people over the age of 80 in 2030, compared to 18.8 million today. At present, China has the largest elderly population in the world, accounting for nearly 25% of the world total and nearly 50% in Asia; over the next two decades, the ageing problem will become even more serious and by 2030 China’s elderly population will have doubled.

14. Industrialisation brought with it the problem of providing resources for workers who were too old to work. The first pension systems were established at the same time as other social protection measures designed to replace income from employment in cases of illness, maternity, accidents at work or unemployment.

15. An ageing population raises more than just the issue of having the resources to replace earnings. It also brings new needs, for instance, for housing assistance, retirement homes and home care services, which can be a source of development and new jobs.

.../...
16. Retired people make an essential contribution to society in terms of social cohesion (involvement in third sector associations, help offered to young parents, care for the sick and older pensioners, etc.). This leads the Round Table to call for stronger measures to utilise people's skills and social usefulness for as long as they wish.

17. The Round Table calls on States, despite their economic and financial difficulties, to develop or preserve inclusive social security provisions that take account of economic and social inequalities so as to rectify them.

18. The Round Table notes that one of the challenges is to organise training, work and retirement periods differently. With regard to training, offering everyone the opportunity to benefit from life-long learning and bolstering young people's initial training by alternating study and work, can enable young people to experience the world of work sooner and, by combining work with study, gain access to income enabling them to be independent.

19. The Round Table notes that there is also a need to address working time and arrange for men and women to have the opportunity to benefit from long periods of full or part-time leave during their working lives. This can be financed in the same way as pensions and can enable them to care for children, adolescents encountering difficulties, family members who are sick and dependent elderly people, so that the family remains the prime support system. Recognition should also be given to the importance of various forms of home-based or community work assisting elderly people, by applying decent working standards.

20. The Round Table notes that there should be new arrangements for distributing not just time but also tasks between men and women. It calls for equality between men and women in pension system...

21. The Round Table calls on authorities to pay close attention to working conditions throughout peoples' working lives, by making work less arduous, limiting night shifts and reducing stress levels, etc., in order to prepare people for a healthy retirement.

22. The Round Table draws attention to the need to provide for finance and resources for the provision of care for dependent elderly people, in order to alleviate the extremely heavy burden on families. It calls for the setting-up of multi-layered funding mechanisms for social security..

23. The two sides agree to deepen discussions on the two topics at the next meeting: 1) sustainable urban development and 2) the ageing population and social security. The 11th meeting will take place in Hanzhou, Zhejiang province of China in April 2012.

.../...
24. This Joint Statement will be submitted to the 2012 China-EU Summit.

Munich, Germany, 1 December 2011

Staffan Nilsson                           Xu Zhenhuan
President                                Vice Chairman
European Economic and Social Committee   China Economic and Social Council