



**Joint Statement**  
**Twelfth Meeting of the China-EU Round Table**  
**(Brussels, 11 and 12 April 2013)**

1. The China-EU Round Table held its twelfth meeting in Brussels on 11 and 12 April 2013.
2. The Round Table was jointly established by the Chinese 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 held in Helsinki in 2006.
3. The dialogue between organised civil society that takes place at the EU-China Round Table forms part of the EU-China strategic partnership and contributes to friendship and mutual understanding between people.
4. At the meeting, delegates from both sides held extensive discussions on the issues of a) inter-cultural dialogue; b) GDP and beyond: the involvement of civil society in choosing complementary indicators to GDP; c) trade and development in the wake of Rio+20 Conference; and d) society's contribution to implementing the EU-China partnership on sustainable urban development.

**Inter-cultural dialogue**

5. The Round Table agrees on the consensus reached at the 14th EU-China Summit that "deepening understanding and mutual trust between the two peoples was vital to the sustained and stable development of EU-China relations" and welcomes the first meeting of the EU-China high level people-to-people dialogue in Brussels in April 2012 and its follow-up measures as a third important pillar of the EU-China strategic partnership. The Round Table acknowledges the crucial contribution of culture to people-to-people dialogue and mutual understanding between China and the EU as well as the role of cultural cooperation in strengthening the countries' respective cultural sectors.
6. The Round Table emphasises that it should be closely involved in the EU-China high level people-to-people dialogue given that it is the highest-level contact between civil society in the EU and China and can bring considerable know-how and relevant experience to bear in developing this dialogue. It can in particular help to develop initiatives related to cultural and creative industries in the years to come.

7. The Round Table acknowledges the importance of intercultural dialogue as an essential part of people-to-people dialogue, alongside education (including adult education and lifelong learning), researcher mobility and young people. Intercultural dialogue opens many opportunities for cooperation in language learning, health care, consumer safety and environmental awareness.
8. The Round Table suggests that attention should be also paid to developing cultural tourism, as it not only boosts the economy but also makes a lasting contribution to mutual understanding. It is important to search for synergies between people-to-people dialogue and the EU-China partnership on sustainable urban development, especially when it comes to protecting historical and cultural heritage and carrying out joint projects in this field to protect historical and cultural sites.
9. The Round Table notes the importance of trade and investment in EU and Chinese economic growth, and believes that better understanding of each other's business practices, business culture, consumer behaviour and social dialogue is essential in fostering economic relations. Therefore, intercultural training, sponsored apprenticeships, business exchanges and support for small and medium-sized enterprises should also be included in the range of activities related to intercultural dialogue.
10. The Round Table also calls for more media cooperation and joint training of journalists from the EU and China, as responsible and free media can help to build up mutual understanding and mutual trust between the EU and China.
11. The Round Table notes that respect for cultural diversity and human rights, as well as consideration for differences in development patterns, should be a precondition for the development of activities as part of the high-level people-to-people dialogue.

#### **GDP and beyond – involvement of civil society in choosing complementary indicators to GDP**

12. The Round Table stresses that initiatives at international level already exist, in particular within the UN and the OECD, to provide comparable indicators for wellbeing. Nevertheless, the Round Table recognises that there is a need for a renewed and internationally agreed research agenda to find indicators to complement GDP.
13. The Round Table notes that point 38 of the final resolution of the Rio+20 conference recognises the need for broader measures of progress to complement GDP in order to make better informed policy decisions, and calls on the relevant UN bodies to begin work on this.
14. The Round Table urges EU and Chinese authorities to invest in cooperation and research concerning mutually acceptable alternative indicators such as enlarged GDP, social

indicators, environmental indicators and wellbeing indicators and to contribute to international research in this area.

15. Nevertheless, the Round Table recognises that in the short term there is a need to make better use of the data and statistics that already exist and that can provide citizens and decision makers with information on quality of life, wellbeing and sustainability.
16. The Round Table recognises the extreme complexity of the work to be undertaken, the advantages and limitations of different indicators and the difficulty of reconciling the sustainable development patterns of developed and developing countries. In addition, the wide differences in statistical capacities across the countries will require capacity-building, technical assistance and regional cooperation regarding the use of existing statistics and designing of new indicators.
17. The Round Table considers it important to give a prominent role to indicators beyond GDP when drafting sustainable development goals in the post-2015 framework.
18. The Round Table considers that civil society, together with other social and institutional players, should use round tables and forums to take part in the development of complementary indicators to GDP. It considers that the creation of new indicators should be a participatory decision-making process as they will underpin future policy choices, particularly in economic, social and fiscal policy.
19. The Round Table considers that the use of complementary indicators to GDP should not be limited to national level but should also cover local levels, particularly in urban areas, in order to have a real impact on the behaviour of citizens, civil society and the business community.

#### **Trade and development in the context of the follow-up to Rio+20**

20. The Round Table reiterates its view that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio in June 2012 offered an opportunity to promote trade and the green economy as a tool for sustainable development and eradicating poverty. Therefore, the Round Table calls for incorporation of the sustainable development impact assessments in a broader cycle of ex-ante to ex-post impact assessments of trade and development policies.
21. The Round Table recognises that EU and Chinese authorities aim to develop policies promoting energy efficiency and environmentally friendly industries and are implementing measures favouring the green economy that are expected to result in more sustainable growth and jobs. The Round Table stresses that, in accordance with the Rio+20 Outcome Document, national green economy policies should be consistent with international law, take into account the needs of developing countries and strengthen international cooperation. WTO rules, ILO conventions and relevant international instruments concerning the environment and climate change should be guiding principles in this respect.

22. The Round Table recommends that the EU and China consider the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference while working to make the WTO's 9th Ministerial Conference in December 2013 a success. The EU and China share a global responsibility to make every possible effort to reach an agreement on certain key elements of the Doha development round, especially in relation to trade facilitation and agriculture, which is expected to help spread the benefits of globalisation more broadly, bring benefits to many millions more people and contribute to development goals.
23. In addition, the Round Table calls on EU and Chinese authorities to consider specific provisions on green goods and services and sustainable development in multilateral, bilateral and regional trade agreements. It is vitally important to pursue common approaches to environmental challenges such as promoting trade and investment in goods and services needed to protect the environment and developing and disseminating relevant technologies. To this end, the APEC list of environmental goods, which was agreed in September 2012 and foresees the reduction of applied tariffs to 5% or less by 2015, could serve as an example of best practice.
24. Civil society mechanisms for monitoring the trade and sustainable development chapters of free trade agreements could also ensure that openness to trade does not compromise social and environmental standards. In this respect, the experience of the European Union in the new type of trade agreements concluded or under negotiation could be streamlined as a reference to be followed.
25. The Round Table considers that trade, investment and economic relations with developing countries, and especially with the least developed countries, should aim for long-term sustainability, with due consideration for environmental and social issues. The Round Table considers that the EU and China should design trade policies that foster development and should continue to strengthen international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to the least developed countries or to the countries most in need, which could contribute to full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the integration of sustainable development in the post-2015 framework.
26. The Round Table urges EU and Chinese authorities to launch negotiations as soon as possible on an ambitious and balanced EU-China investment agreement that creates a better environment for companies from both parties and promotes high social and environmental standards.

#### **Sustainable urban development**

27. The Round Table welcomes the establishment of the EU-China partnership on sustainable urbanisation and shares its objectives. It reiterates its willingness to be involved in this

initiative, and in particular in the aspect of the partnership concerning cooperation in public participation, aiming at improving involvement of non-state actors and the public in the process of urban management, urbanisation cooperation and enhanced people-to-people exchanges.

28. The Round Table reiterates the recommendations on sustainable urban development issued during its 11th meeting and stresses the importance of sustainable development indicators that measure the progress of cities towards sustainable urbanisation. The Round table will seek the possibility to organise a workshop on human-centred urbanisation during the EU-China Urbanisation Forum in 2013 in Bieijing.
29. The Round Table considers that promotion of historical and cultural heritage and preservation of historical parts of cities should be given a prominent role in urban planning and development, and that this topic should be included in the EU-China partnership on sustainable urbanisation.
30. The Round Table stresses that the welfare of citizens should be the principal objective of sustainable urban development, which is why particular attention should be paid to projects benefiting the most vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities and migrants. The Round Table proposes to include these topics in its future work regarding the EU-China sustainable urbanisation partnership.

Both sides agree that the 13th meeting of the China-EU Round Table shall take place in Sichuan in Autumn 2013 and address the two following topics: 1) human rights; and 2) EU-China investment relations. A debate with local stakeholders on sustainable tourism will be organised.

31. This Joint Statement shall be submitted to the upcoming EU-China Summit.



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