

Minutes of the 6thEU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy

Karmenu Vella European Commissioner for Environment, and Chen Jining, Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China, met in Brussels on 24 May 2016 for the 6thEU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy.

They exchanged information on recent developments in their respective environmental policies and priorities. They shared views and expectations for the forthcoming meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Minister Chen Jining briefed Commissioner Vella on environmental concepts and thoughts such as Ecological Civilization Construction, Green Development, and plans for environmental protection in the Thirteenth Five Years Plan period. He also informed that China has ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Commissioner Vella appreciated the progress in the implementation of Action Plans on air and water pollution prevention in China as well as China's ratification of the Convention.

Commissioner Vella informed Minister Chen Jining that his focus during his mandate would be on green growth (notably through promoting the circular economy), connecting with citizens by working on issues such as air and water that impact their daily lives and making things happen through better implementation and international outreach. He expressed the view that the EU can only achieve its goals by working with key international partners and cited the example of protection of marine biodiversity as an issue that can only be solved with international collaboration.

Both sides welcomed the work and results of the current phase of the China Council on International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) and Commissioner Vella indicated his willingness to continue the European Commission's involvement in the next phase of its work.

Both sides shared information on various aspects of pollution control, namely industrial emissions, water, air and soil. On industrial emissions, Commissioner Vella invited China to

participate in the ongoing OECD project to support the worldwide implementation of Best Available Techniques that the Commission is financing through the LIFE programme. Both sides recognised that the workshops on air and water held in Beijing in March 2016, with the support of Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences (CRAES), had been a success, providing a positive exchange of practical experience and agreed that consideration should be given to repeating this type of event.

Commissioner Vella informed Minister Chen on the state of play with the EU's Circular Economy package and observed that with Circular Economy being a major strategic priority for the economic and social development of both sides, there would be scope for cooperation and in particular on issues related to waste policy. He highlighted that DG Environment (ENV) will be organising a high level mission for Circular Economy to China in November of this year.

With the EU and China being two of the largest economies worldwide, both sides recognised their role in addressing international challenges and the need to enhance contacts and collaboration between ENV and MEP on these issues. Commissioner Vella highlighted the issue of green finance as being one which needs international action. He underlined that private sources of finance will be needed in addition to public sources to make the transition to a green circular economy and to achieve SDG implementation. The Commissioner observed that China has growing experience with greening finance systems and encouraged further collaboration with his services on this issue.

Regarding the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), both sides expressed the desire to work together in a cooperative spirit to ensure a good outcome of the CBD Conference of the Parties (CoP13). The Partnership Instrument project on Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Biodiversity in China provides the opportunity for good practice exchanges ahead of the CoP. Commissioner Vella expressed the hope that the Conference will result in decisions on the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in key development sectors and in decision-making processes. Minister Chen indicated that China has officially expressed its intention to host CBD CoP15 in 2020.

Commissioner Vella informed Minister Chen that following the agreement at the 5th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Policy to increase cooperation on Natural Capital Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services, the Commission was about to launch a Partnership Instrument project on this issue and that China was one of the five

partner countries. This project will be implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Division.

Both sides welcomed the good work undertaken by EU-China Environmental Governance Programme which came to end in 2015 and took note of the progress under the ongoing EU-China Environmental Sustainability Programme (ESP) on projects to improve water quality address heavy metal pollution and implement more sustainable solid waste management.

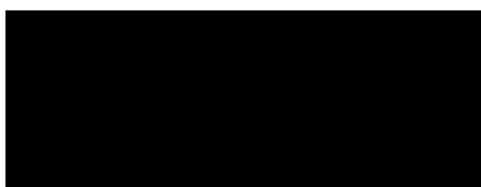
Both sides welcomed the work that had been carried out following their first meeting in October 2015 to review EU-China cooperation priorities.

They welcomed the work of the project "Review of EU-China Environmental Priorities for Co-operation", produced under the Policy Dialogues Support Facility (PDSF) as a potential basis for further enhancing cooperation.

With a view to further developing this analysis, Commissioner Vella tabled a discussion document (in annex) that makes a preliminary identification of the joint priorities, gives an indication of the form of cooperation activities and type of output that could be pursued. It also includes a pipeline of potential activities to be carried out in 2016/2017. MEP will study them, and both sides will keep close contacts at working level.

Both sides supported further discussion to develop this into an action-oriented document to be agreed upon at an early opportunity.

Done at Brussels on 24 May 2016, in duplicate, in the English and Chinese languages, both versions being equally valid.



Karmenu Vella
European Commissioner for Environment,
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries



Chen Jining
Minister of Environmental Protection of
the People's Republic of China

**ANNEX TO THE MINUTES OF THE 6TH EU-CHINA MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENT
POLICY**

**VISIONS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN DG ENVIRONMENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, CHINA**

(Draft by DG Environment as of 24 May 2016)

As China implements the 13th Five Year Plan and the EU works towards the goals of Europe 2020 and the 7th Environmental Action Programme, China and the EU are cooperating on issues of mutual interest for environmental policy that will contribute to green growth. Both sides are fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development both domestically and internationally.

On 24 May 2016 on the occasion of the 6th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy Commissioner Karmenu Vella and Minister Chen Jining discussed environmental challenges. They intend to enhance co-operation in a number of key joint priority areas within their portfolios and identified an initial set of activities under these areas (in annex).

Cooperation activities could take the form of exchange of experience and good practice through dialogue, expert exchange, study visits and workshops. Output may include the production of policy recommendations, joint policy research, filling knowledge gaps and enhancing expertise and understanding.

Joint priorities

1. Pollution Prevention and Control

Permitting systems are vitally important to the success of pollution control policies. China is committed to applying systems for permitting air and water pollution. There is experience in Europe at Member State and EU level that could inform the design of those systems. Cooperation should focus on measures to combat pollution (air, soil, water, industrial emissions) such as integrated permitting systems and standards, for example for soil quality. There may also be an interest to explore further exchanges on issues such as integrating environmental planning and management across administrative boundaries, for example for cross border air pollution, the management of the water quality of river basins.

2: Environmental governance

Good environmental governance is reflected in both China's 13th Five Year Plan and the European 7th Environmental Action Programme. Actions should aim to build on the legacy of earlier cooperation (in particular the Environmental Governance Programme) and focus on strengthening environmental governance with particular attention paid to integrating environmental planning and management across administrative boundaries and improving implementation of environmental legislation. Cooperation should also focus on harnessing the power of information, in particular the role of 'big data in environmental policy (role of central authorities, big data systems, lessons learned) and enabling the citizen to achieve environmental compliance.

The cooperation should target the sharing of good practice between practitioners in the various fields of good governance.

3. Green growth and circular economy (including Waste and Chemicals management)

China and Europe are developing models for green growth and initiatives for significant structural changes to their economies. Waste (including circular economy) and chemicals management are joint policy priorities and there is value in sharing experience on:

- Measures, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and decision-support tools for green growth and green jobs, addressing the links between environment and economy and environment and society
- the development of green finance
- Waste (including circular economy)
- Coherent approaches in chemicals management

Annex: Indicative list of activities to be carried out before the next Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy

- Organisation of an EU high level visit to China to promote the concept of circular economy (November 2016).
- A workshop will be organised to explore water cooperation involving DG ENV and the Joint Research Centre (JRC), MEP, the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences (CRAES) and other implementing actors. This would be held in September 2016 with a view to follow-up activities to be identified for 2017.
- A seminar on air policy will be organised addressing both policy and science and involving the JRC /DG ENV and MEP /CRAES (November/December 2016)
- A study visit will be organised in September 2016 supported by the TAIEF facility for senior judges from the Supreme Peoples' Court of China to gain first-hand experience from their European counterparts on environmental court cases and rulings.
- Organisation of a technical consultation or a workshop in Brussels on waste management (waste collection and recycling and the economic feasibility of waste management) during late 2016 / 2017.

The TAIEF facility may be used to support further study trips/ expert visits on key priorities identified in the Ministerial Dialogue before the project ends on 8 December 2016. The possibility of organising a study visit in conjunction with the European Environment Agency (EEA) on reporting and monitoring will be examined.