Joint Statement
Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Round Table
Paris, 7 November 2008

1. The EU-China Round Table held its fourth meeting in Paris from 6 to 7 November 2008.

2. The Round Table is 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 fruitful results achieved have been recognised by the leaders in the Joint Statement of the 10th China-EU Summit held in Beijing on 28 November 2007 with the view that "the continued exchanges and pragmatic cooperation between the CESC and the EESC constitute a part of the China-EU relationship and that the civil society dialogue between the two sides should be strengthened." The Round Table is 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 negotiations.

4. The fourth meeting of the EU-China Round Table was co-chaired by Mr Mario Sepi, President of the EESC and Mr Li Changjian, Vice Chairman of the CESC.

5. During the meeting, delegates from both sides held extensive discussions and exchanged views on the themes “China-EU Trade and Investment” and “Recycling industries” in an atmosphere of equality, frankness and friendship.

6. The Round Table is concerned by the current financial and economic crisis and its negative consequences for the people. It calls for increased international cooperation to meet these challenges, involving organised civil society.

7. The Round Table was preceded by a workshop on corporate social responsibility (CSR), organised for the first time according to a tripartite formula, with members of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of France, the Chinese delegation and the European
delegation of the EU-China Round Table. This workshop arose out of the wish expressed in the joint statement published at the end of the third EU-China Round Table, which recommended “the promotion of new initiatives and the exchanges of good practices between China and Europe” as regards CSR.

8. **Corporate social responsibility (CSR)**

8.1 The participants in the workshop on CSR recall the 3rd Joint Statement of the EU-China Round Table, according to which the aim of CSR is to contribute to the improvement of living and working conditions for all in a harmonious society. CSR is based on respect for and the effective and dynamic application of basic labour standards and laws, the principles of sustainable development and includes voluntary commitments by businesses that go beyond the normative framework.

8.2 They agree that reflection and the exchange of good practices as regards CSR are among the priorities for all the economic, social and political actors within the framework of relations between China and Europe.

8.3 They note that convergences between Europe and China as regards the aims of CSR and convergences as regards definitions and standards are more numerous than in the past. They also note that difficulties of implementation exist on both sides and that the lessons drawn from the experiments undertaken could be used more to bring points of view closer together, in an approach respecting diversity while adhering to universal values and principles. They recall the importance of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international instruments. They note the importance of the initiative taken by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in a spirit of mutual understanding.

8.4 They note with satisfaction that both China and Europe have recently made great progress in reporting, and that measuring of CSR has become more reliable and transparent, although major progress still needs to be made, particularly as regards the quality of information.

8.5 They call for a reinforcement of the structures for dialogue and partnership between CSR stakeholders and propose organising other workshops to continue their reflections.
9. **Trade and investment**

9.1 The Round Table takes note of the rapid development of bilateral trade and investment between the EU and China. It acknowledges the current trade imbalance between China and the EU, which should be addressed by both sides on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. The Round Table also calls for the promotion of a more favourable environment to both sides for foreign direct investment (FDI).

9.2 The Round Table acknowledges the great potential of the development of trade and investment between the EU and China. It is of the opinion that EU-China relations are now mature enough to address different concerns that each side has with the other. These should be dealt within the appropriate forums in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding. The Round Table recognises the leading role of the High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue Mechanism and the importance of the negotiations on the trade and investment aspects of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). The Round Table recommends exploring the possibility of establishing a special research group engaged in EU-China trade and investment issues.

9.3 The Round Table pays attention to the issue of standards and welcomes the forthcoming agreement between the EU and Chinese standards agencies. The Round Table stresses the importance of taking into account the particularities and needs of SMEs in this regard.

9.4 The Round Table devotes special attention to the current global financial crisis and its impact on the world economy, believing that the world community should make urgent and powerful efforts to prevent the possible rise of trade protectionism, which would be harmful to both sides.

9.5 The Round Table would like to stress that trade and economic issues should be dealt with while taking into account social and environmental concerns. This is why civil society representatives, and this Round Table in particular, should be informed on a regular basis on the evolution of trade negotiations and be able to contribute to the process. The Round Table asks for studies to be conducted on the economic, social and environmental effects of trade liberalisation between the EU and China.
10. Recycling industries

10.1 The Round Table acknowledges the importance of adopting a "circular economy" perspective based on the principle of reducing, reusing and recycling resources.

10.2 The Round Table welcomes the recent adoption of a comprehensive legal framework for recycling both in China and in Europe and insists on its efficient and rapid implementation.

10.3 The Round Table considers that full involvement of civil society organisations is the key to the success of waste management and recycling policies, especially to raise public awareness and exchange good practices and technical expertise.

10.4 The Round Table urges the development of a fully integrated market for green investments between European and Chinese companies to facilitate and enhance green technologies cooperation and investment between both parties, in the process of which the role of government in providing public financial support should be strengthened.

Both sides decide that the fifth meeting of the China-EU Round Table will take place in Tianjin in early summer 2009. The present Joint Statement shall be submitted to the 11th EU-China Summit to be held on 1 December 2008 in Lyon.


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