

The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries

2015/11/24

(Suzhou, China, 24 November 2015)

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as "the Participants") commend the major progress that has been made in the cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (hereinafter referred to as "16+1 cooperation") and acknowledge that 16+1 cooperation continues to promote the ties between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (hereinafter referred to as "CEECs") and contributes to the all-round and balanced growth of the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

The Participants state their readiness to formulate the Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (hereinafter referred to as "the Agenda"), taking the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation as the guideline document for China-EU relations and in accordance with the Press Communiqué of the Meeting between the Prime Ministers of China and Central and Eastern European Countries, China's Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries, the Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and the Belgrade Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries.

The Agenda aims to improve 16+1 cooperation and further unleash its potential by setting out directions and priorities for 16+1 cooperation from 2015 to 2020. Based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and understanding of each other's development choices, the Participants will actively implement the Agenda in light of their respective realities, needs and priorities, through equal-footed consultations, capitalizing on each other's complementarities and win-win cooperation. The possibility of involvement of other partners in specific 16+1 projects and activities will be decided based on the principle of consensus. The Participants will carry out cooperation in accordance with their respective laws and regulations. EU member states are pursuing cooperation conforming with EU legislation, regulations and policies stemming from EU membership. The implementation of the Agenda will be reviewed at the annual Summit.

16+1 cooperation will aim to advance important national and regional projects. Instead of replacing existing bilateral cooperation mechanisms or platforms, it strives to complement and reinforce them, aiming at enhanced and expanded cooperation between China and the 16 countries. 16+1 cooperation will develop synergies with major EU initiatives and plans and contribute to the China-EU partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization. The Participants welcome and support the establishment of the China-EU Connectivity Platform. 16+1 cooperation will make full use of the opportunities offered by the Belt and Road initiative to steadily expand cooperation and in turn contribute to the initiative.

The annual 16+1 Summit plays a guiding role in 16+1 cooperation by drawing up annual guidelines, identifying key deliverables and resolving outstanding issues in the course of cooperation in a timely fashion. Leaders of the EU or their representatives are welcome to attend the China-CEEC Summit.

The 16+1 National Coordinators' Meeting will be held twice a year alternately in China and in one of the CEECs. The Participants welcome and support the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (hereinafter referred to as "the Secretariat") in its efforts to enhance coordination and the sharing of information. A mechanism of quarterly meetings between the Secretariat, its member organizations and CEEC embassies in China will be put in place. The Participants welcome and appreciate the appointment of the Special Representative for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Associations on sectoral cooperation serve as pillars of 16+1 sectoral cooperation. The role of existing associations will be brought into full play, and the establishment of new platforms will be encouraged when conditions are ripe. These associations will update the National Coordinators' Meeting on the latest developments of sectoral cooperation.

I. Economic Cooperation

1. China and CEECs will further facilitate mutual investment and trade and aim to make trade and investment relations one of the most dynamic growth points in 16+1 cooperation.
2. The China-CEEC Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation will be held once every two years.
3. Businesses are welcome to play an active role in 16+1 economic cooperation and trade. Participation by businesses in expos and fairs and mutual visits and exchanges of business delegations are encouraged.
4. Cross-border E-commerce and other new business models are encouraged and new areas of trade growth will be fostered.
5. The Participants acknowledge the important role small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play in the enhancement of trade and investment relations. The Participants will strengthen exchanges and dialogue on SME policies, study the possibility of organizing a China-CEEC SME policy consultation when appropriate and help Chinese and CEEC SMEs establish links with each other.
6. The Participants welcome and support the role of the Warsaw-based China-CEEC Business Council and the China-CEEC Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism in sharing relevant information as well as facilitating and creating new business-to-business contacts and networking opportunities.
7. The Participants will promote transparent, open markets and a level playing field in their respective countries, as well as oppose protectionism in all its forms. With bilateral investments as a top priority, the Participants support the conclusion of an ambitious and comprehensive China-EU investment agreement.

II. Cooperation on Connectivity

8. The Participants will work to reinforce a safe and efficient connectivity network on land, at sea and in the air between China and Europe, in conjunction with key transport passages, linkages and projects, and jointly build the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor. This way, the Participants hope to make fresh contribution to Eurasian connectivity.

9. The Participants encourage and support synergies between 16+1 cooperation on connectivity and the EU's existing network priorities and their extension to the Western Balkans.

10. The Participants welcome and appreciate the modernization of the railway line connecting Budapest and Belgrade and will make steady efforts to build the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line, so as to enhance cooperation on regional connectivity. A China-CEEC association on transport and infrastructure cooperation will be established.

11. CEECs are welcome to work with the Chinese side to step up exchanges and cooperation in the logistics sector and enhance railway container traffic between China and Europe. A China-CEEC association on logistics cooperation will be established.

12. The Participants will step up cooperation in infrastructure development, including roads, railways, ports, airports, telecommunications and oil and gas pipeline networks, taking into account existing policy commitments and priorities at the EU level.

13. The Participants will expand exchanges and cooperation in areas related to civil aviation in the context of the European Common Aviation Area, if applicable.

14. Customs clearance facilitation cooperation will be strengthened and information sharing and exchange will be enhanced. More eligible CEECs are encouraged to take part in the China-EU Smart and Secure Trade Lanes Pilot Project and other cooperation projects under the China-EU Strategic Framework for Customs Cooperation.

III. Cooperation on Industrial Capacity and Equipment Manufacturing

15. The Participants will strengthen cooperation on equipment manufacturing, including rail transport equipment, power-generation equipment, construction machinery, ship and ocean engineering equipment, aviation and automobiles, and deepen cooperation on high-quality industrial capacity, including the petrochemical and chemical industries, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, building materials and railways.

16. China and CEECs are encouraged to develop joint nuclear power projects based on the principle of transparency and responsibility.

17. The Participants will strengthen cooperation in hydropower, wind power and other forms of renewable energy.

18. The Participants are encouraged and supported to strengthen cooperation in industrial parks and free economic zones as well as cooperation along the industrial chain.

19. The Participants will actively explore possibilities of cooperation involving a third party and open more channels for cooperation on industrial capacity and equipment manufacturing.

20. The Participants welcome and support the initiative to set up a Center for Dialogue in energy-related projects.

IV. Financial Cooperation

21. The Participants will accelerate their efforts to optimize an investment and financing cooperation framework, innovate financial cooperation models, support cooperation in the real economy and high-quality cooperation programs, in order to provide strong support for 16+1 cooperation.
22. The Participants will explore opportunities to bring into full play the role of the US\$10 billion special credit line, to create a US\$3 billion investment fund and to establish a RMB fund in support of 16+1 cooperation. Stage two of the China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund will be launched.
23. China-CEEC cooperation in currency swaps, local currency settlement and financial regulation are encouraged. The Participants support RMB clearing arrangements in CEECs.
24. Qualified Chinese and CEEC financial institutions are supported to open branches in each other's countries and carry out wide-ranging business cooperation.
25. The Participants will examine and discuss the possibility of establishing a China-CEEC financial company.
26. Cooperation with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Silk Road Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other national, regional and international financial institutions is welcomed and supported. The Participants support synergies between the relevant Chinese initiatives and the Investment Plan for Europe.

V. Agricultural, Forestry and Quality Inspection Cooperation

27. The Participants will work to keep the momentum of fast growth of agricultural and quality inspection cooperation.
28. The Participants will bring into full play the role of the Sofia-based China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation. The China-CEEC Agrottrade and Economic Cooperation Forum will be held alternately in China and one of the CEECs on an annual basis.
29. The Participants encourage and support a joint effort to step up quality inspection and quarantine cooperation based on the principle of mutual benefit and compliance with the relevant regulations and standards, in order to promote fast growth and safe development of trade of agro-products and food between China and CEECs. The Chinese side welcomes the import of CEEC agro-products and food that meet the relevant inspection and quarantine laws and regulations of China and is committed to accelerating the examination of the relevant applications from CEECs. The Participants will strengthen their cooperation on SPS matters, with a view to boosting confidence-building on food safety matters and improving global food safety.
30. The Participants will strengthen cooperation in agro-trade, sustainable agricultural production, deep processing of agro-products, development of rural areas, scientific research and technologies in the agricultural sector, as well as in the farming and animal husbandry industry. The Participants encourage the establishment of agricultural production bases.
31. The Participants support cooperation on irrigation facilities and other agricultural infrastructure, as well as water-saving irrigation techniques and equipment.
32. The Participants will enhance communication on legislation and policies in the field of flood control and water management.

33. The Participants will identify new channels of cooperation and encourage all-round exchanges in the forestry sector. The Participants support the establishment of a 16+1 coordination mechanism for forestry cooperation, and the China-CEEC High-level Meeting on Cooperation in Forestry will be organized alternately in China and one of the CEECs on a regular basis.

VI. Cooperation in Science, Technology, Research, Innovation and Environmental Protection

34. The Participants will strengthen cooperation in science, technology, innovation and environmental protection, and promote sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations.

35. The Participants will continue to organize the China-CEEC Seminar on Innovation, Technology Cooperation and International Technology Transfer and will step up efforts for development and wider application of innovative results and products. The Participants encourage and support the establishment of a virtual 16+1 technology transfer center.

36. The Participants will strengthen cooperation in communications technology and its application, while ensuring adherence to globally recognized international standards in this sector. The Participants will discuss the possibility of establishing a cooperation mechanism on communications.

37. The Participants will encourage the implementation of China-CEEC joint research projects and promote the cooperation of companies in science and technology parks.

38. The Participants welcome and support cooperation on the Internet of Things, big data and next-generation Internet. While doing so, the Participants will take into account the cooperation already existing between the EU as a whole and China in the cyberspace.

39. The Participants will enhance cooperation in shale gas, where allowed, as well as geology, mining, spatial planning and urbanization in a sustainable way, reducing the environmental and climate impact of these activities.

40. The Participants will increase practical cooperation in the energy-saving and environment-friendly sectors and explore the possibility of exchanges and cooperation on energy-saving and environmental policy dialogue, nature and biodiversity protection and tackling climate change while also promoting public awareness and participation.

VII. Cultural, Educational, Youth, Sport and Tourism Cooperation

41. People-to-people contacts between China and CEECs will be enhanced and further facilitation of movement of people both ways will be encouraged.

42. The ways in which 16+1 people-to-people and cultural exchanges are conducted will be gradually improved, with a view to increasing and enhancing such exchanges. The Guidelines for the Development of Cultural Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries will be implemented.

43. The China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Forum at the ministerial level and the China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks will be organized on a regular basis alternately in China and one of the CEECs. The China-CEEC Cultural Season will be organized. Exchange of visits of Chinese and CEEC journalists will be

organized on a regular basis. The Participants will favorably consider the possibility of establishing a 16+1 center for cultural cooperation.

44. The Participants will organize the China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue alternately in China and one of the CEECs on a regular basis and support the functioning of the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium. China-CEEC exchanges of students will be expanded. The Participants will step up cooperation on mutual recognition of academic degrees, credentials and credit, joint research and country- and region-specific research. The teaching and learning of Mandarin in CEECs will be encouraged and the teaching and learning of the languages of CEECs will be strengthened in China.

45. The Participants support the establishment of a China-CEEC exchanges and cooperation center for think tanks and attach importance to the role of the Research Fund on Relations between China and CEECs in facilitating and guiding the relevant research programs. The Participants encourage and support exchanges and contacts between the Chinese side and CEEC sinologists.

46. The China-CEEC High-Level Conference on Tourism Cooperation will be held on a regular basis. The Participants will support the Budapest-based China-CEEC Association of Tourism Promotion Agencies and Businesses in playing a bigger role.

47. The China-CEEC Young Political Leaders' Forum will be held once every two years.

48. The Participants welcome exchanges and cooperation in the field of sports.

49. The Participants welcome exchanges and cooperation in the field of press and publication.

VIII. Health Cooperation

50. The China-CEEC Health Ministers' Forum will be held on a regular basis. The Participants will work for the establishment of a China-CEEC association on the promotion of health cooperation.

51. Joint research on the healthcare system will be conducted and workshops will be organized on a regular basis. Exchanges of health professionals and workers will be expanded.

52. Taking into account the healthcare system diversity, national specificities and legal framework, the Participants will encourage the establishment of a China-CEEC cooperation network for public hospitals and a China-CEEC alliance for cooperation among public health institutes.

53. The Participants support strengthened cooperation in traditional medicine and enhanced understanding and knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in CEECs. The Chinese side is ready to carry out TCM cooperation with interested CEECs with mutual recognition of relevant legal framework and traditions.

IX. Cooperation at the Local Level

54. The Participants welcome and support their provinces, regions, counties and municipalities in taking a full part in the exchanges and cooperation programs under the framework of 16+1 cooperation, with a view to boosting local development.

55. China and CEECs will take turns to host China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting once every two years.

56. The Participants will redouble their efforts to develop the Prague-based China-CEEC Association of Provincial Governors and encourage and support more CEEC provinces, regions, counties and municipalities to join the Association.

57. The Participants support the twinning of their provinces, regions, counties and municipalities.

58. The Participants encourage and support exchanges and cooperation between mayors of Chinese and CEEC capital cities.