



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Beijing, 21 November 2013
EUCO 241/13

PRESSE 495
PR PCE 216

**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
following the 16th EU-China summit**

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to Prime Minister Li for his hospitality and warm welcome. It is a pleasure to be back in Beijing. It is the first time since he took the reins of the State Council. This year we have an additional reason for celebration, as the summit marked the 10th anniversary of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Ahead of this summit we had very good talks with President Xi.

Over the last decade, our partnership has become increasingly rich and multi-dimensional. We started from a largely trade-driven relationship, but we engage now in a wide spectrum of high level and sectorial dialogues, including the Strategic Dialogue, the Economic and Trade Dialogue and the People-to-People Dialogue, which are the "three pillars" of our relationship. The EU-China Urbanisation Partnership, launched just a year ago, has already become a flagship initiative. 2000 experts have been participating in the Forum today.

Our summit today has been an important building block in the EU-China relationship. We have agreed that we will enhance our Strategic Partnership pursuing peace, prosperity and sustainable development for our two sides and for the world at large. We have set out our mid-to-long term ambitions in the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda which we have agreed at this summit. We are looking forward to its implementation and to reviewing it during future summit meetings.

P R E S S

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We have naturally taken the opportunity of the summit to discuss the recent measures we have each taken to place our economies on sounder footings. I explained to the Prime Ministers our economic strategy in the eurozone and in the Union and how this approach is producing results. The existential threat to the eurozone is behind us. Growth and jobs will have positive figures in almost all countries in 2014 and 2015. We are deepening our EMU and bringing the banking union to completion in 2014. A lot of work is to be done but our efforts are paying off.

Green growth and innovation are at the centre of both our internal strategies, the EU 2020 Strategy and in the Chinese 12th Five-Year Plan and the decisions made by the Third Plenum. We have therefore agreed that green growth should become a key area of strategic and practical bilateral cooperation, and we have also launched, at the side of the summit, a new High Level Dialogue on Innovation Cooperation.

Trade and investment issues remain high on our agenda. We have made a substantial step forward today by launching negotiations on an investment agreement, covering both investment protection and market access. This will be the first stand-alone investment agreement since the new competencies were attributed to the Union. We also continued our discussion on how to promote and rebalance our trade relations further. There is much work to do, not least in making our systems work better together.

A level playing field, transparency, and confidence in the rule of law are essential on both sides for business to thrive. In this regard we recalled our interest in starting a new bilateral dialogue on the rule of law. We will be attending the 8th EU-China Business summit this afternoon to listen to the messages from and express our support to those on whose performance our economic future development rests.

A word on human rights. The protection of human rights and fundamental freedom is at the core of the existence of the EU itself and constitutes an important part of our exchange with all our partners. There is no doubt that through lifting millions of people from poverty China has made key contributions in this field. We also took good note of the decisions taken in the Third Plenum which we consider as an important progress in the field of the human rights.

We discussed today questions related to the protection of minorities and freedom of expression especially on defenders of human rights and I expressed our concerns. I expressed also our wish to work with China to improve our bilateral human rights dialogue and welcomed the visit to China of the EUSR for Human Rights, Mr Lambrinidis.

Among other foreign and security issues, I will share with Prime Minister Li our views on the situation in Syria and how this conflict is endangering peace and stability in the Middle East and has turned into a humanitarian tragedy. The EU is working hard to launch a negotiation process that will help in bringing a political solution. There is no military solution for this conflict. At the same time, through its humanitarian efforts (2 billion euro since 2011), it seeks to alleviate the living condition of millions of displaced and refugees that are seeing their lives shattered. Stopping violence is a priority. The success in addressing the destruction of chemical weapons has shown the effectiveness of UN Security Council action when it acts united. China from her position as a permanent member, has a key role to play in forging such agreements.

China is already working very closely with the EU in addressing the Iranian nuclear issue. A positive outcome of these negotiations under the leadership of High Representative Ahston will have a very beneficial input on overall security in the Middle East.

I hope I will also be able to share our views on the situation in North Africa, Mali and in the Sahel. Restoring stability there, is key to fight against organised crime and terrorism. It is also essential to alleviate poverty of millions of women and children in the region. Indeed development and security are intrinsically linked. Both the EU and China have important relations with African nations.

The EU is also the largest provider in the world of humanitarian aid and development assistance and we have discussed today with Premier Li how to take a more active role together in securing international development through the establishment of a new dialogue between us. In general, disputes wherever in the world have to be settled via dialogue and negotiations. Our world has become indeed closely intertwined.

We have also exchanged views regarding Asian regional security. The EU has an important stake in the security of the Asia-Pacific region where any disruption would impact directly on our security and prosperity. Like China, the EU strongly supports ASEAN's integration and ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture. We want a strong, united and self-confident ASEAN. But we also believe that the regional security architecture needs to be consolidated. We attach great importance to the safety of maritime routes in Asia and Africa, for the world economy and the world peace and security.

Let me conclude thanking Prime Minister Li again for his hospitality and for the candid and useful exchanges we are having. I can confidently say that our relations have further progressed.
