

The Belgrade Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries

2014/12/17

On 16 December 2014, the 3rd Meeting of Heads of Government of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Belgrade, Serbia. Premier Li Keqiang of the People's Republic of China, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic of the Republic of Serbia, Prime Minister Edi Rama of the Republic of Albania, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Vjekoslav Bevanda of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka of the Czech Republic, Prime Minister Taavi Roivas of the Republic of Estonia, Prime Minister Orban Viktor of Hungary, Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma of the Republic of Latvia, Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevicius of the Republic of Lithuania, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of the Republic of Macedonia, Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic of Montenegro, Prime Minister Victor Ponta of Romania, Prime Minister Robert Fico of the Slovak Republic, Prime Minister Miro Cerar of the Republic of Slovenia, Deputy Prime Minister Rumiana Bachvarova of the Republic of Bulgaria, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Vesna Pusic of the Republic of Croatia, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Tomasz Siemoniak of the Republic of Poland, attended the meeting. They expressed appreciation and gratitude to Serbia for the efforts it had made as the host country to ensure the success of the meeting. EU representatives were present at the meeting.

Participants at the meeting (hereinafter referred to as "the participants") commended the progress made in cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries (hereinafter referred to as "CEEC" or "CEECs"), in particular in the implementation of the *Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries* (see Annex), and recognized that China-CEEC cooperation has provided new driving force to China-CEEC traditional friendship, built a new platform for mutually beneficial cooperation and served as a new engine for deepening China-Europe relations for mutual benefit and win-win cooperation.

The participants reiterated that China-CEEC cooperation is in line with China-EU relations and reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their partnership for peace, growth, reform and civilization based on the principles of equality, respect and trust, thus contributing as appropriate to the implementation of the *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation*.

The participants indicated that as their cooperation shows greater vitality and stronger appeal, China and CEECs are ready to make continuous efforts to bring it to a new level by acting on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, with a view to benefiting their countries and peoples, achieving common development and prosperity, and promoting peace and stability.

To this end, the participants jointly formulated and issued, on the theme of "New Driving Force, New Platform and New Engine", the *Belgrade Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries*, reaffirming their readiness to expand cooperation in accordance with their respective laws and regulations, as well as in the case of EU member states, the EU legislation, regulations and policies stemming from their membership.

1. Support China in hosting the 4th China-CEEC Meeting of Heads of Government in 2015.

2. Acknowledging the *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation* as the guiding document for China-EU relations, the participants support the efforts to start formulating a medium-term agenda for cooperation between China and interested Central and Eastern European Countries as appropriate in 2015.

3. Enhance cooperation on connectivity

(1) Taking note of the agreed EU regulations, guidelines, policies and processes in connectivity and the agreed regulations, guidelines, policies and processes of other regions, participants welcome and support exploring possibilities of China-CEEC cooperation in this field.

(2) The participants welcome the signing of cooperation agreements on the railway connecting Belgrade and Budapest between China, Hungary and Serbia, and hope that the relevant parties would continue to create a favorable environment for the cooperation on the project through joint efforts.

(3) Continue to improve the China-Europe international railway container traffic, making it a priority in deepening mutually-beneficial cooperation between China and Europe and improving connectivity and market-access between Asia and Europe. Encourage relevant countries to facilitate customs clearance, create new logistics routes and hubs and encourage the participation of businesses based on their own advantages.

(4) Strengthen cooperation in infrastructure development including road, railway, port and airport under the principle of mutual benefit, and actively discuss the cooperation on building regional transport networks.

(5) Invite more CEECs to take part in the China-EU Smart and Secure Trade Lanes (SSTL) Pilot Project. Actively discuss the inclusion of land, air and other means of transportation into SSTL cooperation.

(6) Welcome Serbia in leading the efforts to establish a China-CEEC association on transport and infrastructure cooperation, and welcome the participation of relevant Chinese and CEEC institutions, businesses and organizations on a voluntary basis.

(7) Support the functioning of existing direct flights between China and CEECs, the opening of new routes at an early date, and the exchanges and cooperation in fields related to civil aviation.

(8) Support the Riga High Level Conference on Transport, Logistics and Trade Routes in 2015.

(9) Support the establishment of a China-CEEC association on logistics cooperation at an appropriate time.

(10) Welcome heads of CEEC customs authorities to China for relevant forums in 2015.

4. Promote economic cooperation, trade and investment

(1) Firmly oppose protectionism in all its forms and manifestations. Work to increase mutual investment, elevate the scale and level of economic cooperation and trade, and create conditions for the sustained and steady growth of trade.

(2) Welcome and support the establishment of the executive body of the China-CEEC Business Council in Warsaw, Poland, and invite relevant Chinese and CEEC business associations, organizations and businesses to join on a voluntary basis.

(3) Welcome the establishment of the Secretariat of the China-CEEC Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism in Beijing, China, and Warsaw, Poland, and support its active role in promoting information sharing on investment and increasing mutual investment between China and CEECs.

(4) Hold the China-CEEC Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation once every two years. Organize a China-CEEC investment and trade fair during the China International Consumer Goods Fair in Ningbo, China, in 2015.

(5) The Chinese side welcomes CEEC businesses to continue to participate in the China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair and other fairs held in Hebei Province and other Chinese localities. The CEECs welcome Chinese businesses to participate in trade fairs and expos in their countries.

(6) Encourage Chinese and CEEC businesses to discuss the possibilities and opportunities of using the convenient geographic locations and favorable investment environment of China and CEECs to jointly explore third markets.

(7) Encourage the participants to develop agricultural trade when supplies are ensured and in line with inspection and quarantine standards and requirements, and step up cooperation on animal husbandry, including breeding, farming, processing and trade.

(8) Welcome and support Bulgaria in leading the efforts to establish a China-CEEC association on promoting agricultural cooperation and invite relevant Chinese and CEEC institutions, businesses and organizations to join on a voluntary basis, noting that the association will be officially launched in Sofia in the first half of 2015.

(9) Hold the 10th China-CEEC Agrottrade and Economic Cooperation Forum in Hungary in 2015.

(10) Hold CEEC-China Forum during European Economic Congress in Katowice, Poland in 2015.

5. Expand financial cooperation

(1) Encourage Chinese and CEEC financial institutions to continue to engage in cooperation in flexible and diverse forms, explore creative models of financial cooperation, and improve financing conditions for businesses. Bring into full play the role of the US\$10 billion special credit line and other financing tools in promoting China-CEEC economic cooperation and trade.

(2) Commend the positive progress of the China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund (stage one) and the contribution by Hungary. Support the launch of stage two of the Fund and encourage more financial institutions and businesses to contribute to the Fund and conduct investment cooperation.

(3) Encourage and support qualified and interested Chinese and CEEC financial institutions to establish branches, develop market and expand business in each other's countries in line with the relevant regulatory legislations.

(4) Support the People's Bank of China and CEEC central banks in signing currency swap agreements as they see necessary, and facilitate local currency settlement as one of the effective means to increase trade and investment. Welcome the signing of currency swap agreements between China and Hungary and between China and Albania. Encourage Chinese and CEEC businesses to use RMB as settlement currency in cross-border trade and investment.

(5) Support qualified and interested Chinese and CEEC institutions in investing in each other's inter-bank bond market. Welcome investment by the relevant institutions of Hungary and Lithuania in the Chinese inter-bank bond market.

(6) Encourage Chinese and CEEC banks to develop comprehensive financial cooperation, including information and personnel exchanges and mutual business facilitation and support.

(7) The Chinese side will favorably consider organizing the meeting of the Central Bank Governors' Club of the Central Asia, Black Sea Region and Balkan Countries in China in 2015 and welcomes the participation of countries in the relevant regions.

6. Expand cooperation in science, technology, innovation, environmental protection and energy

(1) Hold the China-CEEC Seminar on Innovation, Technology Cooperation and International Technology Transfer in Slovakia in 2015. Encourage Chinese and CEEC research institutes and businesses to enhance industrial, academic and research cooperation and on international technology transfer.

(2) Continue to support closer cooperation on information and communications technology. Encourage joint research projects between China and CEECs and promote cooperation among companies of science and technology parks.

(3) Step up China-CEEC cooperation and exchanges on protecting forest, wetland and wildlife, and on developing green economy and eco-culture and share experience of forestry development, with a view to increasing mutual understanding and promoting cooperation.

(4) Encourage China and CEECs to develop nuclear energy projects under the principle of transparency and responsibility. Recognize the rights of each country to develop nuclear energy and the importance of properly fulfilling international obligations on nuclear security. Welcome the signing of nuclear energy cooperation documents between China and Romania and between China and the Czech Republic, and the common understanding between China and Hungary on nuclear energy cooperation.

(5) Encourage closer China-CEEC cooperation on the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, geology, mining, shale gas development and spatial planning.

(6) Welcome Romania's initiative of setting up a Center for Dialogue and Cooperation in energy-related projects and encourages representatives of the academia, legal institutions, businesses and governments in China and CEECs, as well as in other countries, to share and pool their expertise with a view to expanding and further developing their endeavors.

7. Deepen people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation at the sub-national level

(1) The Chinese side encourages its performing arts organizations to purchase programs from CEECs and supports Chinese and CEEC cultural and arts organizations, groups, businesses and artists in engaging in all-dimensional, wide-ranging practical cooperation such as training, joint creative work, experience sharing and platform building. The Chinese side is ready to use the opportunity of the Festival of Baltic Culture to gradually improve its model of cultural exchanges with CEECs to expand and enhance such exchanges.

Support China and Poland in co-organizing an expert forum on the protection of Chinese and CEEC cultural heritage to be held in Poland. Welcome Albania's initiative to hold an expert forum in the field of tangible and intangible cultural heritage management and protection.

Invite CEEC artistic directors of international jazz festivals to visit China, hold a China-CEEC summer dance camp in China, and hold Chinese art festival in the three Baltic countries in 2015.

(2) Hold the China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks on a regular basis.

(3) Support the establishment of a China-CEEC think tanks exchange and cooperation center.

(4) The Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries will organize mutual visits by 50 Chinese journalists and 50 CEEC journalists in 2015.

(5) Hold the 2nd China-CEEC Young Political Leaders' Forum in China in 2015.

(6) Hold the 2nd China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Forum in 2015 and hold a China-CEEC dance evening gala concurrently.

(7) Welcome and support the establishment of China-CEEC Association of Tourism Promotion Agencies and Businesses in Hungary. The Association will organize promotion events, open a bilingual (Mandarin and English) website on China-CEEC tourism cooperation and develop more quality travel routes catered to the needs of Chinese and CEEC tourists.

(8) Designate 2015 as Year of Promotion of China-CEEC Tourism Cooperation. Organize under this framework the 2nd China-CEEC High Level Conference on Tourism Cooperation in Slovenia, a promotion event of Chinese tourism products, trips to CEECs by 1,000 Chinese travellers, a "China tourism day" event and other events, and build platforms for exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and CEEC tourism sectors. Invite media organizations and tourism businesses from both China and CEECs to look at each other's tourism products and routes and organize promotion events. The Chinese side will continue to invite heads of CEEC tourism authorities to participate in the China International Travel Mart in Kunming, Yunnan Province, in October 2015.

(9) Hold the 3rd China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue in one of the CEECs in 2015.

Welcome Sofia University (Bulgaria) in its capacity as the first rotating coordination center on the European side for China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium and support the Consortium in playing an important role in promoting China-CEEC educational exchanges and cooperation.

(10) Support China-CEEC cooperation in translation and publication of each other's literary works. The Chinese side welcomes CEECs to serve as the Country of Honor as a group at the Beijing International Book Fair in 2016.

(11) Organize a Romanian film festival in China in 2015; the Chinese side will organize a China-CEEC high-level radio and television seminar; China and the Czech Republic will jointly produce a cartoon entitled *Panda and Mole*.

(12) China and CEECs are ready to make more contribution to facilitating mobility of people.

(13) Support Chinese and CEEC localities in taking an active part in exchanges and cooperation in all fields under the China-CEEC cooperation framework, properly run the China-CEEC Association of Governors of Provinces and Regions and make it the most important platform for China-CEEC sub-national cooperation. Welcome the inclusion of sub-national cooperation as an important agenda item of the China Investment Forum.

(14) The 3rd China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting will be held in Hebei Province, China, in 2016.

(15) Strengthen information sharing and exchanges under the China-CEEC cooperation framework.

8. Support the convocation of the 1st China-CEEC health ministers' meeting in the Czech Republic in 2015.

The Chinese side will work with interested CEECs to select proper locations to set up TCM centers. The Chinese side commends the efforts of the Czech Republic to cover TCM under its national health insurance system.

9. The Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries will organize a trip to China for senior CEEC officials in 2015.

Annex:

Implementation of the Measures of the Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries

1. Since December 2013, citizens of all the 16 CEECs are entitled to 72-hour visa-free transit in ports including Beijing and Shanghai.

2. In December 2013, the 1st China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks was held in Beijing, China.

3. In April 2014, a delegation of CEEC journalists visited China.

4. In May 2014, the 1st China-CEEC Seminar on Innovation, Technology Cooperation and International Technology Transfer was held in Shanghai, China.

5. In May 2014, the inaugural conference of the China-CEEC Association of Tourism Promotion Agencies and Businesses was held in Budapest, Hungary.

6. In June 2014, the 1st meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia joint working group on transport infrastructure cooperation was held in Beijing, China.

7. In June 2014, the China-CEEC Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Ningbo, China.
8. In June 2014, the Central and Eastern European Countries' Products Fair (CEEC Fair) was held in Ningbo, China.
9. In June 2014, the High Level Conference on Transport, Logistics and Trade Routes: Connecting Asia with Europe was held in Riga, Latvia.
10. In August 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
11. In August 2014, the China Investment Forum was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.
12. In August 2014, the Memorandum of Understanding on Promotion of the Establishment of the Association of Governors of Provinces of China and Representatives of Regions of Central and Eastern European Countries was signed in Prague, the Czech Republic.
13. In September 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks was held in Bled, Slovenia.
14. In September 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue was held in Tianjin, China.
15. In September 2014, the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium was established in Tianjin, China. Sofia University (Bulgaria) was elected as its first rotating coordination center on the European side.
16. In September 2014, a China-CEEC symposium on investment promotion was held in Xiamen, China.
17. In September 2014, the establishment of China-CEEC Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism was announced in Xiamen, China.
18. In September 2014, a China-CEEC investment promotion event was held in Xiamen, China.
19. In October 2014, a promotion event dedicated to CEECs was held in Guangzhou, China, during the 11th China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair.
20. In October 2014, the China-CEEC Agrottrade and Economic Cooperation Forum was held in Bucharest, Romania.
21. In October 2014, agreement was reached on Bulgaria leading the efforts to establish a China-CEEC association on promoting agricultural cooperation.

22. In October 2014, artistic directors of international dance festivals from the CEECs visited China.
23. In October 2014, an event dedicated to China-CEEC cooperation in environmental technologies was held in Poznan, Poland, during the PoLEko fairs.
24. In November 2014, the 2nd Meeting for the Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism of China and CEECs was held in Warsaw, Poland.
25. In November 2014, a promotion event of Chinese and CEEC tourism products was held at the China International Travel Mart in Shanghai, China.
26. From November to December 2014, delegations of Chinese journalists visited CEECs.
27. In December 2014, the 3rd China-CEEC Meeting of Heads of Government was held in Belgrade, Serbia.
28. The China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund (stage one) was officially launched and successfully invested in a number of projects.
29. China signed currency swap agreements with Hungary and Albania.
30. Relevant institutions of Hungary and Lithuania invested in the Chinese inter-bank bond market.
31. China signed with Romania and the Czech Republic cooperation documents on peaceful use of nuclear energy, and reached common understanding with Hungary on nuclear energy cooperation.
32. China signed cooperation agreements on quality inspection with Hungary, Latvia, Serbia and Macedonia.