

10 years since its creation, the EU-China Civil Society Round Table discusses innovation, trade and investment, and social and labour rights

The EU-China [Round Table's fifteenth meeting](#) took place in Beijing from 28 to 30 June 2017, marking 10 years since it was first set up. The theme of the 2-day meeting of delegations from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the China Economic and Social Council (CESC) was "Partnership for Growth, Civilization of mutual benefit". The main topics of debate were innovation as a driver for economic vitality, trade, investment and social and labour rights, summed up in [a joint statement](#). In addition, both delegations met with Mr Yu Zhengsheng, Member of the Politburo Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and Chairman of the CPPCC.

On behalf of the Chinese government, Mr Yu acknowledged the need for China to tackle the inequalities created as a result of globalisation, and reaffirmed their will to cooperate with the EU in an open, sustainable and rules-based multilateral environment.

Mr **Georges Dassis**, EESC President, reaffirmed that the EU needs China and China needs the EU, and that both the EESC and the China ESC can play a role, as civil society, in making this relation become fully participative.

Stefano Palmieri, EESC Member and rapporteur on social and labour rights said that "The EU and China need to take decisive action to reaffirm the importance of decent jobs and working conditions on the basis of agreed international labour conventions".

"The implementation of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative should contribute to the realization of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, and its Sustainable Development Goals", said **Jonathan Peel**, EESC Member and rapporteur on Trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation, "and should be aligned to the European TEN-T and under the Connectivity Platform".

EESC Member **Antonio Longo** presented his report on Innovation-driven development and economic vitality, focusing on the need for reciprocal conditions for R&I cooperation, and for mutual access to EU and China research programmes for students and researchers.

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The EU-China Civil Society Round Table was established in 2007 following a decision taken by the 9th EU-China Summit in Helsinki. The delegations from the EESC and its Chinese counterpart, the China Economic and Social Council, meet regularly to discuss topics relating to economic and social issues

relevant to both parties. By elaborating reports, discussing them and exchanging ideas, the representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee and the China Economic and Social Council contribute to the development of the overall EU-China relationship, from a civil society perspective.