

Guest Editorial

China-EU Partnership Reinforces Asia-Europe Cooperation

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Leaders from more than fifty countries attended the 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Milan this October. Since the first such summit took place 18 years ago, ASEM has developed into the most important inter-regional forum for intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation. It has also become a key platform for the implementation of the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

China and the EU are two major players on the global scene, partners in promoting peace and security, major and dynamic markets promoting mutual development, and centres of culture and knowledge driving human progress. Our deepening relations across the political, economic and social spheres not only benefit our peoples, but also further help build bridges between our regions. Stronger relations between China and the EU contribute to broader mutual understanding and cooperation between Asia and Europe, as well as furthering peace, stability and prosperity across the Eurasian continent.

In the political arena, China and the EU have deepened communication and understanding through annual bilateral summits and other mechanisms such as the high-level strategic dialogue. These meetings provide guidance for bilateral relations, and have strengthened coordination in inter-regional and global governance fora including ASEM. During his visit to Brussels in spring this year, President Xi Jinping defined China-EU relations as a partnership for peace, growth, reform and civilization, giving new meaning and context to our joint work in ASEM.

On the economic front, China and the EU have coordinated their macro-economic policies and regularly explore the potential for future cooperation through high-level economic and trade dialogues. Already we benefit from close cooperation in the areas of trade and economy, investment, finance, infrastructure, recycling, energy efficiency and environmental protection, technological innovation, urbanization, aerospace and aviation. This cooperation brings concrete benefits to our people and has advanced regional economic

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integration. It has also brought the economic ties between the world's most economically dynamic region and its most developed ever closer.

Third, China and the EU have increased cultural and educational exchanges through various people-to-people dialogue mechanisms. This area of cooperation has improved relations between Asia and Europe on the basis of respect for cultural diversity and of reciprocity, which are essential in view of the differences in history, culture, stages of development and social systems amongst the ASEM members.

If the China-EU partnership has been beneficial for ASEM, the Asia-Europe Meeting has also created opportunities for the deepening of our bilateral relations. The key theme of this year's ASEM summit was 'Responsible partnership for Growth and Security'. The agenda echoes many aspects of the current 'EU-China 2020 Strategy Agenda for Cooperation', and the outcome will feed into China-EU bilateral cooperation.

Relations between Asia and Europe, as between China and the EU, are not without their challenges. Strengthening mutual trust on strategic issues, increasing consensus, deepening cooperation and seeking mutual development are however more important today than ever. ASEM is a critical forum for this process, helping identify joint policy focus, strengthen policy action coordination, discover potential for cooperation, and reinvigorate cooperation especially in the areas of trade, investment and connectivity. In doing this, ASEM will provide further momentum for cooperation between the countries of Asia and Europe and contribute as equal partners to peace and prosperity across our continent.

The 10th ASEM Summit successfully advanced this cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect, negotiated consensus and non-interference of each other's internal affairs. I have full confidence that China-EU cooperation and Asia-Europe cooperation will continue to complement each other for the mutual benefit of our countries and peoples.