

Beijing, 22 November 2013

## Press release

### European and Chinese Mayors discuss sustainable urbanisation in Beijing

**A staggering 40 European mayors met their Chinese counterparts yesterday in Beijing at the EU-China Urbanisation Forum. The objective of the event was twofold: increasing cooperation between European and Chinese cities when it comes to sustainable urbanisation and signing cooperation agreements to further improve knowledge-exchange between cities.**

In total some 800 stakeholders from European and Chinese cities discussed sustainable urbanisation yesterday in Beijing. A large delegation of 40 European mayors travelled to China, among which the Covenant of Mayors signatory cities of Bristol (UK), Tampere (Finland), Milan (Italy), Gothenburg (Sweden), Ghent (Belgium), Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and San Sebastian (Spain). They were welcomed by some 40 Chinese mayors, including the leaders of the Chinese mega-cities of Chengdu, Guangzhou, Qingdao, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Main discussion points included sustainable mobility, smart cities, urban innovation, culture heritage and urban planning with the objective of exchanging best-practices that can be replicated both in China and Europe.

In his keynote address, European Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger noted that "*Mayors hold the solution to a low-carbon economy*", while his counterpart for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn added that European and Chinese cities were "*laboratories for our ever more urbanized world*".

Likewise, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso insisted on the key role played by European cities in this partnership and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy said "*cities have been engines of change throughout history*".

Invited as Executive Director of the association leading the Covenant of Mayors Office, Energy Cities, Gérard Magnin portrayed the successful Covenant of Mayors initiative as an "*opera in 5 acts*", starting with the launch of the EU climate and energy package in 2008 (1), promoting multi-level (2), multi-actor (3), multi-sector (4) cooperation and culminating with experience-sharing beyond European borders (5). "*Our stories are different, our situation is different, the organization of our country is different. But we live on the*



*same planet and belong to the same human race.” Commenting on the parallel unfolding of the COP19 conference he concluded: “the cities of our two regions and beyond all continents must join forces and strengthen their cooperation”.*

Under the patronage of Premier Li Keqiang and President José Manuel Barroso, the Forum is co-organized by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Energy and the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission. This partnership is a milestone in the strategic relations between China and the European Union, as it marks the first time ever that European and Chinese cities/regions share best practices in such an important field of action.

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The Covenant of Mayors is the mainstream European movement involving local authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency in their territories. To date more than 5,000 cities and regions have committed to meet the European Union 20% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction objective by 2020. Since February 2012 the Covenant of Mayors is the pivotal European platform for the EU-China urbanisation partnership, acting as counterpart of the Chinese Association of Mayors.

**More information:** [www.eumayors.eu/](http://www.eumayors.eu/)

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