

Mayors from China and EU discuss new approach to EU-China cooperation on climate change

Dialogue between European and Chinese cities highlights opportunities for cities to address the climate crisis and accelerate a green and inclusive recovery from COVID-19.

*The mayors of Heidelberg and the vice mayors of Guangzhou, Lisbon and Nanjing were joined by **Frans Timmermans**, European Commission Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal and Co-chair, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, **Zhang Jian**, Executive Vice Dean, Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University, and C40 Chair - **Eric Garcetti**.*

24 March 2021 - European and Chinese city leaders discussed today their shared commitment to address the climate crisis and COVID19 recovery, in bilateral EU-China dialogue. This meeting is an attempt between European and Chinese city leaders to explore a local approach to the renewed sino-european bilateral cooperation since the EU and China announced their latest climate targets.

The mayors discussed mutual objectives and challenges for rebuilding cities and economies in a way that improves public health, creates jobs, reduces inequality and accelerates the delivery of ambitious climate action in line with the EU Green Deal and China's 14th Five Year Plan. They shared experiences and ideas to accelerate building renovation programmes, champion clean construction, use innovation and technology to improve energy efficiency as well as the future of urban mobility to make city streets greener, healthier and more people-friendly.

The mayors discussed how cities are on the frontline of the climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic. They committed to mutual efforts to ensure a green and inclusive recovery and to deliver their 2030 and net-zero emission targets in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The dialogue was organised by C40 Cities and the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development of Tsinghua University with support from the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. The mayoral session was followed by two technical knowledge sharing discussions, including representatives of Barcelona, Beijing, Copenhagen, Hangzhou, Heidelberg, Nanjin, Rotterdam, Shanghai, Qingdao, focused on policy areas critical to a green and inclusive recovery: building efficiency and green transport.

Quotes

“Cities are at the forefront of climate action. Mayors are the level of government closest to citizens and no matter where they are, they face similar questions. So we hope to help more cities in China and Europe work together.” - **Frans Timmermans**, *European Commission Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal and Co-chair, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy*

"Heidelberg has cooperated with Chinese cities for many years, including on economic and scientific policies with our partner city Hangzhou, on waste management and energy efficiency with Urumqi, on passive-house districts with Gaobeidian - who even named theirs after Heidelberg's Bahnstadt - and more recently, Nanjing helped provide 15,000 masks to our healthcare institutions. Our experience is that both sides have a lot to learn from one another and that Sino-German relations - including those on which this meeting is based - form an excellent starting point to ensure a green and inclusive recovery." - **Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner**, *Lord Mayor of Heidelberg*

Notes for Editors:

Examples of climate action from participating cities (more can be made available):

BUILDINGS SECTOR

Heidelberg: [Heidelberg's Bahnstadt](#) is the size of the city's entire Old Town, spanning just over a square kilometre (100ha). A former brownfield site, it is now in its final phase of construction. It is **Heidelberg's first passive-house district and one of the largest passive-house neighbourhoods in the world**. The development is a testing ground for the most ambitious initiatives of Heidelberg's Masterplan 100% Klimaschutz (100% Climate Protection Masterplan), which aims to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 95% by 2050. Bahnstadt will be completed in 2022 and has created 6,000 jobs since work began in 2010.

Copenhagen - Beijing cooperation on district heating: the Cities of Copenhagen and Beijing have signed a cooperation partnership, supported by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to conduct research projects and pilot studies relating to the use of district heating, and the interaction and control of these systems in buildings. The objective is to facilitate knowledge transfer and solutions testing in Beijing and for further Chinese cities to join the project as observers (C40 has 13 member cities in China), potentially helping to scale the impact out across the cold winter area of North China where district heating is common in urban areas with the potential of improving heating in homes of millions of people.

Shanghai Changning: Changning District in Shanghai explored and practiced the low-carbon path of existing high-density urban areas by implementing large-scale energy-efficient renovation of existing commercial and public buildings. As of the end of 2020, Changning District has completed the comprehensive energy-efficient renovation of existing commercial and public buildings with a construction area of 1,198,800 square meters, and achieved an annual energy saving of 12,676 tons of standard coal. In 2018, Changning District joined the "China Better Building Challenge" programme. At present, 13 large

commercial and public buildings have participated in the challenge, which has achieved remarkable results. In addition, Changning District is also the first region in China to implement a building energy benchmarking policy. The successful practices of Changning District in improving the energy efficiency of existing commercial and public buildings provides an excellent demonstration case for achieving the 2030 carbon peak goal of high-density urban areas at home and abroad.

Qingdao: In Qingdao, a [retrofit incentive scheme](#) is spurring investment in the renovation of the city’s housing stock. More than 50 million m² of old residential buildings is in need of efficiency upgrades to meet targets under the city’s Low-Carbon Development Plan. Already, almost half of the required retrofits completed – over 22 million m² – avoiding an estimated 298,000 tonnes of carbon emissions as well as reducing air pollutants, improving the air quality for Qingdao’s residents.

TRANSPORT SECTOR

Electric buses: Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Guangzhou and Nanjing are among a cohort of [35 cities](#) committed to procuring only electric buses by 2025 - indeed they [have already set targets to fully transition their fleets to electric by 2030](#) or sooner, and have started the procurement and operation of e-buses. The Chinese cities of [Shenzhen](#), Guangzhou and Dalian have already completed the transition to fully electric, with fleets of over 16,000, 11,000 and 4,600 buses respectively.

Barcelona: Mayor Colau has begun implementing an innovative plan based on the city’s historic street layout, with the goal of reducing car and moped use by 21%. Her [‘Superblock’](#) strategy involves pedestrianising groups of three-by-three city blocks, limiting motorised access to single-lane streets around their perimeters.

Nanjing: Nanjing is building an urban public transit network, which integrates rail transit, public transit and slow transit. First, the hierarchy of rail transit functions will be optimized, forming a rail transit network, which is fast, well-spaced and integrated at different levels. It consists of urban express lines, trunk lines and rail transit with medium freight volume. In terms of public transit, we will increase trip modes such as community buses and customized buses so that it can be easier to transfer to rail transit. Finally, we reconstruct old towns and build subways to achieve slow transit. At the same time, we optimize means of transport across streets and rivers and also improve the layout of sharing bicycles. We also encourage citizens to travel in a green way. It requires them to walk when the distance is less than 1 km, to use non-motor vehicles when it is 1-3 km and to take a bus or subway when it is more than 3 km.

GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY

The [“C40 Mayors Agenda for A Green and Just Recovery”](#) details steps to deliver an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including specific measures, already being delivered in many cities in the EU and China to better prepare for future pandemics, address inequalities and keep global heating below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement.



About C40

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities who are working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a **science-based and people-focused approach** to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. Through a Global Green New Deal, mayors are working alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labor, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to go further and faster than ever before. The current Chair of C40 is Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti; and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development of Tsinghua University

Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development (ICCSA) at Tsinghua University was founded in October 2017. Mr. XIE Zhenhua, China's Special Climate Envoy, serves as the inaugural president. ICCSD is committed to building a collaborative platform for strategy and policy research, talent cultivation, and international dialogue. ICCSD has established flagship projects including "Climate Change Global Lecture" and "Friends of the Paris Agreement". It carried out research on 2050 Low-carbon Transition Strategy and Pathway and Synergizing Actions on the Environment and Climate, and has also established the cooperation platforms of Methane Emission Reduction and Nature-based Solution to foster broader collaboration and knowledge sharing. Through integration of domestic and international resources, the Institute has received global recognition in the field of climate change, and has become a respected think tank in the area of climate change and sustainable development.