



# **The Cooperation between China and Central & Eastern European Countries (16+1): 2012-2017**

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## Preface

The 6th Prime Minister Summit of China-CEEC was held in Budapest, Hungary on November 27, 2017, which marks the fifth year of China-CEEC cooperation. It is a Chinese tradition to have a small celebration on the fifth anniversary and a big celebration on the tenth anniversary, and those are good timings to sum up the work has been done. It is also necessary to summarize China-CEEC Cooperation in the latest five years. As the first sub-regional platform under the framework of China-EU cooperation, “16+1 Cooperation” has set an example with great significance. A systematic summary of the “16+1 Cooperation” achievements in the past five years will not only enhance the determination of China-CEEC Cooperation, but also identify the potentials, accumulate and share experience in many areas, and smoothly push forward further cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC).

As early as mid-2017, Huang Ping, the Director General of the Institute of European Studies of CASS and the Secretary General of the China-CEEC Think Tanks Network of CASS proposed the idea of summarizing the achievements of the “16+1 Cooperation” in the past five years into a report. After thoroughly discussion, a few key aspects are included in the report: under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”, how to promote the development of bilateral relations between China and 16 Central Eastern European countries (16 CEE countries), regional cooperation, China-EU cooperation, and the Belt and Road Initiative.

This report summarizes the achievements of the “16+1 Cooperation” in the past five years from the perspective of a think tank. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone and not the Chinese government. The report cannot be perfect even though we are trying to be, and it is open to the valuable comments from experts and scholars.

The report contains five chapters. Chapter I and Chapter V are written by Liu Zuokui; Chapter II is written by Guan Shilin and Zhao Weitao; Ju Weiwei is the author of Chapter III; Liu Zuokui and Ma Junchi are the authors of Chapter IV. The full report is edited by Liu Zuokui, and reviewed by Huang Ping.

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December 7, 2017*

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# **Chapter One “16+1 Cooperation” Improves the Quality and Efficiency of Bilateral Cooperation between China and 16 Central and Eastern European Countries**

In the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, the bilateral cooperation is always the foundation. Without 16 relatively good bilateral relations, the “16+1 Cooperation” framework can’t work well. Meanwhile, the “16+1 Cooperation” framework also offers a platform for developing relations between China and 16 countries, which enables the two sides to regularly exchange cooperation conceptions, projects or issues to which the two sides both pay attention to realize win-win cooperation. Without this platform, it’s hard for the leaders of China and Central and Eastern European countries to meet annually to discuss issues on cooperation. In conclusion, to some extent, “16+1 Cooperation” provides a precious opportunity to promote the development of 16 bilateral relations and plays a role in promoting the improvements and efficiency of bilateral cooperation. Practices have proved that the implementation of the “16+1 Cooperation” has acquired series of achievements in promoting 16 bilateral relations for the latest five years. “16+1 Cooperation” has become the important bond of the Belt and Road Initiative to integrate in the European market, the pilot test of the sub-regional cooperation within China-Europe cooperation and the growth pole of China-EU relations, which has acquired many achievements at early stage in the fields of politics, economics and trade, investment, finance, infrastructure, production capacity, people-to-people exchanges and so on.

## **I The amount of China’s strategic partnership in Central and Eastern Europe has increased substantially and the cooperation level has been upgraded**

Before the establishment of the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, China only established strategic partnership with Serbia and Poland. In the last five years, under the promotion of the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, the network of China’s strategic partnership is more and

more serried in Central and Eastern Europe. China established strategic partnership with Czech (2016), upgraded strategic cooperation level with Poland and Serbia from strategic partnership to comprehensive strategic partnership (2016) and ungraded the friendly cooperative partnership with Hungary to comprehensive strategic partnership (2017). In sum, China now has established four strategic partnerships among 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

At the same time, bilateral relations with countries in Central and Eastern Europe are obviously enhanced.

Firstly, the cooperation with V4 countries maintains good momentum. In the area of economic and trade cooperation with 16 CEECs, the V4 countries account for 70%, and they are the important part of economic and trade cooperation under the “16+1 Cooperation” framework. At present, China’s cooperation with V4 countries still maintains relatively high level. In 2016, Poland got the greatest amount of economic and trade with China, and Czech and Hungary got the second and third rank.

Secondly, the cooperation with countries in the Balkan region is boosted. With Chinese investments and big projects continuing to land in this region, bilateral cooperation is deepened. In 2016, Romania became the biggest investment destination among 16 CEECs from China which reached 0.39 billion USD<sup>1</sup>. China invested about 800 million dollars of concessional loan into Montenegro North-South Highway construction project. It is not only one of the biggest projects introduced by Montenegro which improves the local popularity of China’s equipment manufacturing, but also leaves good image of Chinese people in Montenegro which promotes the stable and good development of bilateral relations. Power generating projects, highway projects and other projects invested by China in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and other Western Balkan countries offer enormous convenience for the daily life of local people, and also win good public praise for China in these countries.

Thirdly, the cooperation with the Baltic Sea Region has been advanced. In the perspective of geographic position and historical development, Baltic States are closely connected with Northern Europe, Western Europe and Russia. Since the establishment of “16+1 Cooperation” framework, the cooperation with Baltic States has been deepened which stimulates Baltic States to seek for more development opportunities from China, especially for playing an important pivot role in the Belt and Road Initiative. Estonia has strong willingness in cooperating with China in the field of e-commerce, Latvia in logistics and infrastructure while Lithuania has strong desires in cooperating with China in the fields of port and industry capacity. They look forward to playing a hinge role in connectivity between Europe and Asia.

## **II Local cooperation between China and countries in the Central and Eastern Europe is vigorously carried out**

Local cooperation is the unique feature and highlight of cooperation between China and

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Commerce, National Bureau of Statistics, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, *2016 Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment*, Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2017.

countries in Central and Eastern Europe and makes up the asymmetry of market size between two sides. Actually, the market sizes of some provinces and cities in China are close to those of some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, their governments are willing to cooperate with China who has much potential, and seek new market opportunity. In recent years, provinces or cities such as Hebei, Chongqing, Chengdu, Suzhou and Ningbo focus on their own features and the opening-up requirements from opposite sides, promote cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe and acquire series of positive achievements which are listed as follows.

Firstly, the amount of our sister cities is increasing. China's local governments have established more and more sister cities with countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the cooperation friendship is firmly enhanced between two sides. By December 7, 2017, China has established 60 pairs of sister city relations with Central and Eastern European countries at the provincial level, and as for the urban level, there are 100 pairs.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, promoted by the bilateral cooperation, more and more direct flights are opened between China and countries in Central and Eastern Europe such as Beijing to Warsaw, Beijing to Budapest, Beijing to Czech, Shanghai to Czech, Chengdu to Czech, Beijing to Belgrade and so on. The increase of direct flights facilitates the economic and trade communication and personnel exchanges between two sides.

Thirdly, many China-Europe Expresses went into services between cities in China and Central and Eastern Europe such as Suzhou to Warsaw, Yiwu to Riga, Chengdu to Lodz, Changsha to Budapest and so on, and more and more China-Expresses are going through countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Though there exist various problems in the operation of China-Europe Express, but the open of the expresses promotes the economic and trade cooperation between two sides and enhances the connection between various parts of China and Central and Eastern European countries.

Last but not the least, local cooperation has gradually become the driving force to promote the economic and trade communication and people-to-people exchange. For instance, China-CEEC Investment and Trade Expo held by Ningbo for three consecutive years have made great contribution to China-CEEC economic and trade cooperation, Suzhou held the fifth Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries, Chongqing and Hebei held the Local Leaders' Meeting of China and Central and Eastern European Countries, Beijing actively promotes the 16+1 Capital Mayor Summit, and all of these contribute to the local cooperation.

### **III Some CEECs play an increasingly positive role in enhancing “16+1 Cooperation”**

The 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe are China's equal cooperation partners and they have the same importance to China. While there exist differences in geographical

2 “statistics of China International Friendship Cities Association,” <http://www.cifca.org.cn/Web/WordGuanXiBiao.aspx>.

position, natural and human resources, historical traditions, cooperation willingness and so on. Now, Serbia and Hungary have played important roles in promoting the cooperation under the “16+1 Cooperation” framework.

Serbia is the country which has acquired a lot of cooperation achievements among 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe under the “16+1 Cooperation” framework. Many achievements gained by China in Europe are landing in Serbia. For instance, the first bridge constructed by China in Europe is Zemun-Borca Bridge in Serbia, Serbia is the first country in Europe to offer visa-free to China, the first thermal power station which meets European Union’s standards is Kostolac Thermal Power Plant of Serbia constructed by Chinese enterprise, the first production capacity cooperation project is Smederevo Steel Plant invested by HBIS Group which achieved profitability the same year they started operation, and the first high-speed train that is going to be constructed in Europe is Hungary-Serbia Railway.

China’s relation with Hungary develops smoothly among relations with 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. China-Hungary relation has created a lot of “First”: Hungary is the first country in Europe to officially sign the intergovernmental cooperation document on jointly promoting the “Belt and Road” Initiative; Hungary is the first country to set up the “Belt and Road” working group with China; Hungary is the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to establish a Renminbi clearing bank; Hungary is the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to issue bond in yuan; Hungary is the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to set up the official agency of Tourism Authority of China; Hungary is also the first country in Europe to implement bilingual education on mother tongue and Chinese.

#### **IV The gradual construction of specific cooperation platform led by each country enriches cooperation in various professional fields**

Various cooperation platforms put forward by Central and Eastern European countries and China related to various industries and fields have enriched the contents of China-CEEC cooperation, actively promote “16+1 Cooperation” to step deeply in Central and Eastern Europe and achieve all-dimensional, multi-layered and wide-ranging policy communication.

**Table 1 Cooperation mechanisms or platforms constructed or to be constructed under the “16+1 Cooperation” framework**

Mechanism or platform	Secretariat location	Organizer	Progress
China-CEEC Tourism Coordination Center	Hungary	Hungarian National Tourism Agency	Constructed
China-CEEC Consortium Institute of Higher Education	Rotating Presidency	Ministry of Education of each country	Constructed
Contact Mechanism for the Investment Promotion Agencies of China-CEEC	Poland	Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency	Constructed

Continued

Mechanism or platform	Secretariat location	Organizer	Progress
China-CEEC Joint Chamber of Commerce	Poland (executing agency) China (Secretariat)	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade	Constructed
China-CEEC Association of Governors of Provinces and Regions	Czech	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Czech	Constructed
China-CEE Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation	Bulgaria	the Ministers of Agriculture and Food of Bulgaria	Constructed
China-CEEC Technology Transfer Center	Slovakia	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	Constructed
China-CEEC Think Tanks Network	China	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Constructed
China-CEEC Association on Transport and Infrastructure Cooperation	Serbia	Ministry of Communications of Serbia	Constructed
China-CEEC Association on Logistics Cooperation	Latvia	Ministry of Communications of Latvia	Constructed
China-CEEC Association on Forestry Cooperation	Slovenia	Ministry of Agriculture of Slovenia	Constructed
China-CEEC Association on the Promotion of Health Cooperation	China	National Health and Family Planning Commission	constructed
China-CEEC Center for Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects	Romania	To be confirmed	To be constructed
China-CEEC Maritime Secretariat	Poland	Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of Poland	Constructed
China-CEEC Association of Small and Medium Enterprises	Croatia	To be confirmed	To be constructed
China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Center	Macedonia	To be confirmed	To be constructed
China-CEEC Inter-Bank Association	China(Secretariat) Hungary (Coordinating Center)	China Development Bank Hungarian Development Bank	Constructed
China-CEEC Veterinary Science Cooperation Center	Bosnia and Herzegovina	To be continued	To be constructed
China-CEEC Environmental Protection Association	Montenegro	To be continued	To be constructed

(Resources: sorted by the author according to public information available.)

At present, both sides have at least confirmed and prepared to construct about 20 professional coordination mechanisms and platforms in fields including economic and trade, investment, tourism, local cooperation, transportation, logistics, technology cooperation, think tanks and so on. This kind of coordination mechanism or platform is an innovation

in the field of policy communication with the characteristics of pragmatic, flexible and niche targeting. China tries to invite each Central and Eastern European country to take responsibility of coordination role, which can help them actively participant in “16+1 Cooperation”.

## V Summary

Within the framework of “16+1 Cooperation”, the bilateral cooperation is the foundation and “16+1 Cooperation” is the platform. Both dimensions are mutual complementary and interdependent. On one hand, better bilateral country to country’s cooperation is the basic guarantee of the further development of “16+1 Cooperation”. Only the bilateral relation between China and each CEEC has the good foundation, could the “16+1 Cooperation” make further progress. On the other, the gradually developing “16+1 Cooperation” will be the multilateral platform for the better cooperation among China and 16 CEECs. At this platform, 17 countries can consult with each other equally, increase mutual knowledge, promote the synergy one another and seek more cooperation opportunities. “16+1 Cooperation”, starting from scratch and from inauguration to development, not only creates the opportunities for 16 CEECs but also offers more chances to dialogue and exchange with China. The leaders from 17 countries can exchange views to design the further cooperation.

At the bilateral level, a lot of progress has been made in the past five years. The amount of China’s strategic partnership in Central and Eastern Europe has increased and the cooperation level has been upgraded. China’s cooperation with the subregional areas from CEEC has also developed very rapidly. The local cooperation became the new gripper and highlight of the “16+1 Cooperation”. China-CEEC cooperation makes striking achievements in the area of local cooperation of which the China Express and Local Leaders’ meeting are the special driving forces. At the “16+1 Cooperation” platform, the CEECs show their specific features and potentials, and play important roles in some specific area. Let’s just take the example of Hungary and Serbia, a lot of achievements and “first” have been made. At the bilateral level, China and CEEC deeply tapped the cooperation potential and push to build a series of professional cooperation platform.

Looking for the future, the bilateral cooperation under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation” still has huge potential and opportunities and will be one of the major points of growth.

## **Chapter Two “16+1 Cooperation” Promotes Sub-Regional Cooperation between China and Europe**

“16+1 Cooperation” is sub-regional cooperation platform under the overall China-EU cooperation, and a new area for implementing the China-EU partnerships of peace, growth, reform and civilization. Given the orientation of these four partnerships, “16+1 Cooperation” has been carrying out new explorations and practices based on the foundation of China’s previous experience and practice of regional cooperation, which brings China-EU sub-regional cooperation more thorough layout, more diversified form and richer content.

### **I “16+1 Cooperation” actively implements new concepts and thoughts as a forerunner practice of sub-regional cooperation**

Since the financial crisis of 2008, both the international ambient and China’s domestic situation have undergone profound changes. From the perspective of international ambient, the growth of world economy lacks driving force and the global trade grows slowly. In this context, the process of trade liberalization and economic globalization has stepped back. On the one hand, the multilateral trade system is undergoing a thorny process while the trade protectionism is emerging. On the other hand, the world has witnessed an accelerated integration of industry chain and supply chain, with some mid-range and high-end manufacture moving back to developed countries. Even American, the world’s biggest economy, has unveiled the “America First” policy. From the perspective of domestic situation, the cost of production factors rose, the traditional comparative advantage has obviously weakened and the economic growth slowed down. At the meantime, China’s overall national strength and international status continue to improve, and its level of integration to and dependency on the world economy become higher. Therefore, in order to create a better and safer external environment for domestic development, it is urgent for China to readjust its economic structure, change its economic growth mode, and improve its layout of the opening strategy. The “16+1

Cooperation” is China’s new diplomatic practice in the new international and domestic context, which is an important practice of sub-regional cooperation for China to establish a new pattern of its all-round open policy and build a community of shared future for mankind.

Firstly, “16+1 Cooperation” creates a new dimension for China-EU sub-regional cooperation. “16+1 Cooperation” is a new platform for cooperation, as well as a new initiative. The redefinition of the “16+1 Cooperation” to this region is not to create an exclusive identification for the CEEC, but to add another connotation and provide an opportunity for cooperation for them in the international affairs, with no strings attached. “16+1 Cooperation” is an innovation and breakthrough for the sub-regional cooperation, displaying distinct feature of the time and revealing new opportunities for win-win cooperation.

Secondly, “16+1 Cooperation” demonstrates a sincere wish to build a community of shared future for mankind. It is set up in the context of worldwide financial crisis and uncertain economic recovery. Both China and CEEC have an urgent demand for opening new markets and developing new trade partnership. Chinese president Xi Jinping pointed out that, China and EU have become a community of shared future with highly integrated interests at the age of economic globalization. Therefore, “16+1 Cooperation” will be the vital pivot and important breakthrough of the building of the China-EU community of shared future. The China-CEEC cooperation was once the weakest part of China-EU relations in bilateral relations and in economic and trade cooperation. However, through all-round, wide-ranging multi-level and mutually beneficial cooperation, now “16+1 Cooperation” has become an important growth pole for China-EU cooperation, advancing the China-CEEC cooperation to a community of shared future in which both sides together overcome the global economic crisis and achieve common prosperity.

Thirdly, “16+1 Cooperation” sticks to the core idea of win-win cooperation. It always adheres to ideas of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and that explains why the 16 CEEC widely accept and actively join in the “16+1 Cooperation”. In the past five years, “16+1 Cooperation” has made numerous achievements: the connectivity and infrastructure in CEECs are developed rapidly, the economic and trade cooperation between China and CEEC continues to rise compared to the western European countries. Even though, skeptics still doubt the concept of win-win cooperation raised by Chinese side due to the imbalanced economic volume. We shall emphasize that win-win cooperation is neither a zero-sum game nor half to half share. Because of the asymmetry of the economic volume and market size between China and CEEC as well as the dissimilarity and difference within CEEC, it is unrealistic for each country to equally distribute the interests in every projects of the “16+1 Cooperation”. It can be called a win-win cooperation as long as there are no loss on both sides and does not cause any harm to a third party. The major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics adheres to the ethics of legitimate justice and reasonable benefit, advocates pursuing justice and benefits simultaneously and always puts the justice above the benefits. It is possible for China to give up part of the economic interests to promote “16+1 Cooperation”, which is in accordance with the good tradition of Chinese diplomacy and China’s responsibilities and roles as a great power in international

affairs. Since the Belt and Road initiative was proposed by China, the principle of win-win cooperation has further advanced toward the global governance ideas of “wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits”. It means that all the participants not only work together and share the results, but also discuss the rules together and participate jointly, truly realizing the goal of equality and mutual benefit. China welcomes the 16 CEE countries to take part in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and the “16+1 Cooperation” on the basis of these spirits, because it will not only bring common development and prosperity, but also provide “16+1 Cooperation” with a stronger foundation and a broader platform.

Fourthly, “16+1 Cooperation” expands China’s network of global partnerships. It opens up a new way to develop relations with traditional friend countries. For the last five years, China’s relations with Poland and Serbia have been respectively upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership, while the strategic partnership with the Czech Republic and the comprehensive strategic partnership with Hungary were also established. More importantly, the bilateral relations and level of mutual trust between China and CEE countries are greatly enhanced through all kinds of meetings under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”. The partnership advocated by China is characterized by equality, peace and inclusiveness, with no classification of major or subordinate countries, no split of different blocs, no imaginary enemies and no targeting at any third party. So it’s neither reasonable nor necessary for some European think tanks to worry about that China is dividing EU by promoting “16+1 Cooperation”. Although China is the first advocator of the “16+1 Cooperation”, China insists all parties involved are equal and shall discuss and construct together, instead of seeking a higher status than others. At the same time, “16+1 Cooperation”, like the Belt and Road initiative, endows great openness and inclusiveness. They are open to the third party, thus helping China to make numerous new friends. Following the road of peaceful development, China advocates dialogue rather than confrontation and establish partnerships rather than alliances.

Last but not least, China regards the “16+1 Cooperation” as part of and positive complement to the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership from the very beginning, boosting the reciprocal cooperation between China and Europe through enhancing the cooperation between China and the 16 CEE countries.

## **II The “16+1 Cooperation” inherits China’s previous experience in promoting regional cooperation**

China actively participates in regional cooperation, which is an important breakthrough of its opening up strategy. Since China established cooperative relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the 1990s, such cooperation mechanisms have been successfully established with the African Union (AU), the League of Arab States, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), improving China’s layout of regional cooperation and promoting the formation of diplomatic deployment that “the neighboring countries are the priority, the developing countries are the basis, the

multilateralism is the important stage". This kind of regional cooperation has an overall characteristics, which refers to that China carries out political, economic and trade and people-to-people cooperation with a certain regional organizations and member states of it, through summits, forums and the other multilateral diplomatic forms. The forming of this kind of composed regional diplomacy has some common features as below.

Firstly, the integrated organization is the key participant of this regional cooperation. On one hand, China's participation in the regional cooperation conforms to the strengthening trend of regional cooperation, and China also respects the role of leadership and coordinator of these organizations in promoting the regional integration progress and cooperation issue. In the regional cooperation frameworks in East Asia, like the "10+1" (cooperation between ASEAN and China), the "10+3" (cooperation among ASEAN, China, Japan and Korea), the "10+8" (ASEAN, China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand), and in the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the China-Arab Cooperation Forum, the China-CELAC Forum, regional organizations all play a vital role, and even become entities with certain degree of independence in the overall cooperation. When conducting cooperation with China, countries within the region can coordinate on the platform provided by these organizations, avoiding unnecessary internal competition and enhancing the efficiency of consultation. On the other hand, China exchanges diplomatic delegations and ambassadors with these organizations, which also promotes their relationships and strengthens the coordination of regional cooperation between the two sides.

Secondly, regular international forums and conferences are the institutional guarantee to promote overall regional cooperation. Although the coverage of the regional cooperation is determined by geographical factors, China does not seek for geopolitical influence in these regions or establishing any international organizations. Therefore, the main framework of the cooperation is a relatively loose mechanism of regular meeting. The ministerial and leaders' meetings formulate plans for short, medium and long-term programmes for the regional cooperation, and coordinately promote the implementation through secretariats of cooperation or follow-up committees. Apart from these political meetings, there are other mechanisms including economic, cultural, medical, educational, agricultural departments as well as regular conferences and functional communication platforms at local, social and enterprise levels. As a result, the bilateral cooperation extends to a wide range of fields and promotes cooperation in these fields through vibrant political exchanges.

Thirdly, good bilateral relations lay foundation for healthy and lasting development of the overall regional cooperation. Regular meetings and consultations at regional level can certainly improve the political and strategic mutual trust as well as boost the development of bilateral relations, while the establishment and development of regional cooperation also rely on good bilateral relations. These mechanisms, including the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the China-Arab Cooperation Forum and the China-CELAC Forum, are all built on the basis of old friendly bilateral relations. Besides, further consolidating and enhancing the bilateral ties through regional multilateral mechanisms are also a main drive for the participating countries to promote such regional cooperation with China. The bilateral relations under the multilateral mechanisms have their own uniqueness, which helps coordinate each other's concerns and

positions in the regional cooperation. Moreover, it not only enables the participating countries to seek common ground and reserve differences at the highest possible level, but also achieves a win-win situation. Besides, overall cooperation under multilateral framework also brings scale and synergistic effects for the bilateral cooperation within it.

“16+1 Cooperation” is not a tree without roots, but based on the traditional friendly relations between China and CEE countries. In the mean time, it opens up a new way for China to develop relations with old friends. Annual leaders’ meetings, dialogue, consultation mechanisms at various levels and diversified functional platforms vigorously boost bilateral relations between China and CEE countries, and motivate CEE countries to join in the “16+1 Cooperation”. These are all examples of positive inheritance of the “16+1 Cooperation” from previous regional cooperation.

### **III “16+1 Cooperation” enriches and innovates the regional cooperation**

As a sub-regional cooperation, “16+1 Cooperation” is an innovative practice for promoting the China-EU relations under the background that the process of European integration has not yet been completed. The distinction between “16+1 Cooperation” and China’s other existing regional cooperation mechanisms is that: it is a sub-regional cooperation framework, while there lacks a permanent platform or stable mechanism in the CEE region (these countries are integrated at the EU level). Due to the weak centripetal force of 16 CEE countries, the development of the “16+1 Cooperation” needs to surmount certain difficulties. There is no incentive for China to push forward the “16+1 Cooperation” in order to divide Europe, on the contrary, the integration process of the CEE countries driven by EU is beneficial to the long-term development of the “16+1 Cooperation”. “16+1 Cooperation” platform undertakes exploration and innovation, takes references from the existing framework, and then conducts a series of diplomatic practice. In contrast to many other regional cooperation platforms and frameworks, its uniqueness and creativity are as below.

Firstly, the 16 CEE countries under the “16+1 Cooperation” together form a relatively new platform, and China has explored some innovative measures to enrich and contribute to this new platform.

The first contribution is raising the level of cooperation. The premiers’ meeting is created to be held annually on the basis of ministerial meeting, and the consultation mechanism of senior officials at director level is replaced by the national coordinators’ meeting. Generally most of the coordinators of all countries have reached vice-ministerial level; the second contribution is increasing the frequency of meetings and consultations. The leaders’ and ministerial meetings are held once a year, while the China-Arab Cooperation Forum is every two years, and the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the China-CELAC Forum are twice in three years. Besides, the China-CEEC national coordinators’ meeting is twice a year while the senior officials’ meetings of other cooperation mechanisms are, at most, once a year. What’s more, China set up the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and CEEC, members of

which will meet quarterly with the embassies of CEEC in China. These high level and high frequency meeting mechanisms enhance “16+1 Cooperation” and boost the bilateral relations between China and CEEC. Therefore, “16+1 Cooperation” could move forward steadily and sustainably on the basis of good bilateral relations. The third contribution is encouraging Central and Eastern European countries to take the lead in establishing sectorial cooperation platforms. Currently, there are more than twenty established or to be established coordination mechanisms or functional platforms, covering a wide range of areas of economy, trade, investment, tourism, local cooperation, transportation, logistics, technical cooperation, think tank, health, etc. Each Central and Eastern European country can be motivated to play a coordinating role through taking the lead in building one or more of these platforms, which helps them to make use of their own advantages respectively in a creative way. The China-CELAC Forum, established in 2015, has learned experience from “16+1 Cooperation” in setting national coordinator mechanism and holding regular leaders’ meeting on the basis of the ministerial meetings, which proves the efficiency of the mechanism innovation of the “16+1 Cooperation”.

Secondly, the whole Central and Eastern European region under framework of “16+1 Cooperation” is now incorporated into the Belt and Road Initiative. Generally the CEEC have accomplished successful economic transformation. Due to their relatively good developed market, favorable investment environment and high level of integration into EU’s single market, they could be an important “connector” for the Belt and Road Initiative when entering into the European economic circles, providing broader platform and stronger foundation for the “16+1 Cooperation”. These unique advantages do not exist in other cooperation mechanisms. It not only increases the probability of implementing cooperative projects in production capacity cooperation and infrastructure construction of connectivity, but also gets more financial supports and improves the sustainability of project construction.

Thirdly, local cooperation is an important element of the “16+1 Cooperation”. Local cooperation, including the Local Leaders’ Meeting of China and CEEC, the Forum for Capitals Mayors of China and CEEC, the China-CEEC Association of Governors of Provinces and Regions, helps to form a more comprehensive local cooperation framework for the “16+1 Cooperation” and effectively promotes the shaping of a comprehensive, diversified and extensive cooperative pattern. Although there are some projects for local cooperation in other regional cooperation, such as China-Arab States Expo held in Ningxia Autonomous Region, China-ASEAN Expo and the regional economic cooperation between ASEAN and the Pan-Pearl River Delta held in Guangxi, they are at provincial and municipal level with specific culture and geographical ties, not an all-around one and lacks of systematic local cooperation framework. With the stable local cooperation framework and the connection of China-Europe Railway Express, local governments are encouraged to join the “16+1 Cooperation”. The local cooperation earns new opportunities after the whole Central and Eastern European region being included in the Belt and Road Initiative, which serves as an important breaking point for the local governments to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative through strengthening cooperation with the CEEC. For example, Chongqing Municipality develops cooperation in electronics, automobile manufacturing and other fields with the CEEC through the Chongqing-Sinkiang-Europe International Railway, Chengdu province develops effective

local cooperation with Czech Republic and Poland through the Chengdu-Sinkiang-Europe International Railway, Ningbo builds the 16+1 Demonstration Area for Economic and Trade Cooperation, these are all successful cases of the 16+1 local cooperation.

Finally, promoting the third party cooperation is a crucial support for the “16+1 Cooperation”. During the Belgrade Summit in 2014, EU was invited to send representatives to attend the meeting; during the Suzhou Summit in 2015, in reference to the observer system of other international organizations, EU, Austria and European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) were invited to attend the meeting as observers; during the Riga Summit in 2016, Switzerland, Greece and Belarus were added as the observers. Bringing in the observer system greatly improves the openness of the “16+1 Cooperation” and provides institutional guarantee for the stakeholders to express their concerns and to build consensus. The openness of the “16+1 Cooperation” consolidates the foundation of cooperation as well as extending its level and scope.

#### **IV Summary**

In short, as a special sub-regional cooperation platform, “16+1 Cooperation” has overcome many challenges and seized opportunities. It offers plenty of space for innovating regional cooperation and diplomatic practice. Besides, its successful implementation in the past five years proved that attractive concept, complete framework and diversified forms are able to make up the natural shortages of the “16+1 Cooperation”.

Firstly, the global governance ideas of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits have been implemented into practice in the “16+1 Cooperation”. The CEEC have become an important supporting point for building the community of shared future between China and Europe. These cooperation concepts with Chinese wisdom strengthened the centripetal force, while innovative Chinese plans have offered brand new options of regional cooperation for the CEEC.

Secondly, with the establishment and improvement of high-level, high frequency, multi-leveled meeting and consultation mechanisms, CEECs showed more willingness to participate in the “16+1” cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative. This has greatly consolidated the foundation of bilateral cooperation between China and CEEC and firmly ensured the sustainable and stable development of the “16+1 Cooperation”.

Finally, the flourishing local cooperation boosts the diversification of forms of cooperation, and is one of the key points to develop an all-dimensional, multi-layered and wide-ranging cooperation pattern. The local cooperation can fill the gaps of the huge differences between China and CEECs in economic volume and market size, enabling China to conduct targeted cooperation with CEECs by fully exploiting the resources, potentials and industry layout at local level. This will further stimulate more market players, SMEs and private sectors for example, to actively join the enterprise. Finally, we will reach a balanced and inclusive cooperation pattern: short-term and long-term projects are properly combined, and central government and local governments act under coordination.

## Chapter Three “16+1 Cooperation” Promotes the Development of China-EU Relations

Since “16+1 Cooperation” was initiated in 2012, it has become an important platform for cooperation and exchange between China and the Central and Eastern European countries in various fields. At present, 11 of the 16 CEE countries are member states of the European Union, while the remaining five also regard integration into the EU as an important national strategy and a future development direction. In fact, “16+1 Cooperation” is inseparable part of the China-Europe cooperation. Since the day China launched the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, Chinese government has been stressing that the platform is an important part and beneficial complementation to the relation and cooperation between China and EU. As China’s Premier Li Keqiang pointed out in the Riga Summit, “16+1 Cooperation” is a part of and helpful complement to China-EU cooperation. It will help advance China-EU partnerships in four aspects and five platforms, and contribute to more balanced development across Europe and European integration.<sup>1</sup>

### I “16+1 Cooperation” provides positive complement for China-EU trade relation

Since the 2007 economic crisis, the European economic experienced a weak recovery, which also affected the trade between China and EU. According to China Customs statistics in 2016, China’s trade with the EU fell by 3.1%, while the trade between China and old members of EU such as the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France and Italy dropped by varying degrees. However, China’s trade with the Central and Eastern European countries in 2016 is relatively better: the volume of trade between China and CEE partners such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Estonia, Slovenia, Croatia and others showed an

<sup>1</sup> Speech by Premier Li Keqiang at the Fifth Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries, The State Council Information Office of China, November 6, 2017, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/32618/Document/1515591/1515591.htm>

obvious growth. Though the trade volume with some other CEE countries such as the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia declined, but double decline in both exports and imports was witnessed in none of these countries. While the whole China-EU trade presented poor performance, there was no overall decline between China and EU members in Central and Eastern Europe an region. (see Table 2)

**Table 2 Trade volume between China and the EU and its member countries in 2016\***

(unit: 10,000 dollars)

Countries/ Regions	Total Trade Value	Export	Import	Compared with last year ±%		
				Total	Export	Import
EU (28)	54,701,794	33,904,794	20,797,000	-3.1	-4.7	-0.4
Germany	15,128,664	6,521,389	8,607,275	-3.5	-5.7	-1.8
UK	7,434,198	5,568,931	1,865,267	-5.3	-6.5	-1.5
Netherland	6,724,004	5,744,970	979,034	-1.5	-3.4	11.5
France	4,713,496	2,465,744	2,247,752	-8.2	-7.8	-8.7
Italy	4,306,496	2,636,095	1,670,401	-3.6	-5.3	-0.7
Belgium	2,161,390	1,473,270	688,120	-6.9	-9.1	-1.8
Spain	2,744,412	2,131,205	613,207	0.0	-2.5	9.8
Slovakia	527,114	286,125	240,990	4.8	2.4	7.7
Slovenia	270,554	226,900	43,654	13.6	8.5	50.8
Latvia	119,448	106,232	13,216	2.3	3.9	-8.6
Lithuania	145,412	129,054	16,358	7.7	6.6	17.9
Estonia	117,525	96,357	21,168	-1.1	1.1	-9.9
Poland	1,762,568	1,509,171	253,396	3.2	5.2	-7.6
Czech	1,100,692	805,865	294,828	0.0	-2.0	6.0
Hungary	888,481	542,256	346,225	10.1	4.3	20.4
Romania	489,927	344,743	145,184	9.9	9.0	12.1
Bulgaria	164,371	105,546	58,825	-8.3	1.2	-21.4
Croatia	117,808	101,666	16,141	7.4	3.2	44.4

\* <http://ozs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/zojmgx/date/201702/20170202520524.shtml>.

In 2016, while the trade volume between China and Europe decreased, China’s trade with the 16 countries of Central and Eastern Europe reached 58.654 billion dollars, an increase of 9.5% in comparison with last year, and over 30% in comparison with the year 2012 when the “16+1 Cooperation” framework was set up. China’s trade with these 16 countries now accounts for 10.19% of China’s total trade with Europe – the proportion is relatively small but the potential is huge.<sup>2</sup>

Overall speaking, in 2016 the trade between China and CEE countries was better than that with the EU’s older member states. Since the establishment of the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, China has actively promoted its trade relations with CEE countries and introduced a series of trade-facilitating measures.

2 <http://lv.mofcom.gov.cn/article/todayheader/201703/20170302531147.shtml>.

First, we strived to make the trade transportation more convenient. The efforts lay largely on the construction of trade corridors, with a number of China-Europe Railway Expresses starting to operate, such as Rongou, Yuxinou, Zhengxinou and Yixinou. All of them depart from China and arrive at or pass through the Central and Eastern European countries, facilitating the transportation of goods between China and Central and Eastern European countries.

Second, we actively explored the market potential of advantageous products. In terms of trade products, China has actively used the platform of commercial, agricultural, forestry, finance and tourism under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation” to find and develop the advantageous products of Central and Eastern European countries and to further explore the markets of CEE countries, strengthening the economic and trade exchanges with them.

Third, we strengthened the construction of soft environment for trade. Driven by the “16+1 Cooperation”, China and Central and Eastern European countries have strengthened their cooperation in customs inspection and quarantine, and further ensured the convenience of Chinese and Central and Eastern European countries’ products entering each other’s markets.

Finally, we made greater efforts to promote the merchandise of both sides. We try to connect the market and consumers of China with agricultural products, high-tech products and tourism services of CEE countries by holding a series of conferences and expositions, of which the China-CEEC Investment and Trade Expo is a good example.

It can see from Table 2 that there is a trade imbalance between China and CEE countries, that is to say, the trade deficit of CEE countries with China is huge (take Poland for an example, in 2016, the trade deficit with China reached 13.67 billion US dollars, accounting for 78% of the whole value of trade between these two countries). This situation is related to the nature of bilateral trade structure and China-EU trade structure. China’s exports to Central and Eastern European countries are mainly electronic machinery, communications equipment, toys and clothing, which are generally consistent with China’s exports to the whole EU. From the point of view of product added value, China’s exports to Central and Eastern Europe are mainly of low or medium value-added products, while this region is also an intermediary place of China’s exportation to the EU, which means that Chinese products are fabricated in Central and Eastern European region in order to sell to the European market, and part of these products even sell back to China. Therefore, with the steady development of trade between China and Central and Eastern European countries, the role of Central and Eastern European countries as a “transit point” of China-EU trade will become increasingly important.

Talking about the trade deficit between China and CEE countries, there actually lies a global problem behind the trade structure problem, which has a lot to do with the global industrial chain layout of multinational companies and producers. China is not the only beneficiary of this trade surplus, not even the biggest one. For example, in terms of the trade deficit between China and the four Visegrad countries, we shall examine it in the trade chain of China-Visegrad Group-Germany. In the automotive industry, the Visegrad countries have acquired and benefited from participating in the assembly section of the German automobile manufacturing chain, and they have reached a win-win situation. However, the German automotive industry would be completely different without the support of Chinese market. Therefore, if we look from the whole industrial layout of many sectors of main EU countries, the China-CEEC-EU

chain benefits all sides, and CEE countries are important actors in this pattern.

To sum up, promoted by the “16+1 Cooperation” both China and CEE countries have deepened their understanding of each other’s advantageous products, market conditions and so on. A wide range of trade cooperation was accomplished. This trade partnership is, without any doubt, an important complement of China-EU trade relations. While China’s trade with old EU members seems to be weak nowadays, the favorable development of China-CEEC trade would unquestionably provide new opportunities of development.

## II “16+1 Cooperation” is an important part of the China-EU cooperation

At present, the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is deepening and the cooperation mechanism improving constantly. Nearly 70 dialogues and cooperation mechanisms have been established, including the China-EU Leaders Summit, High Level Strategic Dialogue, High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue and High Level People-to-People Dialogue. As an important platform on which China and CEE countries carry out comprehensive cooperation, “16+1 Cooperation” gains an active presence in the field of China-EU cooperation.

The dialogue and cooperation between China and Europe requires a more powerful breakthrough point, and the “16+1 Cooperation” can serve as this, as most of the CEE countries are EU member states. In addition, since the beginning of the establishment of the “16+1 Cooperation” has always been emphasized as supplement to China-EU relation. Characterized by its openness, it allows other stakeholders, especially the EU, to participate in this framework.

By comparing the recent guideline documents of China-EU Cooperation and China-CEEC cooperation, we can figure out that there exist a lot of common grounds between them, which demonstrates their interconnection and the possibility of the “16+1 Cooperation” supplementing the China-EU cooperation.

**Table 3 A Comparison of the List of Outcomes during the 19th China-EU Summit (2017) and the Riga Guidelines (2016)\***

Areas of Cooperation	List of Outcomes during the 19th China-EU Summit	The Riga Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries
Finance	The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding Aiming at Facilitating a Co-investment Framework by China’s Silk Road Fund and the European Investment Fund and the establishment of the China-EU Joint Investment Fund. The two sides committed to pushing forward relevant cooperation in the framework of multilateral development institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.	CEEC financial institutions and businesses are invited to contribute on voluntary basis to the investment fund launched by Sino-CEE Finance Holding Company Ltd. The Participants encourage Chinese financial institutions, including the Silk Road Fund, in actively expanding investment and cooperation in CEECs. The Participants support China and CEEC in enhancing practical cooperation under the framework of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Continued

Areas of Cooperation	List of Outcomes during the 19th China-EU Summit	The Riga Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries
Investment	The two sides viewed the ongoing Investment Agreement negotiations as a top priority. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to speeding up negotiations in a cooperative and pragmatic spirit with a view to reaching an ambitious and balanced outcome as early as possible, in order to establish and maintain a friendly, predictable, business-conducive policy environment for investors from both sides.	The Participants encourage and support progress in the ongoing EU-China negotiations over an ambitious and comprehensive investment agreement.
Connectivity	The two sides welcomed the progress achieved under the China-EU Connectivity Platform, including improving customs clearance facilitation, enhancing harmonization of technical rules and standards in transport, strengthening cooperation in low-carbon and smart transportation, conducting investment and financing cooperation, and promoting substantial progress on viable demonstration projects.	The Participants reaffirm support to the progress made under the EU-China Connectivity Platform. The Participants welcome fostering of information exchange on transport and logistics services as well as strengthening of relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to develop integrated transport corridors between Asia and Europe.
People-to-people exchange	The two sides committed to strengthening exchanges in the areas of education, culture, media, youth, gender equality and sport. The two sides committed to streamlining the procedures of short-stay visa application for all non-diplomatic passport holders from both sides. The two sides committed to improving the travel and tourism experience of the two peoples and creating more opportunities for economic cooperation.	Designate 2017 as Year of China-CEEC Media Cooperation. Support China and CEECs in taking more measures to facilitate mobility of people between China and CEECs. The Participants recognize the important significance of China and CEEC's cooperation in tourism and support further transnational cooperation through various means such as exchange of tourism experiences, promotion of mutual tourist visits and development of regional tourism products.

\* "List of Outcomes of the 19th China-EU Summit," [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/cn\\_eu/2017-06/03/content\\_29606003.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/cn_eu/2017-06/03/content_29606003.htm); "The Riga Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries," [http://english.gov.cn/news/international\\_exchanges/2016/11/06/content\\_281475484363051.htm](http://english.gov.cn/news/international_exchanges/2016/11/06/content_281475484363051.htm).

**Table 4 A Comparison of EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation (2013) and The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (2015) \***

Area of Cooperation	EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation	The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries
Trade and Investment	Negotiate and conclude a comprehensive China-EU Investment Agreement. The China-EU Investment Agreement will provide for progressive liberalization of investment and the elimination of restrictions for investors to each other's market. Make full use of the existing bilateral mechanisms to strengthen communication, handle major bilateral trade frictions through dialogue and consultation as a preferred option, and, if needed, through negotiations, with an objective of finding mutually beneficial solutions.	The Participants will promote transparent, open markets and a level playing field in their respective countries, as well as oppose protectionism in all its forms. With bilateral investments as a top priority, the Participants support the conclusion of an ambitious and comprehensive China-EU investment agreement. China and CEEC will further facilitate mutual investment and trade and aim to make trade and investment relations one of the most dynamic growth points in "16+1 Cooperation".

Continued

Area of Cooperation	EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation	The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries
Financial Cooperation	<p>Promote practical win-win cooperation between China and the European Investment Bank. The EU takes note of China's intention to explore options for closer cooperation with the EBRD, in order to support investment in European countries.</p> <p>Ensure the stability of financial markets, reassure Euro area banks of the continuous provision of Chinese Yuan, increase the use of RMB in cross-border trade and investment, promote China-EU trade and investment facilitation and maintain financial stability.</p>	<p>Cooperation with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Silk Road Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other national, regional and international financial institutions is welcomed and supported. The Participants support synergies between the relevant Chinese initiatives and the Investment Plan for Europe.</p> <p>China-CEEC cooperation in currency swaps, local currency settlement and financial regulation are encouraged. The Participants support RMB clearing arrangements in CEECs.</p>
Connectivity	<p>Strengthen cooperation in developing smart, upgraded and fully interconnected infrastructure systems.</p> <p>Actively explore models of infrastructure cooperation.</p>	<p>The Participants will work to reinforce a safe and efficient connectivity network on land, at sea and in the air between China and Europe, in conjunction with key transport passages, linkages and projects, and jointly build the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor.</p> <p>Central and Eastern European countries are welcome to work with the Chinese side to step up exchanges and cooperation in the logistics sector and enhance railway container traffic between China and Europe.</p>
Agricultural cooperation	<p>Enhance cooperation in the fields of sustainable agricultural production, organic agriculture, rural development and agricultural research.</p> <p>With regard to food safety, intensify cooperation with the objective to protect consumer health.</p>	<p>The Participants will strengthen cooperation in agro-trade, sustainable agricultural production, deep processing of agro-products, development of rural areas, scientific research and technologies in the agricultural sector, as well as in the farming and animal husbandry industry. The Participants encourage the establishment of agricultural production bases. Step up quality inspection and quarantine cooperation based on the principle of mutual benefit and compliance with the relevant regulations and standards, in order to promote fast growth and safe development of trade of agro-products and food between China and CEEC.</p>
Scientific innovation	<p>Reinforce cooperation on science, technology and innovation, involving industry, universities and research institutes, so as to tackle common challenges; complement mutual strengths and deliver win-win results in the areas of human resources, skills, technology, research infrastructure, financing of innovation, exploitation of research finding, entrepreneurship and framework conditions for innovation;</p> <p>Joint research and innovation initiatives will be further explored, in particular in the areas of food, agriculture and biotechnology, sustainable urbanization, aviation, water, health and ICT, by developing joint funding programmes and promoting enhanced mutual participation of Chinese and EU researchers and innovators into respective programmes.</p>	<p>The Participants will strengthen cooperation in communications technology and its application, while ensuring adherence to globally recognized international standards in this sector.</p> <p>The Participants will discuss the possibility of establishing a cooperation mechanism on communications.</p> <p>The Participants welcome and support cooperation on the Internet of Things, big data and next-generation Internet. While doing so, the Participants will take into account the cooperation already existing between the EU as a whole and China in the cyberspace.</p> <p>The Participants will enhance cooperation in shale gas, where allowed, as well as geology, mining, spatial planning and urbanization in a sustainable way, reducing the environmental and climate impact of these activities.</p> <p>The Participants will increase practical cooperation in the energy-saving and environment-friendly sectors and explore the possibility of exchanges and cooperation on energy-saving and environmental policy dialogue, nature and biodiversity protection and tackling climate change while also promoting public awareness and participation.</p>

Continued

Area of Cooperation	EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation	The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries
People-to-people exchange	<p>Encourage the learning of the Chinese language and EU languages in the education systems of the EU and China.</p> <p>Expand students and scholars exchange, and support mutual exchange visits of young people.</p> <p>Continue dialogue on education policy, notably in the framework of the Higher Education Platform for Cooperation and Exchanges.</p> <p>Continue to support the establishment of centres for Chinese studies and centres for European national and regional studies by European and Chinese institutions.</p> <p>Promote exchanges and cooperation between China and the EU in the fields of press, publication, radio, film and television.</p>	<p>The teaching and learning of Mandarin in CEEC will be encouraged and the teaching and learning of the languages of CEEC will be strengthened in China.</p> <p>China-CEEC exchanges of students will be expanded. The Participants will step up cooperation on mutual recognition of academic degrees, credentials and credit, joint research and country- and region-specific research.</p> <p>The Participants will organize the China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue alternately in China and one of the CEECs on a regular basis and support the functioning of the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium.</p> <p>The Participants support the establishment of a China-CEEC exchanges and cooperation center for think tanks. The Participants encourage and support exchanges and contacts between the Chinese side and CEEC sinologists.</p> <p>The Participants welcome exchanges and cooperation in the field of press and publication.</p>

\* “EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation,” [http://ceas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/eu-china\\_2020\\_strategic\\_agenda\\_en.pdf](http://ceas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/eu-china_2020_strategic_agenda_en.pdf); “The Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries,” [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1318038.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1318038.shtml).

As it can be seen from Table 3, Riga Guidelines, the latest programmatic document of the “16+1 Cooperation” signed in November 2016, mentioned several times the important strategic cooperation agreement between China and EU. The Guidelines include contents regarding finance, investment, connectivity and people-to-people exchange, which also echo the results of the Nineteenth China-EU Leaders Summit in early June.

Table 4 presents a comparison of the contents of the long-term strategic documents on China-EU relation and China-CCEC relation. It can also be summarized that the Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries shares spirits with the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, and their contents in the areas of economic and trade investment, financial cooperation, connectivity, agricultural cooperation, scientific and technological innovation as well as cultural exchange also coincident with each other. Moreover, the Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and CEE Countries clearly says “taking the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation as the guideline document”, and that “Instead of replacing existing bilateral cooperation mechanisms or platforms, “16+1 Cooperation” will develop synergies with major EU initiatives and plans and contribute to the China-EU partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization”. The above-mentioned programmatic documents and long-term planning documents can fully reflect that the Chinese government’s expectation to bring supplement for the current cooperation mechanism through the “16+1 Cooperation”.

### III “16+1 Cooperation” helps to promote the balanced regional development of the EU

The Central and Eastern European region, especially the Balkan, is relatively less developed if compared with other sub-regions of the EU. The EU has been working on promoting the political, economical and social development in these areas. The five non-EU member states in the 16 CEE countries, namely Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Serbia are all located in the Western Balkans. Although these five countries actively requested to join the EU, economically and socially they do not meet the criteria for entering. The EU also hopes to promote regional development by strengthening infrastructure construction such as energy and connectivity in the Western Balkans, so that they could meet the criterion. However, in recent years the EU’s overall economic situation has been weak, thus it becomes difficult for them to invest enough funds for developing infrastructure in the Western Balkans. According to the estimation of the relevant department, to establish connectivity in Western Balkans required for 7.7 billion euros in the future, but currently determined funds from EU in the region interconnection construction is limited to only 1.2 billion euros.<sup>3</sup>

Dating back to the year 2012 when the “16+1 Cooperation” framework was initially established, China promised to provide 10 billion US dollars of special preferential loans to the CEE countries to be used on infrastructure construction, high technology, green economy and cooperation projects of other areas. In November 2017, the Sino-CEEF Holding Company Limited was formally founded. The company launched the establishment of China-CEE Fund which reaches 10 billion euros and plans to attract another 50 billion euros of project loan. In the Budapest Summit in November 2017, the Chinese government announced that China Development Bank will provide two billion euros equivalent development finance facility. In the meanwhile, the second stage of the China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund has been set up with a capitalization of US\$1 billion, which will mainly be channeled to the CEE region. These projects will play an important role in promoting the development of this region in fields of energy, transportation and information technology, which will promote the regional development.

### IV Summary

Since the establishment of China-CEEC cooperation framework, China has always defined “16+1 Cooperation” as an important complementary part of China-EU relation, repeatedly emphasizing its positive influence on China-EU relation on important occasions and public documents. During the five years, “16+1 Cooperation” has made real achievements in promoting economic and trade relations between China and CEE countries. Under the mechanism, countries grasped the opportunity brought by the “Belt and Road” Initiative,

3 “Final Declaration by the Chair of the Vienna Western Balkans Summit,” 27 August 2015, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/policy-highlights/regional-cooperation/20150828\\_chairmans\\_conclusions\\_western\\_balkans\\_summit.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/policy-highlights/regional-cooperation/20150828_chairmans_conclusions_western_balkans_summit.pdf).

expanded the range of cooperation and made contribution for China-EU cooperation under the “Belt and Road” Initiative. From the perspective of future development, “16+1 Cooperation” is expected to bring greater benefits for the regional balance of EU. In short, “16+1 Cooperation” always adheres to the principle of enhancing and supplementing the important concepts of China-EU relations, and is committed to developing China-CEEC relation under the framework of China-EU cooperation. This is in consistency with the interests of all parties and therefore is expected to have a long-lasting vitality.

## **Chapter Four “16+1 Cooperation” as Important Platform to Promote the Belt and Road Initiative**

On September 7, 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed to build “Silk Road Economic Belt” during his visit to Kazakhstan. Same year in October, while visiting Indonesia, President Xi put forward his initiative to jointly build “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. Since then, the Silk Road and Maritime Silk Road has together composed the Belt and Road initiative. In 2015, China’s National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce together issued “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. The document clarified the definition and measure of the Belt and Road Initiative, emphasizing “policy connectivity, infrastructure connectivity, trade connectivity, financial connectivity and people to people connectivity” as its main content. During May 2017, The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation brought 29 heads of state and government, 70 leaders of international organizations, 1500 representatives from countries and regions worldwide. President Xi gave important speech on the Forum, pointing out to insist on principle of “achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration”, to make “policy consultation, infrastructure connectivity, trade promotion, financial cooperation and people to people exchange” the future goal, and to build the Belt and Road into a road to peace, a road of prosperity, a road of opening up, a road of innovation.

On October, 2017, president Xi Jinping delivered a report on the opening ceremony of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, addressing that we should pursue the Belt and Road initiative as a priority, give equal emphasis to “bringing in” and “going global”, follow the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration, and increase openness and cooperation in building innovation capacity. With efforts, we hope to make new ground in opening China further through links running eastward and westward, across land and over sea.

The 16 Central and Eastern European Countries are all included in the framework of Belt and Road Initiative. It is also the first region where all countries are included in the Belt and

Road Initiative, showing the importance of this region in the Belt and Road Initiative. The five connectivities are arranged in this region and hence achieved significant results since the Belt and Road initiative is pushed forward. Efforts are made to transform “16+1 Cooperation” into the important “connector”<sup>1</sup> to introduce the Belt and Road Initiative to Europe market.

## **I “16+1 Cooperation” as an important policy communication platform for Belt and Road construction**

The “16+1 Cooperation” framework was launched in 2012, slightly ahead of the proposal of the Belt and Road initiative (2013). The Summit of Head of Government of China and Central and Eastern European Countries in 2013 at Bucharest, Romania (which promoted connectivity between China and Central and Eastern European countries), 2014 at Belgrade, Serbia (which built the China-European Land and Sea Express), 2015 at Suzhou, China (which promoted the construction of the Hungarian-Cypriot railways, China Railway Express and Eurasia Corridor), 2016 at Riga, Latvia (which linked “16+1 Cooperation” with China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership through channels like the Central European Interconnection platform) all listed the Belt and Road initiative as an important content in the guidelines of the national leaders’ meeting. Therefore, “16+1 Cooperation” has become a key policy communication platform to promote cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries under the Belt and Road initiative.

In order to actively promote the placement of the Belt and Road initiative in Central and Eastern Europe, Chinese President Xi Jinping has visited the Czech Republic, Serbia, Poland and other countries since 2013, to bring the “Silk Road Economic Belt” cooperation concept to those countries and carry out concrete projects with mutual benefit. In March 2016, President Xi’s Czech tour was the first time in 67 years that Chinese president visits Czech Republic. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries signed a Joint Declaration on the establishment of a strategic partnership between the People’s Republic and Czech Republic. In June of the same year, the President Xi paid a state visit to Serbia and Poland. During his visit to Serbia and Poland, President Xi Jinping, together with Serbian President Nikolic and Polish President Duda, together announced upgrading China-Serbia and China-Poland relations to comprehensive strategic partnerships. Since 2013, Premier Li Keqiang attended China-CEEC leader’s meetings held in Bucharest, Belgrade, Suzhou, Riga and Budapest, in which the leaders communicated the views and opinions and reached a series of consensus.

While the high-level visits pushing forward policy communication, the “16+1 Cooperation” platform also actively builds basic institutional guarantee of communication mechanism. In 2012, China established the China-CEEC Cooperation Secretariat under the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose main function is to coordinate the cooperation between various Chinese institutions and the 16 CEE Countries and to promote the collaboration with authorities of 16 CEE countries. The 16 CEE countries have also

1 “Xi Jinping Meets with Premier Beata Maria Szydlo of Poland,” 2017, May 12, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0512/c64094-29271761.html>

respectively appointed their national coordinators or designated institutes to synergize with the Secretariat. By October 2017, China and CEEC had held 10 national coordinator meetings. The national coordinator meetings are not only conducive to the implementation of the outcomes of the high-level visits but also can further sort the progress of cooperation in various fields and discuss the direction of cooperation in the next stage. In addition to the meetings of the Secretariat and the national coordinators, the parties have jointly established coordination mechanisms in various areas, such as the Contact Mechanism for the Investment Promotion Agencies of China-CEEC, China-CEEC Association on Transport and Infrastructure Cooperation, the 16+1 Executive Body of the Joint Chamber of Commerce, the China-CEE Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation the China-CEEC Association on Logistics Cooperation and so on. On the basis of these platforms, the Meeting of Agriculture Ministers, meeting of Ministers of Transport, meeting of the Ministers of Health, the Forum of Ministers of Culture and the Capital City Mayor’s forum have become important policy communication platforms to promote the “Belt and Road” construction.

## **II “16+1 Cooperation” lays a good foundation for promoting interconnection between China and Europe**

“16+1 Cooperation” promotes China-EU interconnection in two aspects, which are the “hard interconnection” which refers to infrastructure construction and “soft connectivity” which refers to communication.

The “16+1 Cooperation” framework has done the work in the following aspects during the past five years on “hard connectivity”:

### **1 Actively promoting the construction of new Eurasia Corridor**

Building the Eurasian Corridor is an overall plan spanning over Eurasia aiming at the core European market, and the CEEC are the important doorway to it. Therefore, “16+1 Cooperation” has been playing an important role in advancing the construction of Eurasia Corridor. Under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”, several railway lines have been opened in the country leading to or arriving in Central and Eastern Europe. China Railway Express, as the main carrier of the Eurasia Corridor connectivity, is always the main carrier of Belt and Road land transportation and has become an important entry point for the Belt and Road construction. A set of measures has been taken around building the railway line to central Europe.

In 2014, the National Development and Reform Commission of China and the China Railway Corporation respectively led two important coordination conferences in Chongqing and Zhengzhou. In October 2016, the NDRC published the development plan of China Railway Express (2016-2020) based on extensive research and previous argumentation. The Plan clarified the layout transportation corridor, hub and line of the China Railway Express utilizing the east, central and west international intermodal transportation channels. According to the organization method of “combine the main and subsidiary railway and distribute in logistics hubs”, we plan to build 43 hubs and 43 operating railways. It

also addressed the seven missions including improving the international trade corridor, strengthening the construction of logistics hub facilities, integrating the resources of good supplies, innovating the service model, perfecting the price mechanism, building the information service platform and providing convenience for custom formality. Emphases are laid on optimizing the organization and system of transportation, making the Railway Express more efficient and effective.

## **2 Actively promoting the construction of China-EU land and Sea Express line**

The Central European Land and Sea Express line is the landmark project of the Maritime Silk Road in Central Europe. It starts from the southern coastal cities of China, through the sea route to Greek's Piraeus port (hereinafter referred to as "port") in Mediterranean. The Chinese freighter can unload the cargos at the port through Red Sea, the Suez Canal, via the Greek-Macedonian-Serbian-Hungarian railway, and directly transport the load to central region of Europe. The express opens up the shortest shipping route from China to Europe, which reduce the delivery time of Chinese products by 7-11 days. During his visit to Serbia in December 2014, Premier Li Keqiang, in consultation with the parties concerned, established a plan for the Central European Land and Sea Express line based on the route above.

The Hungarian-Serbian railway is a key link in the construction of China-EU land and Sea Express. At the Belgrade summit in 2013, China, Hungary and Serbia announced to build the Hungarian-Serbian railway together to create a new junction of the intermodal transportation between China and Europe. The Hungarian-Serbian railway is a project that requires multilateral cooperation. In November 28, 2017, the construction of the Hungarian-Serbia railway in Serbia was initiated. On November 24, 2015, the governments of China and Hungary signed the Agreement on the Development, construction and financing cooperation of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway project. Under the agreement, the China Railway International Group (a wholly owned subsidiary of China Railway Group Limited) and China Railway International Co., Ltd. (subsidiary of China Railway), together with the Hungarian State Railways, set up the China-Hungarian Railway joint venture, which will be the contractor of the Hungarian party of railway. China holds 85% of the shares in the joint venture, while Hungary the rest. The decision to renew the Budapest-Belgrade railway in Hungary was approved by the Hungarian Conference on April 12, 2016, with 123 votes in support, 6 against and 45 abstentions.

## **3 Actively promoting the cooperation of infrastructure construction initiatives with EU and related countries**

So far, China has actively promoted the synergy of development initiatives with European countries, especially those in central and Eastern Europe. For instance, the synergy of the Belt and Road initiative with Hungary's "Open to the East" policy, "Three Seas Cooperation" (Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Adriatic) by Poland and Croatia, as well as the "Danube strategy" of the EU. On the European Union level, China and Europe also take actions such as pushing the Juncker investment plan in connection with Belt and Road initiative, establishing a platform for China-EU connectivity. The connecting of initiatives provides close and pragmatic cooperation, and promotes win-win situation on the connectivity.

#### 4 Some concrete cooperation projects have landed

In addition to the Hungarian-Serbian railway, remarkable achievements in other infrastructure projects are gradually formed, including the Zemun-Borcabridge in Serbia, the south-north highway in Montenegro, and the highway project along the border between Montenegro and Serbia. (See details of China’s investment projects in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of article) These projects are not only a landmark between China and Central and East European countries, but also part of the plan to connect Eurasia continent which belongs to Belt and Road initiative, provide more options for China’s exports at the same time.

“16+1 Cooperation” has also contributed to promoting the “soft connectivity” between China and Europe.

For China Railway Express, under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”, China and Central and Eastern European countries are actively pushing forward the cooperation among railway administrations, customs, inspection and quarantine, strengthening the coordination among the countries along the railway lines, forming the joint force, simplifying the procedure, improving the speed, reducing the transportation time and improving the operational efficiency. The concrete measures are as follows: (1) Strengthen the international cooperation of the national Customs. Establish an international cooperation mechanism with the countries along the railway lines by encouraging customs cooperation which allows for exchange of information, mutually recognition of supervision and coordination in law enforcement, expanding mutual references and recognition on customs supervision results, customs cooperation agreement on business visa and so on. The implementation of mutually recognition on “certified operator” between China and Europe will also speed up the custom clearance. (2) Promote the integration of inspection and quarantine between China and CEEC. Strengthening the international cooperation among countries along the railway line on inspection and quarantine by promoting the regional management and mutual recognition of the epidemic situation, building a green channel along the railway line for animals and plants without specific diseases, implementing coordination on report, check and release procedures among the inspection and quarantine institutions along the line, achieving the “immediate passing, immediate entering” on export and import, exempting qualified containers on the China Railway Express from open box inspection and replacement of license. (3) Further expand the opening of port. Support regions which satisfied certain conditions to build designated ports for the entry of meat, aquatic products, food, fruit, seedlings, vehicles, wood and so on, give the priority on examine and approval, check and acceptance to those who have met the requirements.

On the Maritime Silk Road construction, in 2014, China, Hungary, Serbia, and Macedonia signed the *Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Facilitating Customs Clearance Among the Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs*, in order to simplify the coordination of customs formalities and reduce the custom inspection rate. Since then, China and CEEC also actively strengthen communication and coordination. On June 8, 2017, China and the Central and Eastern European Countries Customs Cooperation Forum was held in Ningbo. This forum has far-reaching significance on promoting “information exchange, supervision recognition, law enforcement cooperation” between the Customs of China and of the Central and Eastern European countries, thus improving trade facilitation between the two regions.

### III Under the Belt and Road framework, improving China and CEEC trade cooperation while seeking stability, growing fast on investment cooperation

Trade between China and CEEC improves in recent years, and bilateral trade volumes continue to rise. According to the data of Ministry of Commerce of People's Republic of China, from 2010 to 2016, the import and export trade between China and 16 CEEC increased from \$43.9 billion to \$58.7 billion.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of China's bilateral trade with CEEC in its total trade volume of the EU has been increasing. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are the top four trading partners of China among the 16 countries. For these four countries, China is also their biggest trading partner in Asia. In terms of trade structure, taking the trade between China and Hungary as an example, in the early stages of the transition, bilateral trade is dominated by light industrial products such as textiles and hats. Today, the bilateral trade structure has gradually shifted to higher technological products such as machinery, electronics and so on. In addition, high quality agricultural products of CEEC such as meat products, dairy products, wine have gradually begun to enter the Chinese market and gained popularity among consumers.

The CEE countries have been focusing on the promotion of Chinese products, and China has also been actively providing opportunities for them. For example, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province has held three consecutive sessions of China-CEEC Investment and Trade Fairs since 2015; the Bank of China has held China-CEEC SME Cooperation Forums for many consecutive years; and Chinese embassies in CEEC have also actively hosted various investment and trade fairs between China and certain country. The improvement of trade between China and these countries, together with the high willingness of both sides in promoting trade, will have an impact on bilateral trade.

**Table 5 2012-2016 The Growth Rate of China-CEEC Trade\***

Unit: %

Country/Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Poland	10.8	3.0	16.1	-0.6	3.2
Czech Republic	-12.6	8.3	16.2	0.3	0
Hungary	-12.9	4.3	7.3	-10.6	10.1
Slovakia	1.8	7.6	-5.2	-18.9	4.8
Estonia	2.5	-4.4	4.7	-13.4	-1.1
Latvia	10.0	6.7	-0.7	-20.2	2.3
Lithuania	21.0	5.3	0.1	-25.8	7.7
Romania	-14.2	6.7	17.8	-6	9.9
Bulgaria	29.4	9.8	4.4	-17.1	-8.3

<sup>2</sup> See detailed statistics on Ministry of Commerce Europe Division, <http://ozs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/zojmgx/date/201702/20170202520524.shtml>.

Continued

Country/Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Slovenia	-2.9	17.2	8.8	2.5	13.6
Croatia	-15.2	8.8	-24.5	-2.7	7.4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-1.9	60.3	185.8	-64.1	-5.4
Montenegro	63.6	-38.8	106.1	-24.7	-10/8
Macedonia	-7.5	-24.9	-2.1	31.3	-37.6
Serbia	8.5	19.1	-17.5	2.2	8.2
Albania	11.6	15.8	1.7	-1.5	13.9

\* See detailed statistics on Ministry of Commerce Europe Division, <http://ozs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/zojmgx/date/201702/20170202520524.shtml>.

The volume of China-CEEC trade has experienced a satisfactory growth trend, but the growth rate is not stable enough, relatively large fluctuations are observed in some countries. It shows that China-CEEC trade is susceptible to external market volatilities. The trade cooperation calls for more progress while ensuring stability.

**Table 6 2009-2016 China's Investment in Central and Eastern Europe (Stock volume)\***

(USD: million)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Poland	12030	14031	20126	20811	25704	32935	35211	32132
Hungary	9741	46570	47535	50741	53235	55635	57111	31370
Czech Rep.	4934	5233	6683	20245	20468	24269	22431	22777
Slovakia	936	982	2578	8601	8277	12779	12779	8277
Slovenia	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	2686
Romania	9334	12495	12583	16109	14513	19137	36480	39150
Bulgaria	231	1860	7256	12674	14985	17027	23597	16607
Estonia	750	750	750	350	350	350	350	350
Latvia	54	54	54	54	54	54	94	94
Lithuania	393	393	393	697	1248	1248	1248	1529
Serbia	268	484	505	647	1854	2971	4979	8268
Montenegro	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	443
BiH	592	598	601	607	613	613	775	860
Croatia	810	813	818	863	831	1187	1182	1199
Macedonia	20	20	20	26	209	211	211	210
Albania	435	443	443	443	703	703	695	727
In Sum	41060	85258	100877	133400	143576	169651	197675	166679

\* Edited by Ministry of Commerce of People's Republic of China, National Bureau of Statistics of China, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, *2016 China Foreign Direct Investment Statistic Report*, Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2017.

According to the data above, China's investment in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe has remarkably increased, especially in the four countries of Visegrad Group, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. Viewing from the total number of investments, the year 2015 had great improvement when compared with 2009, growing by \$1.566 billion and the growth rate reaching 79%. The investment in stock volume declined in an unobvious way in 2016. The core market of growth is mainly concentrated in the four countries of Visegrad, as well as the Balkan countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.

First, several investment projects have landed successively, which the level and enriched content of China-CEEC cooperation, and promoted mutual understanding between the two sides. At present, China's investment in Central and Eastern Europe is mainly focused on fields including infrastructure, production capacity, machinery, energy-saving and environmental protection industry, tourism and real estate. The width and depth of investment has made great progress compared with 2012, mergers and acquisitions as well as green land investment has experienced a large increase, local employment rate has risen, local economic development has improved. (See statistics on China's investment projects in CEE countries for details)

Second, investments with feature of special aid loans, such as the south-north highway of Montenegro, the Hungarian-Serbian railway, the Serbian power station and the Stanari Power Station project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have also enhanced the quality of cooperation between the both sides. In order to improve the quality and efficiency of the cooperation with the 16 CEE countries, China issued 10 billion U.S. dollars of special loans, in which the preferential loans within it have been used up, investing in the infrastructure, water conservancy, highways and other construction of CEECs, demonstrating a clear effect.

Last, the increase in the preferential loans has enhanced China's influence in Central and Eastern Europe region. At present, neither China nor the CEEC investment data can fully reflect China's actual influence in this region. For example, China's investment statistics do not include the number of investment with aid and preferential loans. At the same time, the investment data of Chinese SMEs are not fully included in the statistical data. It makes official statistics much smaller than the real number, which somewhat underestimates China's investment influence in Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, China's investment in Montenegro in 2015 was about \$7 million, while China's preferential loan to Montenegro's south-north highway was about \$800 million.

#### **IV The "16+1 Cooperation" platform provides financial support for the Belt and Road initiative**

Promoting the construction of Belt and Road initiative in Europe is inseparable from financial support. China has launched various financing support measures under the "16+1 Cooperation" framework.

## **1 The introduction of various financial tools**

### **(1) \$10 billion special loan**

At China-CEEC leader's meeting in Warsaw on April 2012, Wen Jiabao, the then Premier proposed 12 initiatives to promote China-CEEC cooperation, including \$10 billion of special loan and proportional preferential loans on cooperative projects in the fields of infrastructure construction, high-tech, green economy among others. The 16 countries may submit project applications to China National Development Bank, China Import and Export Bank, ICBC, BOC, CCB and Citic Bank. The applications for preferential loan are submitted to China Import and Export Bank, of which the interest rate is 1%-3%. The destination of the investment has to be Central Eastern European Countries, and Chinese companies have to be involved and conduct the projects. Chinese corporations are required to complete 80% to 85% of the project if the ratio of Chinese funding is higher on the infrastructure project. There are no insurance premiums for the loans, and only a small amount of administrative fee applies to the recipients. The financing support will not issue to the project involve third country. The loan at most covers 85% of the whole project, with the duration of 15 years, it may be extended to 20 years depend on the situation, and sovereign guarantees is needed.

### **(2) China-Central and Eastern European Investment Cooperation Fund**

On April 2012, during the meeting of the 17 leaders in Warsaw, Former Premier Wen Jiabao also formally proposed to establish the China-Central and Eastern European Investment Cooperation Fund, and designated the China Import and Export Bank as the executive department of the fund. In November 2013, Premier Li Keqiang announced the formal establishment of the China-Central and Eastern European Investment Cooperation fund when he attended the second China-CEEC leader's meeting. The China-Central and Eastern European Investment Co-operation Fund (phase I) eventually closed at \$435 million and started operating in early 2014. The fund is incorporated in Luxembourg in the form of a limited partnership, with domestic and international investment institutes being its limited partners, such as China Import and export bank and Hungarian import and Export bank. The fund has chosen a investment management team with long-term investment management experience and good reputation in the Central and Eastern Europe to provides consulting services for fund investment. In December 2014, Premier Li Keqiang positively commented the China-CEE Investment Cooperation Fund (phase I) and continued supporting the launch of the China-CEE Investment Cooperation Fund (phase II)” in the third China-CEEC leader's meeting. In November 2015, the fourth China-CEEC leaders' meeting held in Suzhou, China, “launching the China-CEE Investment Cooperation Fund phase two” was included in the China-CEEC Cooperation medium-term plan. In November 2017, Premier Li Keqiang announced that the second stage of the China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund has been set up. The fund in phase II is \$1 billion and currently is operating well. The fund focuses on supporting the development in the infrastructure, telecommunications, energy, manufacturing, education and health care field of the 16 countries. The Fund adopts diversified investment models, such as equity investment, mezzanine debt or mixed financial products; the scale of a single investment is from \$10 million to \$70 million in phase I. Until

now, the fund has invested more than 10 key projects, achieved good social effect, and made contribution for China-CEEC investment cooperation as well as the Belt and Road initiative.

### (3) China-CEE Financial Holdings Limited Company and China-CEE Fund

In November 2015, on the fourth China-CEEC leaders meeting, advocated by the Chinese Government initiated and led by ICBC, a discussion was initiated on supporting interconnection and production capacity cooperation among member countries with commercial financing model. With joint efforts of the ICBC and domestic and international partners, during the fifth China-CEEC leaders meeting in Riga in 2016 Premier Li Keqiang announced the founding of China-CEE Financial Holdings Limited Company. The China-CEE fund established by this Corporation reaches 10 billion euros, and plans to lever 50 billion euros of project credit. The China-CEE Fund adheres to the principle of “supported by government, conducted by companies, oriented by market”. It targets the CEE market, extends to Europe and other regions which is in accordance with China-CEEC interests, and focuses on investment cooperation opportunities in infrastructure construction, high-tech manufacturing and mass consumption industries. In terms of fundraising, CEECs such as Poland, Czech Republic and Latvia, enterprises of Chinese or foreign capital, financial institutions and all kinds of social capital are all potential investors with whom the Fund is actively negotiating with. In addition, the Fund has accepted support from the Silk Road Fund. In investment Management, in addition to ICBC, China Life, Fosun Group, Golden Eagle International Group and other partners are introduced to participate in it. In terms of the project reserve, the Fund is tracking a group of investment projects with great social influence and good economic returns.

### (4) China and CEEC Relation Research Fund

Among the 12 initiatives proposed on the Warsaw Summit in 2012, the proposal of China providing 2 million RMB each year to support academic exchanges of research institutions and scholars is also included. Now, the fund has been operating for five consecutive years as a strong impetus to China-CEEC academic exchanges. So far, the fund has sponsored a number of subjects and seminars, generating good academic and social responses.

## **2 Establishment of various financial branches in Central and Eastern Europe**

Chinese financial institutions such as Bank of China, the People’s Bank of China and ICBC have opened branches or affiliated agencies in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The Bank of China has established branches in Hungary and affiliated agencies in the Czech Republic, Poland and Serbia. The Bank of China’s branch in Hungary is the first operating financial institution, as well as the first RMB clearing bank, opened in Central and Eastern Europe, providing convenience for Chinese enterprises to invest in this region. After the Bank of China (Hungary) Co., Ltd., branches were established in Czech Republic, Poland and other countries in CEEC offering export and import merchandises of all types with one-stop service, including customer credit investigation, ship situation inquiries and consultation on national risk, product trends and policy advice. More importantly, in April 2016, the Bank of China, helped Hungary issue a \$1 billion dim sum bond as the sole global coordinator in Hong Kong. On July 26, 2017, the Bank of China again helped Hungary to

issue the sovereign panda debt, which is the first fund raised specially for the Belt and Road cooperation.

### **3 Actively strengthening cooperation with international financial institutions**

In December 2015, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development approved China's application to join the bank. China officially became a member, providing a broad space for China and the bank to invest and cooperate in various projects in Central and Eastern Europe, in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean and in Central Asia. As a member of the bank, China will fulfill its membership obligations, actively participate in the bank affairs and strengthen its cooperation with the Bank and other members in the regional to share experience, jointly raise capital and aid development. At the same time, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has also been actively involved in the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”.

## **V “16+1 Cooperation” strengthens people to people exchange of the Belt and Road initiative**

The cultural exchanges between China and CEEC are rich and colorful, which is a highlight under the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation” and the Belt and Road Initiative. China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Forum, China-CEEC Culture Season, China-CEEC Culture and Creative Industry Forum, China-CEEC Dance Summer Camp, the “Bridge of Future” China-CEEC Youth Campus, and the Activity of “Happy Spring Festival” held by China in CEEC are all important platforms to promote the participation of CEECs. Exchange and communication activities such as CEEC journalist delegation, the China-CEEC High-Level Think Tanks Symposium, the China-CEEC Political Party Dialogue, the Young Politician Forum and so on have also been successfully held as important measures to promote people to people connectivity.

In the past 5 years, China has established 5 Chinese medicine centers and 3 cultural centers in Central and Eastern Europe. China has signed the agreement on mutual recognition of degree and diploma with 8 CEE countries, and the number of oversea students in each others territory reached almost a million. These concrete achievements have laid a solid foundation for advancing people to people communication.

## **VI Summary**

All countries of Central and Eastern Europe region have been included in the Belt and Road initiative framework. Each country has played its unique role and has created new highlights and new attempts of “Belt and Road” cooperation between China and Europe. Under the effective impetus of China and relevant parties, “16+1 Cooperation” has been steadily pushing forward and actively engaged in the construction of “Belt and Road”, and achieved a

series of notable achievements.

Firstly, it is an important policy communication platform for the “Belt and Road”. Through the platform, from the top leadership, to the decision-making entities in the middle, and to the coordinators and officials responsible for specific areas of cooperation, all these departments communicated to reach a seamless policy, achieved certain strategic consensus, and promoted a number of important cooperative projects and measures. In the past five years, “16+1 Cooperation” as a policy communication platform has been operating efficiently and smoothly.

Secondly, it has laid a good foundation for the interconnection between China and Europe. Through the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, China has promoted the construction of the Silk Road both on land and on sea. The Maritime Silk Road is based on Central Europe land and Sea Express line, while Silk Road on land is based on the construction of the Eurasia Corridor and the effective promotion of China Railway Express. In addition, a series of hard connectivity projects have landed in Central and Eastern Europe region, while the soft connectivity projects also continued to move forward, forming a multi-layered and effective pattern of infrastructure cooperation.

Thirdly, China-Central Eastern Europe trade cooperation is making progress while ensuring stability. In spite of trade deficit and growth fluctuation, China and CEEC have been adhering to the direction of “seeking improvement in stability” in the past five years, and together properly handle the bilateral trade deficit. With the support of a series of favorable policies, China’s investment in Central and Eastern Europe has shown a significant rising trend and the result is satisfactory.

Fourthly, it actively supports the Belt and Road. “16+1 Cooperation” has introduced a number of financial tools and provided multiple funds as financial guarantee. The “16+1 Cooperation” insists flexibility, marketization and pragmatic cooperation as the main direction, creating a series of financial arrangements and becoming new highlight of financial cooperation under the “Belt and Road” initiative.

Finally, it actively promotes people to people connectivity under the Belt and Road initiative. “16+1 Cooperation” has formed a series of new measures on people-to-people exchanges and communication, hence enriched the nongovernmental communication channel between China and Central and Eastern Europe and enhanced the level and scale of cooperation.



## Chapter Five Conclusion

### I What are the highlights of the “16+1 Cooperation” in the past five years?

#### 1 Investment promotion flourishing in multiple fields

“16+1 Cooperation” has made outstanding achievements in the field of investment in the past five years, achieved gratifying progress in the major projects cooperation, and obtained remarkable achievements and improvements in the fields of infrastructure, energy, environmental protection, high-tech industry investment, etc. The investment data climbed year by year, which led to economic development of Central and Eastern European countries. Investment promotion will continue to be one of the main breakthrough points of cooperation between China and CEEC in the future, and will effectively improve the trade volume between China and CEEC and alleviate the trade deficit.

#### 2 Local cooperation growing vigorously

Local cooperation is a distinguishing feature of the cooperation between China and CEEC. It effectively solved the problem that the sizes of the markets of China and CEEC are not symmetric, achieved seamless connection between different actors, enhanced the cooperation between China and CEEC in depth, and inspired the enthusiasm of each actor in cooperation. Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Hebei, Beijing and other provinces intensified the local cooperation with CEEC and have achieved remarkable results.

#### 3 Enhancing precise and specialized cooperation

The “16+1 Cooperation” framework increased the level of the precise cooperation in various specialized fields, perfected good guiding arrangement, and promoted the adaptation to the market rules and willingness of cooperation. On such basis, China and CEEC respectively put forward various cooperation platforms. Accumulating nearly 20 in total, those platforms

involved various fields, enriched the China-CEEC Cooperation, and actively boosted “16+1 Cooperation” to go further in CEEC, thus achieved a comprehensive, multi-level and wide-ranging policy exchanges and pragmatic cooperation.

#### **4 Rich and colorful people-to-people exchanges**

People-to-people exchanges between China and CEEC have also achieved great developments in the past five years: the scale, level and effect of people-to-people exchange have been unprecedentedly promoted, the mutual understanding between China and CEEC went deeper. Cooperation in the fields of political parties, education, health, youth, media, think tanks etc. has achieved remarkable results. For example, in the field of think tanks cooperation, “16+1 Cooperation” has become a hot topic in the research area of international studies, which greatly promoted the development of CEEC as a research field in China and CEEC.

#### **5 Making striking progress in promoting the Belt and Road Initiative**

The Central and Eastern European region was wholly brought into the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, and became the access point for the Belt and Road to the Europe. “16+1 Cooperation” began to actively participate in the Belt and Road one year after its start, and promoted the Belt and Road Initiative to develop in Central and Eastern European and even Europe. It impelled the Maritime Silk Road (China-Europe Land-Sea Express Route) and the Silk Road on the Land (the new Eurasian Continental Bridge) and the China Europe Express to be established in Europe, introduced a series of connectivity projects, issued a series of financial support instruments, actively promoted the people-to-people connection, helped the Belt and Road to make remarkable achievements, and became one of the demonstration areas of the Belt and Road.

#### **6 Initiating the early exploration**

“16+1 Cooperation” is an important initiative to promote regional cooperation between China and Europe, earlier than the sub-regional cooperation between China and Northern and Southern European countries. Although it has met various problems and challenges during the process, in a general view, the achievements outweigh the problems, and it also provides valuable experiences for the other sub-regional cooperation between China and EU. It is the first step of sub-regional cooperation between China and EU, and creates a new highlight of the cooperation between China and Europe.

## **II What are the successful experiences of the “16+1 Cooperation” in the past five years?**

### **1 Playing an active role to shape the cooperation framework**

The introduction of the “16+1 Cooperation” framework evidently demonstrated the activeness, practicality of the Chinese policy makers. As a new initiative put forward by China, it is a new platform for cooperation constructed on the basis of the national conditions

of the 17 countries and concrete requirements from these countries. “16+1 Cooperation” has made innovation and breakthrough in regional cooperation, shown obvious Chinese characteristics, and provided new exploration cases for China’s diplomacy.

## **2 Win-win cooperation and mutual benefit**

“16+1 Cooperation” has always kept adhering to the principle of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, which is the very reason for CEEC to approve and actively participate in this framework. In the past five years, “16+1 Cooperation” acquired impressive achievements, CEEC made great progress in the fields of connectivity and infrastructure, and enhanced economic and trade cooperation with China bucking the downward trend in comparison with the Western European countries. .

## **3 Open and inclusive cooperation**

From the beginning, “16+1 Cooperation” is not an exclusive arrangement, but aimed at being an open platform, compatible with all kinds of beneficial and positive factors. The EU has always been invited as an observer, and Austria, EBRD, Greece, Switzerland and Belarus were also invited as observers during different periods, whose participation enlarged the scale of cooperation. The introduction of observers has greatly improved the openness of the “16+1 Cooperation”, and provide institutional guarantee for the stakeholders to express their concerns and for each side to jointly promote the development of the “16+1 Cooperation”.

## **4 Flexible, pragmatic and economic and trade-oriented cooperation**

“16+1 Cooperation” actively adopted a pragmatic and flexible cooperation approach, incorporated any content of win-win cooperation into the framework of cooperation, regardless of its size, country, scale, or model. At the same time, “16+1 Cooperation” does not blindly expand the scope of cooperation, does not involve in ideological problems deeply, does not involve in geopolitical disputes, nor includes high-politics fields such as military cooperation, but is wholly devoted to economic and trade cooperation and worked on the fields of financial, infrastructure and people to people exchanges.

## **5 Exchange and brainstorm with various partners**

“16+1 Cooperation” gave full play to the multilateral platform, created various opportunities for partners to exchange with each other. The establishment of various high-level and professional exchange channels, the form of professional conferences and platforms of different levels and scales, and the availability of multiple exchange channels could contribute to exchanges and brainstorms with various partners, and helped to reach more consensuses. These platforms range from the exchanges of supreme leaders, to the meetings of national coordinators of China and CEEC, and also include the coordination mechanisms of specific fields, such as the Contact Mechanism for the Investment Promotion Agencies of China and CEEC, 16+1 Transportation and Infrastructure Cooperation Association, the Executive Mechanism for the 16+1 Joint Chamber of Commerce, the 16+1 Agricultural Cooperation Association, the 16+1 Logistics Cooperation Association and so on, increasing the opportunities for multilateral exchanges.

### III Summary

So far, the continuing development of the “16+1 Cooperation” is closely related to China’s insistence of the principle of achieving shared growth through co-discussion and collaboration. “Co-discussion” means to insist on discussing with all the other states equally and making rules together from the beginning, without considering their size, power or wealth, in the fields of any international relation, international cooperation, international exchange or international project. “Collaboration” is to arrange and practice in a participatory and inclusive cooperation relationship, rather than to force something on others, in the fields of international relation, international cooperation, international exchange or international project. “Achieving shared growth” means that no matter how many achievements and benefits have been made through international relation, international cooperation, international exchange or international project, they should not be exclusively owned by only one side, nor being beneficial to someone while doing harm to the others. “16+1 Cooperation” firmly adhered to those above principles, did not classify the 16 countries by their size, insisted on co-discussing and co-making policies, and shared the results of cooperation together in the end.

First, the “16+1 Cooperation” promoted the efficacy and equality of the bilateral cooperation between China and CEEC.

In the framework of the “16+1 Cooperation”, bilateral cooperation is the foundation, the “16+1 Cooperation” is the platform, and they depend on and complement each other. On this platform, those 17 countries negotiated equally, exchanged of needed goods, strengthened interconnection, and looked for opportunities on the multilateral platform. In the past five years, the network of strategic partnership for China has been expanding, making significant progresses in the cooperation with various sub-regions in Central Eastern Europe. Local cooperation has become a new breakthrough point and highlight of the “16+1 Cooperation”. Beginning with the China-Europe trains and taking the local leaders summits as platform, China-CEEC cooperation has made a new path and made new achievements. Furthermore, on the platform of the “16+1 Cooperation”, various CEEC have shown their own characteristics and potentials one after another, and played an active role in cooperation in various fields. In addition, in the field of bilateral cooperation, the two sides also deeply dug out the potential of cooperation, promoted the establishment of a series of professional cooperation platforms, and achieved positive results. In the future, the bilateral cooperation in the framework of “16+1 Cooperation” still has great potential and many opportunities, which will be one of the main growth points of China-CEEC cooperation.

Second, “16+1 Cooperation” is a new way of exploration to promote regional cooperation.

As a unique sub-regional cooperation, “16+1 Cooperation” has not only challenges but also opportunities, and provided large space for innovative practices of regional cooperation diplomacy. First, the global governance view of achieving shared growth through co-discussion and collaboration and the initiative of democratization of international relations have been put into practice in “16+1 Cooperation”. The Central Eastern Europe has become an important fulcrum in constructing a common destiny between China and Europe, since

those advanced concepts of cooperation which contain China wisdom enhanced centripetal force of the “16+1 Cooperation”, and the innovative regional cooperation scheme of China provided CEEC a totally new choice. Secondly, the establishment and improvement of high standard, high frequency and multi-level consultation mechanism not only greatly enhanced the relations between China and CEEC, but also protected the continuing stable development of “16+1 Cooperation”. Finally, booming local cooperation has greatly promoted the diversification of the forms of cooperation, which is the key point for the “16+1 Cooperation” to set up an all-round, wide field and multi-level cooperation pattern.

Third, “16+1 Cooperation” has accelerated the development of the China-Europe relation.

China took the “16+1 Cooperation” as an important content and beneficial complement of China-Europe relation, and repeatedly mentioned the crucial influence and positive effect on China-Europe relation in all the important occasions and important documents issued related to the “16+1 Cooperation”. Under the “16+1 Cooperation” framework, the CEEC fully grasped the important opportunities, kept expanding cooperation space, and at the same time contributed to the cooperation between China and Europe in the Belt and Road. Considering the prospect of development, “16+1 Cooperation” will bring more benefits to the balanced development in EU region.

Last but not the least, “16+1 Cooperation” is an important platform for promoting the Belt and Road Initiative.

“16+1 Cooperation” has laid a good foundation for promoting the connectivity between China and Europe, through which China has completed the composition of Maritime Silk Road and Silk Road on the Land in Europe. Since a series of hard connectivity projects were launched one after another in Central Eastern European region, and the matching soft connectivity projects were also gradually promoted, there has formed a multi-level and effective cooperation in infrastructure. In the framework of the Belt and Road, the trade cooperation between China and CEEC aimed to maintain stability while ensuring making progress, obtained rapid growth in the investment cooperation, and made outstanding achievements. The framework of the “16+1 Cooperation” insisted on flexibility, market-oriented and pragmatic cooperation as the main direction, actively assisted the operation of the Belt and Road, introduced various financial instruments, provided a number of financial supports, formed a series of financial arrangements, and became a new highlight of the financial cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative. “16+1 Cooperation” has also actively promoted people to people exchanges in the Belt and Road Initiative and formed a series of new initiatives of non-governmental exchanges and communication.

In conclusion, “16+1 Cooperation” has made outstanding achievements and remarkable results in the past five years since its start, while problems also existed. However, as long as we together with the CEEC we can maintain confidence and patience; cooperate together, being sincere, pragmatic, positive and enterprising, “16+1 Cooperation” will move forward steadily and firmly, and attain a yet higher level in the next five years.

# The List of Five-year Outcomes of Cooperation Between China and Central and Eastern European Countries\*

2017/11/28\*\*

China-CEEC Cooperation (or “16+1” Cooperation) is a new cooperation platform established in 2012 by China and 16 Central and Eastern European Countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Thanks to the joint efforts of all participants, under the framework of “16+1” Cooperation, a summit mechanism and cooperation platforms on policy coordination, economy and trade, culture, education, agriculture, transportation, tourism, science and technology, health, think tanks, local exchange, and youth have been established. Remarkable achievements have been made, and resonated well with people from both China and CEE countries. As this year marks the 5th anniversary of “16+1” Cooperation, China has taken stock of the achievements of the past five years and made an outcome list with over 200 items, covering five areas, including policy communication, connectivity, economy and trade, finance, cultural and people-to-people exchange.

## 1 Establish policy communication platform

(1) In April 2012, the 1st Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Warsaw, Poland. China and 16 CEECs jointly issued the Press Communiqu 茅 of the Meeting between the Prime Ministers of China and Central and Eastern European Countries. China put forward Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries.

(2) In September 2012, the inaugural conference of the Secretariat for Cooperation

\* [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/lkqcxzgzdoldrhfwxylcxsh/t1514538.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/lkqcxzgzdoldrhfwxylcxsh/t1514538.shtml).

\*\* Note: the articles with black line are the achievements made by China-CEEC Think Tanks Network.

between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and the 1st China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Beijing, China.

(3) In October 2013, the 2nd China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Bucharest, Romania.

(4) In November 2013, the 2nd Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Bucharest, Romania, and issued the Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries.

(5) In May 2014, the 3rd China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Beijing, China.

(6) In November 2014, the 4th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

(7) In December 2014, the 3rd Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Belgrade, Serbia, and issued the Belgrade Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries.

(8) In April 2015, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed the Special Representative for China-CEEC Cooperation.

(9) In July 2015, the 5th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Beijing, China.

(10) In July 2015, a delegation of senior CEEC officials visited Sichuan Province, Yunnan Province and Beijing, China.

(11) In October 2015, the 6th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Warsaw, Poland.

(12) In November 2015, the 4th Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Suzhou, China, and issued the Suzhou Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and the Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries.

(13) In February 2016, the 1st Quarterly Meeting of 2016 between the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and CEEC embassies in China was held in Beijing, China.

(14) In April 2016, the 2nd Quarterly Meeting of 2016 between the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and CEEC embassies in China was held in Beijing, China.

(15) In May 2016, the Conference of the Presidents of the Supreme Courts of China and CEECs was held in Suzhou, China.

(16) In June 2016, the 7th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Haikou, China.

(17) In August 2016, a delegation of senior CEEC officials visited Fujian Province and Ningxia Province, China.

(18) The 3rd Quarterly Meeting of 2016 between the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and CEEC embassies in China was held in Beijing, China in October 2016.

(19) In October 2016, the 8th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in

Riga, Latvia.

(20) In October 2016, the China-CEEC Political Parties Dialogue was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(21) In October 2016, the 5th Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Riga, Latvia, and issued the Riga Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and the Riga Declaration on infrastructure and equipment cooperation at the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Seaport.

(22) The 4th Quarterly Meeting of 2016 between the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and CEEC embassies in China was held in Beijing, China in December 2016.

(23) The Quarterly Meeting between the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries and CEEC embassies in China was held in Beijing, China in April 2017.

(24) In July 2017, the 9th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Beijing, China.

(25) The China-CEEC Political Parties Dialogue and the 3rd China-CEEC Young Political Leaders' Forum were held in Bucharest, Romania in July 2017.

(26) A delegation of high-ranking officials from CEECs visited Beijing, Gansu Province and Hunan Province in August 2017.

(27) The 10th China-CEEC National Coordinators' Meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary in October 2017.

(28) In November 2017, the 6th Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Budapest, Hungary.

## **2 Enhance connectivity**

(29) In June 2014, the 1st meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Beijing, China.

(30) In June 2014, the High Level Conference on Transport, Logistics and Trade Routes: Connecting Asia with Europe was held in Riga, Latvia.

(31) In December 2014, customs representatives from China, Hungary, Macedonia and Serbia signed a framework agreement on facilitation of customs clearance cooperation.

(32) In December 2014, China, Hungary and Serbia signed an interdepartmental Memorandum of Understanding on Hungary-Serbia railway cooperation projects.

(33) In January 2015, the 2nd meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

(34) In January 2015, the customs clearance facilitation cooperation mechanism for the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line among the Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian, Macedonian and Greek Customs was officially established.

(35) In March 2015, the 1st Working Group Meeting on Cooperation in Facilitating Customs Clearance Among Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs was held

in Shanghai, China.

(36) In May 2015, the 1st Customs Control Techniques Workshop for the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line among the Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs was held in Shanghai, China.

(37) In May 2015, the Beijing-Budapest regular flight was launched by Air China.

(38) In May 2015, heads of customs of China, Hungary, Serbia and Macedonia met in Xi'an, China, and signed the Cooperation Action Plan for 2015-2016.

(39) In June 2015, China signed with Hungary the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Building the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

(40) In July 2015, the 3rd meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(41) In September 2015, China Hainan Airlines launched the Beijing-Prague direct flight.

(42) In October 2015, the Workshop on Customs Clearance Procedures of Transit Goods and Risk Management among the Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs was held in Skopje, Macedonia.

(43) In November 2015, the 4th meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Beijing, China.

(44) In November 2015, China signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Building the "Belt and Road" Initiative with Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Serbia and Slovakia.

(45) In November 2015, China and Hungary signed an agreement on the development, construction and financing cooperation of the Hungary Section of the Hungary-Serbia Railway.

(46) In December 2015, the launching ceremony of the Serbia Section of the Hungary-Serbia Railway was held in Novi Sad, Serbia.

(47) In 2015, China signed interdepartmental Memorandum of Understandings on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt with Macedonia and Romania.

(48) In March 2016, the eRegions on the New eAmber and New eSilk Roads Think Tank Meeting was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

(49) In May 2016, the 1st China-CEEC Transport Ministers Meeting was held in Riga, Latvia. The China-CEEC Secretariat on Logistics Cooperation was established.

(50) In June 2016, China Eastern Airlines launched the Shanghai-Prague direct flight.

(51) In June 2016, the 2nd Working Group Meeting on Cooperation in Facilitating Customs Clearance Among Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(52) In August 2016, China Sichuan Airlines launched the Chengdu-Prague direct flight.

(53) In September 2016, the 5th meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

(54) In September 2016, Air China launched the Beijing-Warsaw direct flight.

(55) In November 2016, China signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Building the "Belt and Road" Initiative with Latvia, and signed bilateral cooperation plans to jointly build the Belt and Road with the government of the Czech Republic.

(56) In November 2016, China signed interdepartmental Memorandum of Understandings on port and harbor industrial park cooperation with Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Croatia.

(57) In November 2016, China signed with Hungary an agreement for the establishment of a joint venture company for Hungary-Serbia Railway, a construction contract and a Memorandum of Understanding on financing cooperation. China signed with Serbia a commercial contract for the Belgrade Center-Stara Pazova Section of the Hungarian-Serbian Railway Line and a Memorandum of Understanding on financing cooperation.

(58) In 2016, China signed interdepartmental Memorandum of Understandings on enhancing cooperation for Internet Silk Road to promote information connectivity with the Czech Republic, Poland and Serbia respectively.

(59) China-CEEC Coordinating Secretariat for Maritime Issues 16+1 was set up in Warsaw, Poland in February 2017.

(60) In April 2017, the 1+3 Seminar on Customs Valuation of China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line among Chinese, Hungarian, Macedonian and Serbian Customs was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(61) In May 2017, China signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Building the “Belt and Road” Initiative with Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.

(62) In May 2017, China and Serbia signed the loan agreements on the modernization and reconstruction of Hungarian-Serbian Railway Line for the Belgrade Center-Stara Pazova Section.

(63) In June 2017, the Workshop on Customs Transshipment Operation of China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line among Chinese, Hungarian, Macedonian and Serbian Customs was held in Ningbo, China.

(64) In June 2017, The 6th meeting of the China-Hungary-Serbia Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Cooperation was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(65) In June 2017, the China-CEEC Customs Cooperation Forum was held in Ningbo, China, and adopted a cooperation initiative on building a partnership of connectivity.

(66) In September 2017, China Hainan Airlines launched the Beijing-Prague-Belgrade flight.

(67) In June 2016, the 3rd Working Group Meeting on Cooperation in Facilitating Customs Clearance Among Chinese, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian Customs was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

(68) In October 2017, the 2nd China-CEEC Transport Ministers Meeting & Business Forum was held in Warsaw, Poland.

### **3 Promote economic cooperation and trade**

(69) In September 2012, the 7th China-CEEC Agro-trade and Economic Cooperation Forum was held in Hefei, China.

(70) In September 2013, the 8th China-CEEC Agro-trade and Economic Cooperation

Forum was held in Hefei, China.

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

(72) In June 2014, the China-CEEC Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Ningbo, China, and adopted the Joint Document of China-CEEC Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation.

(73) In June 2014, the 1st Central and Eastern European Countries' Products Fair (CEEC Fair) was held in Ningbo, China.

(74) In August 2014, the China Investment Forum was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.

(75) In September 2014, a China-CEEC symposium on investment promotion was held in Xiamen, China.

(76) In September 2014, the establishment of China-CEEC Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism was announced in Xiamen, China.

(77) In September 2014, a China-CEEC investment promotion event was held in Xiamen, China.

(78) In October 2014, a promotion event dedicated to CEECs was held in Guangzhou, China, during the 11th China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair.

(79) In October 2014, the 9th China-CEEC Agro-trade and Economic Cooperation Forum was held in Bucharest, Romania.

(80) In October 2014, an event dedicated to China-CEEC cooperation in environmental technologies was held in Poznan, Poland, during the PolEko fairs.

(81) In November 2014, the 2nd Meeting of the Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism of China and CEECs was held in Warsaw, Poland.

(82) In 2014, China signed with Romania and the Czech Republic cooperation documents on peaceful use of nuclear energy.

(83) In 2014, China signed with Hungary, Latvia, Serbia, and Macedonia cooperation agreements on quality inspection.

(84) In April 2015, the 1st meeting of the China-CEEC Business Council was held in Katowice, Poland.

(85) In May 2015, China signed with Hungary a Memorandum of Understanding on nuclear energy cooperation.

(86) In June 2015, the launch ceremony of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation and the China-CEEC Agriculture Ministers' Meeting were held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

(87) In June 2015, the 1st China-CEEC Investment and Trade Expo and its side events — the 1st China-CEEC Forum on Cooperation Development, the 2nd China-CEEC Special Products Fair and the 1st China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Seminar were held in Ningbo, China.

(88) In September 2015, the 10th China-CEEC Agro-trade and Economic Cooperation Forum and the 1st meeting of the Consultative Board of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation were held in Budapest, Hungary.

(89) In September 2015, the 2nd China-CEEC Seminar on Innovation, Technology

Cooperation and International Technology Transfer was held in Bratislava, Slovakia.

(90) In November 2015, the China Investment Forum was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.

(91) In November 2015, China signed with Slovenia a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the China-CEEC coordination mechanism for forestry cooperation.

(92) In February 2016, the 2nd meeting of the Consultative Board of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation was held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

(93) In May 2016, Sarajevo Business Forum 16+1 was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(94) In May 2016, the 1st China-CEEC High-Level Meeting on Cooperation in Forestry and China-CEEC Forestry Business Forum were held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and adopted an action plan for forestry cooperation coordination mechanism.

(95) In June 2016, the 2nd China-CEEC Ministerial Conference on Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Ningbo, China and adopted the Ningbo Declaration.

(96) In June 2016, the 2nd China-CEEC Investment and Trade Expo and its side events - the 3rd China-CEEC Special Products Fair, the 3rd meeting of the CEEC Investment Promotion Agencies Contact Mechanism, and the 2nd China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Seminar were held in Ningbo, China.

(97) In June 2016, the 1st China-CEEC Quality Inspection Cooperation Dialogue was held in Ningbo, China, and issued an initiative on e-certificate and trade facilitation.

(98) In October 2016, Poland and Bulgaria participated in the China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair held in Guangzhou, China.

(99) China attended the Brno International Engineering Fair in Brno, the Czech Republic in October 2016 as a partner country.

(100) In October 2016, the China-CEEC Energy Projects Dialogue and Cooperation Center was established in Bucharest, Romania.

(101) The China Investment Forum was held in Prague in November 2016.

(102) In November 2016, the China-CEEC Agriculture Ministers' Meeting was held in Kunming China, issued the Kunming Declaration, and witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Foreign Economic Cooperation Center of Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation.

(103) In November 2016, the 11th China-CEEC Agro-trade Forum and the 3rd meeting of the Consultative Board of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation were held in Kunming, China. The website of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation was launched.

(104) In November 2016, the China-CEEC Conferences on Innovation Cooperation was held in Nanjing, China and issued the Nanjing Declaration.

(105) In November 2016, the Technology Transfer Virtual Center of China and CEECs was formally established.

(106) In February 2017, the China-CEEC coordination mechanism for forestry cooperation held the 1st meeting.

(107) In April 2017, the 4th meeting of the Consultative Board of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation was held in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(108) In April 2017, China-CEEC Agricultural Products and Wine Exhibition was held during the Economic and Trade Fair in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(109) In May 2017, The 2nd China-CEEC Cultural and Creative Industries Forum as well as the 11th International Service Trade Forum was held in Beijing.

(110) In June 2017, the 3rd Investment and Trade Exposition and its side events - the 2nd China-CEEC Forum on Cooperation Development, the 4th China-CEEC Special Products Fair, and the 3rd China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Seminar were held in Ningbo, China.

(111) In June 2017, the 2nd China-CEEC Quality Inspection Cooperation Dialogue was held in Ningbo, China, and issued a joint statement.

(112) In July 2017, China Investment Forum was held in Prague, the Czech Republic.

(113) In July 2017, China signed with Poland a Memorandum of Understanding on nuclear energy cooperation.

(114) China-CEEC Meeting on E-Commerce within the framework of Belt and Road was held in Chengdu in August 2017.

(115) The 2nd China-CEEC Agricultural Ministers' Forum as well as the 12th China-CEEC Agro-trade Forum was held in Brdo, Slovenia in August 2017.

(116) In August 2017, the 5th Meeting of the Consultative Board of the China-CEEC Association on Promoting Agricultural Cooperation was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia,

(117) Delegations from CEECs took part in the 15th China International Agricultural Products Fair held in Beijing in September 2017.

(118) In October 2017, the China-CEEC Forestry Research and Education Cooperation International Symposium was held in Beijing, China. CEEC representatives visited the China Yiwu International Forest Products Fair.

(119) The China-CEEC Energy Forum and Expo were held in Bucharest, Romania in November 2017. The Forum issued a white paper on energy cooperation dialogue and a minister's statement on conducting joint research for energy cooperation.

(120) In November 2017, the 2nd China-CEEC Conferences on Innovation Cooperation was held in Bratislava, Slovakia.

#### **4 Improve financial cooperation framework**

(121) In June 2012, Bank of China set up a branch in Warsaw, Poland.

(122) In November 2012, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China set up a branch in Warsaw, Poland.

(123) In September 2013, the People's Bank of China signed bilateral currency swap agreements with Hungarian National Bank and State Bank of Albania respectively.

(124) In December 2014, Bank of China set up a branch in Budapest, Hungary.

(125) In December 2014, Bank of China proposed to establish the China-CEEC

Coordinated Investment and Financing Framework.

(126) In 2014, Hungarian National Bank and National Bank of Poland invested in the Chinese inter-bank bond market as overseas central banks. Bank of Lithuania invested in the Chinese inter-bank bond market as QFII.

(127) In 2014, the China-CEEC Investment Cooperation Fund (stage one) was officially launched.

(128) In May 2015, the 33rd Meeting of the Central Bank Governors' Club of the Central Asia, Black Sea Region and Balkan Countries was held in Shanghai, China.

(129) In June 2015, the Hungary Branch of Bank of China was authorized as the first clearing bank for RMB business in the CEE region.

(130) In August 2015, Bank of China set up a branch in Prague, the Czech Republic.

(131) In November 2015, Hungarian National Bank entered China's inter-bank foreign exchange market.

(132) In April 2016, Bank of China issued 1 billion RMB dim sum bonds on behalf of the Hungarian government.

(133) In June 2016, the People's Bank of China signed a bilateral currency swap agreement with National Bank of Serbia.

(134) In June 2016, Poland became a formal member of Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank.

(135) In August 2016, National Bank of Slovakia entered China's inter-bank foreign exchange market.

(136) In August 2016, Bank of China issued 3 billion RMB panda bonds on behalf of the Polish government.

(137) In September 2016, the People's Bank of China renewed the bilateral currency swap agreement with Hungarian National Bank.

(138) In November 2016, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China established the China-CEEC financial holding company.

(139) In December 2016, China Construction Bank set up a branch in Warsaw, Poland.

(140) Since December 2016, Hungarian Forint and Polish Zloty can be directly exchanged in China's inter-bank foreign exchange market.

(141) In January 2017, Bank of China set up a branch in Serbia.

(142) In January 2017, China UnionPay and the Hungary Branch of Bank of China issued the Chinese RMB and Hungarian forint dual-currency debit card.

(143) In April 2017, Czech National Bank issued a banking license for Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

(144) In May 2017, Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank approved Romania as a new prospective member.

(145) In May 2017, Shanghai gold exchange signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hungary Budapest Stock Exchange in Beijing.

(146) In June 2017, Hungary became a formal member of Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank.

(147) In July 2017, Hungary issued 1 billion RMB panda bonds with a three-year maturity

in China's inter-bank bond market.

(148) In October 2017, OTP bank set up a representative office in Beijing.

## **5 Strengthen cultural and people-to-people bonds**

(149) In May 2013, the 1st China-CEEC Ministerial Forum on Cultural Cooperation was held in Beijing, China.

(150) In June 2013, the 1st China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue was held in Chongqing, China.

(151) In July 2013, the 1st China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting was held in Chongqing, China.

(152) In August 2013, Chinese Performing Arts delegation visited Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to purchase programs.

(153) In September 2013, curators of national museum of art from CEECs visited China.

(154) In October 2013, the 1st China-CEEC Young Political Leaders' Forum was held in Beijing, China.

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

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

(157) In April 2014, a delegation of CEEC journalists visited China.

(158) In May 2014, the 1st China-CEEC High-Level Conference on Tourism Cooperation was held in Budapest, Hungary, and China-CEEC Association of Tourism Promotion Agencies and Businesses was officially launched.

(159) In July 2014, Chinese Performing Arts delegation visited Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria to purchase programs.

(160) In August 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting was held in Prague, the Czech Republic. China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Promotion of the Establishment of the Association of Governors of Provinces of China with the Czech Republic.

(161) In September 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks was held in Bled, Slovenia.

(162) In September 2014, the 2nd China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue was held in Tianjin, China.

(163) In September 2014, the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium was established in Tianjin, China.

(164) In October 2014, artistic directors of international dance festivals and choreographers from CEECs visited China.

(165) In November 2014, a promotion event of Chinese and CEEC tourism products was held at the China International Travel Mart in Shanghai, China.

(166) From November to December 2014, delegations of Chinese journalists visited

CEECs.

(167) From February to October 2015, the Chinese Art Festival was held in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia.

(168) In March 2015, the launch ceremony of the Year of Promotion of China-CEEC Tourism Cooperation was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(169) In May 2015, the 1st Meeting of China-CEEC Association of Provincial Governors was held in Hebei Province, China.

(170) In May 2015, Chinese Performing Arts delegation visited Hungary, Serbia and Romania to purchase programs.

(171) In June 2015, a delegation of CEEC journalists visited Zhejiang Province, Henan Province and Beijing, China.

(172) In June 2015, the 1st China-CEEC Health Ministers' Forum was held in Prague, the Czech Republic, and issued the Prague Declaration on health cooperation and development.

(173) From July to August 2015, the 1st China-CEEC Summer Dance Camp was organized in Shaanxi Province, China.

(174) From August to September 2015, the 2nd China-CEEC High-Level Conference on Tourism Cooperation was held in Bled, Slovenia.

(175) In September 2015, the 3rd China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue and the 2nd meeting of the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium were held in Warsaw, Poland.

(176) In October 2015, a delegation of artistic directors of CEEC jazz festivals visited China.

(177) In October 2015, the 1st Seminar on Radio and Television Program Production for Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Shanghai, China.

(178) In October 2015, the 2nd China-CEEC Young Political Leaders' Forum was held in China.

(179) In November 2015, the 2nd China-CEEC Ministerial Forum on Cultural Cooperation was held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

(180) In December 2015, the 3rd China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks was held in Beijing, China.

(181) In February 2016, the News Conference for the 2016 Year of China-CEEC People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges was held in Beijing, China.

(182) From April to May 2016, composers of CEECs visited China.

(183) In May 2016, the China-CEEC Arts Cooperation Forum was held in Beijing, China.

(184) In May 2016, officials from tourism authorities of CEECs attended the 1st World Conference on Tourism for Development in Beijing, China.

(185) In May 2016, China-CEEC Dance Culture Union was launched in Beijing Dance Academy.

(186) In May 2016, the 1st China-CEEC Literature Forum was held in Budapest, Hungary.

(187) In May 2016, a delegation of CEEC journalists visited Guangdong Province, Jiangxi Province and Beijing, China.

(188) In June 2016, the 3rd China-CEEC Local Leaders' Meeting and the 2nd Working Meeting of China-CEEC Association of Governors of Provinces and Regions were held in Tangshan, China, and passed the Articles of China-CEEC Association of Governors of Provinces and Regions and the Tangshan Consensus.

(189) In June 2016, the 2nd China-CEEC Health Ministers' Forum was held in Suzhou, China, issued the Suzhou Joint Communiqué 茅 , and announced the establishment of China-CEEC Association on the Promotion of Health Cooperation, China-CEEC Hospital Cooperation Alliance and the China-CEEC public health cooperation mechanism.

(190) In June 2016, the 1st China-CEEC Cultural and Creative Industries Forum was held in Belgrade, Serbia.

(191) In June 2016, Chinese Performing Arts delegation visited Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia to purchase programs.

(192) In June 2016, famous painters from CEECs visited Guizhou Province, China.

(193) From July to August 2016, the 2nd China-CEEC Summer Dance Camp was held in Yunnan and Guizhou, China.

(194) In August 2016, the Beijing International Book Fair with CEECs being the main guests of honor and the China-CEEC Translation Exhibition were held in Beijing, China.

(195) The 1st China-CEEC Forum of Capital City Mayors was held in Sofia, Bulgaria in September 2016.

(196) The 4th China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue and the 3rd meeting of China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium were held in Beijing, China in October 2016.

(197) Artistic directors of international opera festivals from CEECs visited China in October 2016.

(198) The 1st China-CEEC Experts' Forum on Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in Krakow, Poland in October 2016.

(199) In October 2016, the 1st annual meeting of China-CEEC Dance Culture Union was held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

(200) In November 2016, the Seminar on Sinology Research and Chinese Teaching in Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Riga, Latvia.

(201) The Health Qigong Team visited Slovenia and Serbia to hold promotional activities and training sessions in November 2016.

(202) In November 2016, the International Forum of China and Central and Eastern European Countries was held in Riga, Latvia.

(203) In December 2016, the China-CEEC High-Level Symposium of Think Tanks as well as the closing event of the Year of China-CEEC People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges was held in Beijing, China.

(204) China-CEEC Winter Dance Camp was held in Shenzhen in January 2017.

(205) The opening ceremony of China-CEEC Year of Media Cooperation as well as Film Exhibition of CEEC was held in Beijing in February 2017.

(206) China-CEEC Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine was set up in Budapest, Hungary in March 2017.

(207) From January to March 2017, China took part in tourism fairs in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Serbia.

(208) In April 2017, the annual meeting of the China-CEEC Dance Culture Union was held in Skopje, Macedonia.

(209) China-CEEC Cultural Season was kick-started in China in April 2017.

- (210) The 1st China-CEEC Cultural Heritage Forum was held in Belgrade, Serbia in May 2017.
- (211) The 3rd China-CEEC Health Ministers' Forum was held in Budapest, Hungary in June 2017.
- (212) The 4th batch of journalists from CEECs visited Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen in June 2017.
- (213) The launch ceremony of the Seminar of CEEC scholars was held in Beijing in June 2017.
- (214) In June 2017, the China-CEEC Mayors' Forum was held in Ningbo, China.
- (215) In June 2017, China-CEEC Traditional Chinese Medicine Center in Hungary broke ground.
- (216) In July 2017, a delegation of spokespersons from CEECs visited China and the China-CEEC Spokespersons Dialogue was held in Beijing, China.
- (217) In July 2017, the International Audit Seminar for SAIs along the Belt and Road Routes was held in Nanjing, China.
- (218) The 3rd China-CEEC Summer Dance Camp was held in Chengdu in July 2017.
- (219) In August 2017, the 1st China-CEEC Music Camp was held in Macedonia.
- (220) The 1st China-CEEC Youth Exchange Camp of Future Bridge was held in Beijing and Xi'an in September 2017.
- (221) In September 2017, China-CEEC Music Academy Union and China-CEEC Arts Creation and Research Center were established in Zhejiang Conservatory of Music.
- (222) The 1st China-CEEC Development Forum was held in Warsaw, Poland in September 2017.
- (223) The 3rd China-CEEC Ministerial Forum on Cultural Cooperation was held in Hangzhou in September 2017.
- (224) In September 2017, China-CEEC Libraries Union was officially launched.
- (225) The 5th China-CEEC Education Policy Dialogue and the 4th meeting of the China-CEEC Higher Education Institutes Consortium were held in Novi Sad, Serbia in September 2017.
- (226) The 2nd China-CEEC Capital Mayors Forum was held in Podgorica, Montenegro in September 2017.
- (227) In September 2017, the 2nd China-CEEC High-level Radio and Television Seminar for journalists and editors was held in Nanjing, China.
- (228) The 3rd working meeting of the China-CEEC Local Provincial Governors Association was held in Sofia, Bulgaria in October 2017.
- (229) In October 2017, Directors of CEEC International Folk Art Festival visited China.
- (230) In October 2017, the 1st Dance Master Workshop was held in Beijing Dance Academy.
- (231) The 4th China-CEEC High-level Conference on Tourism Cooperation was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 2017.
- (232) In November 2017, the China-CEEC Think Tanks Network Conference was held in Budapest, Hungary.
- (233) In 2016 and 2017, "Martial Arts on the Silk Road" training sessions were held in Hungary, Romania and Croatia.