

Joint Press Statement
The 21st EU-Macao Joint Committee Meeting
Brussels, 5 December 2016

The 21st EU-Macao Joint Committee meeting was held in Brussels on 5 December 2016, in accordance with Article 16 of the EC-Macao Trade and Co-operation Agreement of 15 December 1992. This was the fifteenth annual meeting since China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR).

This meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Gunnar Wiegand, Managing Director of the European External Action Service for Asia and the Pacific, and Mr. Leong Vai Tac, Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macao SAR Government. Both sides underscored the importance of this annual bilateral meeting, which offers a highly effective platform to conduct fruitful exchanges on topics of common interest.

During the meeting, the EU and Macao SAR updated each other on the latest developments of their economies. The EU side outlined the changing strategic environment and informed Macao SAR of its political and economic priorities.

Macao SAR informed the EU of the recent promulgation of the Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2020), which sets out the blueprint for the economic and social development of the SAR. The plan addresses the initiatives on adequate economic diversification and achieving the goals of "One Centre, One Platform"ⁱ. It outlines proposals for Macao SAR to implement the policy goals stated in the Mainland's "13th National Five-Year Plan" as well as the "Belt and Road" initiative.

The EU and Macao SAR exchanged views on the development of their taxation policies. The EU welcomed Macao SAR's commitment to implement the automatic exchange of information in 2018 and encouraged Macao SAR to take the appropriate steps for the effective and timely activation of this exchange with the EU and other partners, so as to fulfil its commitment in accordance with the OECD

standards. The EU also welcomed the recent decision of Macao SAR to join the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Inclusive Framework.

Given the increasing role of the EU businesses operating in Macao, the EU and Macao SAR agreed that direct exchanges between EU enterprises and the Macao SAR Government would be further strengthened by establishing a regular dialogue. In addition, Macao SAR provided an update on the current government procurement regime.

On EU-Macao co-operation, both sides welcomed the smooth progress of the Third Macao-EU Co-operation Programme in the Legal Field, aimed at promoting the modernisation and development of the Macao SAR's legal system. The EU and Macao SAR highlighted that the co-funding mechanism would encourage Macao researchers to take part in the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The two sides agreed to explore cooperation on environment and green technology, particularly in the Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF).

The EU and Macao SAR agreed that the continuation of the training programme in conference interpretation and translation in Chinese and Portuguese would meet the demand of the EU and Macao SAR for qualified interpreters for both languages. The EU also noted Macao SAR's efforts in combating human trafficking, and both sides looked forward to reinforcing their cooperation in this area.

Finally, the EU and Macao SAR reaffirmed their commitment to maintain close contacts through the established channels. Both sides will continue to foster cooperation in priority fields of mutual interest, such as legal training, interpretation and translation training, research and innovation, combating human trafficking, as well as environment protection.

ⁱ 'Centre' refers to world tourism and leisure centre; and 'Platform' means commercial and trade cooperation services platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.