

China-EU scholars media dialogue on public service

(20 10 in Chengdu on July 9)

Reporter: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I am pleased to invite the China-EU scholars to discuss the public services issues which both two sides concern. First, please allow me to introduce the three scholars who participate this dialogue, they are: Pierre. Bobby, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Public Services; Mihaela Similie, the expert on European public service; Prof. Chen Guang, dean of school of public administration, Southwest Jiaotong University. Today, we mainly discuss the basic concept of public services and their reality.

First of all I would like to ask the EU experts, in Europe, what's the basic meaning of public services in Europe? How to understand the diversity an unity of public services in Europe ?

Pierre. Bobby: First of all, thanks China for her kind invitation, I hope this is not just a conference, but a bilateral communication and exchanges. I would like to pay attention to explain what is diversity and what is unity, why can the two co-exist? For the whole of Europe and the EU member states, public services have a long history and developed with the development of the nation. In the EU, there are 23 official language, we use one common language to communicate and build public services. Through establishing common terms, ideas, cultural traditions and legal system, we create a diversity of public services. The expression of this diversity and composition of various forms of organizations, we also found unity. This diversity and unity resulted from a common European history, splendid culture and struggle with their own cultures. It is this common value that we reached a consensus agreement and common concepts. First of all, the whole of Europe have full enjoyment of the public health care, social security, transport, housing and education and other social rights. Secondly, we make sense of each country across Europe is not

an individual, but rather to strengthen the links between, like the establishment of a harmonious society in China, we are building a harmonious Europe. Third, we exert efforts for our common future to achieve sustainable development as China, we are also made efforts on education and other basic public services and make efforts to adhere to the sustainable development of these public services. A new era of diversity and unity are the performance challenges facing the entire European Union. Please allow me to invite Miss Miheala for further instructions.

Mihaela Similie: About the above mentioned public services issue in Europe, I'd like to make some explanation on the responsibility of the EU members and organizations. Public service is a long-term and common task both for national and regional level. The purpose of constructing public service primarily to serve the public, to meet the demand of citizens. Constructing public service by the provisions of the Constitution and various laws, public services rely on a variety of industries, such as education, transport, medical and other industries. Basic public services are not only for individuals but also for various forms of collective. Therefore, we need to provide both individual and collective public services. Another reality is that countries can communicate and enlighten from each other. Public Service has two concepts: functional and entity. We came here mainly to talk about public service from the functional aspect, because public services are mainly for citizens, and are provided by national and regional agencies. Therefore I can not explain public services only from entity, but from the functional aspect.

Reporter: Thank you for your detailed answers to the question. We found that the public services in Europe have gone very far. As the largest developing country, What's the situation of China's current public services? Here we invite Professor Chen Guang to explain the nature and the main contents of China's current public service.

Professor Chen Guang: I have to use "diversity" and "unity" concept to

describe the problem. Public services are different in different countries and regions because of the economic development level, history, culture and national conditions. This is "diversity." However, the nature of public service is consistent throughout the world. No matter where you live, regardless of your race, religion, occupation, status, identity, and what the income difference, you always need food and shelter, also sickness and death are inevitable. Few have learned, and housing, there will be lines, the strong medical sense of security is the most basic aspirations of every citizen, these are also the basic features of social justice. We call it "unity."

The so-called public service, in essence, is for social justice and human rights to survival, development, built on the basis of certain social consensus, all citizens of a country, should be fair and universal access to services. From the perspective of public service delivery, public services means those who do not pursue profit (not to maximize profit) for the purpose, to effectively encourage fairness, promote the rational allocation, coordinate the regulation of public interest. From the perspective of public service recipients, public service is a basic model for citizens to express and realize their basic rights and common interests, it is also the basic guarantee for non-discriminatory safeguard the basic rights of citizens and maintain social fairness and justice.

At present, we usually refer to the general public services as follows:

- 1 Basic public services (water, electricity, gas, transportation and other public utilities, infrastructure, etc.)
- 2 Economic public services (institution supply, macro-control, information dissemination, regulation and supervision, etc.)
- 3 Social public services (employment, social security, science and science and technology culture, education, health, sports, environmental protection, etc.)
- 4 Public safety-type services (defense, police, fire, etc.)

Reporter: Thank you very much. We are very pleased to see Mr. Pierre lead a team to research the development of public service in Europe We would like to know the role public service play in European social development. Could you please describe it

from the perspective of public service providers' direct contribution to European GDP, employees and numbers of enterprises in fields of public service and the investment?

Pierre. Bobby: First, we concluded the research on concept of European public service, we have made a Mapping for 27 EU member states' public services. In the Mapping, Miss. Mihaela first introduced the public service agencies in Europe, to understand the general situation of social organizations and civil organizations. The data of public service employees in the whole of Europe has been completed statistics, the global data remains unclear. Currently, there are 500 million people in Europe, employed 250 million of which 30% are engaged in public service. GDP in the whole of Europe, 26% are contributed by the public service sector. Currently, there are 500,000 enterprises engaged in energy, transportation, postal and telecommunications industries in Europe. The European investment in public services are 150 billion euros, the public service sectors in Europe play an important role in the socio-economic and they enhance Europe's international competitiveness. These data are a conservative estimation, the actual data may be greater.

Reporter: Whether there are similar data to the European public service? Now I would like to ask Professor Chen, how about the Chinese public service status and level of development? What the phase characteristics? What major achievements has made?

Professor Chen Guang: Public service delivery benchmarks, not just the basic human rights and moral requirements, but also on a overall socio-economic development level. Should be provide and are able to provide are two different concepts. China's per capita GDP in 2009 just over three thousand U.S. dollars, is in the middle-income stage of development of growing gap between the rich and the poor. To maintain its economic and social stability, basic social justice and cohesion, protection of individual fundamental right to survival and development, "basic public

services" must be delivered, including the safeguarding of relief, pension protection, basic education, public health, culture, employment and re-employment, sound environment, public infrastructure etc. China's public infrastructure, basic education, rural cooperative medical care have made great achievements. However, there is a long way to go to realize the equalization of basic public services between east and west, between urban and rural areas and between different income groups. Chengdu, for example, needs 10 years to achieve the equalization of basic public services.

Europe: diversity public services

Reporter: Through the introduction of basic public services by two sides, we find that the development of public services need further excavation. Of course, we also hope that Professor Chen lead his team to continue to conduct in-depth study on this issue. Now I would like to ask the EU experts, in Europe, what are the public service organizations, management and monitoring methods?

Mihaela Similie: With regard to entities of public services, there is diversity in EU countries. Such public services as education, health, police are mainly delivered by the public sectors. The EU Member States have national level and regional level of public services, most public services are delivered by national level agencies. Another form is nationalization public services are common after World War II, such as post, rail and air transportation in some countries mainly delivered by state-owned enterprises. In Eastern European countries now have no all public ownership due to the disintegration of Eastern Europe happened in late 80s and early 90s. The third form is local autonomy, which has 150 years of development history in Europe. This model includes public and private cooperation, mainly in three forms: authorization, public-private partnerships and government procurement. Among them, public-private partnerships (PPPs) is a public management idea. Finally, I would like to mention the form of social cooperation, namely the local government cooperates with other social organizations to provide public services to meet public demands. In terms

of economic public service, in the past 25 years, we mainly manage them through regulatory agencies to ensure effective competition. Of course, there are consumer regulatory agencies in Europe to manage public services, the consumer regulatory agencies both are at national level and industry level.

Public Service: Serve for Vulnerable Group

Reporter: Thanks for Miss. Mihaela detail introduction. As a common citizen, we are very concerned about how to ensure public services serve for citizens, especially for social vulnerable groups, rather than a tool for accumulating wealth for those service agencies? Let's invite Professor Chen to share his own views.

Professor Chen Guang: Delivering basic public services for the public, especially for the vulnerable groups is the government's basic responsibilities and important commitments. There are three aspects of basic public services. Firstly, it emphasizes the main subject of provision basic public services is government. Secondly, it emphasizes the basic public services refer to those most close to the people's livelihood. Thirdly, basic public services have a reasonable model of governance. In general, governance consists of three aspects: public participation, transparency and accountability. Public participation ensure that citizens have the right to express in the process of public service, including express their demands for services and to participate in the evaluation of the results of the service. Transparency ensures that citizens can understand public service policies, process and outcomes and avoid information asymmetry. And accountability requires public service providers are responsible for the results of public service.

In addition, to ensure that public services benefit the public, government must convert the concept of performance, shift GDP-performance-oriented to service-oriented, from the social utility management to public services. Strengthen the supervision and control to public service delivery process, the government should

represent citizens to monitor the delivery and producing public services instead of being captured by a few interest groups.

Government and Market: Cooperative Delivery Public Services

Reporter: The development of public administration seems always in problem-finding and problem-solving process. In the EU, public service is already in a high stage of development. I would like to ask Mr. Pierre, what the European public service shows the development trends? What are the problems?

Pierre. Bobby : Yes, even if the European public service has developed to a higher level, there are still many problems to be solved. Now the European countries are trying to find solutions to national problems. I'd like to discuss the solutions from a practical sense.

As we know, market failure and government failure are not uncommon, therefore, government and market should cooperate to solve public service related problems, to combine the advantages of both sides to participate in the competition while taking care of public interests. For the general concept, I want to explain further.

First of all, as far as agency is concerned, we need local government, regional government, national government or even the entire EU to develop legal, policies to address the common problems faced. This is a serious problem, requiring agencies and groups to work together. As Professor Chen just put, the provision of public services need public participation and information disclosure. Public service delivery agencies need to be chosen, Is it delivered by the State, social organizations or the private sector? In particular, if we are to build pipelines in the city, such as energy pipelines or building subways, Is it to be built by the Government or by a certain private enterprise? Another problem is that, as mentioned above, pipeline construction is directly managed by the Government or by a dedicated agency? All in

all, public services can not become a symbol of bureaucratic, but should meet the needs of the public, so that people who truly enjoy the satisfaction of public services. This requires us to consider public service is to meet the higher authorities' requirements or to meet the general public demand. We should have some articles written on different sectors such as education, transport, etc., should be based on the historical development of different national rules and regulations written to regulate the effective delivery of public services.

Public Service: The Main Responsibility of Chinese Government

Reporter: Thank you for your concise and vivid induction. As for China, as the economy's sustained high development, various kinds of social contradictions are constantly accumulating. Let's invite Professor Chen to talk about why the great achievements China has made not reduce but rather reinforced the social management and public service problems ?

Professor Chen Guang: It's no doubt that China's 30 years reform and opening up has made tremendous achievements. However, we can still find there are a lot of problems: employment, social security, income distribution, education, health, residential housing, work safety, justice and public security. Some of us even get confused: Why the huge economic success, not only not reduce but seems to have enforced social management and public services problems?

As we step into the 21st century, the increasingly prominent social contradictions, conflicts and disturbing moral dilemmas show in essence that the principal contradiction in China today has changed to the public's growing public goods and public services demand with public goods supply deficiency, uneven development of public services, and unfair delivery of public services. In other words, we believe that public service's "deficiency, unequal and unjust" is the current major social and management issues.

This is why the Chinese government takes "public service" as one of the Government's four main functions (the other three functions are market supervision, economic regulation and social management). In reality, the deficiency and non-comprehensive of public service provision model, coverage area of public service and service effectiveness will still be China's long-term challenge facing all levels of governments.

We spent 30 years to establish a market economy. China's next 30 years development will depend on our social management and public service achievements.

Reporter: Thank you, Professor Chen. The final question for Mr. Pierre, you have participated the last two China-Europa Social Forum, then do you have any expectations for this coming forum?

Pierre. Bobby: I have attended the previous two forums, both were the discussions on public service. The third forum just begin, I also bring a lot of opinions. On this forum I have a lot of surprises. Firstly, we have more time to communicate with each other and mutual understanding; Secondly, public service problems and challenges discussed in this forum will be much more extensive; Thirdly, China and the EU are currently in different situation, Europe is in financial crisis, while China is still in development stage. Our forum will discuss a number of public service issues, and put the problems of public services on the agenda, deepen and try to solve them, which has positive effect to solve the financial crisis in Europe and the problems facing in China's development. I believe that the China-EU cooperation on public services will have a long-term future and sound development.

Reporter: What's your opinion on the same issue, Ms. Mihaela?

Mihaela Similie: I am pleased to be here. In fact I have already participated once in

the China-Europa Social Forum, but the change in China has made a deep impression on me. Trip to China I would like to learn more about the history and current status of public services of China. As Professor Chen put, the problems facing the public service in China are also very common in Europe, We cannot find a stable answer to solve the public service problems. As we know, the development of public services in Europe has a long history, but that does not mean that all countries have developed to the same stage. I am very grateful for this opportunity to participate in the forum, and to discuss the common challenges facing the public service both in EU and in China together with Professor Chen and other experts.

Reporter: Thanks for EU experts' wonderful speech. Finally, I would like to ask Professor Chen, after you have read the materials on EU-27 basic public services, what do you think the enlightenments can China obtain from European public service organizations, management and supervision?

Professor Chen Guang: Europe, particularly in North Europe countries' public service system, the basic consensus, the concept of content, service standards, organizational structure, management policies, market opening, regulatory rules are worth studying by China for her current development.

Firstly, its advanced public service concept in Europe. In Europe, there is a concept called " Services of general interest"--SGIs, it refers to the public authorities provide market or non-market public services for citizens on basis of general interest and public service responsibility, regardless who are the provision subjects and no matter what are the delivery ways, to meet the needs of the public interest is the basic function of public service. In the " Mapping of the public services in Europe", they not only made the quantitative description of public services in GDP contribution, but also emphasis on public services' "positive externalities". SGIs bring different social strata, intergenerational and regional solidarity and redistribution of optimization and upgrading the competitiveness of the role of the EU can not estimate. Similarly, we can also believe that good public service is a truly harmonious development of

society and won an important foundation for the future.

Secondly, the governance model of public services in Europe. In Europe, not only can we find the consensus in the basic concept of public service, standards, services content attendant with European integration, but can we find the diversity of public service in different regions and different countries. There are also a variety of governance, including the model of public administrations and national companies, All public, local autonomy, delegated management and externalization, New Public Management regulatory agencies, etc., which, in the way of public service delivery, the general trend is gradually reduce the public sector's direct intervention, to encourage the private sector and the social forces participation, establish partnerships with non-profit organizations, implement strict and professional public service regulation by laws and carry out widely social dialogue, etc., this has important enlightenments for China's current development.

Reporter: Tonight's China-EU scholar media dialogue on public service present here made the history of Sino-European public services, current situation, problems and challenges more clearly for all of us. Thanks our China-EU scholars' elaborate and detail discussion. I hope we have the opportunity to follow the future of and trends of public service in China and in Europe. The dialogue ends here tonight, thank you for coming.

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