

## China and Europe: Towards more sustainable rural-urban development

China and the EU should work on better rules and support mechanisms for the integration of rural, urban and trade policies. Better integration will promote cohesion between advantaged and disadvantaged regions. The EU and China should give clear priority to food security. They should enable rural populations to participate in rural planning and to re-invest a growing share of the added value of their products into environmentally friendly and socially viable rural infrastructure so as to modernise their rural economies.

China and the EU share an important part of responsibility for a sustainable use of natural resources and a reliable global food supply. The EU can rise to the challenge by turning away from a subsidy-driven, oil-based and export-oriented farm policy towards a market-based, energy-saving, and quality-oriented rural development policy. China can rise to this challenge by improving the rural infrastructure and economies through reallocation of trade surplus in rural development projects so as to avoid unbalanced rural-urban migration and urbanisation at the expense of dwindling natural resources and environmental conditions.

China and the EU should together address problems of wasteful lifestyles and unsustainable use of resources. Governments and private companies should intensify research and technological development which allows for a radical reduction of the wasting of water and energy in the industrial, agricultural and traffic sector. They must favour the use of organic waste material for energy production in decentralised systems instead of promoting unsustainable agro-industrial fuels production which puts global food security at risk. If well guided by public policies and private investments both internal markets of the EU and China have the potential to move quickly from non renewable energy based economies to solar, wind, and water-energy based economies.

The EU and China should work hard on common rules for fair trade. Under current conditions most European and Chinese farmers cannot compete with imports from many regions of the world because either their production costs are higher or their market access is jeopardised. Free market access for farm imports as claimed by the WTO often undermines efforts to reach local food security, higher environmental and social standards and rural development progress. Therefore China and the EU should work on common rules for *qualified market access* which include sustainability criteria as a condition for market access abroad and which allow to transfer import levies for missing compliance with these standards into rural development support measures in the countries of origin.

The EU and China should support each other in good rural development practices through exchange programmes, networking and capacity building. The EU can offer its LEADER and URBAN programme experiences, which have mobilised the remarkable creative potential of rural and urban communities with relatively small resources and high innovative effects on the local level. Civil society rural networks have become a professional partner of governments in this process. China can offer an enormous potential of well educated academics and engaged citizens ready to guide and manage the process of a rapid rural urban migration but also to invest into a sustainable future of China's future rural economies and sustainable food production.

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