

A journey of talk

I left Beijing for Brussels by air on Oct. 3rd, 2007, and flew to Lyons before the welcome ceremony ended. The purpose of the journey was to join the second Sino-Euro Forum. At first I declined the invitation when I was informed by invitation from my e-mail address, for I think that few forum meeting are interesting. It's He LIJUN, the secretary of the preparatory Office in Zhongshan University, who patiently explained the purpose and organization of the Forum to me, and finally I took interest in it and made up my mind to take this travel.

First, I went to Lyons for two-day group meeting in the city Bird Garden, and then backed to Brussels to attend the whole conference. The main topic in group meeting was biology diversity and ecosystem management. The representatives from European countries explained what they had done and what difficulties they had. In the group meeting the attendants had warm discusses on the common ground and disputes between China and Euro countries. The topics discussed included the followings: who is the real holder of biology diversity resources? Who can be the main body in the protection of biology diversity? Others involved the relationship between culture and agricultural biology diversity, between the independence and utilities factors of scientific research, the vast application of chemical pesticide and gene technology in agriculture production, etc.

Although the representatives from China and European countries respectively expressed their views on biology diversity and ecosystem management in the meeting and out of the meeting, and these views did not always agree with each other, the important thing was that such discusses encouraged both sides to think about the related problems, made both sides understand what the common challenges they were facing now and what they should do to deal with these challenges. In the session, I exchanged views with Ms. Marion Diaz, who is from France Villarceaux Eco-center, on development of organic agriculture. The eco-center she works with now is to use the rails to separate a 360 hectares large farmland controlled by the Center to make it a test land for organic agriculture based on biology diversity. This way of separating a whole into many parts made me surprised for such a way, much like the simple production system based on single farmer household in China, is always regarded as a sign of backwardness.

We began to reinforce exchanges since then. We flew to France second time on March 2nd, 2008, for this time the other two came with me. We wanted to continue the discusses opened at the second Sino-Euro Forum with France Villarceaux Eco-center and related French bodies, and have a visit to the organic farmland the Eco-center managed. Ms. Marion Diaz arranged a one-day workshop at the farmland and the French side detailedly introduced the French agricultural development, particularly the use of chemical pesticide in France and other European countries, the gene product, and agriculture assessment in east European countries, etc. We introduced the ecology risk research on gene product, chemical control on pests and organic agricultural

development in China. During our sojourn Ms. Marion Diaz took us around the organic farmland, introduced the management, cultivation and the future work of the farmland. Later she offered us a visit to the headquarter of Sino-Euro Forum. We had a review on the second Sino-Euro Forum with Dr. Yushuo and Dr. Eglentine, both are majordomo of the Forum. They expressed their ideas and thoughts about the third Sino-Euro Forum, and we made some suggestions. What the deepest impression this journey left us was that we gained better understanding of the idea which originated from the second Sino-Euro Forum, that is, both sides of China and European countries are facing many common problems in agricultural development and environmental protection , and need learning from each other, friendly talks and cooperation to deal with them.

Ms. Marion Diaz left her sparsely populated farmland and flew to Kunming on purpose on 27th May 2008. It was her first visit to China and she hoped that she could get a direct view of the simple production system based on single farmer household during her one-week sojourn in Yunnan province, China. From May 28th to 31st Dr. Yushuo came to and stay in Yunnan and what she hoped was that the small scale agricultural development and research with ecological diversity as a base could be an important part of Sino-Euro Forum. On their way to Fuxian Lake, they were impressed by the natural villages, the full use of the land, the farmland diversity featured with various vegetables and crops and the beautiful rural scene. Ms. Marion Diaz amazed at the scenic nature and village. Because what she had seen in Yunnan was completely different from the large plain agriculture in France. Dr. Yushuo, who had research on shepherders at Alps mountain areas, said that in European mountain areas, such farmlands were totally abandoned, and the Yunnan farmers' experience may give inspiration to European mountain area farmers to reassess the value of traditional agriculture.

One feature of the Sino-Euro Forum is to try to combine the great human views with people's daily life and producing practice. And it's Clanmor, the initiator of the Forum and a thinker, whose travel to China changed the design of the Forum from biannual form into groups' long-term dialogue in their respective field. So Dr. Yushuo placed much hope on the group of ecological diversity. She hoped there were some innovations in organizational way, and with the aid of local government and media, there was a good combination of ecological diversity and multi-national cultural diversity. We also paid our attention to try to establish a long-term and concrete platform for exchange and cooperation between China and European countries instead of the present cooperation which is relatively softer and abstract in a macro sense. For example, to establish a nongovernmental organization or a school in China, which is like peaceful school in Europe. We could mobilize the domestic resources and European countries could mobilize international studies or educational resources and the construction fee for the start. Such a platform could be a micro support to the present soft platform of Sino-Euro Forum. Dialogue is something involved with art, and imagination plays role in it.

In the end, we arranged Ms. Marion Diaz a visit to Dali city, Yunnan, hoping that she could have some impressions on national culture and agriculture system of Dali. These

days' visits brought us an idea, that is, in regard of the protection of agricultural biology diversity, the self-determination on foodstuff and management of agriculture production, China's small scale and simple agricultural production system based on the single farmer household may be deserved to be reassessed. This knowledge comes from the understanding of French and other European countries' agricultural status quo and the Europe's reflection on modern agriculture. Recognizing it, a French doctor on agricultural assessment, under the direction of Sino-Euro Forum and EU Alasmo Research, will come to work at the ecological substitute technology center the next spring.

Our cooperation just begins and we expect this cooperation can last for a long period. We hope the Sino-Euro Forum could be a place for mutual respect, mutual learning and mutual cooperation, be a great process of dealing with common difficulties with common efforts.

by Dr Kuang Rongping, June, 16th, 2008