



CHINA-EUROPA FORUM

## The format of the third biennial of the Forum China - Europa

*July 2008*

To understand the format of the third biennial one must remember the spirit of the Forum and the format of the second biennial held in Europe in October 2007.

The spirit of the Forum is that of a continuous dialogue, constantly deepened and global, between the Chinese society and the European society, both seen in their diversity. Each biennial should be a tangible progress compared to the previous one.

The format of the second biennial enhanced the richness of a constant back and forth between diversity and unity. The diversity was symbolized by the workshops: 19 socioprofessional workshops giving voice to the different components of the society and 27 thematic workshops covering a wide range of challenges facing each society. But diversity was also symbolized by the fact that, within each workshop, participants came from all parts of Europe and China and by the fact that on both European and Chinese sides, a large number of different points of view were expressed, ruling out the idea that there was a European perspective on one hand and a Chinese perspective on the other hand.

The unity was symbolized by the respect, by each workshop and for the plenary sessions, of the same principles of animation and reporting. The analysis of the conclusions of all workshops has reinforced this sense of unity by showing that, beyond the many differences within each society and between the Chinese and European contexts, both sides were confronted with four major common challenges: the need to rethink current models of development to move towards sustainable societies, the need to combine loyalty to the traditions and culture and perspectives of modernity and globalization, the need to think together as global players meant to build a legitimate global governance, democratic and effective, the need to rethink at different levels the management of society and the involvement of various sectors of the population in the public choices. The third biennial must go further along the same principles.

### **1. The work in workshop**

Unlike the second biennial - where the organizers, especially the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress, coordinator of the Forum, has established an a priori list of workshops and has looked, in connection with the Renmin University, the Sun Yat Sen University in China and the Free University of Brussels in Europe, for prime movers on both sides for each workshop-, for the third biennial, there will be workshops only where, on the Chinese and European sides, a strong willingness to lead a workshop will have been expressed.

There would thus be two kinds of workshops: those who continue the work of workshops of the second biennial (list attached); those resulting from new initiatives. These initiatives may be of two kinds: the creation of a workshop on a topic that has not been discussed at the second biennial, such as health problems and funding of public health; those resulting of the development of workshops from the second biennial, for example, a workshop on local policies, on housing, on transport policies.

The distinction is nevertheless maintained between socioprofessional and thematic workshops, as well as remained the division of workshops in nine groups: four socio-professional groups and five thematic groups (see also the attached list of workshops at the second biennial) .

## **2. Holding a workshop at the third biennial in China is one step in a continuous dialogue**

In the summer of 2008, the new site of the Forum China - Europa ([www.china-europa-forum.net](http://www.china-europa-forum.net)) will be ready. It offers to each existing or newly created workshop an autonomous space for work allowing both sides to clarify concepts, share information and ideas, discuss, expand the circle of participants in the dialogue.

## **3. The common functions of the workshops**

The format of the different workshops of the third biennial may vary, but all of them must meet the same functions, which are:

- to rely on concrete experiences in China and Europe;
- to help deepening mutual understanding;
- to seek, beyond the diversity of responses, the unity of general principles;
- to stimulate reflection on the four major challenges identified during the second biennial;
- to share thoughts with as wide an audience as possible.

## **4. Each workshop should be seen as a journey**

A workshop is in itself a milestone in an ongoing process of dialogue. But to perform the functions assigned to it, each workshop will adopt a format that allows it to be itself a journey with different stages :

The Chinese and European organizers of the workshops will have to agree on the location and duration of the workshop and on its specific content. To help fixing ideas, one can estimate that the duration of the workshop will be between three and seven days and will include the following steps:

1. a time dedicated to visit and meeting to root the reflection on concrete situations;
2. a time for intellectual exchange between the workshop's participants. The conclusions of the second biennial, in the case of a workshop which already existed, or internet exchanges prior to the workshop, will provide relevant material for such a dialogue;
3. an optional step, where participants will work together on bringing responses to a specific problem, thus benefiting from each other's view;
4. a phase to value the reflections in view of the plenary;
5. a stage of circulation and broad exchanges on the results of the workshop, through various media including internet forums.

## **5. The plenary meetings**

The plenary sessions of the second biennial were bringing together, in Brussels on October 6 and 7, all the participants to the workshops. All Forum participants attended the same plenary. The plenary's aims were: to give a large visibility to the whole process, to demonstrate the support of public institutions in China and Europe to this process of dialogue, to identify elements of synthesis from the work of all workshops ; to define together perspectives for the future.

Thanks to these achievements, the Forum has evolved into a process of continuing dialogue. Therefore, the plenary sessions of the third biennial must be substantially different and emphasize the joint work drawn from the workshops' syntheses.

The plenary meetings will take place in Hong Kong and will bring together all the participants to identify the lessons of the Forum and the outlook for the next step.