

**SAARBRÜCKEN PREPARATORY  
MEETING FOR THE THIRD  
BIENNIAL OF THE FORUM**

5 – 6 December 2008

(Media Release)



The Saarbrücken preparatory meeting has been held **on December 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> at the European Academy of Otzenhausen** in partnership with the **ASKO EUROPA-STIFTUNG**. Mr. Klaus-Peter Beck, president of the ASKO EUROPA-STIFTUNG, Mr. Michael Meimeth, the Director General of the ASKO EUROPA-STIFTUNG and Mr. Pierre Calame, President of the China-Europa-Forum Foundation, attended the opening session together with more than 50 participants representing universities, research institutes, foundations, associations and media from France, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Portugal, Romania, Germany, Denmark, Poland, Moldova, Luxembourg, Italy, the Czech Republic, the UK, Belgium and Hong Kong at the European Academy of Otzenhausen.

Mr. Meimeth welcomed the participants and hosted the opening session. In his speech, he gave an introduction regarding the organization, the mission and of the strategy of the ASKO EUROPA-STIFTUNG and he noted: "We would like to support the initiative of the China-Europa Forum in the building of a society-to-society dialogue between China and Europe. It's a great pleasure for us to organise jointly here the preparatory meeting for the third biennial meeting of the Forum. I hope that will bring a very concrete result and be a successful, interesting and productive meeting."

Pierre Calame, president of the China-Europa-Forum Foundation than addressed the audience and outlined: "The China-Europa Forum is a prototype of what should in our view become in the future a new way of dialogue between societies. Why a comprehensive society-to-society dialogue? Because we have entered a new world where interdependence between societies and between humanity and the biosphere have reached a point of no return. Cooperation between Europe and China is longer a choice, it is a necessity. In facing the common challenges under the globalization, there is no other solution than to build a long term process of mutual, deep understanding." He invited everybody to participate in this face to face dialogue between the two societies and explained the conception of the workshops each constituted on the four pillars Intellectual, Geographical, Network and Media.

Pierre Calame informed that the workshops will be organised next year all over the mainland China, and also in HK, Taiwan and Macao just before the plenary session of the third Biennial Meeting of the Forum in July 2009 organized in partnership with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He explained also that the third Biennial is different than last Biennial organised in 2007 where the organisers selected all the workshops in order to reflect the diversity of the socio-professional groups and of the challenges for both societies. But this time, the Biennial favours a "self organised" process, Europeans and Chinese make proposals of themes they would like to discuss with their counterparts and search for the various stakeholders who could be involved in the workshop.

The Saarbrücken meeting took place in two steps. The first day was based on collecting data and the 50 participants worked in five small groups with aim to exchange information and to look for potential partners. On the second day, Mr. Pierre Calame thanked all participants for their contribution on suggesting 5 new topics of workshops which will be added to the existent list of the around 200 proposals for topics. Afterwards, Pierre Calame answered questions of the participants on how to organise the workshop, how to get informed and follow up the next steps of the Forum.

In the conclusion session, Mr. Rui D'Avila Lourido, president of the Observatory for China based in Lisbon, addressed the audience and gave his very interesting and useful experience in participating in the Second Forum last year in Europe. Mrs NG Guat-Tin, representing the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, also gave the conclusion on the two days meeting.

The Saarbrücken meeting is the third European preparatory meeting organised with the financial support of the Directorate General for External Relations of the European Commission and the support of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union.

Around 200 representatives coming from twenty European countries took part in those three preparatory meetings. In total, more than 200 proposals for workshop topics have been expressed during three preparatory meetings. The European topics suggested together with the Chinese topic proposed will constitute the base of the choice of workshops for the third Biennial of the China-Europa Forum.