

## Annex 1

# Speech at the 8th High-Level Dialogue Conference of the China-Europe Water Platform

*H.E.* Mr. E Jinping, Minister of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China

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(Draft)

Your Excellency Minister Fernandez,  
Your Excellency Commissioner Sinkevičius,  
Honorable ministers,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Greetings!

2020 is a trying year for us all. The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately disrupted my plan of hosting my EU friends in Zhengzhou, China last September. Nonetheless, I was glad to greet you all at this video conference and discuss policies and experiences related to water governance. On behalf of the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) of China, let me congratulate on the convening of the 8th annual high-level dialogue of the China-EU Water Platform (CEWP) and also welcome all the colleagues who join us online!

The world is undergoing paradigm shifts unseen in a century. In 2020, China and the EU stayed unwavering on the track of mutual support, solidarity, and cooperation. Chinese President Xi Jinping held multiple virtual meetings with leaders of the European Council and the European Commission. The China-EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment were also recently concluded. The China-EU comprehensive strategic relationship pressed ahead despite the negativities brought by the pandemic, bringing great promises to the cooperation between the two sides.

Water cooperation features prominently in the China-EU partnership. Since 2012, China and the EU have held seven high-level dialogues, implemented many cooperative projects, and issued three joint statements including the Guimaraes Declaration in 2019. The results of water cooperation have been recognized in the outcome documents of China-EU leaders' summits, which means we are well-positioned to pursue deeper and more solid progress. In

2020, we in the water sector showed support and care to each other in times of difficulty, and carried out a variety of online exchanges that turned out to be very successful. As the pandemic is not yet contained, the water sector, as an important part of the economy and society, should work together to combat the pandemic and help the economy revive. Therefore, it is of particular significance that we are here today to exchange experiences and measures of protecting the water and ecological environment and strengthening water governance, the culmination of which will be the Beijing Declaration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Chinese government attaches great importance to water resources development. It is fundamental to safeguarding and enhancing public well-being, ecological integrity and healthy economic growth. Under the leadership of the Chinese government, MWR overcame difficulties brought by the pandemic, and made headway in several focal areas: realizing drinking water security for people who live under China's national poverty line, containing grave floods in major rivers, introducing a bunch of strategically important water infrastructure, enforcing water conservation and management, and ecological restoration in rivers and lakes. We are proud to have contributed to China's decisive fight against poverty and its dream of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects.

As China strives to become a modern socialist country in the new era, we will continue to pursue innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development. China has envisioned a new development pattern featuring dual circulations, with the domestic circulation being the mainstay and the domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other. In short, we wish to pursue high-quality development. As a government organ, MWR will follow the new strategies and continue to act on the keynote principle of water reform and development, that is "to make up the shortfall in water works and strengthen the supervision of the water sector". We hold it as our mission to ensure a more sound, sustainable and secure water development, and to realize happy rivers and lakes that benefit the people.

I will briefly touch on our intended actions on two focal areas.

**First, waterworks. we aim to establish a systemic, coordinated, and intelligent water infrastructure system, with the design and building of a national water grid at the core.**

To optimize water resources allocation and enhance resilience to floods and droughts, China identify the four highest priorities in infrastructure development: key water sources and water diversion, flood control, water supply, and ecological restoration.

**I.** We will shore up the flood control capacity and optimize the flood control system and layout. In this regard, floodwater storage and discharge will both be strengthened, with more weight on discharge. We will strengthen flood passage, regulation and retention, and risk mitigation.

**II.** We aim to establish a reasonable national water resources allocation system and guarantee the water supply security in both urban and rural areas. Water resources shall be regulated

between wet and dry seasons in a coordinated and optimized manner, and water resources allocation projects must be able to cushion insecurities in the water supply system.

**III.** We will launch major remediation initiatives that respect, protect, and restore the integrity of the ecosystem and the river basins. Such protection and restoration projects focus on maintaining the function of rivers and lakes as ecological corridors and on creating more high-quality ecosystem services.

**IV.** Last but not least, we aim to realize a more intelligent national water grid. Next-generation information technologies like the Internet of Things, big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain hold broad prospects in the future of a smarter water sector.

**Second, supervision. Supervision of the water sector must be carried out on a regular basis with reliable standards and by the rule of law.** An effective and enforceable water supervision system should be buttressed with improved laws and regulations, institutions, and mechanisms.

**I.** We will continue to enforce and strengthen the river chief and lake chief mechanism. By stepping up water fronts development control, environmental flow management, and dredging regulation, we hope to promote a healthier state of China's watercourses.

**II.** We will establish a rigid water use restriction system and implement national water saving action plan. There should be clear indicators governing water volume distribution on basin-scale, regional water use caps, and double control of water table and water availability. Water use shall be zoned and managed in a differentiated way. Development planning and program need to respect the available volume and carrying capacity of water.

**III.** We will also strengthen the supervision of soil conservation. Aiming at reducing soil erosion loss and improving soil conservation rate, we will improve both the science and practices and institutionalize supervision of man-made incidence.

**IV.** We will strengthen the supervision of water works. From construction to management, we need to supervise and enhance the projects' performance in the whole life cycle, including sound operation, strict scheduling control, and realizing comprehensive benefits.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Though geographically far apart, China and Europe have long been intimate partners. We are proud to have rich experiences related to laws and regulations, management and institution, technology and standards, the market mechanisms, etc. These experiences can be valuable beyond our borders. I suggest we can carry on our cooperation in the following three directions:

**First, we hope to deepen our dialogue on water policies.** Acting on commitments made in the outcome documents of leaders' summit, we need to touch base on the concepts,

experiences and technologies we each have in fields like water and ecological protection, river basin management, and flood control and disaster mitigation. This will work to the benefit of bettering water governance on both sides. A recent work focus can be consolidating the outcomes and policy recommendations from the Partnership Instrument projects.

**Second, we hope to advance scientific research and business cooperation.** Under the framework of China-EU scientific and technological cooperation and platform, I urge the scientific research institutes from both sides explore funding opportunities from Horizon Europe and China-EU Science and Technology Cooperation Program. Companies with high-quality technologies, products and services should also be facilitated in expanding their overseas presence. China welcomes European companies to engage with China's water sector and achieve win-win cooperation.

**Third, we hope to advance cooperation on global water security.** The successful China-EU water cooperation can be instrumental in setting an example for global water cooperation. We need to actively contribute to the global water governance process so that we can realize the water targets under the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and secure a better world for all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Though we are deprived of physical travel opportunities due to the pandemic, we remain keen on deepening cooperation and confident in what we can deliver jointly. Let's stay together and carry on!

Thank you.