



## PRESS RELEASE – 8 May 2012 – Brussels

### **Covenant of Mayors: European initiative to boost EU-China urbanisation partnership**

**The Covenant of Mayors will be the pivotal structure of the EU-China Mayor's Forum, announced Commissioner Günther Oettinger at the opening session of the EU-China urbanisation partnership held last Thursday in Brussels.**

The high-level event gathered 500 participants out of which 200 Chinese delegates. Twenty Chinese mayors, including leaders of Beijing, Shenzhen and Chengdu were present to discuss with their European peers. The mayors of Heidelberg and Malmö recalled the crucial role to be played by the Covenant of Mayors in this new cooperation endeavour.

“Our experience in building sustainable energy concepts with cities dates back to 2007 with the creation of the Covenant of Mayors,” said Commissioner Oettinger. The Covenant of Mayors, the EU's mainstream initiative involving local authorities towards Europe's energy and climate objectives, gathers some 4.000 cities voluntarily committed to European targets, while creating local growth and jobs. Given the “wealth of experience” it has already acquired, the Covenant of Mayors will be the pivotal structure of the EU-China Mayor's Forum.

The first EU-China Mayors' Forum is to be organised later this year in the framework of the partnership. The Forum aims at bringing together European and Chinese mayors to enhance peer-to-peer co-operation and share experiences and best practices. Cities will soon be invited to take part.

In view of the upcoming Forum, Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of Regions, called on the China Association of Mayors to sign an agreement with the EU. A similar initiative has already been taken with the US Conference of Mayors. The appeal of the Covenant of Mayors indeed stretches far beyond EU borders, as evidenced by the European Commission's decision to extend the initiative to Eastern and South Mediterranean partnership countries.

Launched in February 2012, the EU-China urbanisation partnership aims at creating an open platform where EU and Chinese decision makers and stakeholders share experiences and develop joint solutions to address the economic, social and environmental challenges brought by the unprecedented rising rates of urbanisation in Europe and especially in China. The urbanisation partnership is meant to enhance cooperation in areas such as urban planning, energy supply and demand management, development of 'green' digital cities, mobility, inclusion of migrants and management of water and waste.

#### **More information:**

Covenant of Mayors initiative: [http://www.eumayors.eu/index\\_en.html](http://www.eumayors.eu/index_en.html)

EU-China urbanisation partnership:

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/eu\\_china/sustainable\\_urbanisation/sustainable\\_urbanisation.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/eu_china/sustainable_urbanisation/sustainable_urbanisation.htm)

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