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Busquin uses Beijing speech to promote EU-China S&T cooperation

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Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin emphasised the benefits to both Europe and China of increased cooperation in science and technology (S&T), in a speech delivered at Tsinghua University in Beijing on 8 April.



Mr Busquin pointed out that China was the first country in Asia with which the EU concluded a joint S&T agreement, and added that all the instruments of the Framework Programme for research had been opened to Chinese scientists with the aim of boosting cooperation.

'In just four years, between 2000 and 2003, funding for research projects with Chinese participation in the Framework Programme increased from 10 to 200 million euro, totalling 250 million euro over the four years. [...] As we move towards the preparation of the Seventh Framework Programme for research, the EU and China should join forces to cooperate more, and in a strategic way,' said the Commissioner.

Mr Busquin highlighted several areas in particular where cooperation between the two partners had proved fruitful. In the field of space research, he welcomed China's participation in the Galileo satellite navigation project, and announced that the first high level space workshop between the EU and China had taken place on 7 April.

'We discussed the challenges that are in front of us and require our cooperation. It was a big success that has paved the way to more cooperation between China and the European Union on themes of mutual interest, such as Earth observation, satellite telecommunication, space technology and space exploration,' said Mr Busquin.

A delegation of high level European business and space executives accompanied the Commissioner on his trip to China, with the aim of launching a dialogue on space policy and establishing a long term partnership in space activities.

Mr Busquin also used his speech to galvanise Chinese support for the EU in ongoing discussions regarding the location of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). 'We are grateful for China's support to the EU positions in ITER's ongoing multilateral negotiations and look forward to an early conclusion of this process,' he said.

Mr Busquin added a final word about recent EU-China scientific cooperation in the wake of the severe acute respiratory disorder (SARS) outbreak: 'The speed and efficiency with which we were able to coordinate our efforts to ensure a significant participation of our scientific communities in the special call for proposals for SARS deserves a special mention.'

The Commissioner announced that 8 new joint research projects on SARS, all of which involved Chinese and European partners, were currently being negotiated, and would receive EU funds totalling 15 million euro.

'I would like to conclude by emphasising that it is a great honour and pleasure for me to

visit your country and to develop further the links that have united China and Europe for centuries. May our cooperation increase further for the benefit of all our peoples, peace and prosperity,' ended Mr Busquin.

For further information, please consult the following web address:

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