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PRESS RELEASE

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EU SME Centre Kick Off Meeting for phase III

On Monday, 16th November 2020 the official kick off meeting for phase III of the EU SME Centre was held. All parties involved in the project attended this special event which was held online with the participants connected from Brussels and from Beijing.

Ms. Natalia Martinez Paramo, Head of Unit A.1 of EASME gave a welcoming introduction, followed by Mr. Giacomo Mattinò, Head of Unit H.2 of DG GROW who gave an overview of the policy context. Mr. Igor Kalinic, Head of Sector 2, Unit A.1 together with Ms. Giovanna D'Addamio, Senior Project Adviser of Sector 2, Unit A.1 led the subsequent presentations and discussions.

First, the Secretary General of the China-Italy Chamber of Commerce Ms. Giulia Gallarati introduced, as Consortium coordinator and Chairperson of the Board of Advisors, the main goals of the Phase III project. She introduced then the other four members of the Board, each representing a Consortium partner ; Mr. Ben Butters, CEO of *the EUROCHAMBRES*, Mr. Tom Simpson, Managing Director of *the China-Britain Business Council*, Mr. Adam Dunnett, Secretary General of *the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China*, and Mr. Anders Elleman Kristensen, Board member and Treasurer of *the Danish Chamber of Commerce in China*. They each introduced the Working Package they are going to lead. The presentations were followed by a short Q&A session.

Time was then given to other important EU initiatives bringing up the potential synergies with the EU SME Centre. The *SME IPR Helpdesk in China*, the *Cluster Go International*, the *Enterprise Europe Network*, the *SME Policy Dialogue in China* were all recognized to have great potential in bringing value added contribution to the work of the EU SME Centre and, finally, to the successful development of European SMEs in China.



The EU SME Centre phase III is the continuation of two other successful phases. The kick off meeting was enriched with discussions on how the Centre can create and improve synergies with other important EU initiatives in order to further support EU SMEs in China. In phase III, emphasis is placed on increasing the presence and development of EU SMEs' business activities in the second and third tier cities in China. The advocacy will thus continue to play an important role in maintaining and developing government relations whilst adding this important point to the government dialog.

Attendees also considered the possible impact of the global epidemic on the activities of the Centre. In this regard, the market entry opportunities and challenges for EU SMEs were discussed based on the current situation in Europe and in China.

The meeting was concluded with talks on administrative and financial matters as well as on the next steps for the development of the project. By drawing on successful experiences from previous phases of the project, the Centre will continue to be an important resource for SMEs. It will offer practical first-line information and support, free of charge to SMEs from EU and COSME countries and help those companies get ready to do business in China or to develop their business operations in China.

Throughout the meeting there was a strong sense of cooperation among the participants and a shared willingness to make this project a success. The EU SME Centre is thus excited to move forward with the activities planned for this phase III.

About the EU SME Centre

The EU SME Centre in Beijing provides a comprehensive range of hands-on support services to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), getting them ready to do business in China. Our team of experts provides advice and support in four areas – business development, law, standards and conformity and human resources. Collaborating with external experts worldwide, the Centre converts valuable knowledge and experience into practical business tools and services easily accessible online. From first-line advice to in-depth technical solutions, we offer services through Knowledge Centre, Advice Centre, Training Centre and SME Advocacy Platform.

To learn more about the Centre, visit website www.eusmecentre.org.cn

