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The President

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**Opening remarks by the President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
at the meeting with the Premier of the People's Republic of China
Li Keqiang**

I would like to sincerely thank you for the initiative and for your kind invitation to me and President Barroso. We hold dear memories of our visit to Beijing last November and are very pleased to have the possibility to continue our dialogue with you.

The EU appreciates greatly your participation in the ASEM Summit. China is a key ASEM partner. I don't have to recall the importance the European Union attaches to its relations with China. We have huge common interests in trade, investment, sectorial cooperation, global issues, foreign and security policy...

The visit of President Xi to Brussels in March was one of the highlights of the year. We now have to maintain the momentum and continue to bring forward all areas agreed in the Agenda 2020 at our last Summit in Beijing.

A lot has been achieved since President Barroso and I took office, but we must continue dialogue and cooperation. I am certain that the new EU leaders will establish contact with China's leadership at their earliest opportunity to ensure continuity and further develop our relations.

As you know, in the last years, the EU managed to overcome the crisis of the euro zone and is now in a phase of economic recovery. We continue to use all available tools to support growth. Stimulating domestic demand is essential. Structural reforms must be stepped up. But despite all this, the EU single market remains one of the most attractive areas in the world to do business: the quality of life, the open and transparent business environment, good infrastructure, high-skilled labour, innovation capacities, social stability...

We are also facing challenges on the external relations front. Conflict in Ukraine is an issue we are addressing head-on. We want to help advance towards a political solution in accordance with international law and ensure the cessation of all hostilities. Such situations cannot be accepted in the European continent. We are equally concerned by the situations in the Middle-East, Northern Africa and the Sahel. Extremism, terrorism, and organised crime establish very dangerous links between crises in these regions.

China's help in confronting these challenges is very important. I look forward to discussing these and other key issues with you today.