



China: Celebrating the 65th year of Danish-Chinese diplomatic relations

By Rasmus Helveg Petersen, Danish Minister for Climate, Energy and Building

Today we celebrate that 65 years ago formal diplomatic ties were established between Denmark and China. Denmark was a frontrunner and recognized the People's Republic of China in 1950 and remains the only western country to have an unbroken diplomatic presence in China since 1908. Nowadays Denmark is known as a green frontrunner in the energy field inspiring others with our clean energy transition. We have been able to transform our energy sector and are on the path to independence from fossil fuels by 2050. Determined work through ambitious policy has shifted Denmark's almost total reliance on imported oil in the 1970s to our current status as the only net energy exporter in the EU and with a high share of renewable energy in our energy mix.

China and Denmark recently celebrated twenty-five years of cooperation in the energy field. The strong energy cooperation between Denmark and China focuses on the development and promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions. Last year we finalized a renewable energy development programme involving Danish and Chinese parties in renewable energy development. The cooperation has resulted in the establishment of the highly respected China National Renewable Energy Centre (CNREC). Here, experts from the Danish Energy Agency cooperate with the Chinese staff to research possible targets and policy measures for the Chinese renewable energy development. Financial support is secured until 2019 by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) in an agreement with CNREC from January 2015. Through scenario analysis, it has become evident that it is possible to limit the use of coal and increase the share of renewable energy to at least 60% by 2050. This would contribute to a significant improvement of air quality and reduce the pressing issue of derived health problems.

Another element in the Sino-Danish cooperation has been twelve renewable

energy projects spread across China, which have targeted practical implementation and institutional solutions to ease the integration of renewables. This cooperation results in a solid foundation for more detailed energy planning, reducing import of fossil fuels by ensuring optimized use of renewable energy resources. I am pleased to see how the Danish Energy Model is used as inspiration for integrating renewable energy in the Chinese energy mix.

In September I had the pleasure to visit China in company with the Danish Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment. During my visit I experienced great support for our activities and I was happy to be able to discuss cost-efficient transition of energy systems with my Chinese colleagues. The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Building currently has five memorandums of understandings with Chinese authorities. The latest is between the Danish Energy Agency and the National Energy Conservation Center under the NDRC on improving energy efficiency in the manufacturing sector, the building sector and the district heating sector. I see China's engagement in these activities as a sign of a great commitment to the green energy transformation in order to seek sustainable solutions to problems associated with energy intensive growth.

China's dedication to sustainable energy production and consumption was recently confirmed by Prime Minister Li Keqiang in his presentation of the government's work program for the coming year. I am pleased to hear how China will continue to work on a structural reform to decouple energy consumption from growth. This confirms the vision of a green outlook for China's future, especially when the progress is documented in statistics and expected predictions.

Recently, the Chinese coal industry announced that the coal consumption in the first 3 quarters of 2014 was lower than in the same period of time in 2013. This has now been confirmed by the National Bureau of Statistics of China when they published their 2014-Communique, presenting the coal consumption as 2.9 percent lower than in 2013. For the first time since the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, coal consumption has not increased. It has been an assumption that this rate would continue to increase the next 5-15 years, but China now shows its true potential and the will to make changes. The immense devotion to the development in the wind industry combined with a decrease in coal consumption is a very good example of green transition.

The Danish experience has proved that economic growth can go hand in hand

with sustainable energy development. We fully support the dedicated Chinese ambitions for green transition and the impressive results from twenty-five years of Sino-Danish energy cooperation form strong platform for joint, ambitious initiatives in the years to come.

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