



Joint construction of the Silk Road with Central and Eastern Europe (Speech in the Opening Ceremony of Crans Montana Forum)

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Chairman, Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce

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Your Excellency President Filip Vujanović,
Your Excellency President Bujar Nishani,
Distinguished Chairman Jean-Paul Carteron,
Ladies, Gentlemen, and friends,

It's my great honor and pleasure to attend the 2016 Crans Montana Forum in Vienna, which enjoys the reputation of the "Goddess of River Danube". On behalf of the Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce, I would like to extend congratulations to the successful opening of the forum and wish the Forum every success!

Vienna is the *City of Music* because of its musical legacy. It is the birthplace of numerous masterpieces and classics. Today, with so many prominent professionals here, I believe the Crans Montana Forum makes another masterpiece of music entitled cooperation and win-win in Vienna.

I am from Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, which was known as Chang'an. The ancient Silk Road spread from Chang'an in the east and ran to the west to connect Central Asia and Western Asian with Europe. It was an ancient network of trade routes that were vital to trades and cultural interaction between the West to the East. Today, collections in the Tang West Market Museum in Xi'an include coins from dozens of ancient countries. The precious 1,300 ancient coins have witnessed the prosperous trade, economy and exchanges on the Silk Road in the past.

The Central and Eastern Europe is positioned as a strategic gateway in Eastern Europe, and the driving force to promote the prosperity of European emerging markets with in-depth cultural heritage, strategic location and rich natural resources. It is a region of vibrancy and potential, thus, I believe that it will be the new engine of growth to drive the global economy forward.

From 17th to 24th June, Chinese President XI Jinping visited Serbia, Poland and Uzbekistan. The four countries have now jointly agreed to enhance the strategic relationship under the framework of the 16+1 Cooperation, to transform Central and Eastern Europe into the liaison point with European economic areas and the Silk Road. These amply demonstrate the promising future that all sectors of society believe in. And this is what I want to talk about.

Since the introduction of the "Belt and Road" initiative, there has been broad agreement regarding the value of the initiative. And there is increasing evidence that the financial supporting system is starting to "bite", the network of connectivity is taking shape, the capacity cooperation is stepping up, and the construction of economic corridors is making progress. All these achievements create a new momentum in the development of global economy.

Central and Eastern Europe is an important part for the Silk Road Economic Belt westwards, and a gateway for the connectivity of Eurasia. If the growth potential of the Central-Eastern Europe combines with the development of connectivity and capacities, what will happen? I am convinced that this ought to enhance the power of the engines of global economic growth, resulting in a multiplier effect. And the Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce will facilitate the realization of this goal.

We remain totally confident of the promising future of the Eurasian connectivity, however, it still faces challenges in the complexity of infrastructure development, addressing the funding gap, integration of different resources of the members, reduction of trade barriers, simplifications of cross-border and transit formalities and procedures and promoting trade facilitation, which need to be looked at in depth. I now expect to address these difficult issues through intellectual exchanges.

To promote partnerships of the two engines of economic growth, to encourage the Central and Eastern Europe to advance towards a cooperative perspective in parallel with the Silk Road region, I would like to take this opportunity and raise the following initiative:

1. To build a platform for practical cooperation, to promote connectivity and mutual trust
Linking the Central and Eastern Europe with the “Belt and Road” has had considerable success in facilitating the connectivity of infrastructure. The connection between China and Europe – the Road of Iron and Silk, the Air Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road has formed a major artery of economic growth. Besides, we should open other channels that are more efficient and convenient.
 - (1) To jointly build the eSilkRoad
The latest technologies, such as the Internet 2.0, Big Data, and Cloud Computing, enable us to upload huge volumes of data online. The collection of data consists of information about product, techniques, capital, human resources and logistics of enterprises from different regions. On this Big Data, we build an online economy for and of global consumers, retailers, manufacturers, service providers and investors. It provides them platforms for socializing, trade, financing and cultural communication.
 - (2) To build the Intellectual Silk Road
To deepen the cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe, the Think Tank should play a full role in support and assistance. The Belt and Road Think Tank Association shall be established to fully support the development of the Intellectual Silk Road. Intensified research of the Think Tank should focus on the programmes and approaches of development. And the Think Tank should not only assist in project-matching, policy coordination and mechanism design for governments, chambers of commerce and enterprises regarding the project-matching and planning and policy coordination, but also provide data support and references of economic policies, human environments as well as development trends and draw the chart for investment directions and targets.
2. To organize a financial support system which is of complementary nature and diversity
To move the cross-regional cooperation projects forward, connectivity of infrastructure and adequate fund are the essence. From loan syndications, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), BRICS Development Bank, Silk Road Fund, China-CEE Fund, to China-Eurasia Economic Cooperation Fund, capital and resources have been mobilized to provide access to the fundraising and financial collaboration of the “Belt and Road”. The funding requirements will not be adequately met with these organizations, thus, a comprehensive and multi-level financial support system is urgently needed to be set up.
3. To jointly discuss the international trade regulations, to promote trade and investment facilitation

What stands out in the reform of the global economic governance is the reform in the norms of the international system of trade rules. It is the largest one after the Uruguay Round negotiation in 1994. The new trade model, represented by global value chains, calls for improvement of the international trade system. Business communities need to strengthen their connections through chambers of commerce, and on the platforms they provide, discuss and assess plans to improve norms of international trade system which is for the trade and investment facilitation. In addition, business communities should offer their suggestions to relevant international organizations and governments as their efforts to build a fair, just and open international economic system.

The above-mentioned initiatives are the focus of our work. The Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce is an international non-profit and non-governmental organization, co-initiated by 36 chambers of commerce along the Silk Road with the Support of the World Chambers Federation (WCF) and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCOIC). And the SRCIC members jointly initiated organizations for practical cooperation, namely, eSilkRoad, Silk Road International Development Fund, Silk Road Think Tank Association, Silk Road Commerce and Trade Expo as well as International Silver Exchange. Due to time constraints, it will be not possible to enumerate here. Brochures and information will be provided for your reference after the session.

Ladies, Gentlemen, and friends,

On 6 September 2016, the Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce will host the 2016 Silk Road Business Leadership Summit and Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce Xi'an Summit in Xi'an, China's President XI Jinping's hometown, and the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Then, chairs of chambers of commerce from about 40 countries and almost 100 renowned government officials, business leaders, experts and scholars will gather on the archaeological site of the Tang West Market Museum, the once largest terminal market for silk dated back 1,400 years ago, to explore opportunities in boosting future economic prosperity and sustainable development. It will be a moment of great historic meaning and reflection of the modern times.

On behalf of the Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce, I am delighted to welcome you to attend this grand event, to share your insights in the discussion of promoting trade and culture, to participate in global development.

I truly look forward to seeing you in Xi'an again. Thank you!