

# **JOINT STATEMENT**

**on Tourism Cooperation**

**by**

**the 5<sup>th</sup> High Level Tourism Forum**

**between**

**the People's Republic of China and the Central and Eastern European  
Countries**

**Riga, 23 October 2019**

We, representatives responsible for tourism from **the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Hellenic Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia**

gathered at **the 5th Ministerial Conference on Tourism Cooperation between China and the Central and Eastern European Countries** (hereinafter referred to as "CEECs") in Riga, Latvia, on 23 October 2019,

**RECALLING** the commitment of the Republic of Latvia to organise the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of China and CEECs in Riga on 5 November 2016 with the adaptation of the Riga Guidelines calling on practical cooperation in the development of the connectivity between China-CEEC, in particular to deepen cooperation in scheduled air transport and general aviation and welcoming airline companies to open new routes and flights between China and CEECs, and pursuant to High Level Ministerial Conference on Tourism Cooperation on the basis of the Sofia Guidelines adopted on the 7<sup>th</sup> Summit of China and CEECs, which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 7 July 2018;

**WELCOMING** the progress achieved through the cooperation in the field of tourism between China and CEECs at the bilateral and multilateral level of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Tourism Cooperation between China and CEECs, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 19 September 2018;

**CONTINUING** to expand the cultural and tourism cooperation within the framework of 17+1, highlighted at the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of China and CEECs held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 12 April 2019;

**REAFFIRMING** the commitment to expand the scale of and further facilitate two-way tourism and exchanges, work for the implementation of more convenient traveling procedures and encourage more direct flight connections between China and CEECs, in accordance with Riga and Sofia Guidelines for cooperation between China and CEECs of 2016 and 2018;

**RECOGNIZING** the beneficial effects of cooperation on tourism between China and CEECs and the important opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative in this regard;

**EXPRESSING** our commitment to continue activities in accordance with the Joint Statement of the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Meeting between China and CEECs on tourism cooperation and in line with the Riga and Sofia guidelines for cooperation between China and CEECs of 2016 and 2018;

**WELCOMING** the Hellenic Republic joining the China-CEEC Cooperation as a full-fledged participant;

**UNDERSTANDING** the importance of tourism and its contribution to economic prosperity, we strongly support the following principles and priorities in the process of tourism cooperation between China and CEECs and will endeavour to:

1. *Support* further cooperation between China and CEECs in tourism development by acknowledging the growth of *smart tourists* and embracing the opportunities of digitalization;
2. *Enhance* inter-connectivity, mobility and traveling by encouraging the development of more direct flight connections between China and CEECs. Direct flight is the basic precondition for rapid personal and business travel cooperation development, therefore participating countries welcome direct point to point charter and regular flight developments;
3. *Strengthen* communication and cooperation via joint promotional activities of fostering tourism investments and ensuring a stable, transparent and predictable environment for enterprises in China and CEECs;
4. *Encourage* the cooperation between national tourism administrations, local governments, and tourism agencies and organizations in identifying effective marketing communication channels to make China and CEEC more visible for the tourism business companies and potential tourists in the digital era;
5. *Welcome* the establishment of the new “*Tourism Award Marco Polo*” for the development of joint tourism products and promotion of tourism business cooperation between China and CEECs;
6. *Enhance* the cooperation between travel agencies and tour operators in China and CEECs on different types of special interest tourism by creating smart and

attractive tourism products that focus on personal experience, development and growth, mutual understanding and exchange of knowledge;

7. *Encourage* the synergy of culture, tourism and technology in developing joint tourism products and thematic routes linking tourism offer of China and CEECs in the field of world cultural heritage;
8. *Strengthen* communication and cooperation in tourism research and digitalization among tourism market entities, as well as foster professional contacts between cultural institutions and tourism industry to enhance sustainability of culture and environment;
9. *Welcome and strongly support* the activities of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China and CEEC as well as Tourism Coordination Centre for China and the CEEC, based in Budapest enhancing coordination, exploring innovative ways of cooperation and continuing to build a lasting partnership in the 17+1 framework, following principles of openness, inclusiveness and mutual benefit;
10. *Support* continuing cooperation in tourism within the China-CEEC framework and welcome the initiative of the Hellenic Republic to hold the 6<sup>th</sup> China-CEEC High-Level Conference on Tourism Cooperation in 2020 in Athens.

Accordingly, we, representatives responsible for tourism in China and in the CEECs, hereby adopt this Joint Statement and jointly agree on its implementation to create new opportunities for even better cooperation in the field of tourism.