



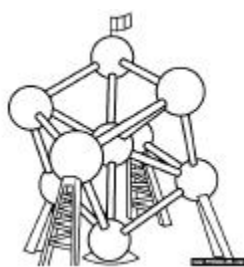
EU-CHINA

Social Protection Reform Project
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目

OVERVIEW OF COMPONENT ONE 2015 ACTIVITIES

The Component 1 plan of activities for 2015 was formerly adopted during the Project advisory committee meeting held in Beijing on 28 April 2015. It includes consideration of 5 topics of utmost importance for pension reform in China. Three of them started being implemented right away, namely: The social insurance system administration reform through preparation for the country's XIIIth Five-Years plan, the respective importance of social pooling and individual accounts in pension benefits, and the design of a multi-tier pension system. Two more topics were introduced from July 2015, the strategy for integrating the pension system in urban and rural context – vesting rights and portability of benefits; and, the practical implementation of the legal decision to integrate civil servants into the general pension scheme for employees.

2015 OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES



BRUSSELS – FEBRUARY 2015

The workshop on the Reform of Public Pension systems was held on 2 and 3 February 2015, under the auspices of the Federal Public Service (FPS) of Social Security, working closely with the RVP/ONP (National Pension Office) of Belgium.

Delegations from the EU side and from China side included government officials, scholars from research institutions and universities, and managers from financial sectors. Representatives from the World Bank, from the OECD and from the European Commission attended and played an active role in the discussions. The head of Chinese delegation, Ms. Ji Ning, Counsel at the National Development and Reform commission NDRC met with the Belgian Federal Minister for Pensions, Mr. Daniel Bacquelaine (Picture)



In total, more than 50 persons participated in this event where six technical sessions were organized.

Plenary session 1: Reform Trend of Public Pension in a Global Context

Plenary session 2: EU Experience and Lessons on Public Pension System Reform

Plenary session 3: Multi-tier Pension System Construction

Plenary session 4: Political, Economic and Social Conditions of Pension Reforms

Plenary session 5: Comparison between Public Sectors and Private Sectors on Pension System

Plenary session 6: Lessons Learned and Conclusions

The Brussels Workshop was unanimously praised as a high quality event, which provided a broad European panorama of major reforms in public pension systems that could be put in a truly Chinese perspective, thanks to a wealth of national and

international reports. The input from non-Consortium member states and representatives from international organizations was particularly appreciated. The perfect organization and the kind hospitality of its Belgian hosts furthermore added to the quality and success of the Workshop.



The Chinese delegation at the Brussels Workshop



Ms. Ji Ning addressing the audience at the opening of the Brussels Workshop

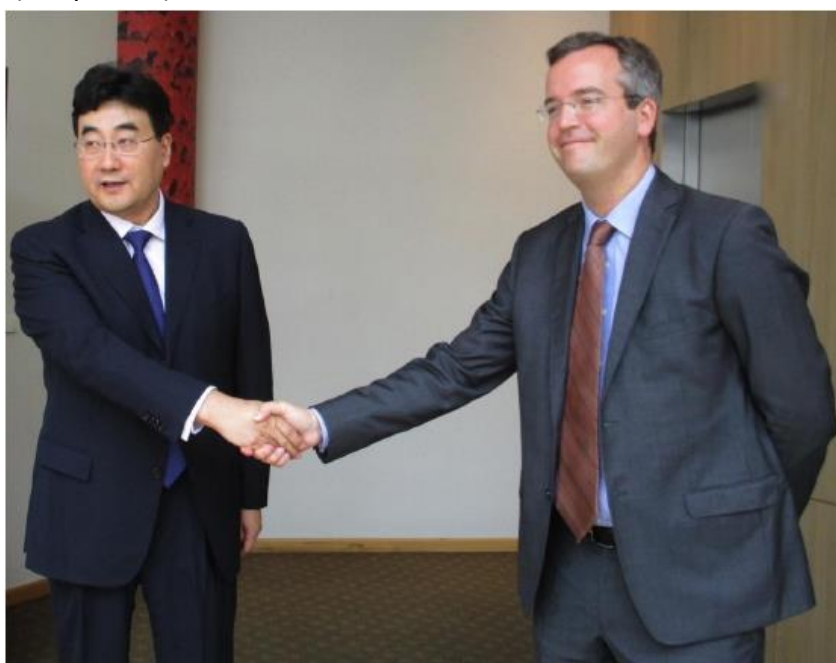


Brussels Workshop – View of delegates during plenary session

PARIS AND LYON – JUNE 2015



A high level training on Multi-tier pension systems in Europe was organized by ADECRI and EXPERTISE France in June 2015, for 20 high-level NDRC Officials – including 16 coming from Provincial delegations. The delegation was led by Mr. Ha Zengyou, Deputy Director General of the Department of Employment and Income Distribution of the NDRC – who also held direct discussions with Mr. Thomas Fatome, Director of French social security (see picture).



Lectures delivered included both the French and the European experience. Lecturers came from within the French system – general pension scheme, supplementary pension schemes, ministry of Finance, workers' and employers' representatives, the insurance sector, the rural pension scheme, the regional pension schemes, the National School for Higher Social Security Studies -, from several national pension systems across Europe – notably from Italy, Romania, Spain, and from international organizations such as the International Labour Organization – ILO – and the OECD. A total of 20 training sessions were organized, covering a variety of topics such as Providing comprehensive responses to the challenges of pension systems reforms, the Strategic analysis and monitoring of pension system, Inter-schemes coordination, Providing basic pensions to specific populations, Management and financing of public pension schemes, Pension and international labour standards, Active ageing, Pension schemes for non-salaried workers – farmers and the self-employed, Implementing the pensions reform at the regional level, IT management and database management for pensions, The impact of economic crisis on pension system reforms.



Group picture in front of the MGEN training center



One small group training session

The good organization of the training event, the variety of the topics covered, the high professionalism of the lecturers and the quality of training materials produced were highly appreciated by the participants, who confirmed this exercise would be of great practical value for their work in support of the Chinese social security reform at the central level, or at that of Provincial governments of China. It was noted that this training came at a crucial moment, when critical decisions were in the making concerning the future design of the Chinese pension system. The contribution of the project to enhance the level of understanding of key NDRC officials in European pension theory and practices was therefore highly relevant and deeply appreciated.



MADRID, PRAGUE AND WARSAW, OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2015



Mr. Pu Yufei with Mr. Tomas Burgos, Secretary of State for Social Security, Spain

A group of 6 high-level NDRC officials and experts, led by Mr. Pu Yufei, Director General, Department of Employment and Income distribution, NDRC, undertook a Dialogue and Study visit to Spain, the Czech Republic and Poland between 27 October and 5 November, on the topic of Employment and Social security reform with special reference to Migrant workers questions.

In Prague, with Ms Iva Merhautová, Deputy Minister for Contributory Social Schemes





In Warsaw, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

The programme for the visit was established in respective host countries on the basis of requirements expressed by NDRC, in view of their own sense of priorities concerning the subject matter. The sub-topics to be addressed were also divided between the three host countries according to their perceived best experiences and Consortium members' fields of competence to avoid repetition and maximize exchange opportunities. In that respect, it is worth noting that the title henceforth retained for this type of activity ("*Dialogue and Study visit*") clearly points to the desire of Government officials to make full use of project facilities to enter into real discussion with their European counterparts, so that contacts may be mutually beneficial.

Contacts held with participants since their return to China testifies to a high degree of satisfaction with the practical arrangements for which responsibilities were shared between host countries, EXPERTISE FRANCE as project coordinator and the project secretariat, as well as with the technical contents and exchanges with counterpart Agencies.

RESEARCH AND PEER REVIEW

The C1 Activity plan for 2015 as adopted by the PAC meeting on 21 April 2015 foresaw that two panel discussions would be held to review the topics considered during the year. Topics were split into two batches, the first one grouping topics 1.1.1. - Social insurance administration systems reform – Contribution to the XIIIth Five-Year plan -, 1.3.2 - Social pooling of the basic pension component (Evaluation of the combination of basic pension & individual accounts) – and 1.3.4. - Multi-tiered design of pension systems (public pension, enterprise annuity and individual pension) - to be held towards mid-year, and the second one addressing topics 1.3.1 - Pension reform for public sectors – and 1.4.3 - Strategy of integrating social security system in urban and rural context also through the portability of social insurance – being scheduled for the end of the same year.

First Panel discussion

Three eminent Chinese experts were selected in April 2015 by the C1 project team and NDRC to conduct an in-depth research on the priority topics retained for the first half of the year 2015. Mr. Tan Zhonghe, from the National Social Security Institute, was in charge of the report preparing for the XIIIth Five-Years Plan (2016-2020). Mr. Song Xiaowu, one of the Chinese lead economists, reviewed the combination of social pooling with individual accounts. Mr. Dong Keyong, Dean emeritus of the School of Public Administration and Policy in Renmin University addressed the issue of the design of a suitable multitier pension system.



The three authors at the 1st Panel discussion meeting – from left to right, Mr. Dong Keyong, Mr. Tan Zhonghe, Mr. Song Xiaowu

Those three authors confronted their views during a panel discussion meeting held on 28 July 2015 under Ms. Ji Ning effective chairpersonship, with the interactive participation of Mr Koen Vleminckx



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, a Belgian renowned European expert. Mr Vleminckx conducted a one-month mission to China to analyse the topics under review with the authors and other interested stakeholders – including Ministry of Human resources and Social security, in charge of implementing all social security schemes across China. On the basis of this joint analysis, a preliminary selection of most relevant European best practices could be made, and shared with NDRC on the occasion of the panel discussion meeting.

Participants were unanimous in praising this collaborative approach where European experience was actually confronted to the Chinese reality, in a manner that would ensure the selection of the most relevant European achievements on which to build future technical cooperation activities.





The bench of the assistants ...

The second panel discussion covering the other two topics considered in 2015 was held in Beijing on 13 November. It was co-chaired by Ms Ji Ning, Project leader on behalf of NDRC and the EU C1 Resident Expert. Chinese experts selected for conducting the national situation analysis were Ms Zhang Yinghua from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for the Reform of Public sector pensions, and Mr Wang Zeying, from the Social Security Institute by the Ministry of Human resources and Social security for the Strategy of integrating social security system in urban and rural context.



From left to right, NDRC Ms Ji Ning (Project leader), Zhang Xinmei (Division director), Tang Ling (Project coordinator), EUD Beijing Ms Yi Xiaolin

Participants from C1 side included the EU resident expert, the Main Chinese Experts – Research and Operations -, the two Chinese experts, authors of the reports under consideration (topics 1.3.1 and 1.4.3) and the EU Best practices Expert Mr. Koen Vleminckx who had just started his second mission to China. NDRC was represented by members of its Employment and Income distribution department and ICC, led by Ms Ji Ning, Inspector and project leader, assisted by Ms Tang Ling and Mr. Chang Hao, Component coordinators on behalf of national stakeholders. Representatives from Provincial authorities, of pilot sites both in Guangdong and Sichuan Provinces and of academic circles attended the sessions. The EU Delegation was represented by the Project official.



Second Panel discussion, 23 November 2015

The activity was rated as extremely useful and timely by all participants – including representatives from Sichuan and Guangdong Provinces who were invited to attend. It is worth noting that, thanks to the association to the discussion of representatives from the Provinces, participants could include in their review of the topics at stake first-hand information on the results achieved and difficulties encountered both in the implementation of the Public sector pension reform, and in handling claims related to the integration of rural and urban pension schemes. The latter was thoroughly documented through a specific case study produced on the basis of Huizhou city experience, to be used as a basis for future technical cooperation activities to be conducted under C1 framework.

PILOT SITES

The Project Advisory Committee, meeting on 21 April 2015, had endorsed the choice of three pilot sites for C1 activities, namely Shanghai city – topic on Ageing population -, Sichuan Province - city of Luzhou - for rural-urban integration including migrant workers issues and Guangdong province - city of Huizhou - for Migrant workers' questions.



Luzhou city

Huizhou city

At the initiative of NDRC, two field visits were organised in September 2015, to respectively Huizhou and Guangzhou cities (Guangdong Province) and Luzhou and Chengdu cities (Sichuan Province). Those missions aimed at gaining first-hand knowledge of the situation in pilot sites, and at listening to the expectations of local authorities concerning their collaboration with the project C1 component. Representatives from the EU delegation took part on the mission to Sichuan province, thus marking their interest in project activities.



Visiting Social security community center, Luzhou City



Meeting with City Government officials

Detailed documents expressing the respective provincial fields of interest were subsequently sent to NDRC and shared with the C1 team. Basically, the Provinces request exposure from the project on General introduction to social security policy in the EU, Monitoring and operational systems, Building IT systems for social security and fund raising, Vesting and portability of social security rights for migrant workers. They requested that knowledge sharing take the form of capacity building either in-country or abroad.



Visiting pharmaceutical company in Huizhou

Not to delay implementation of cooperative activities with the Pilot sites, it was decided by NDRC and the C1 team that the second Panel discussion, dealing inter alia with issues related to migrant workers' social security, would associate representatives from selected pilot sites in Guangdong and Sichuan provinces. It is foreseen that a further training will be provided in situ in February 2016.

Contacts with Shanghai pilot site will take place at a later stage, tentatively in February 2016, since the preferred topic for that site is Ageing, a theme at the core of proposed C1 related project activities for the year 2016 (Training in Spain) for which the advanced suggestions from Pilot site representatives will be sought.