**Suzhou Consensus of the Conference of Presidents of Supreme Courts of China and Central and Eastern European Countries**

The Conference of Presidents of supreme courts of China and Central and Eastern European Countries (hereinafter referred to as “CEECs”) was held in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province of the People’s Republic of China from May 4 to 5, 2016. The Conference was hosted by the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as “SPC”). H.E. Mr. ZHOU Qiang, Chief Justice of the People’s Republic of China and President of the SPC, H.E. Mr. Xhezair Zaganjori, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Ms. Meddzida Kreso, President of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Mr. Branko Hrvatin, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Mr. Priit Pikamae, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Estonia, Hon. Mr. Istvan Konya, Vice-President of the Curia of Hungary, H.E. Mr. Ivars Bickovics, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia, H.E. Mr. Rimvydas Norkus, President of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, H.E. Ms. Lidija Nedelkova, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Macedonia, H.E. Mrs. Vesna Medenica, President of the Supreme Court of Montenegro, Hon. Mr. Lech Paprzycki, President of the Supreme Court and Head of the Criminal Chamber of the Republic of Poland, H.E. Mr. Dragomir Milojevic, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Cassation of the Republic of Serbia, and Hon. Ms. Jarmila Urbancova, Vice-President of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic attended the Conference, and addressed in the sessions.

In friendly, practical and constructive atmosphere, the participants extensively exchanged opinions on a wide range of topics under the theme of “Judiciary in Global Information Age”, which may serve as a basis for enhancing and deepening possibilities of international judicial exchanges and cooperation, including judicial reform, judicial transparency, the application of information technology in courts, alternative disputes resolution (ADR), and the role of the supreme courts in promotion of judicial efficiency and unification of judicial practice. The Conference convinced of the need to establish and maintain a permanent dialogue between judiciaries of China and CEECs, reached the following consensus:

I. The Conference acknowledged a series of achievement documents under the cooperation framework of China-CEECs since the year of 2012 and positively evaluated the important progress and relevance of the cooperation. The Conference noted that “the Belt and Road Initiative” is drawing China and CEECs closer together, which means a greater need for judicial cooperation.

II. The supreme courts of China and CEECs will make joint efforts to promote the rule of law and to improve the domestic and international judicial systems.

III. Fairness and justice are the common ideas honoured and followed by the judiciaries of all countries in the world. Both China and CEECs have attached great importance to promoting judicial reform and using beneficial experiences from other countries for reference, so as to facilitate the improvement of their respective judicial systems.

IV. China and CEECs recognize the principle of judicial transparency as a fundamental part of important means to promote judicial fairness and to improve judicial practice. The supreme courts of China and CEECs will pay more attention to continuous expansion of open justice and adopt innovative measures, based on universally acknowledged international standards and practices combining with their respective national situations, in order to continuously increase judicial transparency and credibility.

V. The development and application of information technology is not only changing the ways of production and living of the human society, but also exerting profound influence on the conventional judicial measures and models. The supreme courts of China and CEECs pay close attention and respond to this trend and actively adopt information technology means, in order to improve judicial capability and practice, efficiently resolve disputes, and better ensure judicial fairness. Thus, the Conference supports ambitions, by expanding the applicability of electronic services, to optimize and to make the work of the courts more transparent and efficient, to make implementation of justice more widely accessible for the society, to create conditions for the society to exercise their rights in a more constructive, expeditious, time and litigation costs saving way.

VI. China and CEECs recognize the value of ADR mechanism, such as mediation and arbitration other than litigation that may provide efficient and expedient approaches to resolve disputes. The Supreme People’s Court of China has been emphasizing the application of mediation in settling disputes, and the supreme courts of CEECs will actively consider trying this and other ADR mechanisms in their respective countries.

VII. Promotion of judicial efficiency and unification of judicial practice is the common pursuit of countries based on the rule of law. The supreme courts of China and CEECs attach high importance to their unique roles in promoting judicial efficiency and unifying judicial standards respectively. They endeavor to ensure the uniform application of laws and improve judicial efficiency by development of clear, precise and predictable jurisprudence of the supreme courts.

VIII. The supreme courts of China and the CEECs will continue to commit to exploring ways of and deepening their cooperation and communication in the judicial field, improving and strengthening cooperation of judicial assistance in civil and criminal cases, and facilitating the overall improvement of cooperation between China and the CEECs. They will make joint efforts to promote exchanges among supreme courts and supreme court judges, while strengthening the exchange of experience and sharing achievements of boosting judicial reform, and improving the judicial system, and conducting collaboration in exchange of supreme courts leading cases and case study .

This Consensus was adopted in both Chinese and English, both texts being equally authentic, on May 5, 2016, in Suzhou, China.