Summary on SESEC 2026 Reception
Dr. Betty Xu，SESEC，February 10, 2026

Background

Launched in May 2006, the **Seconded European Standardization Expert for China** (SESEC) project is a visibility project co-funded by Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), as well as by the European Commission (EC) and by the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

One of the key targets of SESEC project is to Improve contacts between Project Partners and different levels of the Chinese administration, industry and standardization bodies. To better serve this objective, SESEC project made a tradition on holding "End-of-Year Get Together" every year to connect China and EU stakeholders in the standardization community in China. It is not merely a ceremonial gathering; it is a strategic instrument that demonstrates EU presence and commitment in the Chinese standardisation landscape, reinforces SESEC's mandate and relevance and signals continuity of structured engagement.

SESEC 2026 Reception

On 5 February 2026, SESEC successfully convened the 2026 EU–China Standardization Roundtable and New Year Reception in Beijing. The event brought together representatives from European and Chinese standardization bodies, government authorities, industry associations, technical committees, and leading enterprises to exchange views on policy developments, strategic priorities, and future cooperation in standardization and technical regulation.

The event opened with welcoming remarks from Mr. Jorg Weberndorfer, Minister Counsellor for Industrial and SME Policies, Trade and Investment Section, Delegation of the European Union to China. Mr. Weberndorfer highlighted the long-standing achievements of EU–China standardization cooperation and underlined the potential for further collaboration, particularly in the context of the digital and green transitions. He emphasized that standards play a crucial role in supporting innovation, competitiveness, and market access, and are an indispensable foundation for sustainable economic development.

Representing the Chinese side, Ms. Chen Ying, Director of the International Cooperation Division, Standardization Innovation Department of the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), delivered remarks on China's latest standardization developments. She outlined China's strategic direction in advancing a modern, high-quality standardization system and praised SESEC's important role in facilitating communication between European and Chinese stakeholders and supporting practical cooperation.

A highlight of the reception was the keynote briefing by Madam Li Aixian, Vice President of the China National Institute of Standardization (CNIS). Madam Li provided a comprehensive overview of China's standardization system, its evolution, and its growing engagement in international standardization. Madam Li Aixian is a highly respected authority in the field. Notably, on 15 October 2025, she was invited to deliver a high-level presentation on standardization to China's senior state leaders during the State Council's 16th special study session, chaired by Premier Li Qiang, under the theme "Strengthening the guiding and safeguarding role of standards and promoting high-quality economic development through standards upgrading." Her participation at the SESEC reception provided first-hand insights into China's latest policy thinking and

strategic priorities.

Dr. Betty Xu, SESEC, presented an overview of recent and upcoming EU standardization policy developments, including the EU Standardization Strategy and revisions to the EU Standardisation Regulation. She also highlighted SESEC's work in monitoring policy trends, supporting EU stakeholders, and identifying cooperation opportunities with Chinese counterparts.

Ms. Ester Canada, representing the European Chamber of Commerce in China's Standards and Conformity Assessment Working Group, shared key messages from the Chamber's annual position paper, reflecting European industry's main concerns and recommendations regarding standards, conformity assessment, and market access in China.

Mr. Benjamin de Ville, Secretary of CEN-CENELEC JTC 24 on Digital Product Passport (DPP), provided an update on European standardization work related to DPP and its relevance for circular economy, sustainability, and supply chain transparency. He outlined ongoing activities at European and international levels and stressed the importance of early dialogue with international partners.

On the Chinese side, experts from China Certification & Accreditation Institute (CCAI) and CNIS introduced China's carbon footprint policy framework, certification pilots, and the development of the "dual-carbon" (carbon peaking and carbon neutrality) standard system. These presentations generated strong interest among participants, reflecting the growing importance of carbon footprint methodologies and sustainability standards for global value chains.

In this event, SESEC team also distributed the ETSI brochure and introduced the membership and governance of ETSI to the Chinese audiences.

The event attracted around 80 participants, including representatives from SAMR, SAC, CNCA, the National Railway Administration (NRA), Chinese research institutes such as CNIS, CESI and CCSA, Chinese technical committees, as well as European embassies, EU organizations in Beijing, and European companies including Siemens, Schneider Electric, Ericsson, Nokia, ABB, TÜV and IKEA etc,. The diverse participation underscored the strong demand for dialogue and practical cooperation in standardization between Europe and China.

Key Messages Collected from the Event

1. **Upgrading Standards, Shaping Markets: China's Domestic Transformation and Global Standardization Footprint in 2025/2026**

The presentation made by Madam LI Aixian outlines China's strategy of using standards upgrading to support high-quality economic development, positioning standardization as a strategic pillar of national competitiveness, technological advancement, and governance modernization. Standards are no longer viewed merely as technical specifications; rather, they serve as foundational infrastructure for industrial transformation, innovation, green transition, and the development of a unified national market.

China has built a comprehensive five-tier standards system composed of national, sectoral, local, association, and enterprise standards, achieving full coverage across industrial, agricultural, service, and social sectors. **The country maintains over 50,000 national standards, including more than 4,500 mandatory standards, and more than 150,000 registered sectoral and local standards. Over 8,000 social organizations have released more than 120,000 association standards. At the national level, more than 1,300 technical committees**

operate with over 62,000 experts, demonstrating the scale and institutional depth of China's standardization framework.

A key highlight is China's expanding influence in international standardization. **China participates in 99% of ISO technical bodies, hosts 104 ISO technical committee secretariats—ranking fourth globally—and contributes over 14,000 experts to ISO work, the highest number worldwide. The adoption rate of international standards into Chinese national standards exceeds 94%,** reflecting strong alignment with global norms. China's growing engagement in ISO, IEC, and ITU underscores its ambition to shape, not merely follow, international standards. Nevertheless, the presentation acknowledges ongoing challenges, including **limited representation in top leadership positions within major international organizations** and the need for more globally influential industry-led standardization bodies.

Despite notable achievements, structural issues remain. Standards in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, digital platforms, smart devices, and new service models often lag behind rapid technological change. Mandatory standards sometimes lack sufficient research foundations or fail to respond quickly to urgent safety concerns. Fragmentation within the multi-level system leads to overlaps and inconsistencies between national, sectoral, and local standards, posing obstacles to the development of a unified domestic market. Furthermore, the quality and innovation capacity of association standards vary, and the ecosystem for standards implementation, particularly integration with testing, certification, and patent strategies—requires strengthening.

The presentation calls for elevating standards upgrading as a central reform priority. Upgrading standards is framed as institutional transformation rather than simple technical revision. Key policy directions include deepening the integration of technology, industry, and standards; launching pre-standardization research in strategic and emerging technologies; empowering leading enterprises to play a stronger role in standards development; streamlining the hierarchy between national and local standards; and enhancing coordination between government-led and market-driven standardization.

Emphasis is placed on building a modern standards application ecosystem and accelerating digital transformation across the standards lifecycle. China aims to develop digital platforms, enable machine-readable and machine-interpretable standards, and transform standards from static documents into intelligent tools.

In a summary, the presentation portrays China as transitioning from a major participant to an increasingly influential actor in international standardization, while simultaneously reforming its domestic standards system to better support innovation-driven, high-quality development.

2. **China's Dual-Carbon certification and Standard System and China Product Carbon Footprint Development in 2025**

Mr. WANG Peng's presentation outlines the development of China's product carbon labeling and certification system under the leadership of the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) and its Certification and Accreditation Institute. Building on national "dual carbon" strategies and key policy documents issued since 2023, the system integrates both direct and indirect carbon-related certification approaches, combining nationally unified frameworks with voluntary participation by certification bodies.

In 2024, high-level policy documents—including decisions of the CPC Central Committee and State Council—formally called for establishing a product carbon footprint management system and carbon labeling certification mechanism. In response, pilot programs were launched in September 2024, targeting 11 key product categories such as lithium batteries, photovoltaic products and steel, across 25 provinces.

Technical infrastructure has been strengthened through the issuance of general implementation rules, a unified carbon footprint label featuring a "footprint" graphic, and 17 product-specific implementation rules. Twenty-six certification bodies were selected to support pilot implementation.

On carbon footprint standards perspectives, **Mr. Sun Liang** provides an overview of China's progress in building its "dual-carbon" standard system to support carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals. Under strong policy guidance, including the *Guidelines for the Establishment of a Carbon Peaking and Carbon Neutrality Standards Framework*, standards are positioned as a critical instrument for driving green transformation, improving emission governance, and supporting market-based climate mechanisms.

China's dual-carbon standard framework is structured around four pillars: accurate quantification, effective emission reduction, reliable carbon removal, and credible carbon trading. It covers enterprise carbon accounting, project-based emission reduction assessment, product carbon footprint quantification, and market mechanisms such as carbon emissions trading. To date, 51 national standards in key dual-carbon areas have been published, and 49 additional standards are under development, reflecting a rapidly expanding regulatory infrastructure.

A major highlight is the establishment of the "Six Uniform" principles for enterprise carbon accounting, project reduction methodologies, and product carbon footprint standards. These ensure consistent naming, boundaries, methodologies, default factors, reporting formats, and data quality requirements across sectors. Carbon accounting standards already cover 22 key industries, with further sectors under development.

Significant progress has also been made in product carbon footprint standards. China has issued multiple national standards aligned with international methodologies such as ISO 14040 and ISO 14067, covering sectors including plastics, aluminum, livestock products, engines, and air conditioners. An implementation plan for establishing a national carbon footprint management system is underway, with priorities in energy, raw materials, transport, and export-oriented products.

3. Promoting Transparency, Predictability and International Alignment: The European Chamber's Advocacy on Technical Standardisation in China

The European Chamber of Commerce in China plays a structured and strategic role in technical standardisation through its Standards and Conformity Assessment (SCA) Working Group, established in 2008. Representing a wide range of industries—including automotive, ICT, healthcare equipment, cosmetics, construction and machinery—the Working Group serves as a platform for information sharing and coordinated advocacy on standards and conformity assessment issues affecting European businesses in China.

In its 2025/2026 Position Paper, the Chamber outlines key concerns and recommendations aimed at improving China's standardisation system A central priority is enhancing transparency, particularly through proper notification of mandatory and de facto mandatory standards under the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) framework, as well as clearer communication regarding the allocation of standardisation projects,

participation criteria for technical committees and decision-making processes.

The Chamber also advocates equal access and participation rights for all relevant stakeholders in standard-setting activities, including social organizations and commercial entities that meet accreditation requirements. It stresses the importance of maintaining a predictable regulatory framework, limiting mandatory standards to environmental, health and safety objectives, and ensuring reasonable transition periods to allow industries sufficient time to adapt.

In addition, the Position Paper highlights the need to optimize the coordination between mandatory standards, certification schemes and market surveillance practices, while avoiding the inappropriate use of recommended standards as mandatory requirements. Strengthening enforcement proportionality and due process protections is also emphasized.

Finally, the Chamber underscores the importance of greater international harmonisation, particularly in areas linked to the green and digital transitions, including AI governance, digital labelling and quality infrastructure digitalisation. By promoting alignment with international standards and mutual recognition of conformity assessment results, the European Chamber seeks to reduce trade barriers and support China's deeper integration into the global economy.

4. Promoting the European Standardisation System: NLF, Harmonised Standards and the Digital Product Passport

The SESEC Reception presentations delivered a comprehensive overview of the European standardisation system and its strategic role in supporting EU policy objectives. The content highlighted the structure and functioning of the European Standardisation System (ESS), including the cooperation between CEN, CENELEC, ETSI and international bodies through the Vienna and Frankfurt Agreements. Particular attention was given to the EU New Legislative Framework (NLF), explaining the "New Approach" principle whereby legislation sets essential requirements while harmonised standards provide presumption of conformity. The presentations underlined the ongoing revision of Regulation 1025/2012 and the NLF to increase speed, flexibility, transparency, and inclusiveness in European standardisation, reinforcing the EU's global standard-setting role.

A central focus was the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and the Digital Product Passport (DPP). The DPP was presented as a transformative tool embedded in EU legislation, requiring standardised IT infrastructure under Standardisation Request M/604_Amdt, led by CEN-CLC/JTC 24. The DPP supports lifecycle transparency, circularity, interoperability, and sustainability objectives across product categories.

The presentations attracted strong interest from Chinese participants, who actively engaged in discussions on EU standardisation, the NLF and the Digital Product Passport. Many expressed willingness to deepen dialogue and explore future cooperation, particularly in green and digital domains, reflecting growing interest in structured EU–China standardisation collaboration.

5. SESEC as a Trusted Platform: Broad Stakeholder Participation and Resilient EU–China Cooperation
The SESEC event brought together an exceptionally broad and high-level group of stakeholders from both China and Europe.

Chinese participants included senior representatives from SAC, CNCA, CNIS, CAICT, CESI, CNAS, CQC, Standards Press of China, and multiple national technical committees, alongside leading research institutes, industry associations, and certification bodies.

On the European side, the EU Delegation, Member State embassies, European industry associations, and major multinational companies—including automotive, ICT, energy, electronics, and certification sectors—were well represented.

This diverse participation highlights SESEC's strong convening power and trusted networking capacity. By connecting regulators, standards bodies, industry leaders, and technical experts across systems, SESEC demonstrates its ability to create a balanced, high-level dialogue platform that supports transparency, cooperation, and sustained EU–China engagement in standardisation.

In the current geopolitical environment, where regulatory and economic relations are often framed through strategic competition and de-risking narratives, the strong participation and positive atmosphere at the SESEC event carried particular significance. Participants clearly showed goodwill and a shared commitment to maintaining constructive EU–China standardization engagement. The discussions reflected mutual respect and a pragmatic recognition that standards are essential to global trade, technological innovation, and sustainable development. The diversity and seniority of attendees underscored that standardisation continues to be regarded as a technical and cooperative domain, even when other areas face tension.

Participants expressed strong interest in the presentations and actively engaged in exchanges throughout the event. Many highlighted the importance of transparency, early information sharing, and structured dialogue. **There was clear willingness to deepen future cooperation, particularly in areas such as green transition, digitalisation, and emerging technologies.**

Conclusions

The SESEC 2026 Reception reaffirmed the project's strategic importance as a central platform for EU–China cooperation in standardisation. Held in a complex geopolitical context, the event demonstrated that professional and technical dialogue remains both valued and necessary. By bringing together senior representatives from Chinese authorities, research institutes, national technical committees, certification bodies, the EU Delegation, Member State embassies, European industry associations, and multinational companies, SESEC once again showcased its strong convening power and trusted networking capacity.

The event highlighted key achievements of SESEC, including enhanced transparency on regulatory developments, strengthened policy dialogue, and deeper technical exchanges between European Standardisation Organisations and Chinese counterparts. Presentations on the European Standardisation System, the New Legislative Framework (NLF), harmonised standards, and the Digital Product Passport (DPP) provided valuable insights into how EU standards support the green and digital transitions, internal market integration, and global competitiveness.

Feedback from both Chinese and European participants was highly positive. Chinese stakeholders expressed strong interest in understanding the EU's regulatory architecture and showed willingness to explore further cooperation, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, energy transition, batteries, carbon footprinting, and circular economy standards. European participants equally welcomed the opportunity for open and constructive exchanges, emphasizing the importance of maintaining structured engagement to reduce technical barriers to trade and enhance predictability.

The positive atmosphere and active discussions reflected mutual goodwill and a shared recognition that standardisation remains a cooperative domain even amid broader strategic tensions. The SESEC 2026

Reception clearly demonstrated continued commitment from both sides to sustain dialogue, build trust, and advance practical EU–China collaboration in standardisation.

Annexes of the Report

1. SESEC 2026 Reception agenda
2. SESEC 2026 Reception speaker bios