1. **Date and location for the next meeting of the Liaison group and the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for Cooperation in Forestry between China and CEE countries**

The Action plan calls for the China-CEEC High-level Meetings on Cooperation in Forestry to be organized on a regular basis. We have discussed in previous LG meetings to hold a Ministerial 16+1 meetings every two years, to discuss pertinent issues in forestry and wood processing sector, to give guidance and adopt proposals for the future cooperation of the 16+1 forestry mechanism.

The first meeting was held in Ljubljana with the adoption of an Action plan and the 2nd meeting was held in 2018 in Belgrade.

Consequently the secretariat proposes the topic for the next Ministerial meeting to be:

**Importance of forests and forest-based industry in bio-economy**

The topic was proposed and adopted by the ministers of 16+1 countries in the first High- level meeting in Ljubljana 2016 under the sub-areas of cooperation: “Sustainable and multifunctional forest management.

The bio-economy encompasses the production of renewable biological resources and the conversion of these resources, residues, by-products and side streams into value added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products, services and bioenergy.

The climate change challenges are forcing the stakeholders to explore alternative models to minimise the overall consumption of energy and material and maximise the share of renewable resources in the economic production. The bio-economy remains one of the key solutions to these challenges as well as to replace fossil raw materials. A key challenge for the bio-economy is to ensure that it doesn’t lead to depletion of terrestrial carbon stocks and sinks and that it replaces fossil raw material in the most efficient manner.

Advancements in bio-economy research and innovation uptake will allow the mechanism for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries to improve the management of natural resources and to open new and diversified markets in food and bio-based products. Several initiatives, regional and global have identified bio-economy as a key element for global smart and green growth.

The topic is proposed as the main theme of discussions at the next Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for Cooperation in Forestry between China and CEE countries in 2020.