

**Speech by Ambassador Liu Xinsheng at the Opening  
Ceremony of Confucius Institute in Cyprus**

October 27, 2014

Mr. Costas Kadis, Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus,  
Mr. Constantinos Christofides, Rector of University of Cyprus,  
Mr. Luojie of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education,  
Professor Zhang Jinxiu of the Beijing Institute of Education,  
Distinguished Guests, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening!

It is a happy day today as we officially open the very first the Confucius Institute in Cyprus in the University of Cyprus.

China and Cyprus have a longstanding traditional friendship. Though we do not always share the warm weather, we are both famous for our long history, warm people and warm hospitality. We consistently understand and support each other on issues important to our countries. China sees Cyprus as a trusted partner in the European Union. Yet among all EU countries, Cyprus was the only member state that had no Confucius Institute. Our two peoples have over the years expressed a strong desire to establish a Confucius Institute in this country. It has not been easy, but it has a happy ending. We would like to hereby thank and congratulate all the Chinese and Cypriot institutions and friends who have contributed to this initiative, particularly the Beijing Institute of Education and the University of Cyprus.

It is a happy day today as this new Institute will further promote

our cultural exchanges. Our bilateral ties grow stronger and stronger and culture has become a new highlight. Early this year, the Chinese Cultural Minister, Mr. Cai Wu visited Cyprus and the two sides signed an agreement on cultural cooperation. Just a few weeks ago, the Chinese and Cypriots worked closely together and successfully held a China-Cyprus Culture Festival, the first of its kind ever in Cyprus and the Confucius Institute hosted a large event marking the day of Confucius institutes all over the world. People, Chinese and Cypriots, went to the events in their hundreds and enjoyed live the experience of Chinese culture. One could hardly forget the passion of the audience for the festival.

It is a happy day today as we are celebrating not a successful ending but a very promising new beginning. Despite all the good things we have seen, with this Institute in town, we will expect more good things to happen in the relationship. People will have direct access to learning and appreciating the Chinese culture and language, opening more doors to bilateral cooperation, such as culture, education, tourism, trade, and investment. I sincerely hope that all interested parties will make good use of this new platform to enhance and enrich China-Cyprus relations to the benefit of our two peoples.

To conclude, I wish the Confucius Institute every success!

Congratulations and thank you all.

今天是个好日子,再次感谢大家,祝贺大家!