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Analysis of European Energy Crisis and Its Impact

Pan Jiahua, Dong Xiucheng, Cui Hongjian, Ding Chun and Yan Bing

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The current energy challenge in Europe is an energy shortage and market disorder crisis that has been directly triggered by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine amid the relatively fragile energy transition of the EU, which not only has a huge impact on the European economic structure and prospects, but also affects European politics. Economically, the expensive production costs and the shortage of energy supply have prompted European industries to move abroad. The United States and China are expected to become the largest host countries for this round of European manufacturing relocation. Politically, whether the EU can incorporate the building of an “energy union” into its integration process and avoid new political differences and contradictions due to the different levels of adaptability of its members will be a key factor for the EU to maintain its economic dominance, institutional attractiveness and political influence in the region. After the energy landscape transformation, Europe will enter an uncertain era of reorganization of energy economy, geo-economy and geopolitics. In addition, although the European energy crisis has a negative impact on the determination and strength of relevant parties to further boost the climate ambition, considering that all energy crises originate from the maintenance or strengthening of the interests of monopoly hegemony, carbon neutrality-oriented global climate governance can eliminate the root causes of the energy crisis.

China’s Energy Security under the Drastic Changes of International Energy System

Feng Yujun

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At present, a series of interwoven factors, including the world’s new energy revolution, global energy transformation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have not only profoundly affected the world energy market and international energy geopolitics, but also

brought many new uncertainties to China's energy security. At the same time, some old ideas on energy security still prevent China from emancipating its mindset and innovate mechanisms in the field of energy security. Against the backdrop of the profound evolution of the world energy system, China needs to accurately grasp the changing trend of the world energy market and international energy geopolitics, clarify its strategic thinking, realize concept renewal, and take effective measures to safeguard its energy security.

Property Taxation and Fiscal Governance in China: Dissolving Misperceptions

Zhang Ping, Hou Yilin, Ren Qiang and Ma Haitao

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There are currently still controversies and misunderstandings in the society about some basic issues of property tax and fiscal governance. This article summarizes the existing issues and controversies, and answers major questions on property tax reform, including three major questions related to tax attribution, policy objective, and property tax jurisdiction, and five related questions, i.e., the impacts on house prices and rents, income and wealth distribution, and government behavior, as well as opposing opinions, and realization path. The conclusion indicates that from the perspective of the nature of taxation, the property tax is mainly a benefit tax, with the characteristics of a wealth tax and a capital tax. Although it can help adjust the real estate market, the major policy goal of property tax is to create a long-term mechanism to improve the taxation system, promote fairness, strengthen the function of local governments to provide basic public services. From the perspective of tax jurisdiction, the property tax should be a local tax; if it is levied as a central tax, it is not in line with the long-term policy objective and will magnify many problems in current fiscal governance; and ultimately it would have to return to the de facto local taxation and management. The article's basic conclusions on the five related issues are: the impacts of property tax on government, market, and households all depend on the specific tax design, and that the opposing opinions can be answered using relevant theories, and that a gradual reform path based on tax design can balance the short- and long-term goals of property tax. Based on the answers to the eight questions in this article, we hope that the whole society can deepen the understanding of the basic theoretical issues of property tax and fiscal governance, abandon the invalid circular debate, and promote the property tax reform in China.

The Long-term Mechanism of Real Estate Market Development: Framework and Trend

Yan Rong and Zhang Lili

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As China's real estate market develops at a fast pace, the construction of a long-term mechanism has become a key issue for the real estate market regulation policies in the past 10 years. This article thoroughly analyzes the evolution of the mechanism, and summarizes its basic characteristics, interaction modes and expected functions. Based on important media reports on related conferences and policy documents, the article describes the overall framework of the long-term mechanism for the development of the real estate market, which consists of positioning, basic requirements, key relationships, and policy tools. However, the increasing macroeconomic uncertainty, the increasingly prominent urban pattern dominated by city clusters and metropolitan areas, the reduction of potential housing demand, and the selective implementation of the central government's regulatory policies by local governments have increasingly become challenges to the implementation of the long-term mechanism. To fully bring out the role of relevant policies and achieve policy objectives, it is advisable to further improve policies on housing, land, finance, taxation and regulation.

Issuing Rental Vouchers to Relieve Housing Difficulties of New Citizens in Big Cities: Theoretical Basis, International Experiences and Policy Conception

Long Tingyu and Wang Ruimin

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Housing security of new citizens directly affects the vitality and development of the city where they live. Issuing rental vouchers, which are originated from the United States, is a rental support policy after the housing shortage has been alleviated: low- and middle-income citizens can move into "basically decent" and affordable housing with the subsidy of housing consumption vouchers. Compared with housing in-kind subsidies and cash subsidies, rental vouchers can better improve housing benefits for low- and middle-income families. The rental voucher subsidy is paid directly to the landlord, and the amount is the gap between the reasonable rent cap that the family can afford and the fair market rent. The quality of the rental housing participating in the program must meet specific design and safety standards. Rental vouchers significantly reduce the housing burden of participating families, which is conducive to improving their living environment, dispersing poverty and promoting human capital. This article argues that it is the time to introduce rental voucher system into China. Issuing rental vouchers to qualified new citizens is expected to better use the stock of houses, and increase the supply and quality of desirable rental housing. It is better to issue the rental vouchers in cities with an oversupply of housing or in an overall balance as a pilot, and cities with an

overall shortage of housing can appropriately issue rental vouchers on the basis of increasing the supply of rental housing. In the short term, the stock funds used for housing in-kind subsidies can be converted into rental voucher subsidies, and future incremental subsidies should be dominated by rental vouchers, so as to achieve a structural change in the housing subsidy policy. The specific application qualifications and payment standards for rental vouchers in various places should be determined by the local government in accordance with local conditions. It is also necessary to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the rental voucher system to dynamically improve the policy.

Employment Status Identification of Digital Platform Workers and Realization of Their Social Security Rights

Liu Guilian

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The booming development of platform economy has attracted a large number of new forms of employment, and the number of non-standard workers is rising. The employment forms of platform workers, such as self-employed workers, labor-cooperation employment, or multi-platform employment, are obviously different from the traditional “employer-employee” relationship. Platform workers are at once self-employed and controlled by the platform. The identification of their employment status is controversial, and the social security issue caused by this controversy has become the core issue of public discussion. Based on the classification of platform work, this article discusses the precarious risks of platform workers, and analyzes how to distinguish a worker is truly self-employed. Then it continues to discuss the adequacy and sustainability of social security system enforced by the platform economy. Finally, based on some foreign experiences, the article puts forward policy suggestions from the perspectives of employment relationship clarification, social security system innovation, and optimization of relevant services.

China-Targeted Technical Barriers to Trade and National Economic Security

Zheng Xiuxiu, Liu Qing and Zhao Zhongxiu

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Discriminative technical barriers to trade have become the new form of disguised trade protectionism. The results of this paper show that technical barriers to trade against China cover a broad product category, dominated and imitated by the European countries and the United States, and present a trend of focusing on energy or environment-related topics, as well as a trend of extending to the upstream of the value chain. They have been driven by economic, political,

technological and diplomatic factors, and rooted in the competitive conflicts of national interests in specific markets. They also directly affect the economic behavior of Chinese firms in international trade, leading to structural adjustments at domestic industrial or regional level. Moreover, through the equilibrium of product and labor markets, and the internal and external interactions of overseas and domestic markets, they affect the stable state of the national economy, therefore affecting the national economic security. To cope with the existing problems properly and in a timely manner, China needs to take targeted and optimized measures in reform of regulation system, information transmission, fundamental research and technical standards internationalization.

Achieving Carbon Neutrality Target from a Financial and Fiscal Synergy Perspective: Connotative Attribute, Mechanism and Path Selection

Xu Feng, Wang Shuaibin and Wang Yanan

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The socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics combines an active and capable government with an effective market. Fiscal and financial policy coordination under the “government + market” mechanism is an inevitable choice to promote carbon neutrality. Starting from analysis of the connotative attribute of fiscal and financial synergy, this article further analyzes the internal relationship between fiscal and financial policies and the achievement of the carbon neutrality target; with the help of policy synergy theory, it also discusses the logical premise and multi-dimensional structure of fiscal and financial synergy to achieve carbon neutrality target from two perspectives: the improvement of synergy system and the construction of “subject, target, and content” three-dimensional synergy model, build a theoretical framework for fiscal and financial cooperation to achieve carbon neutrality. In terms of path selection, to achieve carbon neutrality, it is necessary to accelerate the construction of a fiscal and financial policy coordination system under the “government + market” mechanism, strengthen the top-level design at the macro level, and form a “common program” for fiscal and financial coordination; at the meso level, focus should be put on regional coordination and the relationship between overall and partial interests and that between efficiency and fairness should be properly handled as carbon neutrality is promoted; at the micro level, the combination of fiscal and financial policy tools should be optimized, and the advantages of different types of policy tools, such as fiscal and taxation, government subsidies, and green credit, should be fully brought out.

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