

# The Enlightenment of Eu Experience to the Integration of Yangtze River Delta

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**Abstract:** The integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta is an important national strategy of China. The new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation in the world has brought new opportunities and challenges to the Yangtze River Delta. At present, there are still problems such as unbalanced development and industrial homogenization in the Yangtze River Delta. As an international organization with a supranational nature, the EU has a relatively mature governance system in the process of promoting integration, which is of great significance to the development of the integration of the Yangtze River Delta. In view of the current development dilemma of the Yangtze River Delta, Based on the experience of EU integration, this paper puts forward some suggestions on administrative governance: strengthening the implementation of integrated layout through regional planning and multi-party participation, realizing the adjustment of industrial structure and building an ecological metropolitan area.

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, the development of urbanization has changed to the development of regional economies such as urban clusters and metropolitan areas. Typical urban clusters in China are the Long The Yangtze River Delta region is at the forefront of the country because of its economic capacity, degree of innovation, and degree of openness. With only 3.7% of the country's land area, it hosts nearly 16% of the population and generates a quarter of the country's GDP, undoubtedly playing a leading role in the country's economic development.<sup>[1]</sup> An increasing number of More and more scholars have started to investigate the regional economy of the Yangtze River Delta, and they have covered all aspects of it. As the research progresses, it is found that there are some problems in the development of the Yangtze River Delta regional economy, such as large income disparity, poor environmental governance and innovation capacity to be improved. In this paper, we combine the legal, policy, economic and administrative aspects of the EU The paper analyzes the reasons for the gap and points out some shortcomings of the current development of the Yangtze River Delta region, taking into account the legal, policy, economic and administrative governance experience of the EU and the specific practice of China. The paper analyzes the reasons for the gap, points out some shortcomings of the current development of the

Yangtze River Delta region, and sheds light on urban planning, infrastructure construction, industrial innovation and policy guidance.

## 2 EU Integration Experience

### 2.1 Complete Legal System

In the process of integration, the EU has a strong ' legal ' color. From the signing of *the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty*, *the European Atomic Energy Community Treaty* and *the European Economic Community Treaty* by six Western European countries to the signing of *the Lisbon Treaty* by 27 European countries, European integration has evolved from cooperation in specific areas to the current economic and political integration (see Table 1). As an international organization with a supranational nature, the EU 's legal coordination is an important guarantee to balance the interests of member states. The direct application and priority application of EU law make the policies of member states complement each other, complement each other and tend to be consistent, creating a coordinated and stable institutional environment for integration<sup>[2]</sup>. In order to establish a common market and promote stable and effective economic growth, the EU has issued a series of coordination policies, such as the abolition of tariffs, the establishment of common agriculture,

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transportation, tax policies, etc., to maintain the stability of the financial market and promote the free flow of

capital factors among member states.

**Tab.1** Establishment of the EU Legal System

Year	Signed Documents	Countries Involved	Impact
1951	<i>European Coal and Steel Community Treaty</i>	Six Western European countries: Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium	Formed the basis of European Community law.
1957	<i>European Economic Community Treaty &amp; European Atomic Energy Community Treaty</i>	Six Western European countries	
1986	<i>Single European Act</i>	Six Western European countries	It laid a legal foundation for the establishment of the European Union.
1992	<i>Union Treaty</i>	12 Member States	From economic integration to political integration.
1997	<i>Amsterdam Treaty</i>	15 Member States	It provides the possibility for elastic integration.
2000	<i>Nice Treaty</i>	15 Member States	
2007	<i>Lisbon Treaty</i>	EU-27	The EU replaced the community & institutional reform.

## 2.2 Strategic regional division

The EU 's multi-level and huge network governance system determines the difficulty and complexity of regional coordinated governance. With the imbalance of resources and the widening gap between urban and rural areas, the problem of unbalanced regional development has become increasingly prominent. The EU has proposed a new strategy to promote future regional development from the local level<sup>[3]</sup>. The EU' s regional

division is based on administrative units, dominated by population size, and takes into account functional regional units such as agricultural areas, fishery areas, mining areas, etc., which are mainly divided into three layers (see Table 2). NUT 1-3 layers, in the administrative divisions from large to small, constantly focus. Each member state needs to be continuously subdivided at these three levels and submitted to the EU Statistical Office.

**Tab.2** Classification of Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics in EU

Regional level	Number (2021 Year)	Population Size (10 thousands)
NUTS 1: Main socio-economic regions	92	300--700
NUTS 2: Basic Areas for Implementing Regional Policies	242	80--300
NUTS 3: Small areas of special problems / functions	1166	15--80

Source: Eurostat.

In view of the development characteristics and problems of different regions, the EU has put forward different regional development models according to local conditions. For example, the problem regional governance model is carried out in backward areas and resource-insufficient areas, the cross-border governance model is carried out in marginal areas, and the watershed governance model is carried out in international basins connecting multiple countries<sup>[4]</sup>. The local-based multi-center governance model can closely integrate various stakeholders, tap local potential advantages through resource integration and industrial chain optimization, and achieve innovative development. Such as Germany 's Ruhr industrial zone, London metropolitan area, Rotterdam-European port area.

## 2.3 Fund policy based on goal and action orientation

The division of NUTS is the basic unit of the EU 's regional policy, and the EU 's fund policy is the main tool

to realize its regional policy. In order to narrow the development gap between EU member states and within member states, the EU has set up phased development goals and set up special funds ( see Table 3 ). Based on the principle of co-management and co-financing, the strict approval process and project supervision mechanism ensure the openness and transparency of fund use. Systematic and standardized fund policies and multi-purpose fund tools can have different emphases on macro-control, and enable funds to be used for local development point-to-point. From 2004 to 2020, the European Union, through its cohesion policy, supported 1.8 million SMEs, created 360,000 new jobs, and built and renovated 14,900 km of roads<sup>[5]</sup>. The EU 's fund policy is goal-oriented and action-oriented. For example, with the economic transformation and the development of the " carbon neutrality " strategy, the EU has added a fair transition fund to provide financial support for member countries with industrial and petroleum fuels as their economic pillars in the transition phase of green transformation.

**Tab.3** The EU's Main Investment Policy (2021-2027)

Goal	Fund Tools	Uses
Goal 1 : Promote employment and growth	European Regional Development Fund	Invest in the social and economic development of all EU regions and cities.
Goal 2 : European cross-regional cooperation	European Social Fund	Providing employment support.
Goal 3 : EU initiative	Cohesion Fund	Help the environment and transportation construction of less developed EU member states.
	Justice transition fund	Provide financial support for areas most affected by climate and transition.

Source: 2021-2027 Cohesion policy EU Budget Allocations, EU Regional and Urban Development

### 3 Yangtze River Delta Regional Development Status

#### 3.1 Background

##### 3.1.1 Basic Overview

The Yangtze River Delta region, which includes Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui, (these three provinces and one city are located in the eastern part of China, the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, bordering the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea, at the meeting point of the rivers and the sea.) accounts for about a quarter of the country's economic output. These three provinces and one city are the financial and industrial highlands of the Yangtze River Economic Belt and these three provinces and cities are the financial and industrial highlands of the Yangtze River Economic Zone and

China as a whole, as well as the wind vane of opening up to the outside world.

In China, the Yangtze River Delta region is the strongest in terms of economic development, openness to the outside world and The Yangtze River Delta region is one of the strongest areas in China in terms of economic development, openness to the outside world, and innovation capacity, and is strategically important in building a strong country and transforming its economic structure.

##### 3.1.2 Yangtze River Delta Regional Development Status

Some of the indicators in the following table can reflect the current development of the Yangtze River Delta region. The table records the change of data from 2018 to 2020, thus showing the trend of these indicators over time.

**Table.4** Yangtze River Delta Integrated Development Index System and Evaluation Data

Tier 1 Indicators	2018	2019	2020
Innovation Development Indicator Score	100.0	104.6	112.5
Coordinated Development Indicator Score	100.0	100.1	101.4
Green Development Indicator Score	100.0	109.2	114.5
Open Development Indicator Score	100.0	83.7	81.2
Shared Development Indicator Score	100.0	107.0	116.4
Comprehensive index score of the integrated high-quality development of the Yangtze River Delta	100.0	100.9	105.2

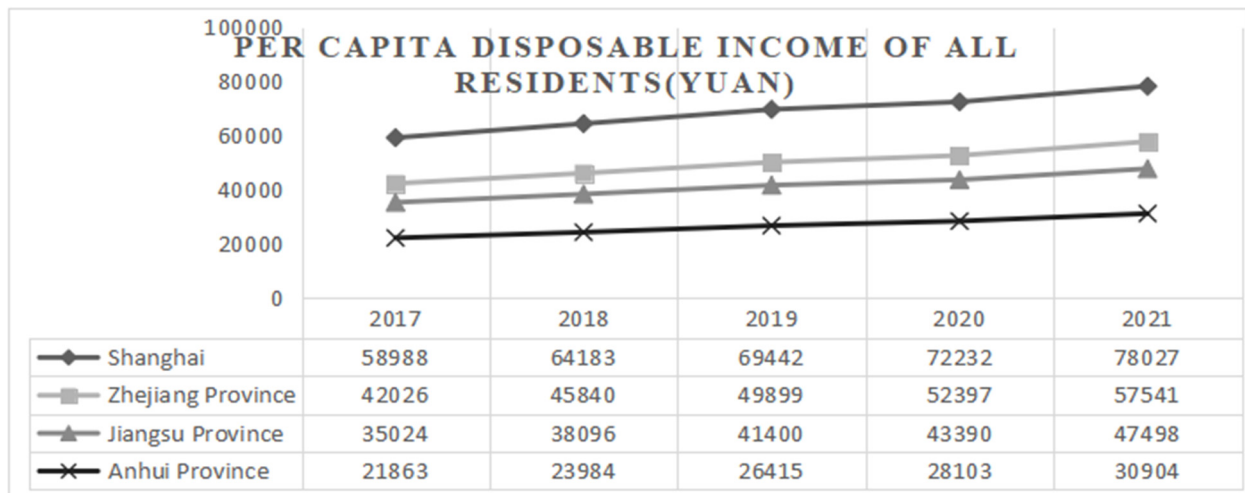
Data source: *Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui Statistical Yearbook and the statistical bulletin on the state of the environment and the China Statistical Yearbook*

Longitudinally, in the three years from 2018 to 2020, only the level of open development decreases from 100.0 to 81.2, while the rest of the primary indicators All the other level indicators have improved. In these three years, the overall index has increased by 5.2%. Among them, the level of innovation development, green development and shared development has increased relatively Among them, innovation development, green development and shared development levels have increased significantly, all by more than 10 percentage points. The level of coordinated development has increased more slowly, by less than 2 percentage points over the three-year period. The decline in the level of open development is due to the severe international situation and the The decline in the level of open development was affected by the severe international situation and the new epidemic, and the decline even reached almost 20 percentage points.

#### 3.2 Current challenges facing the development of the Yangtze River Delta region

##### 3.2.1 Intra-regional income disparities stand out and integrated development fails to meet standards<sup>[6]</sup>

As shown below, in the past 5 years, the income of residents in the Yangtze River Delta region has increased significantly, with per capita disposable income in the Yangtze River Delta region rising by 35.5% in 2021 compared to 2017 The per capita disposable income in the Yangtze River Delta region has increased by 35.5% in 2021 compared to 2017. However, the disparity of residents' income still exists and is prominent, and by 2021, Shanghai residents' per capita disposable income is 78,027 yuan, which is 2.52% of Anhui residents' per capita disposable income. This is 2.52 times higher than the per capita disposable income of Anhui residents.



**Figure.1** Per capita disposable income of all residents from 2017 to 2021  
 Data source: *National Statistical Yearbook*

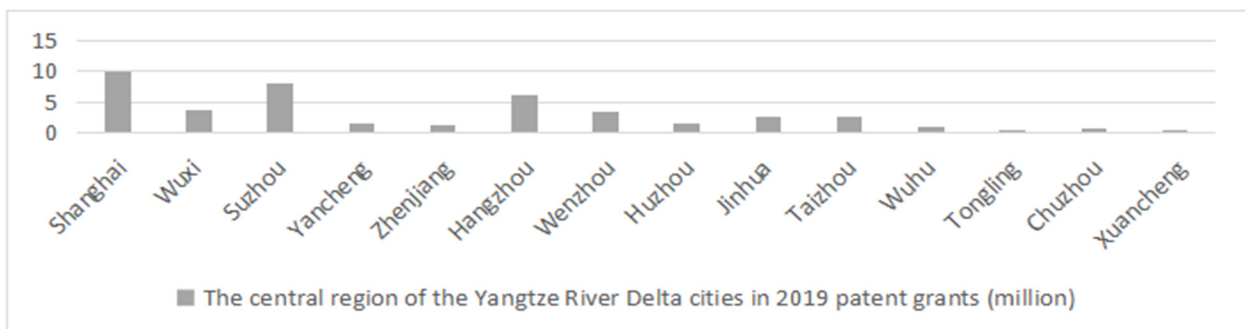
**3.2.2 It is difficult to reverse the polarization of important policies and resources to large cities in the short term**

Scientific research, education, technology, talent and other innovation factors are mainly concentrated in the core area and central cities of the Yangtze River Delta, which are rich in scientific and educational resources and have a solid industrial base, and there are greater difficulties exist for the development of small and medium-sized cities. The following chart, Shanghai has the most colleges and universities per 10,000 people, Zhejiang Jiangsu ranked second third respectively,

Anhui's least, with a big gap with the number of colleges and universities per 10,000 people in this regard. 2019 Shanghai's number of patents granted exceeded 100,000, followed by Suzhou, which ranked second with more than 80,000 patents granted, and Hangzhou, which ranked third and was the city with the highest number of patents granted in Zhejiang Province. While the number of patents granted in Anhui region is obviously lower than the other three regions, the level of technological innovation in Anhui province is at a relatively backward stage.<sup>[7]</sup>The trend of polarization of high-end science and technology resources to big cities is shown.



**Figure.2** The bar chart of the number of colleges per 10,000 people in 2019  
 Data source: *China City Statistical Yearbook*



**Figure.3** Number of patents granted by cities in the central area of Yangtze River Delta in 2019  
 Data source: *China Science and Technology Statistical Yearbook*

**3.2.3 Also need to increase environmental management efforts to improve environmental quality**

The ecological civilization construction in the Yangtze River Delta city cluster has significant aggregation characteristics. Thus, it can be seen that the ecological civilization construction in the Yangtze River Delta region has uneven The integrated and synergistic development still needs efforts. The PM2.5 concentration in the Yangtze River Delta region is slightly higher than the national average, and the concentration in Anhui region is slightly higher than the average concentration in

the Yangtze River Delta region. Anhui is slightly higher than the average concentration in the Yangtze River Delta region.

**3.2.4 The international competitiveness of R&D innovation still needs to be improved**

Internationally, the innovation capacity of the Yangtze River Delta lags far behind that of international metropolitan clusters such as New York, London and Tokyo. As shown in the chart below, New York's R&D index is 227.1, nearly twice as high as Beijing's.<sup>[6]</sup>

**Table.5** Ranking of R&D Index in the Global City Strength Index 2019 to 2021

City	2021	2020	2019
New York	227.1	183.7	215.8
Tokyo	189.1	162.9	162.9
London	188.3	165.1	162.4
Seoul	155.9	126.5	122.7
Singapore	137.8	125.4	112.7
Paris	135.1	104.4	111.9
Hong Kong, China	118.4	96.4	87.6
Washington	112.1	75.5	78.5
Beijing	111.2	77.9	56.9
Shanghai	95.9	61.7	64.2
Sydney	95.4	73.2	75

Source: *Global Power City Index (2019-2021)*

**3.2.5 The level of specialized synergistic division of labor between regions is not high, and the characteristics of division of labor are not clear**

The regional advantage of industry overlap is high. The outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan of each region has proposed to focus on the development and layout of high-end equipment, new materials, new energy industry, artificial intelligence, biomedicine, and so on.

The degree of similarity is very high in the fields of artificial intelligence, biomedicine. Without considering the objective differences in their own development level, the homogeneous layout of strategic emerging industries will easily lead to low-level development.

The homogeneous layout of strategic emerging industries without considering the objective differences in the conditions of their own development levels will easily lead to low-level duplication and waste of resources, and even economic risks caused by the uncertainty of the development of emerging industries.

**3.2.6 The reform of institutional mechanism of regional integration cooperation steps into the deep water of interest**

Compared with transportation, science and technology, industry and other fields, it is more difficult to promote cooperation in ecological environment, public services and other fields of benefit sharing. The ecological environment differs greatly between regions, the mechanism and means to solve cross-border environmental problems, implement ecological compensation, and collaborate to promote common protection of ecological environment are not perfect, the

third-party communication and consultation platform and operation means are single, and the market-oriented operation mechanism of environmental governance is not sound enough. There is still a shortage of quality public service resources, and the degree of the allocation of public service resources among regions, urban and rural areas, groups, provinces and cities is not reasonable enough, and the public service sharing mechanism needs to be improved. The implementation mechanism of adjacent regional cooperation without breaking administrative divisions still needs to be explored in depth, and the construction of cross-regional cooperation platforms and local administrative conflicts are not easily coordinated.<sup>[8]</sup>

**4 Development enlightenment of Yangtze River Delta based on the experience of EU integration**

**4.1 Strategy-based regional planning**

Regional construction should adhere to the planning as the guide, the Yangtze River Delta region should do a good job in the corresponding urban planning, unified planning and coordination of the whole region according to the flow ratio of industry and population in different cities in the region and according to the quarter and between different cities in the region according to different situations and characteristics to carry out representative planning and in the establishment of effective and authoritative planning organizations such as various planning bureaus to deal with the overall coordination of the region and the special planning and

coordination between different cities due to their characteristics<sup>[9]</sup>.

#### 4.2 Strengthen the layout of traffic network integration

In the formation process of the regional metropolitan area, the correlation between the transportation network and the development and construction of the metropolitan area has been continuously strengthened, and a close transportation network system has been constructed. The development of diversified transportation modes has strengthened the interconnection between cities. Focusing on the Yangtze River Delta region, the transportation center hub centered on Shanghai should do a good job in the construction and layout of related transportation and other infrastructure, so as to promote the interconnection with other cities in

the region. In the construction of complete and perfect transportation and other infrastructure, cities in the region can achieve close contact and coordinated development to promote the overall infrastructure construction.

At the end of 2021, the national railway business mileage reached 151,000 kilometers, an increase of 53,000 kilometers from the end of 2012. Among them, the high-speed rail business mileage reached 40,000 kilometers, accounting for more than two-thirds of the world's total high-speed rail mileage. The development results are shared by the whole people, and the modern infrastructure system with complete functions, safety and efficiency is constantly improved. As the focus of national development, the Yangtze River Delta region is expected to drive the overall regional planning and development of the country.

**Table 6** Transportation mode Completed transportation volume

Index	Unit	Absolute number (2002)	Increase over previous year (%)
Tonnage mileage	Billion tons of kilometers	49387	3.8
Quorum: railway	Billion tons of kilometers	15477	6.2
highway	Billion tons of kilometers	6704	5.9
water carriage	Billion tons of kilometers	26481	1.9
civil aviation	Billion tons of kilometers	51.5	17.9
Passenger travel	Hundred million kilometers	13966	6.2
Quorum: railway	Hundred million kilometers	4969	4.2
highway	Hundred million kilometers	7643	6.0
water carriage	Hundred million kilometers	85	-5.6
Civil aviation	Hundred million kilometers	1269	16.2
The port completes cargo throughput	Billion tons	26.8	11.6
Quorum: foreign trade cargo throughput	Billion tons	7.6	17.0

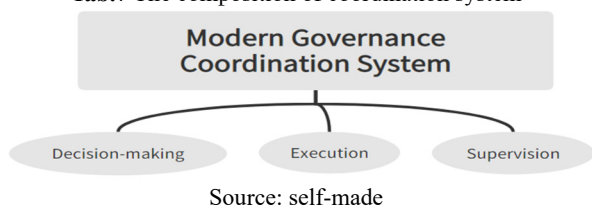
Source: National Bureau of Statistics

#### 4.3 Building a diversified coordination system

The metropolitan area itself is not a first-level administrative unit, and there is a congenital absence of implementation subjects. However, the construction of the metropolitan area is numerous and involves a wide range, and is closely related to the interests of the government, enterprises, citizens, social organizations and groups. It is necessary to establish a relatively centralized coordination mechanism to avoid problems such as repeated construction, waste of resources and vicious competition among local governments. It also requires multi-party participation, full consideration and consideration of the interests of all parties. The Yangtze River Delta region needs to learn from and refer to the excellent cases of foreign metropolitan areas in terms of administrative management, and form an authoritative and efficient series of administrative management units according to its own characteristics<sup>[10]</sup>. In a word, the Yangtze River Delta should establish governance institutions in line with local political, economic, social and cultural characteristics to comprehensively plan regional integration. Compared with developed countries,

we need to strengthen and enhance the focus lies in the multiple participation of various stakeholders, which is the most important point that we should pay attention to in the whole regional integration. It requires the participation of all parties to seek social interaction and give full play to the role of third parties. It can be non-governmental organizations, scholars, experts and other types of personnel, realize the modernization of the governance system at an early date, establish and improve the coordination mechanism of regional development, and form a coordination system for the separation of decision-making, implementation and supervision. The regional leading group should comprehensively coordinate and solve important problems, etc. Such a balanced system is conducive to ensuring the smooth development of regional integration. The coordinating body should have regional governance power, and at the same time have corresponding legal basis and can exercise various tasks according to law. Create a new government evaluation mechanism, with a new set of scientific evaluation system to play a good role in the supervision of administrative personnel.

**Tab.7** The composition of coordination system



#### 4.4 Establish a regional fiscal and taxation coordination mechanism and financial support system

The establishment of regional development funds, China, especially the Yangtze River Delta region can consider the establishment of regional development funds and unified management by the regional integration office, specifically for regional infrastructure construction, subsidies in backward areas and other integrated development issues. At the same time, we should establish a regional fiscal and taxation coordination mechanism and financial support system. Because the coordination mechanism plays an irreplaceable important role in the regional integration of the whole Yangtze River Delta, and the operation of the coordination mechanism requires funds, in addition, industrial adjustment, environmental protection and other integration construction projects also need certain financial support. Even if our country is financed by governments at all levels, it is still necessary to establish a regional fiscal and taxation coordination mechanism and financial support system, including the issuance of special funds to promote industrial adjustment. This measure has also played a certain role in encouraging balanced development and achieving the equal distribution of financial resources based on the financial needs of local governments.

#### 4.5 Promote the adjustment of industrial structure and build an ecological metropolitan area

To achieve market integration, strengthen the unity of a series of regional market rules and systems, improve the level of modernization and integration of market

supervision, so as to promote the coordination of industrial chain and cross-border co-construction of clusters, and at the same time rely on large platforms for product and industry sharing and co-governance. Since the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region needs to establish an innovation-industry system based on scientific research, with technology research and development and technology application research and development as referrals, and with industrialization and market-oriented production and application as exports<sup>[11]</sup>, the innovation and improvement of the regional coordination mechanism is particularly important, which can help break through administrative barriers. The establishment of an integrated mechanism that can handle local administration and regional division of labor and cooperation avoids conflicts of interests at different levels. In addition, Shanghai, as a core city, needs to play a full driving role<sup>[12]</sup>. Give full play to the core driving role of core cities such as Shanghai to build an industrial development pattern and modern industrial system with regional division of labor and coordinated development. Regional coordination and integration development requires us to coordinate the allocation of resources, the export of core technology products and the introduction of foreign capital and investment. Due to the improvement of environmental awareness in various countries around the world and the introduction of a series of low-carbon and environmentally friendly policies in China, many ecological problems such as carbon emissions have gradually attracted the attention of the government and the people of the whole country. Therefore, on the basis of overall sustainable development, while developing and establishing an innovative industrial system, special organizations and personnel are set up to quantify and compare carbon emissions every year, and necessary measures are taken to plan the Yangtze River Delta region as a whole and build an ecological and low-carbon metropolitan area. It can be seen from Table 7 that China's carbon emissions still need to increase efforts to improve and introduce more laws and policies to achieve a better vision of industrial and ecological coordinated development and sustainable development strategy.

**Tab.8** CO2 Emissions

Countries& regions	Carbon Dioxide Emissions Average Annual Growth (%)	Total Emissions (million metric tons)		Per Capita Emissions (ton)	
	1990-2006	2000	2007	2000	2007
World	1.7	24688.0	30649.4	4.1	4.6
China	5.1	3402.3	6533.0	2.7	5.0
Hong kong,China	2.3	40.5	39.9	6.1	5.8
Macao,China		1.6	1.6	3.7	3.0
Japan	0.6	1228.8	1253.5	9.7	9.8
France	-0.3	365.3	371.5	6.2	6.0
Germany	-1.1	831.4	787.3	10.1	9.6
Italy	0.7	447.0	456.1	7.8	7.7
Netherlands		166.2	173.1	10.4	10.6
Spain	3	294.2	359.0	7.3	8.0
Turkey	3.5	216.0	288.4	3.2	4.0
Britain	-0.3	544.0	539.2	9.2	8.8
Australia	1.3	328.8	373.7	17.2	17.7
New zealand	2.1	32.7	32.6	8.5	7.7

Source: World Bank WDI database

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, regional integration is a necessary process of economic globalization. By understanding the specific measures of the typical international metropolitan area of EU integration, including the legal system, regional division, relevant fiscal policies, ecological innovative industrial system, coordinated governance system, etc., this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by the Yangtze River Delta region in the construction of regional integration. According to the specific measures of the international metropolitan area and the EU, this paper puts forward the following suggestions on how the Yangtze River Delta can make up for its shortcomings and truly realize the integration of the industrial chain based on its own advantages : promoting the construction of market integration, the establishment of innovative industrial clusters and the construction of overall development, and creating regional economic integration and ecological regions, in order to enhance the sustainable development of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta.

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