



EU-CHINA: THE NEXT TEN YEARS



Winter 2014

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EU-CHINA: THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Report of the Third Europe China Forum

co-initiated by *Friends of Europe* and

Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union

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Rapporteur: Sebastian Moffett
Publisher: Geert Cami
Director: Nathalie Furrer
Programme Manager: Patricia Diaz
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The global China and the European Union (EU) must build on the growth of their relationship over the past decade by promoting greater two-way investment as well as cooperation in areas such as finance, technology and urbanisation, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said in a special message sent to the third Europe-China Forum.

“Since its establishment 10 years ago, the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has made great strides and cooperation in various fields and has yielded fruitful results,” Li said.

China’s recent decision to deepen reform would lead the country to open up further, and that trade facilitation – in particular for high-tech products – would contribute to the relationship, he underlined. “In the coming decade, China and the EU will strengthen strategic mutual trust and embrace another decade of even more impressive growth,” the Chinese leader added.

The Forum, a joint initiative of *Friends of Europe* and the Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the EU, was held on 26 November, shortly after a Summit in Beijing between Li and EU leaders, where they adopted a 2020 Strategic Agenda calling for greater cooperation. The EU and China are scheduled to start negotiations on an investment agreement, which Forum participants said could help deepen a relationship that is currently heavily focussed on trade.

In his keynote address to the Forum, Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, called for more joint work in international security. “Our cooperation in this field has undoubtedly made progress in the last years,” he told the Forum, mentioning the recent Iran nuclear negotiations, where China’s support contributed to an interim agreement, as well as Chinese Navy cooperation in the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia.

However, he said progress should be made in other areas. “More dialogue is necessary to continue communicating EU positions on Syria, on the Arab Spring process or even on actions in the Sahel,” he said. “Joint cooperation in addressing African crises, in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), is undoubtedly an area where I hope we will be able to advance.”

Booming trade contrasts with meagre investment between the EU and China. From just €125 billion in 2002, EU-China trade reached €434 billion in 2012. “On the contrary our investment relations are poor,” said João Aguiar Machado, the European Commission Deputy Director General for Trade. “EU investment in China represents 2% of EU investment in the world. Chinese investment in the EU is 2 or 2.5% of the total investment the EU receives.”

Greater investment would actually further boost trade, said Vital Moreira, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade. “Most of trade is in companies, so modern trade should be based on investment,” he said.

The EU-China relationship is evolving amid huge changes in China, which will also impact its external relations. Wang Xiaochu, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress of China, said that the “Chinese Dream” is an ongoing historical process, whose current focus is on prosperity and happiness. “China has set two goals,” he said: to double its GDP and per capital income between 2010 and 2020; and “to build China into a modernised socialist country which is prosperous, strong, democratic and harmonious.”

Achieving these goals requires some careful rebalancing, said Van Rompuy – between consumption and investment; internal and external demand; the ecology and the economy. “The present model is not environmentally sustainable,” he said. “If left unchecked, it may endanger the quality of life and even the health of the Chinese population.”

Concrete activities – where Europe and China might be able to contribute to each other's well-being – were seen as crucial by Forum participants. Europe's experience of urbanisation could be useful for China, where hundreds of millions of people will likely move from to cities in coming years, raising challenges in transport, sanitation and water supply.

“Europe is seen as a good example – three-quarters of the population live in cities and there is harmony,” said Paula Abreu-Marques Head of Unit Responsible for EU-China Cooperation in the European Commission Directorate General for Energy.

At the same time, China presents new opportunities for Europe. “China needs to create new jobs, so we need European small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to contribute,” said Li Tie, Director General of the China Centre for Urban Development of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). “A lot of European SMEs would like to invest in China but do not understand Chinese policies. So we should create some demonstration sites to show SMEs how to do this.”

Though trade friction will inevitably crop up from time to time, participants said, this is the result of a strong trading relationship. “We do not see eye to eye on all issues, but we can manage these,” said David O’Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service (EEAS). “Agenda 2020 was not easy to negotiate, but it’s a good basis for future cooperation.”

In conclusion, China and Europe could be moving away from a “them-and-us” relationship towards something much more useful, said Forum co-moderator Giles Merritt, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*.



Zhang Lirong, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

EU-China relations: The next ten years

“Since its establishment 10 years ago, the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has made great strides and cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful results,” Chinese Premier [Li Keqiang](#) said in a special message sent to the third Europe-China Forum on November 26. “In the coming decade, China and the EU will strengthen strategic mutual trust and embrace another decade of even more impressive growth,” Li said.

China’s recent decision to deepen reform would lead the country to open up further, and trade facilitation – in particular for high-tech products – would contribute to the relationship, the Chinese Premier underlined. “The Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has made the arrangement for comprehensively deepening reform in China, which means China will continue to deepen its reform and opening-up,” the Chinese leader added.

Li’s message was delivered to the Forum – co-organised by *Friends of Europe* and the Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the European Union (EU) – several days after he had met EU leaders in Beijing.

“In the coming decade, China and the EU will strengthen strategic mutual trust and embrace another decade of even more impressive growth.”

[Li Keqiang](#), Premier of the People's Republic of China



In his keynote address to the Forum, [Herman Van Rompuy](#), President of the European Council, said China’s new leadership finds itself at a crossroads. “After many years of rapid development at record-high yearly growth rates, millions of people have been lifted from poverty. At the same time the existing economic model needs to be re-examined and revised, if China is to continue on an equivalent path of growth and development over the coming decade,” he said.

EU is China's "partner in development"

The EU is a “partner in development for China in a deeper sense than just a trade partner. We are a partner that will bring experience and knowledge. We are a partner whose economy contributes to world growth. A partner on which it is worthwhile investing. We are also increasingly seen as a partner for peace and stability,” said Van Rompuy.

“But, as China needs the EU, the EU also needs China. China is a major destination for EU exports. It has contributed to sustain the euro during the recent financial crisis. It is a source of investment and it’s rapidly growing economy offers, and will continue to offer during the coming years, irreplaceable opportunities for economic expansion,” he underlined.

China also has to decide how best to use its increased capacity to influence world events, said Van Rompuy. “Our cooperation in this field has undoubtedly made progress in the last years,” he told the Forum, mentioning the recent Iran nuclear negotiations, where China’s support contributed to an interim agreement, as well as Chinese naval cooperation in the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia.



“The EU is a partner in development for China in a deeper sense than just a trade partner.”

Herman Van Rompuy, European Council President

However, he said progress should be made in other areas. “More dialogue is necessary to continue communicating EU positions on Syria, on the Arab Spring process or even on actions in the Sahel,” he said. “Joint cooperation in addressing African crises, in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), is undoubtedly an area where I hope we will be able to advance.”





The Chinese Dream

In a special address to the Forum [Wang Xiaochu](#), Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of China, talked of the Chinese Dream and its impact on the EU-China relationship.

"It includes the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people," he underlined, adding that the ambition was to double China's GDP and per capita income from 2010 to 2020 in order to establish a "well-off society in all aspects". The ambition was also to build China "into a modernised socialist country which is prosperous, strong, democratic and harmonious and to catch up with moderately developed countries" by 2050.

Concretely that means better education, more stable jobs, better income, more reliable social protection, better medical care, better living conditions and a cleaner beautiful environment. "It provides opportunities for Chinese people to realise their individual dreams for a better life," Wang said.

The Chinese Dream means "opportunities for development and cooperation" in the EU-China relationship, he said. A more prosperous China would have strong economic and trade links with the EU. A more open China would provide broader platforms for the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and a more harmonious and stable China would be able to better respond to global challenges and safeguard regional and world peace.

"The Chinese Dream means opportunities for development and cooperation in the EU-China relationship."

Wang Xiaochu, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of China



The "Chinese Dream" is an on-going historical process, which Wang Xiaochu traced back to the "bullying and oppression by the big powers" after the Opium Wars in 1840. Since the start of reforms under Deng Xiaoping in 1978, China has

achieved great material progress, he said: “The country has resolved the long-standing problem of food and clothing supply, lifted over 200 million people out of poverty, universalised nine-year compulsory education and built up a social security system with 1.3 billion people in basic medical insurance and 800 million people in basic old-age insurance, which is the largest social security system in the world.”

Rebalancing of priorities

Herman Van Rompuy told the Forum that achieving these goals required some careful rebalancing of priorities in China. “After many years of rapid development at record-high yearly growth rates, millions of people have been lifted from poverty,” he said. “At the same time, the existing economic model needs to be re-examined and revised, if China is to continue on an equivalent path of growth and development over the coming decade.” Rebalancing is necessary between consumption and investment; internal and external demand; ecology and the economy. “The present model is not environmentally sustainable,” he said. “If left unchecked, it may endanger the quality of life and even the health of the Chinese population.”

In addition, the Chinese system of government needs to be adjusted, said Van Rompuy. “The rapid growth and the deep involvement of the administration in the economic life of the country has led to dysfunctional and corruption-related problems,” he said. “The state sector will remain important, but there is clear awareness that the market has to be given a greater role – the Third Plenum foresaw 'a decisive role' – in guiding economic decisions. Rule of law will need to be strengthened, while limiting government and administration direct involvement in the economic life of the nation.”

Ma Zhengang, Vice Chairman of the China Public Diplomacy Association (CPDA), stressed that China was committed to peace, and is not trying to revive an old empire or establish a new hegemony. Talking about the “Chinese Dream” he said: “Even some people say that’s a dream of a vicious dragon. I think that’s a total misunderstanding. A very important precondition of the Chinese Dream is a peaceful environment.”

The EU-China Summit adopted a 2020 Strategic Agenda calling for greater cooperation in areas such as growth, security and the environment. The Agenda aims to deepen links beyond the thriving trade relationship, which has developed to the point where the EU is China's biggest trading partner and China is the EU's second, after the United States. It opens an array of opportunities for greater EU-China synergies including in areas such as green growth and urbanisation. Two-way investment levels are still small, but negotiations towards an investment agreement are scheduled to start early in 2014, potentially laying the ground for more businesses to set up operations away from home.

**“A very important precondition of the Chinese Dream
is a peaceful environment.”**

Ma Zhengang, Vice Chairman of the China Public Diplomacy Association (CPDA)



An active foreign policy

President Xi Jinping is working to develop and reinforce old and new friendships and has already visited the US but also Russia, India, Southeast Asia and countries in Africa and Latin America. “This new leadership has a new style,” said [Ruan Zongze](#), Vice President of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). “The leaders have a new vision for China’s foreign policy and it seems they have a global vision.”



“This new leadership has a new style.”

[Ruan Zongze](#), Vice President of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

China is also increasingly aware of the importance of trade routes, said Ruan. These include the “silk road” economic belt in Central Asia, as well as a maritime version with Southeast Asia. “The fundamental point here is that China wants to share its opportunities with the neighbouring area. China has land borders with 14 countries, so it has no choice: We have to cultivate better relationships in our immediate neighbourhood.”

Ruan said it was necessary to remember the lessons of Europe a century ago. Then, after several decades of technological and economic progress with few military conflicts, the First World War broke out, killing millions of people and destabilising the continent for decades afterwards. “Of course there are a lot of differences, but there are similarities to that time,” he said. “We should not take peace, stability and prosperity for granted.”

Trade is the bedrock of the EU-China relationship, as both sides need growth – whether this is the 7% or 8% annual increases that China needs to create sufficient new jobs, or the more modest goals of the euro zone. In 2003 bilateral trade was only \$125.2 billion, but by 2012 it had grown to \$546 billion, according

to Chinese government figures. In 1985 China purchased its first Airbus plane, but in 2012 this had increased, with over 800 Airbus planes flying over mainland China. China ordered another 60 in 2013.

Greater market opportunities for Europe

“The further expansion and development of the Chinese economy, especially with its focus on expanding domestic demand, will provide greater market opportunities for European companies and give stronger impetus to our relationship in economy and trade,” said [Wang Xiaochu](#), Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of China.

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[Wang Xiaochu](#), Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of China

New possibilities abound for increasing business relations, said [Christopher Dent](#), Professor in East Asia's International Political Economy at Leeds

University. In September a Chinese container ship travelled for the first time from Northeast China to Rotterdam via the Arctic Ocean, a much shorter route than the conventional one through the Suez Canal. “It’s a very, very small volume of trade at the moment,” he said. “But that could be interesting in the longer term.”

More trade could also mean more trade friction, but there are signs that China and the EU are finding ways to deal with this without jeopardising their relationship. “Problems arise from different perceptions of the realities in the world, from different historical and cultural backgrounds and from different priorities in our respective agendas,” said [Zhang Yuanyuan](#), Senior Communication Advisor

“Problems arise from different perceptions of the realities in the world. But it is problems that force us to redouble our efforts to move our relations forward.”

[Zhang Yuanyuan](#), Senior Communication Advisor and Member of the Public Diplomatic Advisory Committee of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs



and Member of the Public Diplomatic Advisory Committee of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "But it is problems that force us to redouble our efforts to move our relations forward. Nothing should be allowed to stand in a way of stronger and closer partnership between China and the EU."

David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service (EEAS), was optimistic too. "We do not see eye to eye on all issues, but we can manage these," he said. "Agenda 2020 was not easy to negotiate, but it's a good basis for future cooperation."

"Agenda 2020 was not easy to negotiate, but it's a good basis for future cooperation."

David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service (EEAS)



Boosting investments

Booming two-way trade contrasts with low levels of investment. From just €125 billion in 2002, EU-China trade reached €434 billion in 2012. "On the contrary our investment relations are poor," said **João Aguiar Machado**, Deputy Director General at the European Commission Directorate General for Trade. "EU investment in China represents 2% of EU investment in world. Chinese investment in the EU is 2% or 2.5% of the total investment the EU receives."

The low level of investment is not well understood, especially by Europeans, who can have an inflated view of China's overseas purchases, said **André Loeseckrug-Pietri**, CEO and Founding Managing Partner of A CAPITAL. He recalled a cover of *The Economist* newspaper two years ago that featured an image of Chairman Mao holding a fist full of dollars to illustrate that China was buying up the world. "This is totally wrong in numbers, but that's the perception and I think this is the challenge that a lot of Chinese firms face," said Loeseckrug-Pietri.

However, many of the overseas mergers and acquisitions done by Chinese firms have been in Europe. “What China needs today is transportation technology, air quality and water treatment,” he said. “These are areas where the leading, globally competitive clusters are mainly in Europe.”

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André Loeseckrug-Pietri, CEO and Founding Managing Partner of A CAPITAL

European companies could benefit if a future EU-China investment agreement gives them more access to the Chinese consumer market. Though many of them have produced goods in China for a long time, the share of their revenues from China is still mostly single digit – with German car-maker Audi a notable exception. “Very few European companies have tapped into this huge domestic consumption market which is opening up,” said Loeseckrug-Pietri. These factors create a strategic opportunity, he said: “I think there is a historic chance because there is an interest on both sides.”

Not just about protection

A stronger investment relationship could do more than just boost the economic numbers. It could also consolidate the wider relationship. “When you trade, you export and you import from a distance,” said Machado. “When you invest you take a direct stake in the other country and its society, so it becomes a much closer relation. So if we reinforce our investment relations, it will have a tremendous impact in bringing our overall relations with China closer.”

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João Aguiar Machado, European Commission
Deputy Director General for Trade



The investment treaty would not, however, be just about investment protection, said Machado. Only one of the 28 EU member states – Ireland – still does not have a bilateral investment treaty with China, so there would be little point in simply replacing the 27 existing investment protection treaties with a single EU version. “What is missing is greater access to Chinese markets and opportunities to invest across the board there,” he said. “There are some sectors that have been protected. And on the Chinese side, there are certainly opportunities to increase investments in Europe.”

Greater investment would also further boost trade, said [Vital Moreira](#), Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade. Currently, the EU's trade relations with its two biggest partners are completely different, he said. Most trade between the EU and the US is inter-corporate, based on outward investments made by US and European companies. US companies export components from America to their European units, and then export their final products to the US – or the other way round.

"None of this happens with China because the investment flows are so low," said Moreira. "So our trade flow with China is very traditional. We need to modernise it, and that's why investment should be at the basis of our trade relations with China. Modern trade should be based on investment."

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Vital Moreira, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade

European Parliament wants EU-China investment treaty

This is one reason that the European Parliament – often very critical of China over trade relations – has been enthusiastic about a potential investment deal. Since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect in 2009, trade agreements and legislation must pass through the European Parliament and it has tended to be critical of China over trade, often citing unfair trading practices, poor enforcement of intellectual property rights and environmental standards and weaknesses in the rule of law and human rights. "However, when we learned that the Commission.

had decided to launch negotiations for an investment agreement with China, the Parliament came out strongly in support," said Moreira.

That said, the EU-China relationship will not be able to match those of the US with EU and with China for geographic reasons, Moreira said. "The Pacific is also an American ocean," he said. "We have only the Atlantic Ocean." However, he said, Europe was still engaging with Asia, completing a free-trade agreement with South Korea and negotiating with Japan and India

After spending years trying to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and then, after entry, bringing itself in line with WTO rules, China now finds itself uninvolved in the world's two biggest trade-boosting projects: the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) being negotiated by the EU and the US and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in which a large number of Asia-Pacific countries are either involved in or have expressed interest in – including the US, Canada, Chile, Japan and much of Southeast Asia.

The EU, for its part, is trying to seal an array of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) around the world. "At the beginning I think China preferred multilateral mechanisms such as the WTO," said Cheng Weidong, Professor at the European Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). "If FTAs or regionalism are the future trend, I think Europe will play a more important role in that process."

China and the CEE states

China, meanwhile, has caused unease in some European capitals by pursuing a separated cooperation agenda - through Economic and Trade Forum meetings - with 16 countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the so-called "16 plus 1". In a visit to Poland last April, then-Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced \$10 billion credit line to support Chinese investment in the region. At the most recent meeting, in November 2013 in Bucharest, current Prime Minister Li proposed to double the trade volume between China and CEE countries within five years, plan a group of big joint infrastructure projects and boost corporate investment.

The meetings have raised suspicions that the eastern European states are trying to get round the EU framework or that China is playing groups of member states

off against the EU. However, this is not a formal arrangement and should not clash with the EU's policies towards China or the framework for EU-China relations, said [Justyna Szczudlik-Tatar](#), Analyst at the International Economic Relations and Global Issues Programme of the Polish Institute of International Affairs. The main thing the countries have in common is that they have longer diplomatic relations with China than western European countries, as they recognised the People's Republic in 1949. In addition, their time spent in the Soviet bloc slowed their economic progress, so they now tend to have lower wages than Western Europe.



Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, Zhang Yuanyuan, Senior Communication Advisor and Member of the Public Diplomatic Advisory Committee of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cheng Weidong, Professor at the European Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences and Ma Zhengang, Vice Chairman of the China Public Diplomacy Association

But the 16 countries are very different from each other, said Szczudlik-Tatar. “They range geographically from the Baltic through Central Europe to the Balkans and are at different stages of economic development. They do not have a common policy towards China but are focused on pursuing their individual bilateral relations with China, making them to some extent competitors.” She also said China's economic pledges, such as the credit line, were not that significant.

“It's more a political declaration than a real economic offer,” she said. “The Summit is kind of a place when 16 bilateral dialogues are held. So practically, it's a venue for annual meetings between prime ministers from those countries and the Chinese Prime Minister. For us this is very convenient.”

"The Summit is kind of a place when 16 bilateral dialogues are held."



Justyna Szczudlik-Tatar, Analyst at the International Economic Relations and Global Issues Programme of the Polish Institute of International Affairs

One reason for the initiative might be the EU's Lisbon Treaty framework, which gave the Union a single president – Van Rompuy at present – and did away with the old system, where the EU President was the head of government of the country holding EU's six-month rotating presidency.

No worries

O'Sullivan said he was “fairly relaxed” about the 16 plus 1. “The EU is what it is. We are not a state. We are in an intermediate stage of development between an international organisation and some new form of supra-national,” he said. “We have difficulty ourselves defining it to our own citizens sometimes. I am not surprised that our strategic partners want to hedge their bets by not only having good relations with Brussels but also having good relations with our member states. This is nothing new. It was said that China is not trying to divide and rule. Well, it would be the first strategic partner that didn't try to do that because most of our strategic partners have been doing this as a strategy for many, many years, hedging their bets.

For its part, China is undergoing changes in the responsibilities assigned to different layers and divisions of government, something that could also affect the way Europe and China interact. “In the beginning in China, the system was that everything was paid for by the central government leaving the local governments doing nothing,” said Zhang. “Later on, the local government was asked by the central government to do an increasing number of jobs on behalf of the central government, but the taxation system remained pretty much unchanged. This meant local governments had great difficulty in meeting their financial burdens. So in the latest reform package includes reforms in the area of taxation powers and areas of competence.”

Evolving relations

The EU-China relationship is evolving amid massive changes inside China, which will also impact its external relations. “I think what absolutely struck most of us from the EU delegation to Beijing was the style of the new leadership, which is much more spontaneous and much more self-confident,” said O'Sullivan. The full implications of the Third Plenum have yet to sink in for outsiders, he said, “but it's clearly taken some very, very important decisions.”

Concrete activities – where Europe and China might be able to contribute to each other's well-being – were seen as crucial by Forum participants.

Policies to smooth the progress of urbanisation are a key priority, said Wang Xiaochu, as Chinese cities would in coming years need to absorb 600 million people migrating from the countryside. At present, 53% of the Chinese population lives in cities, but this is expected to reach 60% in 2020 and peak at 70% in 2030. That makes it necessary to generate 25 million new urban jobs each year and to provide adequate transport, sanitation and water supply. “While Chinese society is full of vitality, it also faces challenges and more conflicts of interest between different social groups,” he said.

“I think what absolutely struck most of us from the EU delegation to Beijing was the style of the new leadership, which is much more spontaneous and much more self-confident.”



David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service (EEAS)

Sustainable urbanisation

Europe's experience of urbanisation could be useful for China, several participants said. This could cover mobility, water and the efficient use of resources, as well as a range of concerns from environmental protection to cultural heritage. In 2012, leaders established the China-EU Partnership on Urbanisation and then held the first China-EU Mayors' Forum.

"Europe is seen as a good example – three-quarters of the population live in cities and there is harmony," said [Paula Abreu-Marques](#), Head of Unit Responsible for EU-China Cooperation in the European Commission Directorate General for Energy. "Of course, not everything has been positive but it is also possible to learn from our mistakes. So this is an area where Europe and China have decided to make a big effort together."

"Europe is seen as a good example – three-quarters of the population live in cities and there is harmony."



[Paula Abreu-Marques](#), Head of Unit Responsible for EU-China Cooperation in the European Commission Directorate General for Energy

City-to-city cooperation is also being encouraged. Twelve cities from Europe and 12 from China have signed up to pairing agreements that will lead to pilot projects, said Abreu-Marques. "This is another vehicle for European companies to enter the Chinese market," she said.

Indeed, said Cheng Weidong, joint cooperation on cities could be an opportunity for European companies to profit from their technology, as they are widely considered to be leaders in renewable energy, low-energy buildings and the treatment of water and waste. “We all know that Europe has a lot of experience, skills and technology in urbanisation area,” he said. “So there is a large potential area of cooperation.”

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Cheng Weidong, Professor at the European Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences (CASS)



Some European companies – and not just in the urbanisation field – might need help to navigate the Chinese business scene, said Li Tie, Director General of the China Centre for Urban Development of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). “China needs to create new jobs, so we need European small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to contribute,” he said. “A lot of European SMEs would like to invest in China but do not understand Chinese policies. So we should create some demonstration sites to show SMEs how to do this.”

“China needs to create new jobs, so we need European small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to contribute.”

Li Tie, Director General of the China Centre for Urban Development of the National



Energy cooperation

Energy is another big challenge for China, in particular given its current heavy reliance on carbon-based fuels. Because China needs to import all its gas and oil, it relies a lot on coal, which it has in abundance for the time being, said Ma Zhengang. “We know that’s not the best choice,” he said. “The Chinese government has taken a lot of measures to reduce pollution but it takes time.”

Currently China generates just 2% of its electricity from nuclear power, compared to 75% for France and 19% for the US but, according to Christopher Dent, China – along with South Korea – has the world’s most ambitious nuclear energy programme.

Most remarkable is China’s expansion of wind power, which is unparalleled in the world. Helped by its large surface area and long coastline, China in 2010 became the largest wind energy provider worldwide, and it now has more capacity to generate electricity by wind than it does nuclear capacity. China is also investing heavily in solar power, hydropower and biomass – plant-based products used to produce energy.

“The challenges are enormous but I think we are going in the right direction,” said Dent. “If you look at investment levels in green and renewable energy, the two leaders are China and Europe.”

Public diplomacy

China has become increasingly aware of its image around the world, and has been working hard at public diplomacy.

Mainly it has invested in the past years in building the “hardware” of public diplomacy, said [Ingrid d’Hooghe](#), Senior Research Associate at Clingendael in the Netherlands. It has expanded its media presence around the world, established many Confucius Institutes and set up people-to-people dialogues and student exchanges. “I think now China is ready to take the next step and improve on the software of public diplomacy,” she said – “improve the quality of its messages; improve the quality of the programs.”

Public diplomacy is important because China is different from many of the countries and regions that it deals with in its historical background, cultural identity and political system. “Chinese leaders often complain they are misunderstood, and I think they are right,” said d’Hooghe. The best way to produce messages that appeal to a foreign or European public is to formulate them jointly. Often, dialogues consist of a European participant talking, a Chinese participant talking

“If you look at investment levels in green and renewable energy, the two leaders are China and Europe.”

Christopher Dent, Professor in East Asia's International Political Economy at Leeds University



and then each goes their own way. “Instead of a Chinese participant writing an op-ed and a European participant writing an op-ed, maybe they could write an op-ed together,” she said. “I think there are many creative ideas to really collaborate and improve the impact of people-to-people dialogues.”

“China is ready to take the next step and improve on the software of public diplomacy, improve the quality of its messages; improve the quality of the programs.”



Ingrid d'Hooghe, Senior Research Associate at Clingendael in the Netherlands

There are some relatively simple things that China could do better. For example, the Chinese government's report on the Third Plenum had not been posted on its website in an official English language translation, something that would have helped non-Chinese better understand Beijing's thinking.

Transparency creates trust

Chinese business leaders could improve their image by being more open to foreign media, said Loesekrug-Pietri. “We co-invest with Chinese groups, I am permanently harassed by journalists who tell me they would like to interview the chairman of our partner in Shanghai or Beijing,” he said. “I keep having the same answer that these Chinese groups are not available for interviews.”

This would also help China buy foreign companies. Volvo – which was bought in 2009 by Zhejiang Geely – was available for purchase fairly easily, he said. “But when you are looking at companies that have a lot of value and technology and that are profitable, there is a lot of competition in Europe from local investors,” he said. “The story is the same everywhere – that between a foreign investor and a local investor, there is a human tendency to privilege the local one. You feel more comfortable, you speak the same language.”

He said the heads of big Chinese enterprises should go to the media more and talk – about their strategies, financing, and also what kind of a person they are. “They will create huge trust because transparency creates trust,” he said. “I think this is a very big message that probably the central government or entrepreneurs' associations can really push, and say, 'It's not just about a cheque book.' If you want to invest in Europe, you will need to disclose much more who you are, what you want to do and what is your strategy. This will make Chinese firms much more acceptable, I think.”

Get to know China better

Europeans too should make more effort to get to know China, said O'Sullivan. “We have a much deeper and richer common cultural heritage with the United States,” he said. “There are deep family personal ties there which go back a long way even if we have to recognise that the changing demographics of the US mean that cannot be taken for granted. We have nothing comparable in our relations with China and I do think there that the obligation is rather on Europe frankly to understand better our place in a changing world.”

Often, the rest of the world has been damaged in some way by Europeans, so they know quite a lot about Europe, he said. To redress the balance, changes should be made to language and history education, he said. “I think we need a little bit of humility on our side to recognise that we actually have to be the ones to reach out and understand better the culture, history, and perspective of the countries with whom we are going to share this planet.”



ANNEX I – Programme

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Introductory address by **Herman Van Rompuy**, European Council President

Special address by **Wang Xiaochu**, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of China (NPC)

SESSION I

Europe and the chinese dream

President Xi Jinping's talk of the "Chinese dream" has galvanised the Chinese public, encouraging people across the country to think bigger and better. The catchy – and deliberately vague – slogan has also prompted worldwide curiosity. As China and the EU mark ten years of their strategic partnership and reflect on the next decade, how should Europe interpret the Chinese dream? Can Europe help China's leaders turn their ambitions of domestic growth and development into reality? How will President Xi's vision of peace, happiness and prosperity impact on China's domestic economic environment, trade and business relations and global engagement? Is the Chinese dream exclusively about domestic growth and development or a more inclusive concept with implications for Europe and European business? Given its experience and know-how, can Europe help China tackle the public's key "quality of life" aspirations (and dreams) in areas such as sustainable urbanisation, air pollution, food safety and environmental preservation? Can European exporters and investors hope to operate in a more open business environment? Do the new leaders plan to speed up economic reforms, boost domestic demand and revamp the unsustainable domestic investment-driven export model? Will the Chinese dream enhance China's "soft power" on the global stage?

Paula Abreu-Marques

Head of Unit Responsible for EU-China Cooperation at the European Commission Directorate General for Energy

Cheng Weidong

Professor at the European Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences (CASS)

Christopher Dent

Professor in East Asia's International Political Economy at Leeds University

Li Tie

Director General of the China Centre for Urban Development of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)

Ma Zhengang

Vice Chairman of the China Public Diplomacy Association (CPDA)

Vital Moreira MEP

Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on international trade

Co-moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*, and **Shada Islam**, Director of Policy at *Friends of Europe*

SESSION II

Europe, China and the brave new world

EU-China relations have waxed and waned since they sealed an ambitious “strategic partnership” in 2003. Relations were upbeat last year as EU and Chinese leaders launched an urbanization partnership, established people-to-people ties and agreed to negotiate a bilateral investment treaty. As EU and China mark ten years of their strategic partnership, what can be done to put EU-China relations on a stronger footing? Can China and the EU ensure that their trade disputes do not poison overall relations? Is China right to be concerned about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership? How does China’s pursuit of stronger relations with Germany and some other EU member states impact on EU-China ties? Can the EU and China meet the challenge of forging a new, 21st Century political and economic relationship based on mutual trust and respect? Are Brussels and Beijing investing enough time and energy into their “strategic” relationship? Can more be done to boost practical cooperation in areas such as development policy, global governance, cyber security and climate change? Can the EU support a stronger role for China in global agendasetting and is China ready to take on more global responsibilities? What can be done to further boost EU-China people-to-people contacts?

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| João Aguiar Machado | Deputy Director General at the European Commission Directorate General for Trade |
| Ingrid d’Hooghe | Senior Research Associate at Clingendael, The Netherlands |
| André Loesekrug-Pietri | Founder of A CAPITAL |
| David O’Sullivan | Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service (EEAS) |
| Ruan Zongze | Vice President of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) |
| Justyna Szczudlik-Tatar | Analyst at the International Economic Relations and Global Issues Programme of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland |
| Zhang Yuanyuan | Senior Communication Advisor and Member of Public Diplomatic Advisory Committee of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs |

Co-moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*, and **Shada Islam**, Director of Policy at *Friends of Europe*

ANNEX II – List of participants

Paal Aavatsmark, Counsellor, Foreign Policy, Mission of Norway to the EU

Paula Abreu Marques, Head of Unit, International Relations & Enlargement, European Commission, Directorate General for Energy

João Aguiar Machado, Deputy Director General, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Victor Angelo, International Affairs, Strategist & Columnist, Visao Magazine

Danijel Apostolovic, First Secretary, Mission of Serbia to the EU

Oana-Andreea Arsanu, Assistant, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Ailara Astanakulova, Masters Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Thomas Avenati, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Jan Bakkes, Senior Project Leader, Global and European Outlooks, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Pedro Ballesteros Torres, Principal Administrator, International Relations and Enlargement, European Commission, Directorate General for Energy

Nicole Baromska-Glab, Assistant, European Commission, Legal Service

Leanda Barrington, Senior Adviser, Cambre Associates

Benjamin Barth, Team Member, Centre for European Studies (CES)

Sudeshna Basu, EU Public Affairs Manager, Huawei Technologies

Raphaël Beaufret, European Affairs Advisor, Sanofi

Louis Bellemin, Advisor to the President, National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS)

Vijay Bhardwaj, Head of Unit for External Relations, European Commission, Directorate General for Budget

Alison Birkett, International Relations China, Japan, Korea, European Commission, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Helene Blondel, Translation & Sinology, Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (BCECC)

Else Boonstra, Administrator for China, Japan, India & EIDHR, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Pierre Borgoltz, Coordinator, Cooperation Central Asia, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Vito Borrelli, China Desk, European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture

Oliver Brauner, Researcher for the China and Global Security Programme, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Giovanni Bravo Vanegas, Counsellor, Mission of Mexico to the EU

Guido Broekhoven, China - Africa Programme Manager, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) European Policy Office

Reinhard Bütikofer MEP, Member, European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Lisa Buzenas, Political Officer, EU relations with Central, South and East Asia, Mission of the United States of America to the EU

Eric Callens, Xinhua News Agency European Regional Bureau

Fraser Cameron, Director, EU-Asia Centre

Geert Cami, Co-Founder & Director, *Friends of Europe* Les Amis de l'Europe

Alessandro Carano, Managerial Adviser, Head of Unit, Institutional and Operational Policies Outside the EU, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Yaou Chen, Counsellor, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Weidong Cheng, Deputy Director of the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Institute of European Studies

Alice Choi, Deputy Representative, Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office

Xavier Coget, Policy Co-ordinator, China, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Susanne Connolly, Media Relations and Outreach Officer, Mission of Canada to the EU

Pierre-Valentin Costa, Liaison Officer, EU Correspondent, Inter Euro Media

João Da Graça Santos, Officer, Market Access, Industry, Energy and Raw Materials, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Vincenzo De Benedictis, European External Action Service (EEAS), European Union Military Staff (EUMS)

Eva De Bleeker, Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Nicolas de Gennes, Campaign Strategy Advisor, Mostra Communications, Media Relations Department

Marjolein de Ridder, Strategic Policy Analyst, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Thierry de Wilde, Conseiller affaires intérieures, Permanent Representation of France to the EU

Dennis Debosschere, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Uyanga Delger, Independent Legal Expert

Christopher Dent, Professor in East Asia's International Political Economy, University of Leeds, Department of East Asia Studies, and White Rose East Asia Centre (WREAC)

Filip Deraedt, Policy Officer, Trade Relations with China, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Bart Dessein, Professor Chinese Studies, Gent University, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences

Ingrid d'Hooghe, Senior Research Associate, Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael)

Patricia Diaz, Programme Manager, *Friends of Europe* Les Amis de l'Europe

Verena Diesch, Assistant, Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU

Dan Dinuta, Head of Section, Trade Policy, TPC Comity, EFTA, The Stability Pact (trade aspects), OCDE, Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU

Utku Dogan, Assistant, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSIAD)

Peter Durajka, COASI Delegate, Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU

Ben Eckman, Second Secretary & NATO Political Liaison, Mission of New Zealand to the EU

Julia Ewert, Research Fellow, EU-Asia Centre

John Farnell, Independent Researcher on EU-China relations and former visiting fellow at Oxford University

David Fernandez Lacueva, Agent, COEXPRO

Afonso Ferreira, Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Pierick Fillon-Ashida, Policy Officer, International Dimension of the Framework Programme, European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation

Jing Fu, EU Bureau Chief, China Daily

Qian Fu, Journalist, China Youth Daily

Tetsuro Fukunaga, Executive Director, Japan Machinery Centre for Trade & Investment (JMC)

Nathalie Furrer, Director, *Friends of Europe* Les Amis de l'Europe

Bart Gaens, Programme Director (Acting), Global Security, Finnish Institute of International Affairs (UPI)

Kurt Gaissert, Adviser, Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU

Alessandro Gallo, Student, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

Chun Gan, Journalist, Xinhua News Agency European Regional Bureau

Anurag Goel, Counsellor, Mission of India to the EU

Adam Gono, Assistant to the Secretary General, European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)

Andrej Grebenc, Advisor, European Commission, Research Executive Agency (REA)

Thomas Grusemann, Corporate Group Representative, TÜV Rheinland

Ziruo Gu, Third Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Cem Gündüz, Counsellor, Mission of Turkey to the EU

Claudia Gutiérrez, Asia Pacific Analyst, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)

- Artur Habant**, Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU
- Freja Hansen**, Assistant, Representation of North Denmark to the EU
- Alisa Herrero Cangas**, Policy Officer, EU External Action Programme, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)
- Joelle Hivonnet**, Senior Policy Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- Jan Hoogmartens**, China Desk Manager, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
- Hongbo Hu**, First Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Shada Islam**, Director of Policy, *Friends of Europe* Les Amis de l'Europe
- Bent Jepsen**, Coordinator, Astralie Geie
- Rong Ji**, Deputy Director, Press and Communication Department, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Xiaoyan Jiang**, Counsellor, Press & Communications, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Wenzhu Jiang**, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)
- Ling Jin**, Associate Research Fellow, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)
- Biaorong Jin**, Chief Correspondent, China Radio International (CRI)
- Adam Jirousek**, Official, Antitrust - Pharma and Health Services, European Commission, Directorate General for Competition
- Jan Jonckheere**, Editor, Chinasquare.be
- Daniel H. Jordan**, Managing Director, Touchroad International Holdings Group
- Cora Francisca Jungbluth**, Project Manager, Programme Germany and Asia, Bertelsmann Stiftung
- Siti Arfah Kamaruzaman**, Counsellor, Economic Affairs, Mission of Malaysia to the EU
- Violeta Kasapian**, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)
- Michael Keymolen**, Head of Unit, IT Resources and Document Management, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- Johan Knoppers**, Deputy Head of Unit, Relations with other EU Institutions and agricultural NGO's, European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Philip Koch**, Desk Officer, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce
- Christian Krökel**, Parliamentary Assistant, European Parliament
- Michal Krol**, Research Associate, European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE)
- Bartczak Krzysztof**, Counsellor on EU Foreign Policy and External Action, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU
- Tilmann Kupfer**, Vice President, Trade & International Affairs, BT Group
- Anna-Elisabeth Larsen**, Assistant, Danish Dairy Board
- Margot Lenoir**, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)
- Christopher Lewis**, Journalist, EIR Nachrichten Agentur
- Danning Li**, Europe-China Program Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy
- Jianmin Li**, Minister Counsellor, Education and Culture, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Xiaofei Li**, Assistant, China Daily
- Liu Lifang**, Third Secretary, Economic & Commercial, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Ge Liu**, Correspondent, People's Daily European Center
- Qin Liu**, Journalist, China Central Television (CCTV)
- André Loesekrug-Pietri**, Chairman & Managing Partner, A CAPITAL
- Fabrizio Lucentini**, First Counsellor, Trade Policy, Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU
- Shaoxuan Ma**, First Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU
- Zhengang Ma**, Vice Chairman, China Public Diplomacy Association
- Lars Jorgen Magnusson**, Principal Administrator, European Commission, Directorate General for Budget

Felix Mallin, Research & Executive Assistant, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), German Institute for International and Security Affairs

Hubert Mandery, Director General, European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)

Cristina Marcuzzo, Research Programme Officer, European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation

Zoltán Martinusz, Director, Enlargement, Security, Civil Protection, FAC support, Council of the European Union

Françoise Masson, Manager, The Belgian Economic Journal

Martin Matas, European Commission

Mikael Mattlin, Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs (UPI)

Tamas Matura, Research Fellow, École supérieure des sciences commerciales d'Angers Centre for European Integration

Jing Men, InBev-Baillet Latour Professor of European Union - China Relations, EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies Department, College of Europe

Giles Merritt, Secretary General, *Friends of Europe* Les Amis de l'Europe

Vincent Metten, EU Policy Director, International Campaign for Tibet

Ning Mi, Policy Officer, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Xiaojuan Miao, Correspondent, Xinhua News Agency European Regional Bureau

Russel Mills, Head of Brussels Office and Global Director Energy & Climate Change Policy, Dow

Mary Minch, Former EC Official

Jessica Mitchell, Policy Analyst, European Commission, Joint Research Centre

Andrea Mogni, Former Policy Coordinator, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Vital Moreira MEP, Chairman, European Parliament, Committee on International Trade

Olivier Mortet, Conseiller pour la coopération policière, Permanent Representation of France to the EU

Mihai Costin Nitoi, Counsellor, Cyber Security, EU Internal Security, Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU

Jiro Okuyama, Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of Japan to the EU

Veronika Orbetsova, Research and Academic Assistant, College of Europe

David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Katarzyna Palasz, Assistant, European Commission, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Javier Palmero Zurdo, Deputy Head of Unit, International Affairs, European Commission, Directorate General for Internal Market and Services

Chao Pan, Third Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Wolfgang Pape, Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

George Paterson, Policy Officer, Climate Finance, European Commission, Directorate General for Climate Action

Gisela Payeras, Director, Government Affairs Emerging Market & Asia Pacific, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Corporate & European Government Affairs

Isabelle Pernot du Breuil, China Affairs Policy Expert, Directions Internationales Associées

Máté Pesti, Second Secretary, COASI Delegate, Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU

Constanze Picking, Executive Director, EU-ChinaLink

Moritz Pieper, PhD candidate, University of Kent, Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS)

Chow Ping, Ex-post Control Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Sylvain Plasschaert, Professor, University of Antwerp

Vincent Ploquin, Assistant, Comité de Politique commerciale, Permanent Representation of France to the EU

Jean Plume, Director, Association Belge de Services (ABS)

Jolita Pons, Desk Officer, Hong Kong, Macao, European External Action Service (EEAS) Joint Situation Centre

Matthew Powell, Chief Executive Officer, Primax

Luís Prats, Acting Director, Resources and Internal Control, European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry

Radostina Primova, Researcher, EU Energy Policy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) Institute for European Studies (IES)

Franziska Pudelko, Assistant, Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU

Yi Qiu, Counsellor, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Martijn Quinn, Member of Cabinet, Disasters, Climate Change, Energy and Energy Security, Environment, Research, Transport, Employment, Industry, European Commission, Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid Kristalina Georgieva

Camilla Randazzo, Policy Officer, European Affairs, Servier

Michael Reiterer, Senior Advisor, Asia & Pacific Department, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Aurélien Renard, Director, Business Development & Marketing, Gallup Europe

Kyriakos Revelas, Senior Policy Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS), Division Maghreb

Zongze Ruan, Vice President, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

Wolfgang Rudischhauser, Chair, Working Party on Non-proliferation, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Jarno Ryckeboer, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Gerhard Sabathil, Director North East Asia and the Pacific, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Rahul Sahgal, Attaché d'Ambassade, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

Serkan Sariguney, Assistant, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSIAD)

Christoph Saurenbach, Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate General for Trade

Véronique Scailteur, Director, Government Relations Europe, Procter & Gamble

Anka Schild, Policy Advisor Trade & International Relations, Siemens EU Affairs Office

Johannes Schneider, Seconded National Expert in Professional Training, European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry

Karl Peter Schön, Head of Department & Scientific Director, Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, Germany

Stefanie Seedig, Counsellor, COASI Delegate, Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU

Anita Sek, Researcher on EU External Action, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)

Dmitry Semenov, First Secretary, Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU

Ana Maria Serban, General Secretary, European Development Platform (EDP)

Pedro Serrano, Principal Advisor on External Affairs, European Council

Ivanna Silva, First Secretary, Mission of Argentina to the EU

Francis Snyder, Professor of Law and Co-Director and Jean Monnet Professor ad personam, Peking University School of Transnational Law

Ronghua Song, General Secretary, China Public Diplomacy Association

Xinning Song, Jean Monnet Chair ad Personam, Renmin University of China Centre for European Studies

George Ciprian Stanciu, Student, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

Dinos Stasinopoulos, Former EC Official

Pawel Stelmaszczyk, Advisor, European Mobility Network, European Commission, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport

Jim T.W. Stoopman, Programme Coordinator, European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)

Mingxi Sun, First Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Leo Sun, President of the European Public Affairs and Communications Office, Huawei Technologies

Réka Szántó, Manager International IP and Trade, European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries

and Associations (EFPIA)

Szabolcs Tapasztó, Policy Specialist (Asia), European Parliament

Jenny Theresia Permatasari, Masters Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Felix Theus, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Tina Tsai, EU Public Relations and Communications Manager, Huawei Technologies

Andrey Tsyvov, Second Secretary, Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU

Richard Turcsanyi, Visiting Fellow, European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)

Alberto Turkstra, Programme Coordinator, European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)

Cristiana Tzika, First Secretary, Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU

Takako Ueta, Professor, International Christian University, Department of Politics and International Studies

Waltraut Urban, Freelance Economist, Austrian Institute for Research on China and Southeast Asia

Guy Van Haeverbeke, Honorary Secretary General & Member of the Board, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)

Bavo Van Kerrebroeck, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Hannes Van Raemdonck, EU Public Affairs Manager, Huawei Technologies

Herman Van Rompuy, President, European Council

Robert F. Vandenplas, Managing Director, Belgoprocess

Ummugulsum Varii, Commercial Counsellor, Mission of Turkey to the EU

Sanja Vasic, Secretary, Center for International Economic Relations, Belgrade Chamber of Commerce

Daniel Verheyden, Attaché Asia Desk, Brussels Invest & Export

Laura Vermeer, Junior Researcher, European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)

Jan von Herff, Senior Manager, Trade & Industry Policy, BASF

Ekaterini Vourka, Linguist Administrator, Council of the European Union, Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD)

Yushen Wang, Correspondent, Jiefang Daily

Ruiping Wang, Fellow, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

Qiong Wang, First Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Linxia Wang, First Secretary, Press and Communications, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Robert Weaver, Managing Partner, Syllion

Thomas Wiley, Head of Sector, Regional Programmes in Asia, European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid (DEVCO)

Jessica Williams, Research and Editorial Assistant, Madariaga - College of Europe Foundation

Manharsinh Yadav, Second Secretary, Mission of India to the EU

Hengyuan Yan, Chief Correspondent, China Economic Daily

Min Yan, Coordinator, China-Europa Forum

Tuo Yannan, Reporter, China Daily

Mingdeng Yi, Brussels Correspondent, Beijing Daily

Zifen Yu, Correspondent, People's Daily European Center

Xichao Yu, Researcher, European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)

Serena Yu, Second Secretary, Taipei Representative Office to the EU & Belgium

Qianwen Yu, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Claude Zanardi, Post Graduate Research Student, King's College London, Department of War Studies

Lei Zhang, Assistant Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Institute of Contemporary China Studie

Xinghui Zhang, Brussels Bureau Chief, China Youth Daily

Lirong Zhang, Chargé d'Affaires, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Yuanyuan Zhang, Former Ambassador, Embassy of China to Belgium

Jiaming Zhang, Law Clerk, Jones Day

Jingyuan Zhang, Student, University of Antwerp Management School (UAMS)

Jie Zhang, Correspondent, People's Daily, European Center

Jixi Zhuang, Student, Université Paris Sorbonne Paris IV, Département Affaires Européennes

Joe Zou, EU Public Affairs Manager, Huawei Technologies

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Rue Belliard 199
B-1040 Brussels
t +32 2 502 2008

Friends of Europe – Les Amis de l'Europe

4, Rue de la Science, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: +32 (0) 2 893 9823 – Fax: +32 (0) 2 893 9829

Email: info@friendsofeurope.org

Website: www.friendsofeurope.org





Europe for Citizens
Programme

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