

## European Union – China Partnership and its Prospects

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**Abstract:** Our paper aims at analyzing the prospects of relations between the European Union and China in 2020 horizon. From this perspective we considered useful a travel insight into history of four decades of Sino-European bilateral relations. In 2015 it was marked four decades after the establishment of the first EU-China relations. During this time relations between the two sides marked important progress in all areas and today China is considered a strategic partner of Brussels.

**Keywords:** China; European Union; Trade; Horizon 2020

### 1. Introduction

In 2015 it was marked four decades after the establishment of the first EU-China relations. During this time relations between the two sides marked important progress in all areas and today China is considered a strategic partner of Brussels.

On May 5, 1975 the Series of high-level bilateral visits was opened with the arrival on China of European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Christopher Soames, the first personality of this rank sent into a mission to China<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted that Soames was a prominent English politician, member of the Conservative Party and was married to the youngest daughter of former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Mary Churchill. It is the moment when diplomatic relations also were established between China and the European Economic Community. On 15 September the same year, the government of China accredit as ambassador with the Community of Li Lien Pi.

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<sup>2</sup> For a chronology of European Union – China relations see [eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/index_en.htm).

## 2. Analysis and Results

Following this first contact, despite the disappearance of Mao Tze-dun in 1976, at February 3, 1978 the two sides already signed a trade agreement<sup>1</sup>. This was facilitated by the visit of a delegation of the European Economic Community in China in July 1977. It must be said that the agreement on February 3 will be subject to formal signing ceremony during the visit to Brussels of Chinese Minister of Commerce Li Xiang, which is why official date that appears on agreement is May 2, 1978<sup>2</sup> and that he has acquired the share from 1 July 1978. The document was valid for five years, renewable by tacit annual passing of the deadline.

It is time that opened the prospect of discussions at the highest level - which was also held in Beijing in February 1979 - between European Commission President Roy Jenkins<sup>3</sup> and the Chinese communist leader Deng Xiaoping<sup>4</sup>. In his diaries (Jenkins, 2004, pp. 199-200), Jenkins remembers visiting China, remembering talks with Deng Xiaoping and Hua Goufeng related to the international situation - especially the war in Vietnam - but also the stage of development where he was the great Asian country.

There followed a decade in which bilateral relations have developed continuously, but events in Tiananmen Square from June 4, 1989 led to the suspension of relations between the EU and China, the main reason cited in Brussels being for the violation of human rights. However, and this obstacle was overcome, so that after three years the situation was normalized. Moreover, since 1998 began to conduct annual summits between European Union and China<sup>5</sup>.

On June 29, 2015, Brussels hosted the 17th bilateral summit, an opportunity to score four decades of relations between the European Union and China. On this occasion, Donald Tusk, European Council President, Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang signed a joint document which is saluting the event and proposing plans for the future. Remember the most important elements in the communication in question:

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<sup>1</sup> [eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/press.../timeline\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/press.../timeline_en.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Published in the number from May 11, 1978 of Official Journal of European Communities.

<sup>3</sup> British politician, from Labour Party, Jenkins was President of the European Commission between 1977 and 1981. He died in 2003 at the age of 83 years.

<sup>4</sup> Deng was a supporter of a more open policy towards Europe and the world in general.

<sup>5</sup> The first summit took place on April 2, 1998 in London, followed on in December 21, 1999 by the second at Beijing.

- “Both sides stressed the importance they attach to the EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in promoting peace, prosperity and sustainable development for the benefit of all. They reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their partnership for peace, growth, reform and civilization, based on the principles of mutual respect, trust, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation, by comprehensively implementing the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation.
- Both sides fully recognized the progress achieved in the implementation of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. A bilateral review mechanism at officials’ level will be established to monitor follow-up. Both sides agreed at this Summit on a set of priorities to reinforce their bilateral cooperation and enhance the global dimension of their strategic partnership.
- Both sides confirmed their strong interest in each other's flagship initiatives, namely the Investment Plan for Europe, and the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (The Belt and Road Initiative). Leaders decided to support synergies between these initiatives, and directed the EU-China High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue in September to develop practical avenues for mutually beneficial co-operation, including through a possible China-EU co-investment vehicle.
- The EU and China agreed to improve their infrastructure links. They decided to establish a new Connectivity Platform and to convene its first meeting as soon as possible in order to:
  - (i) share information, promote seamless traffic flows and transport facilitation, and develop synergies between their relevant initiatives and projects;
  - (ii) identify co-operation opportunities between their respective policies and sources of funding, including the Trans-European Networks and The Belt and Road Initiative, and;
  - (iii) actively explore business and investment opportunities open to both China and the European side, and;
  - (iv) create a favorable environment for sustainable and inter-operable cross-border infrastructure networks in countries and regions between the EU and China.”

Also at the meeting on June 29, 2015, the two sides signed a joint statement on climate change<sup>1</sup>.

Now the prospects of development of Sino-European relations seem quite favorable. There is even a 2020 horizon agreement of bilateral cooperation, the main provisions document sets out four main sections<sup>2</sup>.

The first is entitled *Peace and Security*. Starting from the idea that the contemporary world is a multi-polar and globalized, the two parts proposes achieving key objectives in the field of 13 approached. We are mention here only about the following:

- “Consult fully and effectively on major bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern. Enhance coordination on strategic, political and security issues within the EU-China High Level Strategic Dialogue. Use this platform to increase mutual understanding, deepen mutual trust, build common ground, and provide strategic support for promoting bilateral relations and safeguarding international peace and development.
- Strengthen dialogue and communication on international and regional issues with major implications at the global level. Enhance consultations on Africa, Central Asia, Latin America and the respective neighborhoods of the EU and China.
- Reinforce cooperation in multilateral fora, including coordination before major meetings, to establish a rules-based, more efficient, transparent, just and equitable system of global governance, emphasize multilateralism and the central role of the U.N. in international affairs and value the role of multilateral organizations and platforms such as the G20. The EU looks forward to China hosting a forthcoming G20 summit.
- Reinforce cooperation on promoting nuclear security, strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and related export control arrangements, and combatting the smuggling of nuclear material.”

The second largest chapter suggestively titled *Prosperity* and envisages the development issues of trade and investment, information and industry, agriculture, transport and infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Both documents are published on the European Union official site, [https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_ro](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_ro).

<sup>2</sup> [eeas.europa.eu/china/.../eu-china\\_2020\\_strategic\\_agenda\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/china/.../eu-china_2020_strategic_agenda_en).

Not incidentally, the third part of the cooperation plan by horizon is reserved to *Sustainable development*. In this regard the key initiatives are on science, technology and innovation, the collaboration on space and aerospace field, energy (with an emphasis on developing sources of clean, green energy), urbanization, climate change and environmental protection (with reference to the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol). No missing from this problematic the situation rather complex of ocean, regional policy, social progress, public policy, global development and cooperation.

Finally, the last section of *People-to-people exchanges* envisages two major problems. The first is entitled *Culture, Education and Youth*, having among its main objectives including learning of Chinese language in Europe and, respectively, in the China space of the main European languages, encouraging student exchanges, including the use of Erasmus plus.

The second issue *Facilitation of people-to-people exchanges*, envisages cooperation to halt illegal migration and tourism.

### 3. Conclusions

The implementation of this agreement of 2020 horizon of relations between the EU and China has importance beyond the scope of bilateral relations. Given the economic strength of the parties, area, population, resources, we talk about agreements that may impact on the whole planet.

Of course, first of all European Union Member States should consider the fact that in recent decades China has made great progress. The novelty of the system promoted by Beijing, “one country, two systems” has made the first demographic power of the world an economic and political partner worthy of consideration. Geostrategic impact must also be considered. The age of the two superpowers belong to the past, like the Cold War and bi-polar world also.

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<sup>1</sup> On this chapter it shows that: “Negotiate and conclude a comprehensive EU-China Investment Agreement that covers issues of interest to either side, including investment protection and market access. The EU-China Investment Agreement will provide for progressive liberalization of investment and the elimination of restrictions for investors to each other’s market. It will provide a simpler and more secure legal framework to investors of both sides by securing predictable long-term access to EU and Chinese markets respectively and providing for strong protection to investors and their investments. It should replace the existing bilateral investment treaties between China and EU Member States with one single comprehensive agreement covering all EU Member States.”

In today's world more and more centers of power tend to claim the role that it deserves. USA, which remain the first power of the world, have just elected a president atypical. Many political scientists and political commentators even talk about that Donald Trump will initiate a course of foreign policy rather close to the Monroe doctrine, which would amount to some kind of isolationism that America has practiced it. In this regard, the European Union's foreign policy must be built in relation to realities on the complex relations with Putin's Russia, engaged in complex Ukrainian crisis, but who remains a privileged partner of Europe. Therefore, the Chinese can be a factor that ensures not only international security, but also prosperity.

#### **4. Bibliography**

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