

AFET: Committee on Foreign Relations

The question of Sino-European relations

In consideration of the latest developments in China in terms of human rights violations and increasing surveillance, how should Sino-European trade relations look in the future? Are sanctions the only way the EU can influence developments? Which diplomatic actions should the EU take and to what extent should the EU increase its (economic) involvement with China?

Preparation Module

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the AFET committee! The question of Sino-European trade relations is one of great importance especially nowadays. It is a widely debated topic especially in terms of how dependent the EU should be on China when it comes to the import of certain goods. Throughout the years this relationship has evolved by passing through different stages. It is now up to you to come up with a new approach and further investigate this topic.

We are looking forward to getting to know you at the upcoming session, and await fruitful debates. In order to ensure all delegates are well-prepared and knowledgeable, we have provided you with links and definitions to help you establish a good understanding of the topic. However, we strongly encourage you to treat the information merely as a starting point and further explore the topic, in order to develop your personal opinion.

Guiding Questions:

- >What do the Sino-European trade relations look like at the moment? In what ways have they changed throughout the years?
- >How does the EU benefit from it's trade relations with China and what are the possible problems?
- >What are the main factors influencing the Sino-European trade relations? What will those factors look like in the future?
- >To what extent should the European economy depend on China?
- >What diplomatic actions have the EU and China already taken to strengthen their trade relations?

(Make sure to come up with your own innovative solutions)

Suggested Sources:

Keep in mind that you should come up with your own opinion on the topic, do not let biased articles influence your own thoughts.

Future of Sino-European relations:

http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2019-03/20/content_74592095.htm

“The EU is regularly asking for reciprocity in its economic relations with China, which seems to suggest that knowledge of Chinese affairs in Europe remains limited. It is questionable whether the new foreign investment law has, in fact, been carefully studied by European policy-makers. Of course, the content of the new law cannot fully satisfy European demands and in the same way, expected changes in EU legislation cannot be fully in line with Chinese economic interests.” This article overlooks the future of Sino-EU relations, taking in account both the historical background of the two and their political states.

<http://www.eias.org/news/the-new-eu-leadership-and-the-future-of-eu-china-relations/>

“The new roster of nominated leaders of the EU was announced on 2 July 2019, immediately prompting speculation about the direction in which the proposed leadership might take the Union. The leadership change takes place against the backdrop of increasingly strained Sino-European relations, leaving some China commentators wondering how the new European leadership may affect the future of EU-China relations.” This document goes into detail on how a leadership change in the EU might affect Sino-EU relations.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10308-017-0469-2>

”China’s growing power and influence raise important and inescapable questions for countries and societies around the world, not least for Europe. A rising China offers opportunities for greater cooperation, both bilaterally and in the context of old and new multilateral institutions, yet also carries inherent risks for the European Union (EU), not least in the way in which it may make it (even) more difficult to manage the relations with other global powers while also maintaining unity among EU member states.” This source concentrates on the impacts from China’s steady and dramatic rise over the past two decades. In particular, it explores the challenges as well as the many instances of engagement that define their relations today across a number of policy areas, including economic, diplomatic, and security relations.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-china/opinion/2020-critical-year-for-eu-china-relations/>

“2020 will be a decisive year for the EU’s relations with China. The two sides are struggling to conclude an investment treaty while there are continuing disputes over human rights and whether to allow Chinese tech giant Huawei to exploit Europe’s 5G market.” This source primarily targets the year 2020 and its summits regarding a bilateral investment treaty.

EU documents:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/570493/EXPO_STU\(2018\)570493_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/570493/EXPO_STU(2018)570493_EN.pdf)

“China is an important strategic partner for the EU, despite fundamental divergences in some areas, mostly related to state intervention and fundamental human rights. The partnership offers mutually beneficial cooperation and dialogue in areas ranging from investment and transport to human rights and cybersecurity.” This document covers such areas and gives you an inside of the Sino-EU relations and their overall relationship.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/433861/EXP_O-INTA_ET\(2011\)433861_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/433861/EXP_O-INTA_ET(2011)433861_EN.pdf)

“China is at the core of every economic conversation and more than ever before perceived as THE strategically important market. Well aware of the increasing competitiveness of the Chinese market, European firms are very sensitive to the complexity and opacity of China’s regulatory landscape.” This document specifically concentrates on the Sino-EU trade relations.

https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/etnc_web_final_1-1.pdf

“The European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC) is a gathering of China experts from a selection of European policy research institutes. It is devoted to the study of Chinese foreign policy and EU-China relations and facilitates regular exchanges among participating researchers. ETNC strives to deepen the understanding of how Europe, as a complex set of actors, relates with China and how China’s development and evolving global role will impact the future of Europe.” This document gives a really realistic approach of the Sino-EU relationship and provides information regarding the direction it will be taking in the future.

Statistics:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/China-EU - international trade in goods statistics#EU and China in world trade in goods](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/China-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics#EU_and_China_in_world_trade_in_goods)

This article provides various statistics and generally a picture of the international trade in goods between the EU and China. It analyses the type of goods exchanged between the two economies and the shares of each EU Member State in those exchanges.

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/China-EU-trade-balance-from-2010-to-2016-in-million-US-including-re-exports-Goods_fig2_330551941

This source provides you with some graphs and diagrams on the China-EU trade relations. The statistics provided by it overlook the imports of goods as well as the re-exports from 2010 to 2016.

Key Definitions and concepts:

Communism: a political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production (e.g., mines, mills, and factories) and the natural resources of a society.

For more information check:

<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/communist-countries/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zptxxnb/revision/2>

CCP: Chinese Communist Party also known as the Communist Party of China (CPC). It is the founding and ruling political party of The People's Republic of China. It is the sole governing party within mainland China, permitting eight other, subordinated parties to co-exist, those making up the United Front.

For more information check:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chinese-Communist-Party>

United Front: The coalition between the CCP and the Nationalist Party of china.

For more information check:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Front-Chinese-history-1937-1945>

EU sanctions: a key foreign and security instrument. Their purpose is to uphold the international security order as well as defend human rights and democracy standards, by encouraging targeted countries to change their behaviour.

For more information check:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621870/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)621870_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621870/EPRS_BRI(2018)621870_EN.pdf)

ETNET: the European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC) is a gathering of China experts from a selection of European research institutes.

For more information check:

<https://www.ifri.org/en/european-think-tank-network-china-etnc>

Tips for the delegates:

While it is not mandatory for you to read the entire list of sources, we do recommend it, so that you can form an informed opinion on the topic supported by factual information. It is of great importance for you to have at least a basic understanding on the topic and to be sure that you understand all the listed above key terms. Keep in mind that your participation, thus final evaluation may greatly depend on your preparation.

In addition we do encourage you to also have a look at the Preparation Modules of the other committees, to at least get a bit of an insider's view of their issues, so that you would be able to contribute to the discussions at the General Assembly (GA).

Based on our personal experience we believe that good preparation is crucial for the performance of a delegate and overall increases the quality of the discussions within the committee. Therefore it is a good idea for you to at least have a look at some of the suggested links. However, make sure to not get lost in details, as not every bit of information is relevant. Furthermore, make sure to check the reliability of the additional links you use, existent EU documents are always a good starting point.

We do realise that the Preparation Modul sounds like a lot of work but we can guarantee you that it will pay off during the discussions.

In case our further help is needed, feel free to contact us. We are looking forward to the discussions. Good luck with your research!