

# Chinese president to make first EU visit

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(BRUSSELS) - Chinese President Xi Jinping will make his first visit to European Union headquarters in Brussels on March 31 as part of trip to several EU countries, an EU statement said Wednesday.

Xi will be hosted by European Council head Hermann Van Rompuy and European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso, it said.

Xi's trip will "be the first visit ever by a Chinese president to EU institutions," the statement added.

On April 1, Xi will make a speech on EU-China relations at the College of Europe in the medieval city of Bruges where future EU civil servants are trained.

He will also visit Germany, France and the Netherlands during the trip.

China and the EU are major global trading partners but ties have been strained at times by dumping disputes over some Chinese imports and by EU criticism of Beijing's human rights record.

They have held regular, alternating annual summits since 1998 but China has up to now been represented by its prime minister when the meeting has been in the EU.

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