



## Conference on the EU-China Bilateral Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI)

*15 May 2017- European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels*

### Call for papers

The Baillet Latour Chair of EU-China Relations and the EU-China Research Centre, IRD, College of Europe, together with the European Economic and Social Committee, are calling for paper submissions for an international conference on the EU-China Bilateral CAI, to be held in Brussels on May 15, 2017.

Proposals of **max. 300 words**, along with a short bio and contact details, should be submitted to Francesco S. Montesano ( [francesco.montesano@coleurope.eu](mailto:francesco.montesano@coleurope.eu) ) by **January 20, 2017**. Authors of accepted papers will be contacted shortly after. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the organisers.

### Background and content of the conference

During the 16<sup>th</sup> bilateral summit held on November 21, 2013, the EU and China officially announced the launch of negotiations for a comprehensive **EU-China Bilateral Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI)**. So far, twelve rounds of negotiation have been completed, with both sides finally agreeing on the scope of the agreement. Based on upholding key principles such as the 'right to invest' and non-discrimination, the agreement will focus on enhancing market opportunities for both the EU and China. Also, it will seek to address some of the core regulatory challenges in a sustainable fashion, prioritising transparency, licensing and authorisation norms, and protection of the environmental and labour-related dimensions.

The negotiations are taking place at a time when both sides are experiencing considerable –and arguably 'existential' challenges. While obviously different in nature – with China struggling with the recalibration of its economy along more sustainable and consumer-oriented lines, and the EU still trying to recover from the 2008 crisis while facing increasingly strong centrifugal pressures – such challenges are of structural importance for the global economy, given how the stability and prosperity of both the EU and China is of key interest to virtually all international actors.

An EU-China CAI, covering both investment protection and liberalisation, would replace 26 bilateral investment agreements between the member states and China, thereby providing both parties with a more predictable, impartial and sustainable investment environment. This would be particularly beneficial for China, whose appeal as an FDI destination has been decreasing over the past few years due to rising labour costs, lack of sufficient intellectual property rights protection, and various non-tariff barriers. Beijing needs to promote a greater inflow of sustainable investments, and striking a comprehensive deal with the EU might help it achieve this crucial goal. On a global scale, a successful EU-China CAI would greatly raise the bar with regard to the need to liberalise investments while ensuring a sustainably regulated framework.

Against this background, this international conference intends to bring together a wide range of top-level academics, practitioners, policymakers, businessmen and entrepreneurs, from the EU, China, as well as from 'interested' third countries, to promote dialogue and discussions on all facets of the agreement under negotiation. In addition to elaborating on the obviously central economic aspects of the EU-China CAI, the panels will also seek to broaden the scope by tackling issues of geopolitical and institutional relevance for the EU, China, and the broader global context.

The envisaged four panels of the conference will therefore respectively focus on the political, economic, legal, and social implications of the CAI, thereby offering a variety of valuable angles to analyse the status quo as well as future developments.