

The EU and China Beyond 2020: Setting A New Agenda for Cooperation

Bruges, 17 April 2020

Call for papers

The Baillet Latour Chair of EU-China Relations and the EU-China Research Centre, College of Europe, are calling for paper submissions for an international conference on the topic “The EU and China Beyond 2020: Setting A New Agenda for Cooperation”, to be held on 17 April 2020 at College of Europe, in Bruges.

Background

In an effort to improve and give greater formalisation to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that they had established a decade earlier, in 2013 Brussels and Beijing launched the **EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation**, an ambitious goal-setting document covering a wide range of initiatives in the fields of ‘peace and security’, ‘prosperity’, ‘sustainable development’, and ‘people-to-people exchanges’.

Since this launch, significant convergence has been achieved between the EU and China, for example in areas like environmental policies and the fight against climate change. Strong disparities remain in other sectors, including trade, ICT and the broader digital economy. Overall, **structural barriers seem to hinder further cooperation, even in those areas where progress was made under this Agenda**. In addition, inherent contradictions persist within EU-China relations, deriving from the interplay of different layers of bilateral and multilateral ties, as well as from their domestic repercussions. Published in March 2019, the latest EU’s policy paper states indeed that “China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance”, under a new EU approach that combines pragmatism with coherence to its values at the same time and promises to redefine bilateral relations.

Whereas the Agenda may have fallen short of many of its promises, its most remarkable achievement has arguably been its capacity to adapt itself to the evolution of EU-China relations, thus keeping an **open door for dialogue in both times of harmony and tensions**.

As this document hits its ‘time deadline’, the EU and China are taking steps to continue their cooperation under **a new Agenda looking beyond 2020**. Firstly, as recently recalled in the Joint Declaration of the 2019 EU-China Summit, a number of initiatives that have been taken under the current Agenda are now heading towards a swift implementation. Meanwhile, a post-2020 Agenda is under negotiation, with the long-term goal of upgrading the EU-China partnership, facing existing and future challenges, and possibly exploring new areas of cooperation.

Conference objectives

If Brussels and Beijing are to truly step their strategic partnership up to the global level, a serious discussion on the post-2020 bilateral relations is therefore of paramount importance.

Also drawing on the [‘stocktaking’ conference on the 2020 Strategic Agenda](#) held by the Chair and the Centre in May 2019, this high-profile event will seek to examine the various areas of cooperation with a forward-looking eye, trying to draw possible agendas – addressing existing or emerging issues – and scenarios – both cooperative and competitive – envisaging how Brussels and Beijing might deal with each other, as well as with other global actors, in the coming years. The conference will welcome specific issue-oriented papers as well as those that address broader scenarios (‘how will EU-China relations look like?’), prescriptive inputs (‘what should be done to improve EU-China relations?’), thereby adding not only academic, but also policy-oriented value to the conference.

Submission instructions

Proposals of **max. 300 words**, along with a short bio and contact details, are to be submitted to Dr Duncan Freeman (duncan.freeman@coleurope.eu) by **12 January 2020**. Authors of accepted papers will be contacted shortly after. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the organisers.

For questions and further information, please contact:

eu-china-conferences@coleurope.eu