

China and China-EU Relations in the New Era

Speech by Ambassador Zhang Ming
At the College of Europe

Rector Jörg Monar,
Faculty Members,
Dear Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

Good morning! It is a great pleasure for me to come to the College of Europe, the cradle of political elites of Europe. It is wonderful to be with young people like you. Your vigor and energy remind me of the rising sun in the morning, shining proudly through clouds. It is because of your support and commitment that the development of China-EU relations would never lose momentum. As Chinese Ambassador to the EU, I am more than ready to talk to you and to listen to you. You are always welcome to visit the Chinese Mission and share your views with me.

Four years ago, my President, Mr. Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at this College. He described to the audience where China has come from and what China is like today. He said that China and the EU need to build four partnerships for peace, growth, reform and progress of civilization, a direction that we have and will continue to follow. He also said, “to move our relationship forward, China needs to know more about Europe, and Europe needs to know more about China”. That is why I am here today—to help you know more about China and China-EU relations in the new era.

Last October, the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Beijing. The Congress sent a key message

that socialism with Chinese features has entered a new era. It set out a great vision and guide to action for China's future development. In the past decades, China has basically made it possible for over a billion people to live decent lives. In the new era, China will strive to address inadequate and unbalanced development and to improve the quality and effect of development. The timeframe for our efforts is as follows:

By 2020, we will eradicate poverty and establish a moderately prosperous society in all aspects. This is a society to be enjoyed by each and every one of us. Then we will move toward our goal in two steps. By 2035, we will basically achieve modernization. By the middle of this century, we will turn China into a great modern country that is strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful.

To achieve our goal, we must work very hard and continue to deepen reform. We also need a peaceful and stable world, and to work with others with an open mind. I can assure you that China's development is good news to Europe and the whole world.

Let me have some words about what China is going to do in the new era.

First, China will achieve high-quality development, and bring huge opportunities to the world.

China's economy is making a transition from high-speed growth to high-quality growth. In 2017, China's economic structure continued to improve. Consumption, together with investment, was a main driver of growth, taking up nearly 59% of growth. Emerging sectors, like digital economy and new energy, were doing very well. Online retail sales surpassed 1 trillion US dollars. Development has become more cost-efficient, with energy intensity dropping 3.7%. China is the second largest economy in the world. When China's development is of higher quality, it will contribute a lot to our world.

China will contribute more to global growth. In 2017, China's economy grew by 6.9%, accounting for 34.6% of global growth. An encouraging thing is that China's import, which rose by 18.7%, far outpaced its export, which grew by 10.8%. As China's economic structure

improves, global recovery will get stronger and global economy will get more balanced.

China will contribute more to innovation. China is already a frontrunner in global innovation. More than 25% of new unicorn companies since 2010 were established in China. With the advances of science and technology, productivity is getting higher; new sources of consumption are emerging; market demand is getting stronger; global economy is getting more robust.

China will contribute more to green development. China is the largest producer and seller of new energy vehicles. We have already started the world's largest emissions trading system. We will continue to promote green and low-carbon development, and grow the economy by using less. We want to protect our environment, and help tackle climate change.

Second, China will continue to open up to the world.

Forty years ago, China started reform and opening-up. Our past successful experience shows how important opening-up is. We know this better than anyone else. Without opening-up, China would not have come such a long way in the past 40 years. Similarly, without opening-up, China could hardly turn its great vision into reality in the next 30 years.

We will not be green-eyed to see others take away a big share of benefits from China. On the contrary, we welcome them to join us and share the opportunities brought by China's development.

We will create a level-playing field for foreign investors and give equal treatment to all enterprises registered in China. We will improve the management of foreign investment by implementing the system of pre-establishment national treatment plus a negative list across the board. We will expand market access, and not take compulsory transfer of technology as a precondition for market access. China has taken significant steps to further open up the banking, securities, and insurance sectors. Many more similar steps will follow.

In terms of trade, we will pursue a more proactive import policy to make trade more balanced. Last month, China cut tariffs on 187 consumer

goods from 17.3% to 7.7%, equivalent to 13.9 billion US dollars of import annually. Later this year, we will hold an international import expo in Shanghai, the first expo devoted to expanding imports in the world. It demonstrates China's readiness to open its market to the outside.

China will continue to advance the Belt and Road Initiative. We will work with countries along the routes to synergize development strategies. We will speed up the delivery of major projects, enhance industrial cooperation and cooperation in building innovation capacity, and advance trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, we aim to promote connectivity in policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people-to-people exchanges.

Third, China will seek peace and prosperity together with the rest of the world.

Human society has never been so inter-dependent as today. There have never been so many challenges as today. No countries can address these challenges alone. No countries can afford to retreat into self-isolation. On the one hand, the world we dream of is open, clean and beautiful with lasting peace, common security and shared prosperity. On the other hand, the reality we face is that peace might still be in short supply. However, we should never stop pursuing our dreams simply because they seem out of reach.

China's diplomacy in the new era is essentially about promoting peace and development for all. China will build a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind. We will build stable and balanced relations with other major countries, develop friendship and partnership with neighboring countries, and strengthen win-win cooperation with other developing countries in the spirit of justice and good faith. We believe that as long as we abandon the law of jungles and zero-sum games, we will be able to find a new path for developing state-to-state relations.

We will take an active part in the reform of global governance system, following the principles of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We will continue to support multilateral trading

system and oppose protectionism. We will work to make development more balanced and beneficial to all, and ensure that everyone has a fair shot in life. We will continue to demonstrate a sense of responsibility to help resolve hotspot issues constructively.

Faculty Members,

Dear Students,

New era means new opportunities to China-EU relations. This year marks the 15th anniversary of China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership. We are glad to see the achievements of the past 15 years. We also need to think ahead, prepare for both opportunities and challenges, and take China-EU relations to a new level.

To advance China-EU relations in the new era, it is important to think strategically.

Dr. Henry Kissinger said and I quote, “Each generation will be judged by whether the greatest and most consequential issues of the human condition have been faced”, unquote. Together, China and the EU take up 10% of land area, 25% of population and one third of GDP of the world. In this age of great changes, China-EU relations not only bear on the interests of people from both sides, but also have profound impact on global politics and economy. We need to join forces to promote open economy, ensure that multilateralism is widely respected and functions well, and make global governance more equitable. China and the EU are well-placed to set a model of a new type of international relations for a shared future.

To advance China-EU relations in the new era, it is important to think big.

One who fails to get the big things right cannot handle small things well either. China-EU relations are wider and deeper than many have thought. Take trade. Every year, China and the EU trade nearly 600 billion US dollars, or over 1 million US dollars every minute. However, trade frictions, which you may have heard a lot from media, only account for a very small portion. Therefore, we must look beyond differences on specific issues and grasp the big picture.

To further expand China-EU cooperation, we need to link the Belt and Road Initiative with Europe's development strategies, step up connectivity and launch more projects. We need to advance the BIT talks and start joint feasibility studies on an FTA at an early date. We need to explore new areas of cooperation, like green development and digital economy. We want our cooperation to work for both sides.

To advance China-EU relations in the new era, it is important to think positively.

China and the EU should view each other in a positive light and build trust. China attaches great importance to Europe and the EU, always supports European integration, and always supports a united, stable and prosperous EU that plays a bigger role in international affairs. China's support is more powerful than any other major country, and has never become less powerful, even when the EU had a hard time a few years ago. Likewise, we hope that the EU can respect China's development path, core interests and major concerns, and see China's development in an objective and rational fashion.

People can play a positive role in our relations. Our cooperation should be people-oriented and deliver more real benefits. Our people need to have more interactions and get a better understanding of each other. This year is the China-EU Tourism Year. It offers an open and diverse platform to engage our people, especially young people like you. Next month, we are going to hold a lantern expo at Grand Place to celebrate the Chinese New Year. I'm very happy to invite all of you to the event to experience both Chinese and European cultures.

Faculty Members,

Dear Students,

The development of China-EU relations is like a relay race across generations. Young people like you are active, energetic and open-minded. I am confident that your generation will run faster and farther than mine. I believe that on this long journey, hopeful students of the College of Europe will be the pace-setters.

In the new era, China will be more dynamic than ever. China-EU

relations will be more promising than ever. In this time of opportunities and challenges, let's work together to make our world a better place to live in.

Thank you.