China: From partner to rival

According to analysts and politicians, China’s increasingly autocratic domestic stance and assertive foreign policy are damaging its relations with the European Union. No substantial agreement was achieved at a virtual EU-China summit on 14 September, despite years of negotiations on many issues, not least on trade and investment. ‘For the EU, China is simultaneously (in different policy areas) a cooperation partner, a negotiation partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival,’ the European External Action Service’s background paper says.

Formally, the EU and China have been strategic partners since 2003 – a partnership that was broadened five years ago by the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. However, more recently, EU officials and politicians have been expressing increasing concerns over China’s economic expansionism and human rights violations. The current coronavirus pandemic and developments in Hong Kong have had a marked negative impact on EU-China relations.

This note offers links to recent commentaries, studies and reports from major international think tanks on China, its ties with the EU and related issues.

EU-China

Non-summit shows EU-China ties at new low
Bruegel, September 2020

Towards tougher bilateral relations between EU and China
Institut français des relations internationales, September 2020

The new China consensus: How Europe is growing wary of Beijing
European Council on Foreign Relations, September 2020

The EU-China relationship
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, September 2020

Europe, the US and China: A love-hate triangle?
Centre for European Reform, September 2020

It’s time for NATO and the EU to have a serious conversation about China
Friends of Europe, September 2020

EU-China relations: State of the art and new perspectives
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2020

Relocating production from China to Central Europe? Not so fast!
Bruegel, September 2020
Europe's manoeuvring on 5G technology: The case of Italy
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2020

The missing partnership: The United States, Europe, and China’s economic challenge
German Marshall Fund, September 2020

China and the EU in the Western Balkans A zero-sum game?
Clingendael, August 2020

Towards strategic autonomy: The role of the EU in the growing China-USA rivalry
Egmont, July 2020

EU-China trade and investment: Views from East and West
Friends of Europe, July 2020

Europe’s China problem: Investment screening and state aid
Bruegel, July 2020

The pandemic, power rivalries and the EU
Friends of Europe, July 2020

Europe’s digital sovereignty: From rulemaker to superpower in the age of US-China rivalry
European Council on Foreign Relations, July 2020

The meaning of systemic rivalry: Europe and China beyond the pandemic
European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2020

Hong Kong calls: Can Europe respond?
Carnegie Europe, May 2020

Other studies and commentaries

China’s ‘dual circulation’ plan is bad news for others’ exports
Bruegel, September 2020

The cacophony of powers: International politics in the 2020s
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2020

Europe’s global test
Carnegie Europe, September 2020

The race for critical minerals in an era of geopolitical realignments
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2020

How US-China tensions could hamper development efforts
Brookings Institution, September 2020

Lessons from the Trump administration’s policy experiment on China
Brookings Institution, September 2020

China’s structural power and the fate of the BCIM economic corridor
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2020
China’s system of oppression in Xinjiang: How it developed and how to curb it
Brookings Institution, September 2020

Will the U.S. stance on Chinese telecom equipment change?
European Centre for International Political Economy, September 2020

Returning to the shadows: China, Pakistan, and the fate of CPEC
German Marshall Fund, September 2020

An answer to aggression: How to push back against Beijing
German Marshall Fund, September 2020

The Sino-Russian normative partnership in action
European Union Institute for Security Studies, August 2020

US-China phase one tracker: China’s purchases of US goods
Peterson Institute for International Economics, August 2020

Differentiated cooperation in European Foreign Policy: The challenge of coherence
European Policy Centre, August 2020

Fewer Chinese investments in the US are raising national security concerns
Peterson Institute for International Economics, August 2020

Debunking the myth of ‘debt-trap diplomacy’: How recipient countries shape China’s Belt and Road Initiative
Chatham House, August 2020

Arms and influence? Chinese arms transfers to Africa in context
Peterson Institute for International Economics, July 2020

How ‘democratic security’ can protect Europe from a rising China
German Council on Foreign Relations, July 2020

Despite the rhetoric, US-China financial decoupling is not happening
Peterson Institute for International Economics, July 2020

Mask wars: China’s exports of medical goods in times of Covid-19
Kiel Institute for the World Economy, July 2020

Masks off: Chinese coronavirus assistance in Europe
German Marshall Fund, July 2020

Hong Kong: The second hand-over
Fondation pour l’innovation politique, July 2020

European fear of ‘missing out’ and narratives on China in Africa
European Think Tank Group, July 2020

China has blown its historic opportunity
Peterson Institute for International Economics, July 2020
China has an unfair advantage in the EU Market: What can be done to level the playing field?
Bruegel, July 2020

China’s targeted corporate shopping spree to continue, especially in Europe
Bruegel, July 2020

China and the Trans-Pacific Partnership: In or out?
Peterson Institute for International Economics, June 2020

Australia’s strategic shift to the United States infuriates China
Carnegie Europe, June 2020

China’s focus remains firmly fixed on domestic problems
Chatham House, June 2020

East Asia decouples from the United States: Trade war, Covid-19, and East Asia’s new trade blocs
Peterson Institute for International Economics, June 2020

China’s Indian Ocean ambitions: Investment, influence, and military advantage
Brookings Institution, June 2020

Reading tea leaves from China’s two sessions: Large monetary and fiscal stimulus and still no growth guarantee
Bruegel, May 2020

How images frame China’s role in African development
Chatham House, May 2020