

China and EU: Avoiding unnecessary divergences; seeking new convergences!

China-EU Relations Conference

José Luís de Sales Marques 19/03/2024

China-EU relations at a crossroads

- Geopolitical and geoeconomics tensions and confrontation: US-China; US/EU/NATO-Russia on Ukraine War;
- Gaza conflict and the threat of major escalation;
- WW3 is a real peril, while the multilateral system and particularly UNSC is blocked;
- Coming out from Covid19 overall economic recovery still weak major competition to access their markets, namely the Global South;
- The economic rise of India, Indonesia...(BRICS)
- Tensions in the South China sea (what extent?)! Negative blocs and alliances are being built with confrontation in mind , not cooperation! (Like minded countries?) containing China.
- In the meantime, terrorism and other major traditional and non-traditional global threats are still strong

Current EU approach to China

Cooperation, competition and strategic rivalry!

- The European Union and China are committed to a comprehensive strategic partnership. The balance of challenges and opportunities presented by China has shifted over time. At the same time, the EU and China should work together more closely to tackle global and regional challenges and remain committed to engagement. We are two of three largest economies and traders in the world. Therefore, ensuring reciprocity, achieving a level-playing field, and addressing asymmetries in the relationship is a matter of priority! (EEAS, 15.08.2023), accessed today 19.03.2023!
- EU's China Policy is defined by "Elements for a new EU Strategy on China", "Council conclusions EU Strategy on China" and the 2019 "EU-Strategic Outlook"!

However...

Competition and Rivalry> Cooperation!

- Subsidies investigation of Chinese EV cars (2023) and European Economic Security (June, 2023) and EES package (Jan, 2024)

CAI still frozen

Unfulfilled expectations on China’s role in regard to Russia/Ukraine conflict

The overall rhetoric of confrontation is conducive to further misunderstandings and confrontations

Table 2.2 EU countermeasures and technical barriers against China since 2016

Time	Tool	Key information
2016.6–2019.5	EU toolkit for 5G security	Share 5G safety risk information and develop mitigation measures
2016.9–2021.5	EU’s export control toolbox	Update the dual-use item control system
2020.9	EU framework for screening foreign direct investment	Stricter reviews of investment and business relations
2021.3	A new Industrial Strategy for Europe	Maintain European industrial leadership
2021.4	Supplement the legislation of “sustainable corporate governance” and incorporate it into the Green Deal	Due diligence for all corporations related to the EU market; call for investigation of the Xinjiang human rights issue
2021.5	Updating the 2020 Industrial Strategy for Europe’s Recovery: Towards a Stronger Single Market	Solve the problem of excessive external dependence
2021.9	International Procurement Instrument	EU will exclude any third country bidders from bidding on public contracts as long as they do not open their own public procurement markets
2022.2	The European Chips Act	Strengthen the EU semiconductor ecosystem, ensure the flexibility of the chip supply chain, and reduce international dependence
2022.11	Regulation on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market (Foreign Subsidies Law)	Protect the EU market, especially foreign subsidies in the M&A

Source: Compiled by author.

See reference

Current China approach to the EU

- Keeping the comprehensive strategic partnership
- Concerns about developments in the EU, namely its position vis-a-vis China and trying to understand the ambiguity and contradictions of its current approach and how it will reflect in future trade, investment and cooperation in general
- Showing signs of more openness and welcoming more european investments and visitations to Chinese: market access and visa free policy
- Expectations in regard to CAI seen as a win-win agreement

Conclusions

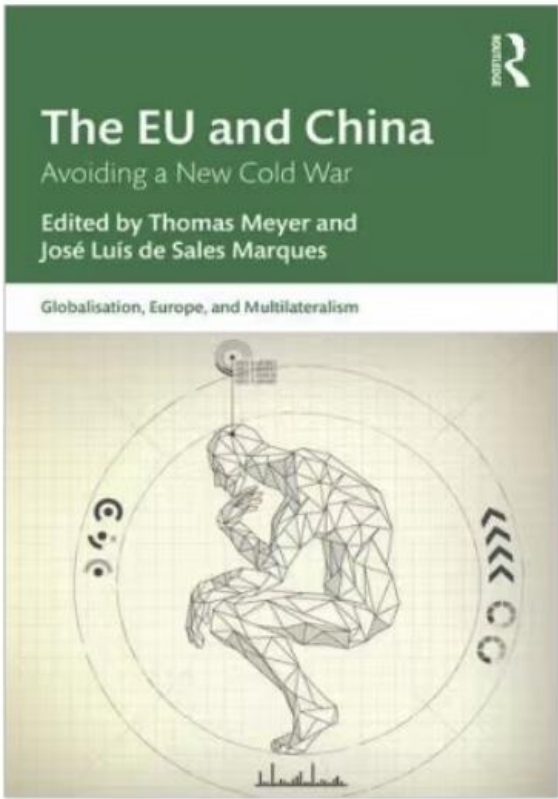
Avoiding unnecessary divergences, seeking new convergences

- China and EU have long standing relations that had been peaceful and mutually beneficial
- Both China and EU have been going through some important changes that represents challenges to both parties and could have severe negative impact in their future relations
- Some of those challenges are the result of the ongoing geopolitical tensions and confrontations; but there is one that is structural and has to do with the fact that China has grown in the last 50 years to become one of the two most important powers in the world (comprehensive power)
- A balance relation requires the EU to take that into consideration
- Dialogue is of fundamental importance and also is important that in the geopolitical sense the EU and China cooperate to bring peace, stability and security to the Eurasian landmass! To deepen mutual knowledge is crucial to the process of building mutual understanding and trust!

Thank you very much!
Muito obrigado!

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The EU and China

Avoiding a New Cold War

Edited By **Thomas Meyer, José Luís de Sales Marques**

This edited book is devoted to an analysis of how the multiple-modernities approach might help strengthen the strategic autonomy of the European Union and foster cooperative EU-China relations at a time when some observers believe that a new global cold war may be on the horizon. The book will be of interest to students of history, international relations, international political economy, European and Chinese studies, and military and security affairs. Furthermore, its timely subject should stimulate debate among a wider audience of journalists, policy professionals, and politically-engaged readers the world over.

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