



**Joint Research Achievements of Think Tanks on
“Contemporary China and the World”**

Report on China-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation

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The Report on China–EU Economic and Trade Cooperation

Foreword

Against the backdrop of rapid changes unseen in a century and profound adjustments of the global economic landscape, the international trade and economic system is undergoing a new round of restructuring. The evolution of major-country relations, the technological revolution, and the process of green transition are increasingly intertwined, exerting great impacts on global development paths and governance patterns. As major global economic forces, a healthy and stable bilateral relationship between China and the European Union (EU) carries strategic significance and global influence, bearing upon world peace, stability, and prosperity.

Grounded in the new shifts in the international landscape and the new stage of China-EU relations, this report systematically reviews the development trajectory and foundation of China-EU economic and trade cooperation in recent years and aims to identify the overall trends of this cooperation at both macro and strategic levels to provide reference for promoting the steady and sustained development of bilateral relations.

I. The Solid Foundation of China-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation: Massive Scale and Strong Complementarity

As the world's second and third largest economies, China and the EU have become each other's major trading partners and investment destinations. China-EU economic and trade cooperation is not only one of the largest and most dynamic economic and trade relationships in the world, but also serves as the cornerstone for the stable and healthy development of bilateral relations.

Both sides share a broad consensus on deepening economic and trade cooperation. At the official level, Chinese President Xi Jinping has emphasized on multiple

occasions that China-EU relations have become one of the most influential bilateral relationships in the world. Currently, as the profound changes unseen in a century accelerate, human society has once again arrived at a critical crossroads. A healthy and stable China-EU relationship not only benefits both sides, but also illuminates the world. Leaders of the EU and political figures from various European countries, such as France and Germany, have also repeatedly expressed their willingness to maintain candid dialogues, strengthen cooperation, enhance strategic mutual trust, and deepen partnerships with China. **At the industry level**, according to the report titled *Seeking Development Alongside Cooperation and Demonstrating Resilience Against Challenges: Report on the Development of Chinese Enterprises in the EU 2025/2026*, released by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU in November 2025, 85% of the surveyed enterprises reported stable or improved operating conditions in 2024, 62% expected revenue growth in 2025, and half planned to increase their investment in the EU. The willingness of Chinese enterprises to invest in Europe has warmed up significantly. The *Business Confidence Survey 2025* released by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China in May 2025 revealed that 26% of European companies are transferring their production to China, whereas only about 13% are shifting their production capacity to other countries. The *Business Confidence Survey 2025/2026* published by the German Chamber of Commerce in China in December 2025 indicated that over 90% of surveyed German companies have no intention of withdrawing from the Chinese market, and more than half plan to increase their investments in China. These statements and data underscore the strong desire of both political and business circles in China and Europe to deepen bilateral economic and trade cooperation, as well as their shared expectation for long-term healthy development of bilateral relations.

Communication mechanisms and channels for bilateral economic and trade cooperation are abundant and stable. Since the establishment of the China-EU High-Level Economic

and Trade Dialogue mechanism in 2007, officials from both sides have held ten rounds of dialogue focusing on topics such as macroeconomics, trade and investment, industrial and supply chains, and financial cooperation. Both sides have also established dialogue mechanisms such as the China-EU Joint Economic and Trade Committee, as well as dialogues on trade policy, intellectual property, and competition policy, providing institutional safeguards for the stable development of China-EU economic and trade relations. In addition, national-level exhibitions such as the China International Import Expo and the China-CEEC Expo & International Consumer Goods Fair, along with industry exhibitions like the Hannover Messe in Germany and the Salon International de l'Alimentation in France, provide broad platforms for Chinese and European companies to seek cooperation opportunities and showcase new products and technologies, serving as effective vehicles for stabilizing China-EU economic and trade relations.

China-EU economy and trade have formed a powerful symbiotic relationship. The industrial structures of China and the EU differ significantly, and this complementarity forms the natural basis for economic and trade cooperation. In the field of aircraft manufacturing, Airbus established two civil aircraft final assembly lines in Tianjin in 2008 and 2025 respectively. Leveraging China's stable aviation industry ecosystem, Airbus has been able to supply the globe from China, thereby facilitating the development of the global aviation industry. In the field of green cooperation, investments in Hungary by Chinese new energy enterprises such as BYD, CATL, FiberHome, and Huayou Cobalt have formed a complete electric vehicle (EV) industrial cluster. This has not only promoted the improvement of Hungary's EV industrial chain, but also strengthened Hungary's position within the European industrial chain, assisting its economic development and industrial transformation and upgrading. In 2025, over 50% of China's cosmetics and nearly 60% of its automobiles were imported from Europe, while exports to Europe of pharmaceuticals and industrial robots both maintained growth rates of over 20%.

With complementary advantages and mutually beneficial outcomes, China-EU economic and trade cooperation has become close-knit with shared interests.

Long-term China-EU economic and trade cooperation has laid a foundation of trust. There are no fundamental conflicts of interest or geopolitical contradictions between China and the EU; rather, they are partners that enable each other's success. They both seek cooperative consensus amidst institutional differences, expand cooperation spaces across distinct development paths, and continuously enhance political and strategic mutual trust. For over 50 years, China-EU economic and trade cooperation has continuously deepened. While achieving their own economic development and promoting domestic employment, they have also contributed to global economic growth. At present, as the tremendous global changes accelerate with numerous risks and challenges overlapping, China and the EU are both advocates of economic globalization and trade liberalization, as well as staunch defenders and supporters of the World Trade Organization. Thus, the strategic significance and global influence of deepening bilateral economic and trade cooperation have become even more prominent. The development course of China-EU relations demonstrates that as long as both sides respect each other, treat each other as equals, and engage in candid dialogues, they can advance cooperation and accomplish great things. Further deepening China-EU economic and trade cooperation is not only the revelation of history, but also aligns with the practical needs of both sides. It will bring greater well-being to the people of both regions and bring more stability and certainty to the turbulent international situation.

II. Distinctive Characteristics of China-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation: Close Integration and Strong Stability

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties over 50 years ago, economic and trade cooperation between China and the EU has leveraged complementary advantages. Bilateral trade volume has increased by more than 300-fold compared to the

initial period of the diplomatic relations, and the stock of mutual investment has grown from virtually zero to over 280 billion USD, with outstanding highlights in multiple areas of cooperation.

The scale of trade between China and the EU continues to expand. Despite challenges such as the slow recovery of the global economy and the rising trade protectionism, China-EU economic and trade cooperation remains close, and the trade scale has achieved steady growth. **In terms of total trade volume,** the China-EU trade volume reached 828.1 billion USD in 2025, representing a year-on-year increase of 5.4%. In 2025, the bilateral trade volumes of China and Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Hungary, and Ireland grew by 5.2%, 6%, 10.5%, 5.6%, 4.5%, 8.9%, 3.6%, 29%, and 7%, respectively. It is worth mentioning that in 2025, Germany was not only China's sixth largest trading nation, but also its largest trading partner within the EU. **In terms of consumer goods,** over 40% of China's total imports of luggage, healthcare products, passenger vehicles, and cosmetics were from the EU, while its exports of electronic appliances, apparel, and kitchenware to the EU increased by 3.4%, 3.7%, and 3.6%, respectively. **In terms of high technology,** China's exports of high-tech products to the EU grew by 7.5%, and imports of high-tech products from the EU grew by 11.1%. In the green industry, China's exports to the EU of wind turbine generator systems surged by 65.9%, exports of electrical equipment such as DC charging piles and energy storage batteries increased by 25.4%, and imports of recycled products from the EU increased by 18.9%. These data fully demonstrate the complementarity of the two economies.

China-EU investment cooperation continues to deepen. **Regarding investment policies,** both sides are moving toward each other, with greater facilitation. In November 2024, China's *Special Administrative Measures (Negative List) for Foreign Investment Access (2024 Edition)* officially came into effect, showing that the restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector have been removed, and China will take

the initiative to open wider regarding biotechnology, cloud computing, value-added telecommunications, and wholly foreign-owned hospitals. In May 2025, China and the EU decided to simultaneously and comprehensively lift restrictions on mutual exchanges, creating conditions for more exchanges and cooperation in the economic and trade fields. In January 2026, after consultations, China and the EU reached a consensus on the EV case. This not only contributes to the healthy development of China-EU economic and trade relations, but also helps uphold the rule-based international trade order. **In terms of investment volume**, two-way investment flows between China and the EU continue to grow, displaying good momentum. Regarding investment in Europe, data from the European Commission show that China's direct investment in the EU in 2024 was 9.4 billion EUR, an increase of over 80% compared to the 5.2 billion EUR in 2023. Regarding investment in China, taking Germany as an example, according to the latest data released by the German Economic Institute, investment by German enterprises in China reached its highest level in four years in 2025. From January to November, German companies invested over 7 billion EUR in China, an increase of 55.5% compared to the 4.5 billion EUR in 2024 and 2023, and exceeding the average level of 6 billion EUR during the period from 2010 to 2024. **In terms of investment methods**, the structure of two-way investment between China and the EU continues to be optimized and innovated. EU companies have expanded their business presence in China, advancing the investment transformation and upgrading from "Made in China" to "R&D in China". For instance, Germany's BASF invested 10 billion EUR in China's Zhanjiang to build its largest overseas pentanediol base, and Volkswagen Group invested 2.4 billion EUR for technological development of autonomous driving together with the Chinese company Horizon Robotics. Chinese companies' investment in Europe has also shifted from early-stage mergers and acquisitions to greenfield investments. For example, CATL's factory in Hungary adopts "Chinese technology + European standards," with 70% of its products

supplied to European automakers, promoting the development of local new energy industry clusters.

China-EU digital cooperation continues to advance. Currently, China and the EU have established exemplary digital cooperation paradigms in the fields of cross-border data flows, data protection, and technology regulatory policies, as well as in innovative technologies like autonomous driving and artificial intelligence. Regarding rule-making, China and the EU officially launched a cross-border data flow communication mechanism in August 2024 to facilitate the cross-border flow of corporate data. In terms of industrial synergy, in November 2025, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, the German Association of the Automotive Industry, and the European Catena-X Association jointly launched the "Co-building China-EU Data Trust – China-EU Automotive Industry Data Trust Application Scenario Pilot". This project focuses on high-value scenarios such as supply chain certificate management, carbon footprint calculation, and battery passports, aiming to explore the standards and technological paths for the trusted cross-border flow of automotive data, break the trust barriers in data sharing, and help achieve safe and efficient empowerment of data elements in areas such as industrial coordination, green and low-carbon development, and product traceability. Concerning corporate participation, Chinese automobile companies such as BYD and Geely have built factories in Europe, promoting the application of autonomous driving technology. Cloud computing-related enterprises such as Huawei Cloud and Alibaba Cloud have built data centers in Europe and provided cloud computing solutions. The AI-related products of Chinese tech companies like ByteDance and iFlytek have been promoted in the European market. Germany's Bosch Group has settled in Suzhou and plans to launch an innovation R&D project for the intelligent driving and control industry and for accelerating the intelligent upgrading of the automotive industry. France's Schneider Electric has established innovation centers in Beijing and Shanghai, focusing on industrial automation adaptation and transformation cooperation with

China. With the rapid development of global digital technology, particularly the breakthroughs in emerging technologies represented by AI, the scope and fields of China-EU digital cooperation are bound to expand.

Clean energy has become a new engine for China-EU economic and trade cooperation. Both China and the EU are important participants and leaders in international cooperation against climate change. Both actively support low-carbon transition and green development, sharing highly compatible green development philosophies. In Europe, BYD's passenger vehicle factory in Hungary has officially commenced production, while Envision Energy has built factories in the UK and France and signed a hydrogen energy cooperation agreement with the Spanish government. The presence of Chinese new energy enterprises in the European market has not only driven the export of Chinese new energy products, but also facilitated in-depth cooperation between China and the EU in the field of green energy. In China, the Italian Futura Group's solar integration base and large-scale power station project have landed in Ningxia. The project will drive the transformation and upgrading of the global photovoltaic industry through technological innovation and industrial collaboration and provide a replicable template for cooperation in the green economy field between China and the EU. In April 2025, China and the EU officially signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Green Technology Cooperation*, agreeing to jointly invest 15 billion EUR over the next three years. Focusing on six major areas such as hydrogen energy, energy storage, and carbon capture, they aim to build the world's largest transnational green technology R&D alliance. This upgrading from "market complementarity" to "technological symbiosis" will lay a solid foundation for long-term and stable bilateral cooperation in the field of the green economy.

The China-Europe Railway Express effectively facilitates economic and trade exchanges between the two sides. Serving as the "Steel Camel Caravan" of China-EU trade, the China-Europe Railway Express has not only shortened

transnational transport time, but also opened up new areas of trade and cooperation, enhancing liberalization and facilitation of China-EU economic and trade cooperation. By November 2025, the cumulative number of China-Europe Railway Express trains had exceeded 120,000, with sent cargo value surpassing 490 billion USD. The transported goods have gradually expanded from a few categories like apparel, shoes, and hats at the beginning to 53 categories and over 50,000 types of goods, including electronic products, mechanical equipment, and new energy vehicles (NEVs), reaching 232 cities across 26 European countries and promoting the socioeconomic development of China and the European countries along the routes. In 2025 alone, a total of 20,022 trains ran on these routes, and about 10,100 trains, roughly half of them, returned to China carrying 1.02 million TEUs of goods, up 14.4% and 9.4% year-on-year, respectively. This indicates balanced two-way transport between China and Europe. In July 2024, a road transport route to a Caspian Sea port was opened, establishing a new transport channel for China-Europe international logistics and injecting new momentum into the sound development of China-EU economic and trade relations.

III. Impressive Achievements in China-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation: Benefiting Both Sides and the Globe

The development of China-EU relations has progressed alongside China's reform and opening up. The EU has been an active participant and contributor to the process of China's reform and opening up, and China's rapid development and progress have also provided important opportunities and broad space for Europe's development. China's ultra-large market and the EU's single market represent critical development opportunities for each other. Enhancing the reliability and stability of China-EU economic and trade relations serves with the shared interests of both sides and is also conducive to world stability, development, and prosperity.

Stabilizing global economic growth. As the two being the world's second and third largest economies, China-EU economic

and trade cooperation is a vital component of economic globalization and an indispensable force driving globalization. The combined economic aggregate of China and the EU exceeds one-third of the global total, and their bilateral trade volume accounts for more than a quarter of global trade. The positive spillover effects generated by their cooperation strongly drive global economic growth. In 2023, the two economies grew by 5.2% and 0.4% year-on-year, respectively, jointly driving global economic growth by 1.1 percentage points and contributing 33% to global economic growth. The profound economic and trade complementarity makes their cooperation a key shield against the anti-globalization currents, bringing more stability and certainty into the global economy. A survey, conducted by the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum, of 75 central banks worldwide from March to May 2025 indicated that in the next one to two years, 16% of the central banks plan to increase their holdings of the Euro, up from 7% a year earlier; over the next decade, 30% of the central banks will increase their holdings of the RMB, multiplying its share in global reserves threefold. These central banks' plans to increase holdings of the RMB and the Euro reflect the international community's confidence in the economic strength and financial stability of China and Europe and expectation of the two to jointly promote the construction of a more diversified and stable new international monetary order. In September 2025, the People's Bank of China signed bilateral local currency swap agreements with the European Central Bank, the Swiss National Bank, and the Magyar Nemzeti Bank (Hungarian Central Bank) respectively. This not only facilitates bilateral trade and investment, but also helps bolster mutual market confidence and maintain regional and global financial stability.

Upholding the multilateral trading system. In recent years, the global economic landscape has undergone profound adjustments, with unilateralism and protectionism on the rise. Consequently, economic globalization has encountered setbacks, and the authority and effectiveness of the multilateral trading system are facing serious challenges. Both China and the EU

have consistently acted as vital forces in defending and practicing multilateralism, and they place great importance on playing a constructive role within the frameworks of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. The *Joint Press Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Federal Republic of Germany* released last February reaffirmed that both sides firmly uphold the status of the UN and adhere to multilateralism and free trade. Dialogue and cooperation between China and the EU not only reflect their shared interests and demonstrate their responsibility and determination to maintain the world trade order, but also send a strong signal of upholding the multilateral order and encourage most countries to maintain a healthy, stable, and predictable global trade environment that serves the interests of the vast majority of economies.

Providing resilient support for the stability of global industrial and supply chains. Against the backdrop of frequent geopolitical conflicts, China and the EU have reshaped the risk-resistance capacity of global supply chains and mitigated the risk of "decoupling and breaking chains" through infrastructure connectivity and industry layout optimization, providing key resilient support for global industrial and supply chains. Taking the China-Europe Railway Express as an example, it has not only broken the traditional dual transnational transport pattern of ocean and air freight by creating a new option for international land transport and drastically reducing cargo transport time for countries along the routes, but also promoted the continuous upgrading of the Asian-European logistics network. This plays an important role in enhancing supply chain resilience in the regions along the routes and promoting coordinated development of regional industrial chains. Countries along the routes now have efficient and stable transport of raw materials, parts, and finished products among different nations via the China-Europe Railway Express. This accelerates the realization of regional industrial coordination and division of labor, improves factors allocation efficiency, and drives the transformation of "transit" dividends into tangible "grounded"

industries, further strengthening the risk-resistance capacity of supply chains. Currently, the China-Europe Railway Express has attracted numerous multinational corporations and international supply chain service providers to establish operations in the areas along the routes. The categories of goods transported have become increasingly diverse, and business forms are progressively enriched, bringing the local goods into broader markets. As Julio Ríos, the Spanish expert on China issues, stated, the China-Europe Railway Express integrates the demands of both China and Europe in a brand-new and complementary manner.

Advancing the development of the global digital economy. China-EU digital cooperation dates back to the China-EU High-Tech Dialogue in 2009, with a focus on information technology, telecommunications, and internet usage. In the following years, both sides agreed on jointly promoting the formulation of international 5G standards, technological R&D, and trials, as well as smart cities and internet governance. In 2018, the *China's Policy Paper on the European Union* and the EU's *Connecting Europe and Asia* strategy respectively reaffirmed the willingness of both sides to support each other and increase exchanges and cooperation in the digital field. The precise docking of industry leading enterprises and advanced technologies between China and the EU not only provides innovative ideas and practical samples for prosperous growth of the global digital economy, but also lays a more solid regulatory foundation for its healthy development through mutual sharing of technical standards and regulatory experiences. Luigi Gambardella, Chairman of China-EU, believes that both sides possess unique strengths that are complementary. Combining Europe's regulatory framework, R&D ecosystem, and technological innovation with China's manufacturing capacity, market scale, and rapid deployment capabilities for digital technology will produce mutually beneficial outcomes, accelerate progress in key technology fields such as AI and the Internet of Things (IoT), and enhance global interconnectivity and technological cohesion. Moreover, facing the opportunities

and challenges brought by digitalization, China-EU digital economic and trade cooperation has transcended the economic realm to become a key stabilizer in a multipolar world and offer new possibilities for future development of the global digital economy. By increasing pragmatic cooperation in the digital economy and joining hands to create a digital space that is more just and reasonable, open and inclusive, secure and stable, and full of vitality, China and the EU can effectively avoid the adversarial deterioration of digital geopolitics and benefit the global citizens with the light of digitization.

Providing a paradigm for global governance cooperation. Jointly promoting the improvement of global governance is a shared value pursuit of both China and the EU. Their shared interests and wish regarding global governance have laid a solid foundation for their economic and trade cooperation. Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out: "With the constant changes in the international balance of power and the increase in global challenges, there is a growing demand for strengthening global governance and reforming the global governance system." In his speech at the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, President Xi called for advocating an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization and making the global governance system more just and equitable. As Charles Michel, former President of the European Council and former Prime Minister of Belgium, put it, "Although China and the EU differ on some issues, they are highly aligned in their fundamental pursuit of stability, security, and prosperity. Facing a series of increasingly severe global challenges such as climate change and global public health, China and the EU must strengthen communication and collaboration to jointly defuse risks, seize opportunities, and play a larger role in the global governance system." **In addressing climate change,** as practitioners and promoters of the *Paris Agreement*, China and the EU have carried out extensive practical cooperation in global climate governance and green transition, implemented multiple green

energy projects, built energy cooperation platforms, and pushed for the implementation and industrialization of clean energy technologies. These collaborations have not only produced mutually beneficial outcomes, but also demonstrated the responsibility and commitment of China and the EU as two major global economies, as well as their confidence and strength in jointly promoting global governance reform, providing practical solutions and replicable templates for solving global issues. In June 2024, the first high-level dialogue under the China-Germany Climate Change and Green Transition Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism achieved a series of outcomes, including launching China-Germany provincial/state cooperation on green transition, agreeing on the 2024 work plan of the China-Germany Energy Efficiency Working Group and the *Key Recent Activities for Implementing the Action Plan for China-Germany Dialogue on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency*, establishing the China-Germany Industrial Decarbonization Working Group, and launching demonstration projects for energy efficiency improvement in key areas of both countries. In July 2025, to enhance the global synergy of China-EU automotive carbon footprint management systems, the China-EU Automotive Carbon Footprint Mutual Recognition Working Group jointly released the *Guidelines for China-EU Automotive Carbon Footprint Accounting, Verification and Mutual Recognition v1.0*, contributing a "China-EU solution" to global carbon neutrality goals. **In global public health**, China and the EU have jointly carried out project development and industrial cooperation, pooling R&D resources, and accelerating global innovation in pharmaceuticals and medical equipment to safeguard global public health security. Taking Siemens Shenzhen Magnetic Resonance Ltd., established in 2002, as an example. It actively expands innovative cooperation with Chinese hospitals, universities, and other institutions, driving the development of the global high-end medical equipment industrial chain. Over the past two decades, the company has become the only R&D and manufacturing base with a complete value chain within Siemens Healthineers' global magnetic

resonance operating system. While serving the Chinese market, it has exported 65% of its complete medical devices to over 100 countries and regions, which has enabled the latest medical equipment to benefit more patients around the world.

IV. Broad Prospects for China-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation: Seizing Opportunities for Steady and Sustained Progress

China-EU economic and trade relations bear upon global economic recovery and development. However, in recent years, normal economic and trade relations between China and the EU have been disturbed by factors such as unilateralism, protectionism, and the prioritization of security. The "de-risking" strategy pushed by the EU against China has impacted pragmatic cooperation between the two sides. China and the EU are two major markets that support economic globalization, and both sides need an inclusive and open world economic system. During its 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), China will continue to expand opening up at the institutional level, safeguard the multilateral trading system, and promote broader international economic flows. It will draw momentum from opening up to propel reform and development, and share opportunities with the rest of the world and promote common development. The China-EU economic and trade relations are rooted in complementary strengths, and the two sides can achieve a dynamic balance in a mutually beneficial development process. Looking to the future, there is ample space for bilateral cooperation with high potential in key fields such as the green and low-carbon economy, the digital economy, third-party markets, and the automotive industry. This will not only provide strong momentum for the sustained growth and transformation and upgrading of both economies, but also boost global economic recovery and sustainable development.

Focusing on the global green and low-carbon transition to stimulate the vitality of China-EU cooperation. Climate change is one of the major challenges facing the world today. In July 2025, the *China-EU Leaders' Joint Statement on*

Addressing Climate Change was released, in which leaders of both sides reaffirmed the importance of climate cooperation against the backdrop of global changes. During German Chancellor Merz's visit to China last February, China and Germany agreed to continue dialogues on climate change and green transition, laying a solid foundation for future green and low-carbon cooperation between China and the EU. By increasing policy communication and coordination under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, China and the EU can work together to promote global climate governance and contribute to achieving the goals of the *Paris Agreement*. Specifically, Europe holds a global leading position in renewable energy technology R&D, green finance innovation, and low-carbon development practices, while China possesses a huge green consumer market, strong green industry manufacturing capabilities, and rapid green transition. These complementarities will increase the possibility and feasibility of cooperation between the two sides. They can join hands to carry out cooperation on the R&D and application of low-carbon technologies such as carbon capture and storage, NEVs, and smart grids, and accelerate the commercial promotion and popularization of low-carbon technologies to help achieve global carbon emission reduction goals. **In the green finance field**, they can jointly innovate financial instruments and cooperation models to promote the prosperous development of green industries. **Regarding climate resilience capacity building**, China and the EU can jointly carry out R&D and project cooperation on adaptation technologies addressing climate risks such as extreme weather events and rising sea levels. This will not only lead to positive progress in global climate response, but also derive multi-level economic and trade cooperation opportunities in areas like infrastructure construction, agricultural adaptation, urban management, and financial investment.

Concentrating on global digital transformation to build up the momentum of China-EU cooperation. The digital economy is a priority for their cooperation in the future. The rise

of the digital economy is profoundly changing global economic operation models and competition patterns. Both sides possess strengths in the digital economy, and the potential for cooperation is enormous. Europe has a solid foundation in basic technology R&D, digital rule-making, and high-end digital industry cultivation, while China have a huge digital consumer base, abundant digital application scenarios, and an enormous digital economy scale and boasts globally leading digital infrastructure, with its intelligent computing power scale ranking among the top in the world. During its 15th Five-Year Plan period, China will advance the Digital China initiative, promote close integration of the real economy and the digital economy, and accelerate innovations and industrial empowerment in digital technologies like AI. In March 2025, the European Commission officially adopted the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) 2025-2027 work program, announcing that 1.3 billion EUR will be invested to develop key digital technologies such as AI, cybersecurity, and digital skills, which highly aligns with the content of China's 15th Five-Year Plan. In the future, both sides can carry out in-depth cooperation in cutting-edge digital technologies such as AI, big data, cloud computing, and the IoT, jointly promote digital technology innovation and application expansion to reshape bilateral relations and elevate their traditional economic and trade cooperation to a strategic partnership of innovative symbiosis. They can also increase exchanges and cooperation in digital trade rule-making, digital market regulation, and data security protection, pushing for the creation of a more equitable, open, and stable environment for the development of the global digital economy. This will create market opportunities and large development space for enterprises from both sides and further facilitate close integration of the digital economy with the real economy, contributing to the digital transformation and high-quality development of the global economy.

Promoting third-party market cooperation to unlock the potential of China-EU cooperation. In the world today, over 40% of the developing countries have entered the middle or

late stages of industrialization, and nearly 30% others have not yet begun industrialization, indicating great demand for infrastructure construction and equipment. After more than 70 years of industrialization, China has built an independent modern industrial system with a complete range of categories. In contrast, the developed European countries are mostly in the post-industrial stage and possess advanced technologies and equipment. They both have ample cooperation opportunities in third-party markets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They can further align and coordinate the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the EU's Global Gateway plan. By carrying out third-party market cooperation in areas like infrastructure and energy and resource development and industrial capacity cooperation, they can fully leverage their respective strengths in technology, capital, and management and contribute to the realization of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through implementing the Global Development Initiative. Taking the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project as an example. It was completed through the cooperation of Chinese companies, European companies, and African countries and serves as a model for cooperation between China and Europe in a third-party market. At present, nearly 90% of Africa's hydropower potential remains undeveloped, the largest proportion of undeveloped capacity in the world, while 600 million Africans still lack reliable power supplies. The GERD project fully leveraged the technological and equipment strengths of Chinese and European companies in infrastructure, directly benefiting African people and achieving multi-party win-win results. China and the EU also have immense cooperation potential in energy and resource development in third-party markets. For instance, they can carry out exploration and development cooperation for resources such as oil, natural gas, and minerals, which will not only promote local economic development and job creation, but also ensure stable supply of global energy resources, foster sustainable resource utilization, and propel global energy transition and resource structure optimization.

Grasping the opportunities of the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation to support the transformation and upgrading of the automotive industry of both China and the EU. The automotive industry, as a traditional key field of China-EU economic and trade cooperation, has embraced new cooperation opportunities with the rapid development in NEVs and intelligent connected vehicles. Europe is in a leading position in automobile manufacturing technology and NEVs battery R&D, while China demonstrates strong development momentum in NEVs market scale, industrial supporting capacity, and application scenario expansion for intelligent connected vehicles. Data released by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association in January this year showed that in December 2025, the EU auto market reached a historical inflection point, with pure EV registrations exceeding traditional gasoline-powered vehicles for the first time on record. Nowadays, the EU automobile market is accelerating its electrification transition, and European automakers are actively promoting the establishment of EV production plants. Consequently, China-EU automotive cooperation is expanding to more spheres. In the future, they can jointly promote the transformation and upgrading as well as innovative development of the global automotive industry by increasing cooperation in fields such as NEVs battery technology R&D, industrial chain integration, intelligent connected vehicle standard formulation, and automotive aftermarket services. For instance, by jointly carrying out NEVs battery technology R&D projects, they can improve battery performance and safety, reduce production costs, and foster closer collaboration in bilateral economic and trade relations; regarding intelligent connected vehicle standard formulation, they can join hands to push for the formulation and unification of international standards, creating favorable conditions for the global promotion and application of intelligent connected vehicles and leading the intelligent and electrified development direction of the global automotive industry.

Facing the complex and volatile international economic and trade environment, China and the EU should consolidate institutional safeguards to protect economic and trade cooperation. To fully release the immense potential of their economic and trade cooperation and achieve long-term and mutually beneficial results, they need to increase policy coordination, improve the cooperation mechanisms, and enhance supply chain efficiency and resilience. By establishing regular high-level dialogue mechanisms and multi-level policy communication platforms, they can solve the problems arising in cooperation with better coordinated in a timely manner and ensure synergy and consistency of their policies. Meanwhile, they need to enhance the functions and roles of existing cooperation platforms, encourage extensive exchanges and in-depth cooperation among their government departments, business circles, and academic circles, and push for the implementation of cooperative projects. For example, in supply chain cooperation, China and the EU should increase cooperation in key links, jointly build a stable and diversified supply chain system to reduce the impact of external risks on the supply chain; accelerate the digital transformation of the supply chain, elevate its transparency, efficiency, and flexibility, and enhance its risk-resistance capacity; optimize logistics and transport cooperation, further improve the service quality and operation efficiency of logistics channels like the China-Europe Railway Express, lower logistics costs, and ensure an unimpeded supply chain, thus providing solid logistics support for the continuous and stable development of China-EU economic and trade cooperation.

Conclusion

At this critical juncture for global economic recovery and sustainable development, China and the EU should firmly seize cooperation opportunities, fully leverage their respective strengths, continuously expand areas of collaboration, and enhance their engagement. Through close cooperation in key fields such as the green and low-carbon economy, the digital

economy, third-party market cooperation, and the automotive industry, as well as joint efforts in multiple aspects like increasing policy coordination, improving cooperation mechanisms, and enhancing supply chain efficiency, China and the EU are expected to produce mutually beneficial outcomes in multiple fields. Together, they will open up a brighter future for economic and trade cooperation, injecting strong momentum into global economic recovery, contributing more to global sustainable development, and working for the building of a more open, inclusive, balanced, and universally beneficial global economic landscape!