



Press statement by President von der Leyen following the trilateral meeting with French President Macron and President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping

Paris, 6 May 2024

Good afternoon,

Today was the third time I met President Xi in just over one year, and I think this reflects the importance we both attribute to EU-China relations. Once again, we had an open and honest exchange and discussion on points where we see eye to eye and on points where we have differences. Our topics range from geopolitical issues to climate change and of course our economic relations.

Together with President Macron, the first topic where we exchanged views on was the geopolitical situation. We especially discussed Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East. We agree that Europe and China have a shared interest in peace and security. We count on China to use all its influence on Russia to end Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. President Xi has played an important role in de-escalating Russia's irresponsible nuclear threats, and I am confident that President Xi will continue to do so against the backdrop of the ongoing nuclear threats by Russia. We have also discussed China's commitment not to provide any lethal equipment to Russia. More effort is needed to curtail delivery of dual-use goods to Russia that find their way to the battlefield. And given the existential nature of the threats stemming from this war for both Ukraine and Europe, this does affect the EU-China relations.

Finally, we discussed the situation in the Middle East, which is of great concern for both of us. No effort can be spared in de-escalating tensions and preventing a wider conflict in the region. Once again, we call for a ceasefire and for the release of all hostages, and we continue to work to provide all humanitarian support possible while working for a two-state solution. We also made clear our concern on Iran's direct threat to stability in the region, and we believe that China can play an important role in limiting the irresponsible proliferation of Iranian ballistic missiles and drones.

We also discussed our economic and trade relationship. It is one of the most important in the world. I am convinced that if the competition is fair, we in Europe will have thriving, durable economies that will support more good jobs. But of course, today we also discussed the imbalances that remain significant, and this is a matter of great concern. As we have shown, we will defend our companies; we will defend our economies. We will never hesitate to do so if this is required. Let me focus on three topics.

The first topic: Chinese subsidised products. These subsidised products – such as the electric vehicles or, for example, steel – are flooding the European market. At the same time, China continues to massively support its manufacturing sector. Combined with a domestic demand that is not increasing, the world cannot absorb China's surplus production. Therefore, I have encouraged the Chinese government to address these structural overcapacities. At the same time, we will closely coordinate with G7 countries and emerging economies that are also increasingly affected by China's market distortions.

My second topic: For trade to be fair, access to each other's market also needs to be reciprocal. We discussed how to make real progress on market access. I remain confident that more progress can be achieved. At the same time, we stand ready to make full use of our trade defence instruments if this is necessary. For example, a couple of weeks ago, we launched our first investigation under the International Procurement Instrument. Europe cannot accept market-distorting practices that could lead to deindustrialisation here at home.

My third point: We need to improve the resilience of our supply chains. For example, we tackle excessive dependencies by diversifying sources of critical raw materials. This is why we have negotiated several agreements to widen the number of countries from which we obtain critical raw materials. This is basically de-risking in practice. Our market is and remains open to fair competition and to investments, but it is not good for Europe if it harms our security and makes us vulnerable.

And this is why we act.

To conclude: The EU-China relation is a complex relationship. We approach it clear-eyed, constructively and responsibly. Because a China that plays fair is good for all of us. At the same time, Europe will not waver from making tough decisions needed to protect its economy and its security. So, with that, we are looking forward to celebrating next year the 50th anniversary of the EU-China relations. I thank you for your attention.

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Press contacts:

[Eric MAMER](#) (+32 2 299 40 73)

[Arianna PODESTA](#) (+32 2 298 70 24)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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