MEPs to visit China on pressing trade matters

Trade Committee MEPs will discuss market access, investment, overcapacity, US tariffs and intellectual property rights in Beijing and Shanghai next week.

The delegation of seven members, led by the Chair of the International Trade Committee Bernd Lange (S&D, DE), will be visiting China from 6 to 9 May. This is the first ever INTA delegation to the country.

MEPs will push for progress in bilateral negotiations on a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) and Geographical Indications (GIs) and follow up on recent announcements to open up market access to the Chinese economy. Members are also set to discuss the question of overcapacity and recent US tariffs on steel and aluminium.

The EP delegation will meet with Chinese state officials from Chinese super-ministry National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Ministry of Commerce (MoFCOM) both in Shanghai and Beijing, the recently created State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), the National People’s Congress, the Communist Party, and trade union representatives, as well as hold talks with members of the EU business community.

Delegation Chair Bernd Lange and EP Standing Rapporteur Iuliu Winkler (EPP, RO) will hold a press point on 9 May in Beijing to wrap up the visit.

After the visit, the Committee will adopt and submit its opinion on the state of EU-China relations for the Foreign Affairs Committee’s comprehensive report.

In its April meeting, the INTA Committee assessed the state of EU-China relations in a debate with Chinese Ambassador to the EU Zhang Ming and held a public hearing on possible European strategies for China with Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs.

The Parliament has been following China’s excess production capacity and the resulting cut-price exports for effects on jobs, the environment and economic growth closely. Tougher EU rules to fight dumped and subsidised imports from non-EU countries were
endorsed by the European Parliament last November and the modernisation of trade defence instruments is up for a final vote during the May plenary session in Strasbourg. Trade MEPs will vote on a Commission proposal aiming to create an EU framework to screen foreign direct investment on 17 May.

In a recent plenary debate on US tariffs, MEPs urged global players to avoid trade wars and tackle global overcapacity in steel instead.

Background

The European Union and China are two of the biggest traders in the world. China is now the EU's second-biggest trading partner behind the United States and the EU is China's biggest trading partner. According to the EU Commission, the EU currently has a trade deficit with China. In 2013, the EU and Beijing launched negotiations for an Investment Agreement. The aim is to provide investors on both sides with predictable, long-term access to the EU and Chinese markets and to protect investors and their investments.

Further information

EPRS Briefing: Foreign direct investment screening - A debate in light of China-EU FDI flows (May 2017)
603941_EN.pdf

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EU-China trade relations (by the Commission)

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