

**EUROPEAN UNION COMMITTEE**  
**Sub-Committee C (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy)**

**Inquiry into “The European Union and China”**

**Call for Evidence**

The Foreign Policy, Defence and Development Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee C) of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union has decided to undertake an inquiry into “The European Union and China”. The Sub-Committee is chaired by Lord Teverson.

**Background**

Relations between the European Union and China, as well as business, scientific and cultural links have grown significantly in the last decade. This was reflected in 2003 when China and the EU announced a ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’. The European Commission’s Communication of 2006 ‘*EU-China: closer partners, growing responsibilities*’ reviewed the relationship in the context of China’s growing economic strength and global role. The EU is now China’s main trade partner and both sides have an interest in working closely together on issues ranging from sustainable development to international security. The maturity of the relationship is reflected in the 7 formal agreements and 22 sectoral dialogues now in place, complemented by annual summits and a strategic dialogue at deputy foreign minister level.

However, the relationship faces an increasing diversity and number of challenges. Many of these are driven by the sheer dynamism of change in China, which is in turn empowering a new international activism. There have been increasing calls for China’s rising international presence to be matched by commitments to a variety of international norms, covering areas as diverse as human rights observance, good governance in development, environmental responsibility, and non-proliferation and conflict resolution. At the same time the EU-China relationship covers a number of bilateral issues, such as the EU arms embargo imposed after the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, China’s market economy status, and the Chinese government’s attitude to the role of rights in the emerging civil society in China, where to date limited progress has been made.

Most recently, differences around these questions triggered the postponement of the December 2008 EU-China summit as the Chinese government registered its protest at the decision by several European leaders to meet with the Dalai Lama.<sup>1</sup> To reflect the growing scope of the relationship, China and the EU began negotiations on a Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) in January 2007, as an ambitious attempt to establish a framework to address both current challenges and future cooperation.

**Scope of the Inquiry**

The inquiry will focus on the foreign, security and development policy aspects of the relationship, but will also cover key issues for bilateral cooperation such as human rights, the environment, and science and technology. Although trade and investment issues are a very

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<sup>1</sup> European Union Presidency Statement on the postponement of the EU-China Summit. French EU presidency website, [www.ue2008.fr](http://www.ue2008.fr)

important aspect of EU-China relations, we have deliberately decided not to focus on them. The House of Lords EU Committee recently published a report on EU trade policy which covered trade with China to some extent.

The inquiry will start by examining the way that social, economic, environmental and political change in China is shaping the relationship. It will review the objectives of the European Union in pursuing a ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’ with China and the institutional framework for EU-China relations, particularly negotiation on the PCA. We will review the coherence of the EU’s policies, in particular the extent to which the EU Member States and the European Institutions all share a common approach to China. We will also assess the perspectives of the EU’s other regional and international partners on the progress and significance of the EU’s relations with China. Overall, the inquiry will seek to evaluate the development and effectiveness of the European Union strategy towards China.

In the framework of this inquiry, the Sub-Committee will consider written evidence. We would therefore welcome submissions on following questions:

### **China today**

1. What are the main successes and challenges of economic, social and political modernisation in China, and how do these shape the context for China’s external strategy? In particular how do development priorities and foreign and security objectives interact?
2. How does the EU’s policy on promoting the rule of law and human rights, including women’s rights, as well as political pluralism, freedom of expression and civil society interact with its broader foreign policy objectives on China? What is the scope and content of the bilateral human rights dialogue and how well is it working? How successful has the EU been in encouraging Chinese participation in international conventions and institutions in this area, such as the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights; and the UN Human Rights Council?

### **Mutual perceptions**

3. How is the EU – and its Member States - perceived by China: what are the values, interests, and ambitions held by China in terms of its European strategy? What priority does China place on its relations with Europe; and how is this level of priority shaped, not by what Europe does, but by the positions adopted by others?

### **Nature of the relationship**

4. What is the current nature of EU-China relations in the broader context of political, trade, economic, environmental, demographic-migratory and social-cultural terms? What should be the primary objectives of EU policy towards China; and notably how do Europe’s interests in closer interactions with China on trade, investment, and technology relate to its foreign and security strategy?

### **China’s foreign policy principles**

5. China treats its sovereignty as a fundamental determinant of its foreign and security policy, with the result that its general approach to political and civil rights, and its specific posture on questions such as Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang have significance in

international politics. How does the EU's position on these questions shape its relations with China?

### **Managing the EU-China relationship**

6. What does the EU have to offer China as a partner and how can it best influence, and learn from, Chinese thinking and policy? How successful has the EU's diplomacy towards China been in attaining its stated objectives, and how could it be improved? How does the degree of coherence of the EU's policy impact on the EU's ability to engage and negotiate with China? How effective are the channels of communication and diplomacy of the EU in China, including the European Commission delegation in Beijing, and *vice versa*?

### **The institutional framework**

7. What is the current state of the institutional framework for the conduct of EU-China relations? How well do the summits, dialogue mechanisms, technical agreements and programmes meet their aims? What progress is being made in the negotiations for a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and what is its potential to provide an effective framework for an increasingly complex relationship?

### **Coherence of the EU's policy**

8. What is the perspective of different EU Member States in relations with China; and how do these different perspectives shape the conduct of European foreign and security policy? To what extent have the Commission, the Council and the Member States been prepared to conduct a common strategy? How close is the European Union to designing a strategy that will ensure that China regards convergence or compliance with EU objectives as a significant priority?

### **Foreign and Security Policy**

9. What is the level and kind of cooperation being conducted at present between the EU and China on questions of foreign and security policy, including non-proliferation; counter-terrorism; and crisis management and peacekeeping? To what extent does the technical and scientific cooperation between Europe and China assist in China's modernisation in areas such as defence and space; and is the EU confident that it has adequate mechanisms in place for oversight and regulation of these interactions?
10. How successful has the EU been in persuading China to increase the transparency of its defence objectives and military expenditure? What is the state of play regarding exports of arms made in the EU to China? How effective is the newly adopted Council Common Position to replace the Code of Conduct on arms exports in limiting arms exports to China? Should the EU continue to pursue its stated ambition of lifting the arms embargo on China imposed in 1989? What is the EU's policy on cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan, and how successful has the EU been in encouraging peaceful dialogue and confidence-building between the two sides?
11. How does the foreign and defence policy of the United States impact on EU-China relations? To what extent and with what consequences will the EU-China relationship be determined by the course of the transatlantic relationship? What is divergent and

convergent about US and European approaches to China? How do the EU's other partners, notably Japan, India and Russia, view the development of EU-China relations?

12. To what extent should Europe regionalise and internationalise its China strategy? Europe and China increasingly meet in common neighbourhoods and in global forums, most obviously the UN. What is the role of regional multilateralism -for example, the ASEM process - and institutions of global governance in promoting the EU's objectives in the China relationship?

### **Environment, Climate Change and Energy**

13. What is the scope of the EU's environmental cooperation with China, and assisting China on policy mitigating and adapting to climate change? What is the EU doing to persuade China to commit to binding targets for reductions in its greenhouse gas emissions under the post-Kyoto UN framework on climate change? What is the EU's policy on cooperation with China on energy? How has China's growing demand for energy and raw materials shaped its foreign policy, and to what extent is there scope for greater cooperation between the two sides on security of supply?

### **Europe and China's strategy for Africa**

14. What is the Chinese view of promoting security and development in Africa; and how far does this approach correspond to that promoted by the EU? Can the EU, China and Africa cooperate to improve the effectiveness of regional development and security through the dialogue mechanism and UN forums?

## **GUIDANCE TO THOSE SUBMITTING WRITTEN EVIDENCE**

**Written evidence is invited in response to the questions above, to arrive by no later than 17 April 2009. If you require an extension of this deadline, please contact the Clerk of the Sub-Committee (see contact details below).**

This inquiry naturally deals with a very broad range of topics and it is preferable for individual submissions to deal with a limited number of these. Evidence should be kept as short as possible: submissions of not more than approx. ten sides of A4 paper of free-standing text, excluding any supporting annexes, are preferred. Submissions longer than this should contain a summary. Paragraphs should be numbered.

Evidence should be sent in hard copy and electronically to the addresses below.

Evidence should be attributed, dated and signed, and include a note stating the author's name and position. Please also state whether evidence is submitted on an individual or corporate basis. Please note that material which is submitted to the Sub-Committee having already been published or circulated elsewhere cannot be treated as evidence, but may be circulated to the Sub-Committee and referred to in the Report.

Evidence becomes the property of the Sub-Committee, and may be printed or circulated by the Sub-Committee at any stage. You may publicise or publish your evidence yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Sub-Committee.

Persons who submit written evidence, and others, may be invited to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster, and transcripts are published. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Submissions will be acknowledged. Any enquiries should be addressed to: Kathryn Colvin, Clerk to the Sub-Committee on EU foreign affairs, defence and development policy, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW; telephone: 020 7219 6099; fax: 020 7219 6715; e-mail: [colvink@parliament.uk](mailto:colvink@parliament.uk)

**This is a public call for evidence. You are encouraged to bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy directly.**