

China Business Weekly

8 October 2024



FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Webinar: Understanding the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and its Impact on Business Practices – 10 October 2024, 10 AM CEST



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce is organizing a webinar which focuses on “**Understanding the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and its Impact on Business Practices.**” This webinar will take place on **October 10 at 10h00 CEST.**

Part 1: Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)

The CSDDD is a significant regulatory initiative from the European Commission aimed at promoting sustainable and responsible business practices across the EU. It imposes obligations on companies to identify, prevent, and mitigate human rights violations and environmental impacts throughout their value chains. The directive is set to impact a wide range of industries, with an emphasis on corporate accountability and transparency.

Part 2: Key Requirements and Scope

Under the CSDDD, companies will be required to conduct due diligence on their suppliers, contractors, and business partners, ensuring that their operations align with European and international sustainability standards. The directive applies to large companies, demanding the implementation of comprehensive risk assessment and due diligence processes. Compliance will be closely monitored by competent authorities, with potential penalties for non-adherence.

Part 3: Implications for Businesses and Future Steps

Businesses need to prepare by integrating sustainability due diligence into their operations, fostering collaboration across the supply chain, and adopting a proactive approach to risk management. Our webinar will explore the practical steps for ensuring compliance, the role of key stakeholders, and the broader implications for corporate governance and sustainability strategies in the evolving regulatory landscape.

The program is as follows:

10:00 - 10:05: Introduction by Ms. **Gwenn Sonck**, Executive Director, **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce/EU-China Business Association**

10:05 - 10:45: Presentations by

Mr. **Tom Wallyn**, Director of Sustainability at **PwC**, and his colleague, Ms. **Caroline Schmidt**, Senior Manager Environment and Sustainability

10:45 - 11:00: Q&A Session

Practical information:

Date and time: 10 October 2024, 10h00 CEST

Location: Online

Price for Members: Free

Price for non-members: Free

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Webinar: European Business in China: Position Paper 2024/2025
17 October 2024 – 11 am CET



The **EU-China Business Association** and the **European Union Chamber of Commerce in China** are organizing a webinar focused on **European Business in China: Position Paper 2024/2025**. This webinar will take place on **17 October** at **11 am CET**.

The Position Paper 2024/2025 details the challenges faced by European companies operating in China and provides more than 1,000 constructive recommendations to the Chinese Government on how they can be resolved. In short, it provides a blueprint for rebuilding business confidence in the Chinese market and restoring it as the preferred destination for global investment.

While doing business in China has never been easy, companies previously viewed the complex challenges they encountered as the 'growing pains' of an emerging market. However, with the risks of doing business increasing and the rewards decreasing, many investors are now confronted with the reality that their approach to the China market may require a strategic rethink.

Programme:

11h00 – 11h05: Welcome remarks by Ms **Gwenn Sonck**, Executive Director, EU-China Business Association

11h05 – 11h40: Presentation on the "European Business in China: Position Paper 2024/2025" by Mr **Adam Dunnett**, Secretary General, European Union Chamber of Commerce in China

11h40 – 12h00: Q&A Session

Practical Information

Date: 17 October 2024

Time: 11h00-12h00 CET

Location: Online

Price: Free

The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce is in charge of the management of the EU-China Business Association, which is the association of bilateral business associations in the EU promoting the economic and trade relations between China and the EU.

[**SUBSCRIBE HERE**](#)

The 10th Europe Forum 2024: Transformative Leadership for Challenging Times: Cultivating China-EU Business Leaders – Tuesday, October 22, 2024 – Brussels & Shanghai



The EU-China Business Association (EUCBA), the China-Europe International Business School (CEIBS) and the China Chamber of Commerce in the EU (CCCEU) are organizing the **10th Europe Forum 2024** on the theme of **“Transformative Leadership for Challenging Times: Cultivating China-EU Business Leaders”** on Tuesday, **October 22, 2024** in **Brussels and Shanghai**.

Today's ties between China and the European Union trace their origins to almost half a century ago. During that time, China has opened to the world, its economy and enterprises making incredible progress; Europe has continued to lead the way in key industries. On both sides, business has been vital in driving development and social change.

To respond to the shared challenges of geopolitical competition, a move away from globalization, and the rapid advancement of disruptive technologies, the world needs responsible, visionary, and globally minded business leaders. It also requires robust communication and exchange between China and Europe, two vital players on the world stage. How can we cultivate responsible global leaders equipped to deal with the challenges of the day? What are the defining features of leadership that are needed for today's businesses? At the 10th Europe Forum 2024, held in both Brussels and Shanghai on October 22, speakers from the political, diplomatic, business, and academic communities of China and Europe will gather to answer these questions and more, exploring how to promote the development of China-EU leadership and seek new paths for future cooperation.

Practical information:

Date and time: 15:00-18:10, October 22 (Beijing time)

Language: English and Chinese (with simultaneous interpretation)

Venue: Shanghai: 699 Hongfeng Road, Pudong, Shanghai, P.R.C.

Brussels: Rue de la Loi 155 Résidence Palace, International Press Center, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

** The Forum Organizing Committee will review your registration and send out a formal confirmation letter once it has been approved.*

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Agenda



Host
Dominique Turpin
 President (European) and Professor of Marketing, CEIBS



09:00–09:30 Check-in & Networking



09:30–09:50 Welcome Addresses



Wang Hong
 President and Professor of Management, CEIBS



Gwenn Sonck
 Executive Director, EU-China Business Association

Opening Address



Zhu Jing
 Charge d'affaires, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union

09:50–10:10 Keynote Speech



Dita Charanzová
 Former Vice President, European Parliament

10:10–11:00 Panel Discussion 1: Innovative Leadership Amid Disruptive Business Transformations



Moderator



Ivan Hodac
 Founder & Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Aspen Institute Central Europe

Panelists



Dita Charanzová
 Former Vice President, European Parliament



Qin Shuo
 Founder, Yicai; Observer of Human-centric Finance



Kai Lücke
 Head of Global External Affairs, Senior Vice President, ZF Group



Jeff Walters
 Managing Director and Senior Partner, AP Leader of Technology & Digital Advantage Practice, BCG

11:00–11:50 Panel Discussion 2: Cross-Cultural Leadership in the Context of Corporate Globalisation



Moderator



Dominique Turpin
 President (European) and Professor of Marketing, CEIBS

Panelists



Eric Labaye
 President IDEL Partners; former Chairman and President of École Polytechnique & Institut Polytechnique de Paris; Senior Partner Emeritus of McKinsey & Company



Annie Xu-Huhmann
 Divisional CEO Rubber Reinforcement, Bekaert; CEIBS Alumna



Leon Wang
 Executive Vice President, Chair and President, International Region, China President, AstraZeneca; CEIBS Alumnus



Jean Lee
 Professor of Management, Michelin Chair Professor in Leadership and Human Resources Management, CEIBS

11:50–12:05 Closing Keynote Speech



Pascal Lamy
 Former DG of WTO; Distinguished Professor, CEIBS; Vice-President of the Paris Peace Forum; Coordinator of the Jacques Delors Think Tanks (Paris, Berlin, Brussels); Former Trade Commissioner (European Commission)

12:05–12:10 Gratitude Remarks



Xu Chen
 Chairman, China Chamber of Commerce to the EU

12:10–13:10 Cocktail Reception



* Speakers are subject to change

STUDY

Study: “Navigating through the new Chinese business Environment”



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), Silk Road Partners and Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT) have jointly published a report on **“Navigating through the New Chinese Business Environment”**.

China is the second-largest economy in the world and remains a market which should not be neglected. Many companies are in China due to its large market potential and local supply chain, but also increasingly for its growing innovation power. Slower Chinese economic growth, the slowdown of the global economy and the growing geopolitical tensions require companies to use a new China playbook.

This study provides insight into China's transformation and what this entails for our companies. It offers strategic recommendations not only for companies that have already invested in China but also for newcomers.

China's reaction to Covid-19 and the current geopolitical climate have raised questions about the risks and opportunities of doing business in and with China. This study aims to present a balanced perspective on how China has been transformed and what this means for companies cooperating with this economic superpower.

The study highlights the historical context of China's transformation, the current economic landscape, demographic shifts, and geopolitical influences. It presents China's business-focused answer to its domestic challenges, opportunities and strategic recommendations.

The study concludes that understanding and adapting to economic power shifts is of crucial importance. Embracing innovation, forming strategic partnerships, and remaining flexible are key to navigating the new Chinese business climate.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of this study, please send an e-mail to: info@flanders-china.be

This study is in the Dutch language.

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FOREIGN TRADE

EU votes to impose anti-subsidy tariffs on Chinese EV imports; faces strong Chinese opposition



EU leaders have given the green light to extra anti-subsidy tariffs on electric vehicle imports from China despite opposition from five countries, including Germany, where car manufacturers condemned the decision as a potential “fatal” blow for the auto industry. The European Commission – which provisionally approved the tariffs in June after an inquiry found that Beijing’s state aid to auto manufacturers was unfair – now has free rein to impose them for five years from the end of this month. The tariffs of up to 35.3% on top of existing duties of 10%, were supported by 10 member states, including France, Italy and Poland, several European diplomats told the AFP news agency. Only five nations, including Germany and Hungary, which has significant investments from China, voted against, while 12 abstained, including Spain and Sweden. **BMW and Volkswagen criticized the EU decision.** BMW said it was a “fatal signal” for the European car industry, while VW said it was the “wrong approach”.

China condemned the vote as protectionist and called on the EU to return to the track of negotiations to resolve trade disputes. “We strongly encourage the EU to delay the implementation of these tariffs, and prioritize resolving disputes and trade tensions through consultations and dialogue,” the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU said in a statement. Rejecting the tariffs would have required the objection of at least 15 EU nations representing 65% of the bloc’s population. The levies due to come into force on October 31 for a period of five years

range from 7.8% extra duties on Tesla cars manufactured in China to 35.3% for cars made by SAIC, including the British brand MG.

China’s Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said that China has always maintained the utmost sincerity in properly handling differences through dialogue and consultation. China and the EU have held more than 10 technical consultations at the bureau level and two vice ministerial consultations regarding the anti-subsidy case for EVs since the end of June. On September 19, Minister Wang Wentao held a comprehensive, in-depth and constructive meeting with European Commission Executive Vice President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis. Both sides clearly expressed their political will to resolve differences through consultations and agreed to initiate talks on price commitments to avoid escalation of the dispute. In the short 14 days that followed, the China-EU technical teams conducted six rounds of technical consultations. China repeatedly listened to the demands and opinions of both Chinese and European industries and demonstrated an open and cooperative attitude throughout the consultation process, showing maximum flexibility, the Ministry said.

By adhering to a market-driven approach and fostering full competition and continuous independent innovation, Chinese EVs have enhanced the quality supply of global green public goods, making significant contributions to the global response to climate change. The EU’s protectionist practices seriously violate WTO rules, disrupt the normal international trade order, hinder China-EU trade and investment cooperation, delay the EU’s green transition, and will also negatively impact global efforts to combat climate change, the Ministry said.

MOFCOM said that the China-EU technical teams would continue negotiations on October 7 until October 30, but if an agreement is not reached the new tariffs will be implemented on October 31. China hopes the EU will recognize that imposing tariffs will not solve any problems; rather, it will only undermine and hinder the confidence and determination of Chinese enterprises in investing and cooperating with the EU.

This overview is based on reports by The Guardian, Global Times, China Daily and South China Morning Post.

75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

On its 75th anniversary, the PRC looks back on its amazing development



From October 1 to 7, Chinese people enjoyed a week-long holiday and celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over these 75 years, the journey of Chinese modernization has profoundly transformed China and influenced the world, the Global Times reports.

The practices of Chinese modernization teaches us that development is the key to solving all problems. China's total economic output has risen from CNY53.9 trillion in 2012 to more than CNY126 trillion in 2023, with the overall scale of manufacturing remaining the largest in the world for 14 consecutive years. This reflects not only a leap in "quantity" but also an improvement in "quality." China is charting a path of higher quality, increased efficiency, and more equitable, sustainable, and safer development. The automotive industry is universally acknowledged as one of the most important indicators of a country's manufacturing strength. At its founding, China was unable to produce one single car. By 2023, China's automobile production and sales both exceeded 30 million units, making the country the world's largest automobile producer and consumer for 15 years running, and it has also become the largest automobile exporter globally. In the first eight months of 2024, the production and sales of new energy vehicles (NEVs) in China rose by 29% and 30.9% year-on-year, respectively.

Chinese modernization is the only correct path for building a strong country and achieving national rejuvenation. The starting point and ultimate aim of Chinese modernization is to empower over 1.4 billion Chinese people to achieve improved living standards. **The key to Chinese modernization is the modernization of science and technology.** China is now able to construct aircraft carriers, large LNG transport vessels and large cruise ships, achieving the "three jewels" of the shipbuilding industry. The Chang'e lunar exploration missions, the Tianhe core module of China's space station, the Tianwen Mars mission, the Crust 1 deep-earth exploration, the Fendouzhe manned submersible, establishing leadership in 5G communication, thinner steel, larger screens, better chips, and advanced CNC machine tools, these are all

vivid examples. Emerging sectors like integrated circuits and artificial intelligence (AI) are experiencing rapid growth, domestically developed large passenger jets have commenced commercial flights, and high-speed rail technology has established international standards, while commercial aerospace and the low-altitude economy are developing.

Dr Sun Yat-sen outlined the first blueprint for China's modernization in his "International Development of China" program, which mentioned the construction of 1.6 million kilometers of roads, about 160,000 kilometers of railways, and three world-class seaports. Today, roads are crisscrossing the country, high-speed trains are running, and China's railway operating mileage has exceeded 160,000 kilometers, with seven of the world's top 10 ports located in China. In December 2015, Guomang village in the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai province and two other locations with a total population of 39,800 people were the last in the country to receive access to electricity. The level of modernization in China has therefore greatly surpassed expectations.

From 1979 to 2023, China's economic growth averaged 8.9% annually, far exceeding the average global economic growth of 3% during the same period. China's average annual contribution to world economic growth was 24.8%, ranking first in the world, according to a report by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). In 1952, China's GDP was only USD30 billion. **In 1978, China's GDP increased to USD149.5 billion, accounting for 1.7% of the world economy.** Since the reform and opening up, China's economic aggregate has continued to expand. **In 2023, China's GDP reached USD17.8 trillion, accounting for 16.9% of the world's total and solidifying its position as the world's second-largest economy.** In 1985, the number of invention patent applications in China reached 8,558. This number had soared to 526,000 by 2011, making China the world leader in this area. As of the end of 2022, China's number of accepted applications for invention patents reached 1.619 million, firmly securing its position as the world leader.

In 1950, China's foreign trade of goods was only USD1.1 billion, accounting for 0.9% of the world's total. In 2013, China became the world's largest goods trading nation. **By 2023, China's total goods trade had reached USD5.9 trillion, accounting for 12.4% of the global share,** and has consistently ranked first in the world for seven consecutive years. The service trade has also undergone tremendous expansions. At the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China's service trade was almost zero. In 2023, the country's total service trade import and export volume reached USD933.1 billion, ranking fourth in the world.

China has proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI) to support the development and revitalization of countries in the Global South. By the end of 2023,

China's direct investment in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had exceeded USD300 billion. Chinese companies have built the first ultra-high voltage direct current transmission line in the Americas, the first electrified railway, the first digital mine, and numerous infrastructure and livelihood projects in Africa, making an indelible contribution to global infrastructure construction.

Seventy-five years ago, when this ancient nation in the East opened a new chapter in its history, the world was just beginning to recover from the devastation of two wars. From a struggling agricultural country, **China has evolved into the world's second-largest economy, the world's leading manufacturing power, the top trader of goods, and the holder of the largest foreign exchange reserves.** For 12 consecutive years, China's outbound direct investment (ODI) in foreign countries has ranked among the top three globally, holding over 10% of the global share for eight years. China's "new three items" – electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries, and solar cells – are facilitating the green and low-carbon transition all over the world, while its infrastructure projects span over 190 countries and regions.

Today, China engages in approximately CNY80 million worth of trade with the world every minute, invests approximately CNY112 million abroad every hour, and attracts about CNY3.377 billion in foreign investment daily. The development of China is intricately linked with global progress, achieving mutual success, and driving the world toward greater progress and prosperity. The Chinese

nation has made a significant leap, progressing from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong.

China is 'ahead of schedule' in achieving the UN 2030 sustainable development goals, while global progress remains limited, according to a report by the International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS). China's sprawling public transport network now serves 90% of the country's urban population. Major coastal and central Chinese cities offer "convenient" public transport access to nearly two times more of their populations than other global hubs, including New York. Only one in two urban residents globally has convenient access to public transport, according to UN statistics.

Lifting nearly 100 million rural poor out of absolute poverty has made a significant contribution to global poverty reduction; and contributing about 30% of global economic growth for many years has vigorously advanced the global development cause; continuously hosting the CIIE, CIFTIS, and CICPE has constantly offered new opportunities for the world with China's new development.

The 75-year journey through challenges has underscored the invaluable role China plays in global peace, development and progress. The modernization China has promoted, which embodies justice, openness, mutual benefit, people-first policies, diversity, inclusiveness, eco-friendliness, and peace and security, will only become more significant and valuable to the world as time progresses. While the journey ahead remains challenging, the future is promising, the Global Times concludes.

TRAVEL

Short trips become more popular during week-long holiday



Chinese consumers opted for more personalized and flexible travel options for the weeklong National Day holiday, with significant increases in bookings for short trips, independent travel, and private group vacations, industry players said. Both domestic long-haul trips and travel abroad are gaining popularity, and traditional cultural tours and autumn excursions have emerged as top choices, said Tuniu Corp, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency. Running from October 1 to 7, the National Day holiday is the last

long holiday of the year, and bookings for flights and hotels exceeded levels during the same period last year, Tuniu said. "Some people took an extra two-day leave on September 29 and 30 and thus combined it for a 10-day break in total," said Qi Chunguang, Vice President of Tuniu.

Some of the most popular domestic destinations included Huangguoshu waterfall in Guizhou province, the largest waterfall in Asia; Lushan mountain and Wuyuan in Jiangxi province; Huangshan mountain in Anhui province; as well as the Kanas scenic area in Xinjiang. Destinations abroad included Japan, Thailand, the Maldives, Indonesia, Turkiye, the France-Italy-Switzerland itinerary, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Singapore and Russia. "Emerging destinations such as the Serbia-Montenegro-Bosnia route, the Georgia-Armenia-Azerbaijan route, and the Czech Republic-Hungary-Austria route have also seen a peak in popularity during the National Day holiday, becoming hot choices for many seasoned travelers who are seeking unique experiences," Qi said. Driving their own car has emerged as one of the most popular modes of travel for Chinese consumers. An increasing number of travelers are also opting to take high-speed trains to their destinations, and then participate in local group tours or

rent cars.

In the summer vacation, bookings of car rentals and per capita spending on such rentals **jumped 40%** and 20%, respectively, on a yearly basis, said China's largest online travel agency Trip.com Group. Overseas car rentals were also up. Trip.com reported a 160% surge in overseas car rentals this summer. Tourists who prefer to drive their own car or hire one were mainly born in the 1980s and 1990s, and car rental bookings made by tourists born after 2000 expanded by 77% over last summer, outperforming all other age groups. Most young drivers came from Beijing; Shanghai; Chengdu in Sichuan province; and Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, said Trip.com. There are also more female drivers. From beaches with breathtaking views to vast grasslands, women have been traveling further afield. "Car rental bookings made by females have maintained growth for five consecutive years. This summer, women – especially those born in the 1990s – contributed 41% to the total booking volume of car rentals," said Shen Jiani,

Senior Researcher with Trip.com Group. "Some popular domestic routes included the ring roads of Hainan province, western Yunnan province, Xinjiang and Gansu," Shen said.

China's tourism market has entered a new stage of development in the past few years. The tourism market in smaller cities has shown huge growth potential, while travelers have increasingly diversified demands, said the China Tourism Academy in a report on the development of domestic tourism in 2023 and 2024. For instance, Inner Mongolia has attracted more travelers driving cars. This summer, the number of such travelers jumped 94% year-on-year, ranking at the top nationwide. The number of tourists who booked private and customized tours online surged 136%, said Trip.com. Among foreign visitors, one third came from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, and 20% of the total came from Singapore. Melbourne, Australia, also served as one of the region's top sources of foreign visitors, the China Daily reports.

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

Wuhan's JFS Laboratory claims breakthrough in silicon photonics

Wuhan-based JFS Laboratory has announced that it reached a milestone that could help China overcome restraints imposed by traditional chip-design technology. The lab achieved a breakthrough in silicon photonics, as it was able to light up a laser light source integrated with a silicon-based chip, the first time this was successfully done in China.

The achievement means that China has filled "one of the few blanks" in its optoelectronics technology, the People's Daily reported. Silicon photonics rely on optical signals instead of electric signals for transmission. It aims to address the restraints imposed by current technology, as the transmission of electric signals between chips is approaching its physical limit, the lab said.

Established in 2021 with CNY8.2 billion in government funding, JFS is one of China's key institutions tasked with pursuing technological breakthroughs. Major players in the global semiconductor industry have devoted resources into advancing silicon photonics, which is believed to hold the future to making better chips for data and graphics processing, as well as artificial intelligence (AI). Still, businesses have faced challenges in translating scientific breakthroughs into commercial products, the South China Morning Post reports.

China-Europe railway brings opportunities to Duisburg

In the thirteen years since the China-Europe Railway Express (CRE) began operations in Duisburg, the German city's profile as a key hub on the railway has been steadily rising. During a recent visit by Xinhua reporters, bustling terminals, ports, and warehouses in Duisburg highlighted the city's growing vitality. One of Duisburg's central logistics centers, AUKLogis, a German subsidiary of the Chinese logistics company Western Post, provides storage and customs clearance services for clients using CRE services. The company has witnessed a shift in local traders' perceptions of the service, from initial skepticism to recognition, resulting in long-term partnerships. "Our clients often highlight the railway's speed and reliability, which are unmatched by other freight transport methods," said Fan Yuliang, Warehouse Manager of AUKLogis. As the routes expand and improve, trust in the service has continued to grow. Daniele Materazzo, an operator in the outbound group for China-Europe Railway Express at AUKLogis, told Xinhua that he now receives better pay and feels a sense of stability working with the company. "Despite our language and cultural differences, we support each other as a team. I feel completely at home here," he said.

Markus Bangen, CEO of Duisburger Hafen (Duisport), noted that the railway is strengthening ties between Europe and China, opening up a new international

transport market that benefits both economies. Duisburg's profile is steadily growing as a key stop on the railway, attracting investment, creating job opportunities, and driving growth in the logistics sector, he added. In August, a direct route from Chongqing to Duisburg, traversing the Caspian Sea, was put into operation. The route provides a new option for transportation along the so-called Middle Corridor, a trade link between China and Europe that passes through several central Asian and southern Caucasian countries. Bangen said that since the participants facilitating the Middle Corridor are familiar with CRE operations, the experience gained over the past decade will significantly accelerate the corridor's development.

While enabling faster and more cost-effective delivery of goods from China to Europe, CRE has also opened new trade routes for European manufacturers and traders aiming to enter the Chinese market, Chinese Consul General in Dusseldorf Du Chunguo told Xinhua. "This exchange has significantly improved consumer welfare and created jobs along the route," the Global Times reports.

Hi-Dolphin Robot Technology launches automated coffee kiosks in Shanghai

Shanghai Hi-Dolphin Robot Technology aims to reduce the costs of operating coffee shops to revive the industry, says Founder Philip Han. He believes his robots can revolutionize the coffee business. Founded in 2018 in Shanghai – the city with the most cafés in the world, according to the local government – Shanghai Hi-Dolphin Robot Technology's mission is to reduce the cost of brewing a good cup of Java and bring down its price: a win-win situation for both business owners and customers. The company's solution is Cofe+, a self-contained booth with all the equipment and ingredients needed to make coffee – Americano or cappuccino, hot or iced. At the center of the booth is a four-axis robot arm that fills empty cups, covers them with lids, and hands them over to customers. Complete with grinders and ice makers, the kiosk can prepare a drink in roughly 50 seconds, without a single human barista involved. When fully loaded, each booth can supply around 300 beverages, the firm said.

In some ways, robots are better baristas than humans, according to Han. "Humans can be forgetful, emotional and careless and sometimes they pick or blow their noses," he said. The Cofe+ machines, on the other hand, are protected by glass and equipped with patented anti-insect and antibacterial technology. Pipelines are automatically cleaned and disinfected, and milk is kept at a constant temperature to keep it fresh for 72 hours. But the biggest advantage of robotic kiosks lies in cost savings, according to Hi-Dolphin. Compared to running a regular café, operating a fully automated booth costs around 90% less, the company said. It takes no more than 30 minutes to refill a kiosk and get it ready for the next cycle, so a maintenance person can take care of up to 10 kiosks a day, according to the company's website. Each machine sells for between USD50,000 and USD60,000 overseas, and lasts for about 10 years, Han said. The automated kiosks are also expected to sell well abroad. "It's much easier to promote the booths overseas, because the labor

costs are higher in developed economies," he said.

Hi-Dolphin hopes that its technology can also help China's coffee shops survive a downturn in the domestic economy. Some 44,000 cafés have closed in the country in the first 10 months of last year, leaving fewer than 192,000 cafés still operating as of late October 2023, according to Chinese food and catering industry intelligence firm Canyin88, as reported by the South China Morning Post.

China files complaint at WTO over Canada's unilateralism and trade protectionism

China has filed a complaint at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over Canada's unilateralism and trade protectionism, according to the Chinese Commerce Ministry (MOFCOM). It has also initiated an anti-discrimination probe into Canada's restrictive measures targeting certain imports from China after the Canadian government announced Chinese-made steel and aluminum will be subject to a 25% tariff, along with a 100% tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs), effective immediately. Commenting on the announcement made by the Canadian side, a MOFCOM spokesperson said that Canada's measures violate the principles of market economy and fair competition, severely damaging normal economic and trade cooperation between Chinese and Canadian enterprises, significantly impacting bilateral economic and trade relations, and disrupting and distorting global industrial and supply chains. China firmly opposes these actions by the Canadian side, according to the spokesperson, who urged Canada to view bilateral economic and trade cooperation rationally and objectively, respect the facts, adhere to WTO rules, and not stray further down the wrong path. China will take all necessary steps to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises, the spokesperson added. Canada's action is a blind follow-up to the U.S. approach without carefully assessing its own market conditions, he concluded.

Zhou Mi, Senior Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times that despite considerable opposition, Canada insists on implementing its protectionist measures, which will directly impact its industrial development and green transition. "Furthermore, it will affect Canada's role in the multilateral economic and trade system and increase trade friction and economic costs. The related industrial chains will also face further restrictions, which will weaken Canada's access to currently leading global green development technologies," Zhou further noted. According to Xinhua News Agency, it is the first such investigation initiated by China and also the first of its kind in the world, the Global Times reports.

China's resilient supply chains will drive global industrial development

China's intensified efforts to build resilient industrial and supply chains and expand international collaboration will further drive global industrial

development and unlock a wealth of opportunities for companies worldwide, experts and company executives said. The comments were made in response to the Communist Party Central Committee's resolution to move faster to build industrial and supply chains that are self-supporting and risk-controllable. "China is both a participant and beneficiary of global industrial and supply chains, as well as a firm defender and builder of these chains," Zhang Qingwei, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) said. He added that the country will integrate more deeply with the global industrial and supply chain and firmly oppose protectionism and any form of decoupling.

Zhang Yansheng, Researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macro-economic Research, said that China has shown momentum in emerging sectors like new energy in recent years despite headwinds such as decoupling moves initiated by the United States and its relocation strategies. "The U.S. is leveraging new protectionism, industrial policies and government intervention to undermine the solid foundation of China's industrial and supply chains. This retrogressive approach is not only unfair to Chinese companies and global consumers, but also a step backward in the global transition toward sustainability. "What is to the benefit of all is that China will further deepen market-oriented reforms, expand high-standard opening-up, improve the legal system, and enhance the institutional framework for fair competition, green development and the advancement of clean energy domestically." Zhang added that if there were no negative spillovers of geopolitical tensions and protectionism, the supply and demand of new energy vehicles, photovoltaics and lithium batteries – areas in which the U.S. unfairly accuses China of overcapacity – would achieve a dynamic balance at the global level.

Recalling that the U.S. and China have both benefited tremendously from more bilateral trade, Neil Bush, Chairman of the George H.W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations, said that countries that rely solely on local manufacturing face significant challenges. "Manufacturing is no longer confined to national borders. Countries that embrace innovation while working together can unlock new potential and drive economic growth by sharing research and best practices in technical progress," he said.

As Chinese companies continue to weave themselves into the fabric of global industrial and supply chains, Wang Yang, President of SinoEV (Hefei) Powertrain Technologies, a developer of electric vehicle power systems, said it is challenging for some countries to be independent of China's new energy industry supply chain in the short term. "Developing a robust supply chain requires a long time and certain favorable conditions, such as a comprehensive policy and a large market scale," Wang said. "China's new energy industry supply chain is competitive on the global stage, thanks to its complete industry chain covering research and development, engineering design, manufacturing management and final assembly integration. It will bring benefits to companies around the world."

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), China is the only country in the world that has all industrial categories listed in the United Nations Industrial Classification, covering almost all traditional and emerging manufacturing sectors, the China Daily reports.

Favorable policies boost interest in real estate

Fueled by favorable policies, China's residential real estate market witnessed an uptick in inquiries and viewings over the first three days of the National Day holiday. Experts have predicted a country-wide market revival marked by increased transactions, with first-tier cities leading the trend. They said recent policy adjustments that eased restrictions on leveraging, along with previous measures such as ensuring the delivery of pre-sale properties and the CNY300 billion loan to state-owned enterprises for affordable housing projects, are crucial for stabilizing the market. However, further support from the central bank may still be required to sustain the momentum. "Our phones rang non-stop the day new policies were announced, as they captured the attention of numerous potential homebuyers," said Wu Libin, Sales Manager at 5i5j in Beijing, adding that inquiries are still coming in. Another sales manager in Beijing E-Town told Beijing News that transactions worth CNY125 million had been completed and more than 100 families had visited the development area since Beijing announced its policies on September 30.

There was a rush of inquiries elsewhere too. In Guangzhou, Guangdong province, a housing sales center in Liwan district extended its office hours and stayed open throughout the night following Guangzhou's policy announcement on September 29. By noon the next day, the number of visitors to the sales center had surged by 200% compared to usual levels. A staff member said that while some buyers jumped at the chance to buy following the policy announcement, others had opted for a wait-and-see approach. Shenzhen in Guangdong province and Shanghai also reported a rise in the number of visitors to various sales offices. Latest data from the research center of realty agency Leyoujia revealed a nearly 40% surge in pre-owned home transactions at Leyoujia sales centers on September 30 compared to the previous day – the highest since February 2021. New home transactions also hit a two-year high. Multiple sales offices in Shanghai were fully booked for house viewings last week.

Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen all made significant policy changes. Shanghai streamlined its purchase restrictions, notably reducing the threshold and initial payment costs. Among first-tier cities, Guangzhou was the first to completely remove home purchase restrictions. Beijing announced measures such as further reducing interest rates on existing housing loans and lowering the minimum down payment for personal housing loans. China's real estate market is anticipated to witness a wave of transactions in the fourth quarter, the China Daily reports.

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