

China Business Weekly

14 January 2025

法蘭德斯
中國商會

FCCC
VCKK

FLANDERS-CHINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VLAAMS-CHINESE KAMER VAN KOOPHANDEL

FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Chinese New Year Reception & 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Flanders China Chamber of Commerce – Monday, 10 February 2025, 18h00 – Brussels

法蘭德斯 中國商會 | FCCC VCKK

FLANDERS-CHINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VLAAMS-CHINESE KAMER VAN KOOPHANDEL

The Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce are delighted to invite you to its
法蘭德斯-中國商會主席和董事會誠邀您參加

Chinese New Year Reception and 20th Anniversary
新春招待會暨 20 周年庆典

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
演講嘉賓

MR MATTHIAS DIEPENDAELE
Minister-President of the Government of Flanders,
Flemish Minister for Economy, Innovation and Industry,
Foreign Affairs, Digitalisation and Facility Management
法蘭德斯大區政府首席大臣，法蘭德斯經濟、創新和工業、
外交、數字化和設施管理部長

HIS EXCELLENCY MR FEI SHENGCHAO
Ambassador of the People's Republic
of China in Belgium
中華人民共和國駐比利時大使
費勝潮

10 FEBRUARY 2025 – 18h00
2025年2月10日 18 時
Flemish Parliament
法蘭德斯大區議會
Leuvenseweg 86, 1000 Brussels 布魯塞爾

We look forward to seeing you
at our Chinese New Year Reception
我們期待與您在我們的中國春節晚會相見！

Gwenn Sonck
Executive Director
法蘭德斯-中國商會執行總裁
宋惠安

Philippe Latour
Chairman
法蘭德斯-中國商會主席
菲利普·龍鋒

FOUNDING MEMBERS
and Members of the Board of Directors
of the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce
法蘭德斯-中國商會創辦成員和董事會成員

AGEAS
Mr PHILIPPE LATOUR
Senior Advisor to Group CFO

AHLERS
Mr CARL PEETERS
Group Chief Financial Officer

BEKAERT
Mr PHILIP EYSKENS
Chief Legal & Compliance Officer

DEME
Mr DIRK POPPE
Area Director Asia-Pacific

ECO3
Mr ARNOUD POITEL
Global Head of Business Development, Purchasing & ESG

KBC BANK
Mr JAN BARBE
General Manager Senior Banking & Family Capital Solutions

PICANOL
Mr JOHAN VERSTRAETE
Vice President Weaving Machines

UMICORE
Ms NATHALIE BORTELS
UMS Global Operations Director

FCCC FOUNDING MEMBERS 創辦成員



FCCC STRUCTURAL PARTNERS 重要合作夥伴



IN COOPERATION WITH



SPONSORS



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce has the pleasure to invite you to **celebrate the Year of the Snake and the FCCC 20th anniversary** on **Monday 10 February at 18h00** at the **Flemish Parliament, Leuvenseweg 86, 1000 Brussels**.

Distinguished Guests: **Mr Matthias Diependaele**, Minister-President of the Government of Flanders, Flemish Minister for Economy, Innovation and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Digitalisation and Facility Management and **His Excellency Mr Fei Shengchao**, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Belgium.

Practical information:

Date and time: February 10, 2025, 18h00 - 21h00

Location: Flemish Parliament, Leuvenseweg 86, 1000 Brussels

Price for Members: 55 € (excl. 21% VAT)

Price for Non-members: 85 € (excl. 21% VAT)

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)

Sponsorship Opportunity for the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce Chinese New Year Reception & 20th Anniversary Celebration

On **10 February 2025**, the **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)** will celebrate the **Chinese New Year** and the **20th anniversary** of our Chamber. We are pleased to invite your company to participate in this prestigious event as a sponsor.

This event offers a unique opportunity to increase visibility for Flemish companies doing business with China, as well as for Chinese companies based in Belgium. We would like to invite your company to become a sponsor and take advantage of this high-profile occasion to enhance your exposure.

When ? 10 FEBRUARY 2025 – 18h00

Where ? Brussels

Who will attend? Chinese, Belgian business leaders, officials, PRESS +/- 250 Participants

Invitations are distributed via email and the FCCC website and newsletters

Should you be interested in becoming a sponsor, kindly contact us by email at gwenn.sonck@flanders-china.be

Exclusive Luncheon with the new Chinese Ambassador of the People's Republic of China and Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU, His Excellency Mr. Cai Run **20 January 2025, 12h00 CET – Brussels**



 EU-China Business Association
欧盟中国贸易协会

**Exclusive Luncheon with
the new Chinese Ambassador
of the People's Republic of China
and Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU,
His Excellency Mr Cai Run**



 **WHEN**
20 JANUARY 2025
12H00 CET

 **WHERE**
DE WARANDE
ZINNERSTRAAT 1,
1000 BRUSSELS

The **EU-China Business Association** is organizing an **exclusive luncheon with the new Ambassador of the People's Republic of China and Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU, His Excellency Mr Cai Run**. The Chinese Ambassador will deliver an address on EU-China trade and investment relations. This exclusive event is a unique opportunity to meet the Chinese Ambassador to the EU and raise subjects you would like to discuss. This luncheon will take place on **20 January**, at **12h00 CET** at 'De Warande', Zinnerstraat 1, 1000 Brussels.

There are limited spaces for this luncheon. If you are interested in participating, please register **before 15 January**. The luncheon is certain to be well attended, so we strongly recommend you book now to guarantee your place.

The programme is as follows:

12h00 – 12h30: Registration & Networking Cocktail

12h30 – 12h35: Introduction by Mr **Jochum Haakma**, Chairman, EU-China Business Association

12h35 – 12h50: Speech on EU-China trade and investment relations by H.E Mr **Cai Run**, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China and Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU

12h50 – 13h00: Q&A Session

14h00: End of luncheon

Practical information:

Date: 20 January, 2025

Time: 12h00 - 14h00

Location: 'De Warande', Zinnerstraat 1, 1000 Brussels

Price: €185 excl. 21% VAT (€47.25)

Deadline for subscription: 15 January 2025

About EUCBA:

The EU-China Business Association is the EU-wide federation of business organisations in the EU promoting business relations with China. The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) is in charge of the management and vice-presidency of the EUCBA. EUCBA is offering platinum and silver partnerships for European and Chinese companies. If you are interested to raise your profile and sponsor this luncheon, please send an email to: info@eucba.org

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)

**Exclusive innovation trip China led by Provincial Governor Carl Decaluwé
25-31 May 2025 – Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Shanghai**



The **Province of West-Flanders** and the **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)** are organizing an inspiring **innovation trip from 25 to 31 May 2025 to Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Shanghai**. Those dynamic cities are symbols of the unequaled technological growth of China and provide unique insights into the future of industry and innovation.

The world is evolving at an unprecedented pace and China is at the forefront of technological innovation. The Province of West-Flanders and the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce are proud to offer the possibility to companies of West-Flanders to experience this progress at close hand.

Led by Provincial Governor Carl Decaluwé and with the support of Professor Dr. Rudy Aernoudt, we have made a program combining company visits, networking moments and official activities. This provides a unique opportunity to establish contacts with prominent technology companies and experts, and to participate in the 25th anniversary celebration of the bilateral cooperation between West-Flanders and Zhejiang.

PARTICIPANTS

The program is multi-sectoral, and the number of participants is limited to 25. Therefore, we recommend that you subscribe early.

PROGRAM:

- **25/05:** Departure from Brussels to Shenzhen
- **26/05:** Shenzhen: breakfast seminar and company visits
- **27/05:** Shenzhen and Hangzhou: Company visits and transfer to Hangzhou
- **28/05:** Hangzhou: Innovation seminar, company visits and gala
- **29/05:** Hangzhou and Shanghai: Company visits and transfer to Shanghai
- **30/05:** Shanghai: Closing seminar, company visits and reception at the Consulate-General of Belgium
- **31/05:** Departure from Shanghai to Brussels or participation in the optional program to visit the World Expo in Japan.

Detailed info: <https://wetu.com/ltinerary/Landing/cbd1dee5-407b-4a9b-9394-24dbde409589>.

PRICES

Basic price: €5,575

Single supplement: €650

Business supplement: €3,325

SUBSIDIES TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Travel and accommodation are to be paid by your company. FIT may provide financial support under certain conditions. For more information: <https://export.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/nl/subsidies>.

FURTHER QUESTIONS?

China Office of the Province of West-Flanders

W: <https://www.west-vlaanderen.be/internationale-samenwerking-china>

E: chinaoffice@west-vlaanderen.be

FCCC

W: <https://www.flanders-china.be/en>

E: gwen.sonck@flanders-china.be

ALK BUSINESS TRAVEL

W: <https://alk.be/business-travel/> T: +32 11 31 36 20 E: info@alk.be

We hope you will take this unique opportunity to explore innovative developments in China with us. We believe this trip will provide valuable insights and look forward to your participation.

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY FCCC

World Cargo Summit 2025 – January 27-29, 2025 – Ostend-Bruges



Invitation for the World Cargo Summit 2025 – Free Access

Ostend-Bruges Airport is pleased to offer an exclusive invitation to take part in the **World Cargo Summit 2025**, taking place from **January 27-29, 2025**, at the prestigious **Kursaal Casino** in **Ostend-Bruges, Flanders, Belgium**.

As the hosting partner of this premier event, Ostend-Bruges Airport is pleased to offer **free access** for up to two delegates to the summit, where global leaders will gather to explore industry trends, challenges, and opportunities. (= saving of €1100 per person).

Event highlights

The summit offers a comprehensive agenda packed with valuable insights into the air logistics industry, including the global freight outlook, future trends, and developments at regional cargo airports. Attendees will also benefit from distinguished speakers sharing their expertise.

In addition to these informative sessions, the summit provides exceptional networking opportunities. Connect with industry leaders, innovators, and decision-makers during our exclusive networking event, including a special gathering in the historic center of Bruges.

Why attend?

This summit provides unparalleled opportunities to exchange knowledge, collaborate, and stay ahead in the dynamic world of air cargo. It is a must-attend event for airline executives, freight forwarders, logistics providers, and policymakers shaping the industry's future.

Claim your complimentary access

To secure your complimentary access, please email our **Cargo Sales Director, Rose Qiu**, at rose.qiu@ostendairport.aero

We look forward to welcoming you to this extraordinary event and collaborating to shape the future of air cargo logistics.

Visit the Cargo Summit Website via: www.worldcargosummit.com

Follow the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce on
[LinkedIn](#) – [Facebook](#) – [X](#) – [Instagram](#)

HEALTH

Shanghai now welcomes foreign-owned hospitals to be set up



Shanghai is encouraging the set-up of wholly foreign-owned hospitals in a trial program to promote the opening-up of the healthcare industry as part of broader efforts to further open its services sector. The action plan allows overseas hospitals to operate in Shanghai, and maps out a detailed policy guiding the number of pilot projects in the city, eligible investors and operational requirements. Foreign-invested hospitals are permitted to set up in the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, the Lingang Special Area, the Hongqiao International Business District and the Oriental Hub International Business Cooperation Zone, and other selected places. The move will enrich Shanghai's medical service offerings and meet the diverse health service needs of Shanghai-based residents.

Raffles Medical Group, a leading private integrated healthcare provider in Asia, **currently operates three hospitals in Shanghai, Beijing and Chongqing city.** "The new policy is encouraging, and we continue looking for more high-quality projects in China," Kenneth Chung, General Manager of Raffles Hospital Shanghai, told the Global Times.

In September 2024, China allowed the setting up wholly-owned foreign hospitals in nine cities across the country, including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. In November, the government released detailed guidelines outlining specific conditions and management measures. Since then, the push for healthcare opening-up has gained pace. On December 16, Singapore-based Perennial Holdings obtained a Medical Institution Practice License in Tianjin, and is on track to open its first wholly-owned general hospital in 2025. "We highly commend China's open-door foreign investment policy on healthcare. This boosts confidence for investors keen on China's healthcare space and drives foreign investment and foreign-local collaboration, given the growth prospects of China," the company told the Global Times, adding it is undertaking similar healthcare projects in Kunming, Xian and Guangzhou. Another foreign healthcare provider, Luye Medical Group, is also planning to build an international medical center and a foreign-funded specialty hospital in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

IHH Healthcare, Asia's largest private healthcare group, entered the Chinese market about 20 years ago, and it **now cooperates with Parkway Shanghai Hospital**, a multi-specialty tertiary facility in Shanghai. "Over the past two decades, we have witnessed the remarkable vitality and potential of the Chinese market, with Parkway Shanghai making several significant investments locally," said Prem Kumar Nair, CEO of IHH Healthcare. The company is making a major investment by establishing a new 8,000-square-meter ambulatory care center in downtown Shanghai that will provide comprehensive outpatient and day surgery services when it opens in 2025.

"Given China's large population and an ever-growing middle class, the demand for private healthcare services is rising," Wang Bo, Research Fellow at the Research Center of National Drug Policy and Ecosystem, said. Wang noted that setting up a high-standard medical care system is a complex process. It requires significant infrastructure development and the recruitment of very skilled medics, while coordination with local hospitals is also important.

The China Daily adds that **foreign investors are not permitted to establish hospitals dedicated to** psychiatric diseases, infectious diseases, hematology, traditional Chinese medicine, integrated TCM and Western medicine, or those specializing in ethnic minorities' medical practices. Wholly foreign-invested hospitals are also prohibited from engaging in high-risk medical and ethical activities, including organ transplantation, assisted reproductive technologies, prenatal screening and diagnosis, inpatient psychiatric treatment and experimental treatments using tumor cell therapy.

The hospitals are to be located in key economic zones, biopharmaceutical industry clusters and downtown districts with a high concentration of expatriate residents. Each of these areas will allow a maximum of two foreign-owned hospitals. The Shanghai document specifies that foreign investors must implement advanced hospital management concepts, models and service standards. They are also required to provide cutting-edge medical technologies and equipment at an international level, complement or enhance local healthcare service capabilities and expand the diversity of healthcare offerings. These hospitals are permitted to hire physicians and healthcare professionals from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, but at least half of the hospital's management and healthcare professionals must come from the Chinese mainland.

John K. Hsiang, Chairman of the Jiahui Health Executive Committee, said: "We hope that the government can allow short-term work permits for nurses and technicians from overseas. Additionally, the review process for expat doctors to receive professional title recognition could be streamlined." Jiahui Health operates the Hong Kong-owned Jiahui International Hospital in Shanghai, which was opened in 2017. It also runs outpatient clinics in Shanghai and other cities.

EXHIBITIONS

Chinese tech companies make up 30% of exhibitors at the 2025 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas



Chinese technology companies are in the spotlight at the 2025 Consumer Electronics Show (CES), the world's premier tech show, in Las Vegas in the United States, as they showcase their latest technological achievements and innovative products, including semiconductors, smart homes, wearable devices and robots. Nearly 1,500 Chinese enterprises are participating in the event, accounting for more than 30% of the total registered exhibitors. Experts said that the presence of Chinese companies at CES demonstrates that they are not only playing an increasingly vital role in spearheading the revolution in the global consumer electronics industry, but are also striving to expand their presence in overseas markets despite the U.S. crackdown and sanctions on China's high-tech sector.

Artificial intelligence-powered terminal devices have attracted attention during this year's event. Chinese display panel manufacturer **BOE Technology Group** launched an array of new technologies and products, including a 31.6-inch slidable organic light-emitting diode (LED) display, a vehicle-mounted foldable and curved screen, and an AI-powered smart cockpit. Liu Zhiqiang, Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of BOE, said the application of AI technology in display products will make the devices more intelligent and suitable to more usage scenarios, adding that the company will continue to invest in AI.

Chinese consumer electronics maker **TCL Technology Group** showcased a diverse range of innovative gadgets, such as QD-Mini LED TVs, mobile phones, tablets, smart projectors and augmented reality glasses, as well as AI-enabled companion robots. "The true value of AI lies in its application," said Li Dongsheng, Founder and Chairman of TCL, emphasizing that the company will focus on building core AI capacities, making technological breakthroughs and expanding its global footprint. He estimated that the company's revenue in North America will see 30% year-on-year growth in 2025. A China-made "Land Aircraft Carrier" has attracted lots of attention. The vehicle, from Chinese electric vehicle maker Xpeng Motors' flying car unit **Xpeng**

Aeroht, made its international debut at CES 2025. With over 3,000 orders secured, the flying car is positioned to become the world's first mass-produced vehicle of its kind, with deliveries slated for 2026.

Zhu Keli, Founding Director of the China Institute of New Economy, said the strong participation of Chinese enterprises at CES 2025 is a testament to China's increasing technological prowess and competitiveness on the global stage. "As the world's biggest consumer electronics show, CES provides a valuable platform for Chinese enterprises to showcase their latest breakthroughs in world-leading technologies and make forays into the international market," Zhu said. Zhu added that through participation in the exhibition, these companies can learn about the latest industry trends and market demand, enhance brand awareness and influence, better integrate into global industrial and supply chains, and take part in global governance in the tech domain.

Chinese home appliance manufacturer **Hisense** unveiled a 116-inch Mini LED TV equipped with its self-developed AI image chips, which will start mass production in March. Augmented reality goggles and robots have gained a strong foothold during the show. Chinese AR company **Xreal** displayed its latest AR-powered glasses with enhanced entertainment and gaming AR capabilities, while **Dreame Technology** presented its robotic vacuum cleaners and window-cleaning robots. Robotics technology company **Segway-Ninebot** showcased more than 20 products, including smart robotic mowers, electric scooters and e-bikes. The company said it hopes to gain insights from global users and expand its presence in the global market via CES.

Chinese companies are diversifying their overseas strategies, with product portfolios expanding from traditional PCs, smartphones and tablets to emerging AI-powered intelligent terminal devices, such as AR glasses, robot vacuum cleaners and smart home equipment, which will become a new growth driver for the consumer electronics industry, said Wang Jiping, Vice President of market research company IDC China. Wang noted that domestic enterprises are constantly upgrading their products and technologies in an attempt to satisfy the increasingly diversified needs of global consumers and gain a bigger slice of the midrange to high-end overseas market. Hong Yong, Associate Researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said Chinese companies are at the global forefront of technological innovation, and have made remarkable progress in tech frontiers, such as AI, AR and robotics. The move will be conducive to driving the transformation from "Made in China" to "Created in China", he added, as reported by the China Daily.

SURVEYS

Nearly 80% of foreign respondents to Global Times survey confident in China's development prospects



As changes unseen in a century accelerate across the world, China's impact is becoming increasingly comprehensive, profound, and long-lasting. The global attention on China has never been as wide, deep, and focused as it is today. How does the world view the changes in China? What are the global perspectives on China's development? How does the rest of the world perceive China's image? To find the answers to these questions, **the Global Times launched a survey with 51,332 respondents in 46 countries.** This is a global public survey with the largest scale, the largest sample size, and the most comprehensive and in-depth questionnaire since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The survey reveals that China's comprehensive national strength and its components are generally evaluated as "strong/high" by international respondents. The country's economic strength has the highest favorable rating at 77%, followed by sci-tech strength (75%), and financial strength (72%). The survey also shows that younger respondents have a higher evaluation of China's sci-tech strength. More than 70% of respondents from African countries, BRICS countries, the Middle East, and developing countries believe that China's overall national strength is high; this proportion is more than 60% in ASEAN and European countries, and more than half in developed countries. In the ranking of the international status of major countries, 20%, 27%, and 17% of foreign respondents rate China first, second, and third, respectively. Based on a comprehensive calculation method, China ranks second. The U.S. is ranked first at 47%. Russia, Japan, and the UK have similar scores. A relatively large percentage of respondents place Russia in third place and the UK and Japan in fourth place.

The survey also finds that a majority of international respondents have a positive outlook on the prospects of China's economic growth and development potential. **Nearly 80% of foreign respondents show confidence in China's development.** More than 90% of foreign respondents believe that China's economy will continue to grow in the next decade, and nearly 60% believe that China is a major driving force of world economic growth. More than three-quarters of respondents from developing countries, the Middle East, and BRICS countries expect faster growth of the Chinese economy. In African countries, this proportion reaches 85%. Meanwhile, in Europe and ASEAN regions, it exceeds 70% and in developed countries, it surpasses 60%.

Some 60% of international respondents agree that China's continuously deepening reform and opening-up are "in the

right direction." About two-thirds of respondents believe that **the future of the Chinese economy** is bright and has great potential while about 20% expressed a neutral stance. **African countries hold the highest favorable view** (81%), while the proportion of Middle Eastern, BRICS, and developing countries exceeds 70%. More than 60% of respondents from European and ASEAN countries believe that the Chinese economy is bright and has great potential while more than 50% of developed countries hold the same view.

The survey also shows that more than 90% of foreign respondents have an interest in China and 40% have a high level of interest in China, including 14% who are "extremely interested" and 26% who are "very interested." **Respondents in developing countries (95%) show a higher interest in China than those in developed countries (86%).** In terms of subjective sentiment toward China, 63% of foreign respondents express a favorable opinion of China, while 20% hold a neutral attitude. In terms of different country groups, African countries hold the highest favorable view of China, reaching 84%. This figure is more than 70% in Latin American, BRICS, and developing countries, with nearly 70% in ASEAN countries and more than 60% in Middle East countries. Nearly half of respondents in European countries have a favorable opinion of China, and about 30% hold a neutral attitude.

As for the overall evaluation of China and the Chinese people, nearly 60% of foreign respondents have a "good" impression and over 30% hold a neutral attitude. 74% and 72% of respondents have a good impression of Chinese science and technology and China's economic development respectively. More than 60% of respondents have a good impression of Chinese culture. 55% of foreign respondents have an overall positive impression of the Chinese people, while 36% hold a neutral attitude. More than 70% of foreign respondents have a good impression of the hardworking and innovative spirit of the Chinese people.

The survey also lists more than 10 representative things about China and asks international respondents whether they like them or not. Among them, the popularity of the Great Wall (67%), high-speed rail (65%), pandas (63%), and smart phones (61%) all exceed 60%. More than 50% of foreign respondents choose visa-free transit (57%), electric vehicles (55%), and online shopping (55%). Chinese cuisine (48%) and TikTok (48%) are preferred by nearly half of respondents. Data comparisons show that respondents in developed countries show a relatively higher preference for traditional Chinese symbols like the Great Wall, pandas and Chinese cuisine, while respondents in Middle Eastern, BRICS, and African countries express a higher preference for high-speed rail, smart phones, online shopping, electric vehicles, and other new things in China. The survey was carried out by the Global Times Institute from August to November 2024. The Global Times' report on the survey is available [here](#)

ADVERTISEMENT AND SPONSORSHIP

Interested in advertisement in the FCCC Weekly or on the FCCC website? Send an e-mail to info@flanders-china.be

CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

China's trade surplus hits all-time high of USD 992 billion

China's trade surplus reached an all-time high in 2024 of USD992 billion – including record shipments of integrated circuits (ICs) and cars – but the imminent second term of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and the likely onset of higher tariffs will make similar levels of trade growth a challenge in 2025. Exports grew 5.9% year-on-year in 2024 to USD3.58 trillion, according to Customs data. Imports rose 1.1% to USD2.59 trillion, leading to a record trade surplus of USD992.1 billion.

In December alone, exports grew by 10.7%, beating the 6.7% growth recorded in November. Imports rose by 1.0% from a year earlier in December, compared to the 3.9% fall in November. This led to a trade surplus of USD104.84 billion in December, compared with USD97.44 billion in November. "China has consolidated its status as the world's largest merchandise exporter," said Wang Lingjun, Deputy Director of the General Administration of Customs (GAC), at a Beijing press conference held in conjunction with the data release.

Exports were a significant driver of China's economic growth in 2024. Increases in cross-border e-commerce shipments – as well as higher overseas demand for electric vehicles (EVs), batteries and solar panels – have helped the country mitigate a slowdown in domestic activity, the South China Morning Post reports.

China to develop the "silver economy" in the next 10 years, to improve the life quality of senior citizens

China will develop more services for the elderly, boosting the silver economy and cultivating more talent for the sector in the next 10 years, as part of a move to better cope with the aging population and improve the quality of life for seniors. The Communist Party and the government of China recently released a guideline stating that the nation aims to build up a solid services system for the elderly by 2029. The guideline also said that the services will be better matched with the needs of seniors by 2035. Furthermore, all elderly people will have access to basic elderly care services, as the nation will form a well-established elderly care service system by 2035, prioritizing services for those who have lost self-care ability, and will bring inclusive, fair and sustainable services to more elderly in urban as well as rural areas. Tang

Chengpei, Vice Minister of Civil Affairs, said at a news conference in Beijing that optimizing elderly services is not only a response to the aging population, but will also improve seniors' quality of life.

The guideline urges governments at all levels to include the development of elderly care services in their plans for vitalizing rural areas, and it emphasizes that more efforts are needed to improve care for elderly rural residents, especially those of advanced age and those who cannot take care of themselves or have disabilities. Vocational schools are encouraged to set up pilot education programs to cultivate the needed talent. According to the guideline, the central authorities **encourage companies to develop and promote products for the elderly**, either high-tech electrical appliances or tourism products, and enrich services to the elderly, aiming for a prosperous silver economy. In addition, the nation will channel resources and investment into technological programs for elderly care services, such as humanoid robots and artificial intelligence (AI).

"The elderly, especially those born after 1960, are increasingly willing and able to consume products and services," said Liu Ming, an official of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), at the news conference. China has channeled increasing investment and efforts into the elderly services sector in recent years. According to a report by the Ministry of Civil Affairs last year, China's elderly population – people 60 and older – accounted for more than one-fifth of the nation's total population in 2023. From 2019 to 2024, fiscal expenditures on elderly services and benefits totaled more than CNY560 billion, with annual funding growth of 11% over the five years, according to the Ministry of Finance, as reported by the China Daily.

More than 124 parcels received by every Chinese on average in 2024

The China's parcel delivery sector shattered all previous records in 2024, handling 174.5 billion packages – equivalent to more than 124 per person. China's delivery network processed more than 5,500 parcels every second. The rapid expansion of the sector underscores not only the growing dependence of Chinese consumers on e-commerce, but also the increasing role express delivery plays as a barometer of the economy. This explosive growth comes as no surprise. The total volume of express delivery services last year reached

174.5 billion parcels, marking a **21% increase over the previous year**. Meanwhile, business income from these services surged to CNY1.4 trillion, reflecting a 13% growth. “The postal and express delivery industry has become a driving force in China’s logistics sector, and for 11 straight years, it has ranked first globally in delivery volume,” Zhao Chongjiu, Director of the State Post Bureau of China, said at the Bureau’s annual conference last week in Beijing. “The integration of express delivery into daily life has been profound. It now serves as a vital indicator of both economic vitality and development,” he added.

As more parcels move through the country’s vast logistics network, it is clear that express delivery is no longer just about transporting packages from point A to point B – it has become a powerful symbol of China’s thriving economy. Particularly in the central and western regions, delivery networks have been rapidly expanding. In 2024, express delivery volumes in these regions grew by 30% and 35%, respectively, compared to the previous year. This expansion has significantly helped bridge the development gap between urban and rural areas. Subsidized shipping to remote villages, such as those in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, have brought e-commerce services to areas that once struggled with limited access to goods and services. This growth has also unlocked new economic opportunities, enabling businesses in emerging sectors such as live-streaming e-commerce and cross-border trade to thrive. Online retail sales of physical goods soared last year, and the delivery industry played a crucial role in facilitating these transactions. This makes it an essential partner in the ongoing digital transformation of the economy.

The result of this booming logistics network is felt in every corner of the country, transforming not only how businesses operate, but also how ordinary people live. In 2025, the express delivery volume is projected to reach 190 billion parcels, with corresponding revenue of CNY1.5 trillion. As China’s express delivery sector continues to expand, it is clear that the logistics industry is not only driving economic growth, but is also becoming an integral part of everyday life for millions, the China Daily reports.

China reduces import tariffs on large number of goods

China has reduced import tariffs on a large number of goods to expand domestic demand and promote high-standard opening-up. Provisional import tariffs, lower than most favored nation rates, were applied to 935 commodities as part of an annual tariff adjustment effective January 1. This plan “will help increase the imports of quality products”, according to a statement from the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council, China’s government. The tariff reduction aligns with the need to foster new quality productive forces through scientific and technological innovation, enhance people’s well-being, and promote green and low-carbon development, the Commission said. Lower provisional tariffs have been implemented for some raw materials, including ethane, cyclo-olefin polymers and ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymers, which are important basic materials for the petrochemical industry. “These tariff cuts will

effectively reduce the production costs of enterprises, promote their technological innovation and facilitate the green development of the petrochemical industry,” said Fan Min, Deputy Director of the Information and Market Department of the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation.

Some recycled copper and aluminum raw materials have also had their import tariffs reduced. In addition, automatic transmissions for special-purpose vehicles such as fire trucks and repair vehicles now enjoy lower import tariffs, which analysts say will better guarantee the production of such vehicles and improve their competitiveness. While continuing to apply zero tariffs on some drugs and raw materials to treat cancer and rare diseases, the country has cut tariffs on sodium zirconium cyclosilicate, viral vectors for CAR-T tumor therapy, and nickel-titanium alloy wires for surgical implants. **By continuously reducing import tariffs on pharmaceutical raw materials and medical equipment** in high demand, China will better ensure people’s access to medical services, said Gao Yuning, Vice Dean of the School of Public Policy and Management of Tsinghua University. China has been bringing down import tariffs for drugs and active pharmaceutical ingredients since 2018.

Under 24 free trade and preferential trade agreements, conventional tariff rates will this year be applied to certain products from 34 countries or regions as part of China’s efforts to expand its network of high-standard free trade areas. For example, lower tariffs under the China-Maldives free trade agreement, effective January 1, will eventually lead to zero tariffs on nearly 96% of tariff lines between the two sides. China will also continue to offer zero-tariff treatment on 100% of tariff lines to the 43 least developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations in a bid to support their development and foster mutual benefit, the China Daily reports.

Fiscal deficit to increase substantially in 2025

The size of China’s fiscal deficit will increase significantly in 2025, Liao Min, Vice Minister of Finance, told a press conference. He also noted that the rise in the deficit coupled with the increasing size of China’s GDP means that total fiscal expenditure will be further increased, and counter-cyclical adjustment will be stepped up to provide support for the sustained recovery of the economy. Liao added that the increase in the fiscal deficit ratio coupled with the multiplier effect of fiscal policy will allow for more bank credit and social capital investment, thereby promoting an increase in effective demand. In addition, there will be more funding to support employment and consumption, as well as scientific and technological innovation, thus promoting economic structural adjustment and a solid push for high-quality development. There remains considerable room for China’s central finance to issue debt and expand the deficit. The country’s economy still has high growth potential in the medium to long term, the Vice Minister noted.

The government’s debt ratio is significantly lower than that of other major economies and emerging markets, making

China's fiscal situation healthy and sustainable. Moreover, the government's debt is backed by a large amount of high-quality assets. Additionally, the real interest rate on Chinese government bonds is currently significantly lower than the real growth rate of the country's economy, so issuing government debt is sustainable, Liao said. "The increase in the size of the fiscal deficit is a very important manifestation of the implementation of a more proactive fiscal policy," Li Chang'an, Professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, told the Global Times.

Li noted that taking the actual conditions of national development into consideration, **fiscal policy will play a more significant role this year** in stabilizing the country's economic growth, combined with monetary policy and other support policies. Liao noted that the Ministry of Finance (MOF) will increase the amount of government bonds to provide more support for stabilizing growth. It will also expand the scale of ultra-long-term special national bonds to further implement equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-in programs. In addition, the Ministry will raise the quota for new local government special-purpose bonds, in order to expand effective investment. It will also issue special treasury bonds to support large state-owned commercial banks in replenishing core tier-1 capital, enhancing their ability to lend to the real economy and support the expansion of effective demand and economic structural adjustment, the Vice Minister noted.

Wang Peng, Associate Research Fellow at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times that boosting demand and expanding consumption will be priorities in the country's fiscal policy this year. "Increasing employment and people's income through multiple channels will enhance real consumption, and supporting the development of a number of new industries such as elderly services and cultural tourism will foster more and newer consumer industries and scenarios," Wang said.

The China Daily adds that the government will roll out **more stimulus measures to push urban renewal projects** this year in a bid to scale up effective investment and shore up domestic demand. The country will accelerate the transformation of aging residential neighborhoods, industrial areas and urban villages, as well as strengthen underlying urban infrastructure, the State Council said during its first executive meeting of 2025. The scope of urban village renewal initiatives has now been extended from 35 urban villages to 300 urban areas nationwide. Over the next five years, underground plumbing and wiring alone will require a total investment of around CNY4 trillion, with an estimated 600,000 kilometers of aging gas, water and heating lines in need of upgrades.

CAS working on breakthrough RISC-V open source CPU

A team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), China's top government research academy, pledged to produce this year a processor based on the open-source chip-design architecture RISC-V, as part of China's semiconductor self-reliance drive amid escalating U.S. restrictions. CAS will be able to deliver its XiangShan

open-source central processing unit in 2025, wrote Bao Yungang, Deputy Director at the Academy's Institute of Computing Technology.

Initiated by the CAS in 2019, the XiangShan project aims to develop high-performance open-source processors. During a presentation at the Hot Chips 2024 semiconductor conference in Silicon Valley in August, the CAS research team described XiangShan's goal as eventually becoming "the Linux of processors". Bao, who is also Secretary General of the China Open Command Ecology (RISC-V) Alliance, said the team strives to break the traditional perception that open source means low performance and low quality. It also wants to prove that an open-source project initiated by academia can result in scalable applications.

XiangShan is part of China's growing efforts to adopt RISC-V, an open-source chip architecture that lets developers configure and customize their designs. Chinese developers are hoping that RISC-V, pronounced "risk five", can help them reduce reliance on foreign suppliers amid an intensifying tech war with the U.S., the South China Morning Post reports.

Volkswagen and XPENG to jointly build large super-fast charging network for EVs

Volkswagen Group China plans to join with XPENG, a major Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer, to jointly build one of the largest super-fast charging networks for EVs in China. The move is expected to enhance Volkswagen's competitiveness in China's EV market and marks a promising direction for cooperation between Chinese and German carmakers as well as European carmakers in general, analysts said. The project will provide more than 20,000 self-operated charging piles, covering 420 cities and regions across China. Both companies will be enhancing the charging experience of EV drivers by expanding charging locations, the company said. The collaboration was formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for strategic collaboration. The charging network will integrate seamlessly with major automakers via mobile apps, according to the company. "Volkswagen partnered with XPENG, recognizing its extensive sales network and established charging infrastructure in China. Leveraging XPENG's resources allows Volkswagen to rapidly expand its charging network, minimizing time and costs," Wu Shuocheng, a veteran automobile industry analyst, told the Global Times.

China's automobile market has matured rapidly in the past several years, remaining highly attractive for foreign automakers. Major Japanese and European automakers unveiled new partnerships with Chinese companies in November during the 22nd Guangzhou International Automobile Exhibition. On November 12, Dongfeng Nissan Passenger Vehicle Co announced a partnership with Huawei. The two companies are expected to collaborate on developing a smart car cockpit based on Huawei's HarmonyOS system. China has been the global front-runner in new-energy vehicle (NEV) production and sales for nine consecutive years, from 2015 to 2023 and in the

first 11 months of 2024 China's carmakers sold more than 11.26 million NEVs, a 35.6% increase compared to the previous year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM). China holds immense potential in vehicle consumption. The CAAM estimates that China's total vehicle sales are expected to reach 31.5 million units in 2024, including 13 million NEVs.

China's NEV sales accounted for almost 70% of the

world's total between January and November, said Cui Dongshu, Secretary General of the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA). The share stood at 52% in 2021, rising to 63% in 2022, 64% in 2023 and 69.6% in the first 11 months of 2024, reflecting a clear trend of rapid expansion, Cui said. He noted that China's NEV growth has outpaced the global average, the Global Times reports.

Your banner at the FCCC website or newsletter

Companies interested in posting a banner/an advertisement on the FCCC website or FCCC weekly newsletter are kindly invited to contact the FCCC at: info@flanders-china.be

Organisation and founding members of the Flanders- China Chamber of Commerce

Chairman

Mr. Philippe Latour, Senior Advisor to Group CFO, AGEAS

Vice-Chairman

Mr. Philip Eyskens, Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, BEKAERT

Secretary and Treasurer

Jan Barbe, General Manager Banking & Family Capital Solutions, KBC Bank

Executive Director

Ms. Gwenn Sonck

Members of the Board of Directors and Founding Members:

Mr. Philippe Latour, Executive Advisor to Group CFO, AGEAS

Mr. Carl Peeters, Chief Financial Officer, AHLERS

Mr. Philip Eyskens, Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, BEKAERT

Mr. Dirk Poppe, Area Director Asia-Pacific, DEME

Mr. Jan Barbe, General Manager Banking & Family Capital Solutions, KBC Bank

Mr. Johan Verstraete, Vice President Weaving Machines, PICANOL

Mr. Arnaud Poitel, Head of Business Development, Purchasing and ICS, ECO3

Ms. Nathalie Bortels, Global Operations Director, Umicore Marketing Services, UMICORE

Membership rates for 2025 (excl. VAT):

- SMEs: €550 (VAT excl.)
- Large enterprises: €1,350 (VAT excl.)

Contact

Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce

Office: Ajuinlei 1, B-9000 Gent, Belgium

New telephone and fax numbers:

T ++32/9/269.52.46

F ++32/9/269.52.99

E info@flanders-china.be

W www.flanders-china.be

Share your story

To send your input for publication in a future newsletter mail to: info@flanders-china.be

The FCCC Newsletters are edited by Michel Lens, who is based in Beijing and can be contacted by e-mail michel.jc.lens@gmail.com

Disclaimer: the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the FCCC or its Board of Directors.

FCCC FOUNDING MEMBERS



FCCC STRUCTURAL PARTNERS



With the support of



IN COOPERATION WITH



EU-China
Business Association
欧盟中国贸易协会