

China Business Weekly

24 June 2025



FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Webinar: European Business in China 2025: Business Confidence Survey 2025
25 June 2025 – 10 AM CEST



The EU-China Business Association is organizing an exclusive webinar on the key findings of the **European Union Chamber of Commerce in China's Business Confidence Survey (BCS) 2025**.

During this webinar, you will gain insights into how European businesses are adapting to a rapidly changing business environment in China.

Global trade tensions, price deflation, razor-thin margins, low domestic consumption, and a weakening global economy have all increased business uncertainty. These challenges have led many European Chamber members to revise their growth and profitability forecasts.

This session will provide an overview of the current landscape for EU businesses in China and explore how they are adjusting their strategies in response.

Programme:

10:00–10:05 | Introduction by **Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director, EU-China Business Association**

10:05–10:35 | Key Insights from the Business Confidence Survey 2025 by **Robert Jarvis, Policy and Communications Manager, European Chamber**

10:35–10:55 | Q&A Session

10:55–11:00 | Closing by **Jochum Haakma, Chairman, EU-China Business Association**

We look forward to your participation in this timely and important discussion.

Practical information:

Date: 25 June 2025

Time: 10 AM - CEST

Location: Online

Price members: FREE (registration required)

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Webinar: Enforcement of IP in China – Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 10 AM CEST

CHINA
IP SME HELPDASK

法文信託 FCCC
VCKK

EU-China
Business Assoc
欧盟中国贸易协会

Webinar

Enforcement of IP in China

Tuesday, July 1st 2025
10 AM (CEST) / 4 PM (Beijing time)



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce, the EU-China Business Association and the China IP SME Helpdesk are organizing an exclusive webinar focused on the **Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in China**. This event will take place on **1 July 2025 at 10:00 AM CEST**.

During this session, **Mr. Toby Mak, IP expert of the China IP SME Helpdesk**, will provide participants with practical insights into the various enforcement mechanisms available to SMEs facing intellectual property infringement in China.

The webinar will walk attendees through the process of enforcing IP rights in a Chinese court. It will address key areas such as administrative actions, civil litigation, criminal sanctions, and other alternative enforcement methods.

This session is particularly important for SMEs aiming to safeguard their intellectual property in the Chinese market and take appropriate legal action when confronted with infringement.

The programme is as follows:

10h00-10h05: Introduction of the **China IP SME Helpdesk** – **Ms. Alessandra Capriglia, Project Manager**

10h05-10h15: Introduction of the **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce and the EU-China Business Association** – **Ms. Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director**

10h15-10h50: Enforcement of IP in China – **Mr. Toby Mak, IP expert of the China IP SME Helpdesk**

10h50-11h00: Q&A session

Practical information:

Date: 1 July 2025

Time: 10 AM – CEST

Location: Online

Price members: FREE (registration required)

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)

Webinar: Financial Incentives for Doing Business with China 9 July 2025, 10h00 CEST



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce is organizing a webinar focused on **Financial Incentives for Doing Business with China**. This webinar will take place on **9 July at 10 am CEST**.

The programme is as follows:

10h00-10h05: Introduction by **Ms Gwenn Sonck**, Executive Director, Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce

10h05-10h20: Introduction to the China Belgium Direct Equity Investment Fund by **Mr. Rik Daems**, former Belgian Minister and Vice Chairman of the China-Belgium Direct Equity Investment Fund (CBDEIF)

10h20-10h35: Introduction to the Capricorn Fusion China Fund by **Mr Steven Levecke**, Partner, Capricorn Partners

10h35-10h45: Financial Support by Flanders Investment and Trade by **Mrs Caroline Steensels**, Team leader Financial Support, Flanders Investment and Trade

10h45-11h00: Q&A

Practical information:

Date: 9 July 2025

Time: 10 AM - CEST

Location: Online

Participation fee for members: FREE

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ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY FCCC

REGISTER NOW: 5th Innovation Fair – Nanjing – September 16-18, 2025



The **EU-China Business Association (EUCBA)** is proud to be a supporting organization of the **5th Innovation Fair in Nanjing**.

Building on the success of previous editions, the 5th Innovation Fair is scheduled to take place from 16-18th September 2025. The fair promotes international business development, uncovers sourcing opportunities, and provides access to the Chinese market while allowing for opportunities for representation and distribution of Chinese businesses in Europe. Based on your specific requirements, our team in China will book relevant counterpart meetings for you.

This initiative is designed for companies and research institutes from Europe looking to develop business activities in China.

Industries include, but are not limited to:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- New Energy
- Artificial Intelligence
- Low Altitude Flight Technology
- Environmental Technology
- Fintech
- Pharma & Medtech
- Food & Beverage
- Fashion & Beauty Products
- Innovation Services

If your organization operates in any of these sectors and seeks partnerships or market entry in China, this event offers a tailored platform to connect and grow.

Based on your specific business interests, our team in China will arrange targeted B2B meetings with relevant counterparts to ensure a valuable and productive experience.

Benefits & Cost of Participation

Covered Costs

- 1x Economy Class Roundtrip Ticket
- Hotel and meals throughout the event

Services Provided

- Matchmaking Space (Booth)
- Speaking Opportunity

- Personalized Matchmaking Service

Registration Fees per Participant

- **Standard Rate:** €980 (from 17 May to 17 July)
- **Late Registration:** €1280 (from 18 July to 18 August)

Payment instructions will be sent via email after we confirm your registration.

If you are interested in taking part in the Innovation Fair then email us at: gwenn.sonck@flanders-china.be

Introduction to the ICBC booth at the 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE) November 5-10, 2025 – Shanghai



Join us at the **8th China International Import Expo on November 5 – 10, 2025 – Shanghai, China** where ICBC will showcase its **Signature Booth**, organized under a financial institution-led exhibition model.

ICBC has a pleasure to offer a **Free Booth for FCCC members at the Expo**.

Exhibition Area: **Food and Agricultural Products**

Since 2021, ICBC's booth has welcomed over **430 international** exhibitor participation from **60+ countries**, hosted **50+ matchmaking events**, and supported **60+ product launches**, playing a key role in advancing global trade cooperation.

This year's ICBC booth will feature a 1,200 m² space including:

- Product Display Area
- Business Negotiation Area
- Event & Financial Services Zones
- VIP Lounge
- Live Streaming Area
- Newly added Buyers' Corridor and Key Buyers' Product Selection Area

The Buyers' Corridor will host direct matchmaking opportunities with leading enterprises such as **JD.com**, **Suning.com**, **Bright Food Supply Chain**, and **Greenland Zhongxuan**, all of whom will have dedicated spaces and onsite purchasing representatives.

Exhibitor Invitation Criteria

Our chamber can recommend 5 qualified international food and agricultural enterprises.

- Booth space and design coordinated by ICBC
- Promotional activities (≤50 attendees) may be arranged with advance notice
- All travel and logistics costs are the responsibility of the exhibitors

For registration and further details, please contact: gwenn.sonck@flanders-china.be

PAST EVENTS

Webinar: Setting up your own Manufacturing Facility in China: Trends and Best Practices from Orfit Industries – 17 June 2025



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce organized an exclusive webinar focused on **Setting Up Your Own Manufacturing Facility in China** on **17 June 2025**.

Ms Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director of of the Flanders China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) and the EU-China Business Association (EUCBA), welcomed the participants to the webinar and introduced the speakers. The EU and China are interdependent and need each other. In 2024, the Chinese investment in the EU also matched the same amount of EU investment in China. In 2024, Chinese direct investment in the EU reached €185 billion, while European investment in China held steady at €184 billion. In Q1 of this year, EU FDI into China maintained its momentum with investments totaling €3,06 billion, the strongest first quarter performance since 2022.

Mrs. Ting Zhang, CEO and Founder of Crayfish introduced her company, formally called **Crayfish.io Limited** because it started with a digital platform in 2017 when it was launched, but now the company has expanded to include advisory consulting as well as IP monetization and IP commercialization business. Crayfish has been working with various companies in the Flanders region as well as other European countries. Turning to China's manufacturing, Ms. Zhang said that there is no doubt that China is the world's powerhouse. It has actually been 15 conservative years that China's industrial output is at the top of the world at about €4 trillion. VR equipment, electric vehicles (EVs) as well as EV charging equipment show the highest growth. China has not always had this manufacturing advantage in the last century, although China had the well-known four great inventions: the compass, gunpowder, paper making and printing. But unfortunately, China lost its advantage in terms of manufacturing when the Industrial Revolution started in Britain. China had a very backward century in terms of manufacturing, but in the last four decades, however, China has managed to catch up really quickly and now it has not just caught up with the West, but in fact, in many other areas has exceeded Western countries in terms of scale and capacity. This didn't happen by coincidence. It was a part of the government's long term drive to boost China's manufacturing, but also specifically, there is this Made in China 2025 initiative, which was launched in China by the government under Xi Jinping's leadership in 2015.

In 2023, the Chinese government pursued new policies and strategies, particularly to diversify China's manufacturing from the sort of old traditional toys and clothes to smart, high end, and green manufacturing, which are called **the new productive forces**. It is basically aiming for China **to go through a new economic model based on innovation**, particularly in advanced sectors, so that China would lead the development of strategic emerging and future industries. This includes the use of AI, IoT, robotics as well as brain technology. Everywhere, China is advocating green factories. The number of national-level green factories has reached 6,430 accounting for about 20% of the total output value. The Chinese government has designated many clusters, not only the ones you know about such as Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing, or the Pearl River Delta and Greater Bay Area, but also clusters in Western and Central as well as Northeastern provinces to sort of balance the regional development. Some Western companies consider that over-reliance on China manufacturing is not sustainable and have already started shifting production out of China, such as Volvo, which has moved some production to Belgium. The key takeaway here is that you do need to reconsider China manufacturing if you are over-relying on that. But there is still a lot of continued investment in China, particularly in pharmaceuticals, electronics, as well as in EVs. Western companies are using that to help them to reduce costs and be close to the market to remain competitive.

How to set up your own manufacturing in China? If you already have a sales office in China, the first thing to evaluate is whether to expand that sales entity to a manufacturing entity in the same city, set up one of your own elsewhere or go for subcontracting. It may be more cost-effective if you outsource, but it may suit your strategic goals if you have your own

manufacturing facility. Mrs. Zhang presented a few examples of companies they have assisted in setting up manufacturing in China. In order to sell to China, some companies have to localize their production, including localizing the supply chain.

The first question is how to identify your optimal city in China. There are so many cities in China that all claim they can manufacture all sorts of things. So we shortlist a number of cities and look at their economic profile in terms of the industry alignment, and also whether they have a local supply chain, which is really important for manufacturers, as well as logistics because some of the products are going to be exported. Finally, also look at operational expenditure that includes salaries and the social insurance cost, which actually is a big add-on.

Once you choose a city, there are typically various zones competing for foreign investment. Don't just rely on the presentations, but visit the sites, as many of them are in a very early stage and you might be the only factory operating there. If you're just going for a small factory, then go for the more established industrial parks. Also build up your guanxi or connections with the local government already from the beginning. As a small manufacturer, you may not want to go to Shanghai, because Shanghai is really very costly now, and also to get the government's attention, you need to be very big scale and also advanced. No matter how nice the facility is, **the most important thing is the people, the team**, and how do you get the right people right from the beginning. If you find someone you like at a particular senior level, it's really important you act quickly, because this kind of talent doesn't stay available long.

Finally, **it is important to get the right license** and for manufacturing business, you need to specify all the potential products and parts you're going to manufacture. The actual preparation of documents by the parent company is typically underestimated because the level of detail and compliance by the Chinese local registration authorities is very thorough. Even a tiny non-compliance or discrepancy might lead to rejection or lengthier applications.

Mr. Steven Cuypers spoke about the practical side of setting up his company in China. Orfit Industries develops and produces thermoplastic polymers and composite materials for medical devices for three market segments: radiation oncology, physical rehabilitation, and orthotics and prosthetics. The company manufactures polymers by the extrusion method. The company also produces composite materials for the radiation oncology market. Products are introduced to the market through four channels, the most important of which is exclusive or non-exclusive distributors. The company's first steps in China date back to the mid 80s, when the Belgian Foreign Trade Office organized a visit where you could have a booth at the China Medical Equipment Fair in Shanghai. Orfit Industries was the first company to introduce in China the practice of patient immobilization in radiotherapy. The equipment and machines used in radiation are extremely precise. Thanks to the company's thermoplastic masks, patients are immobilized so that the medical practitioner is sure that the patient cannot move with millimeter precision. At first, we thought we would need an exclusive distributor, which later on we found was not really the way to go ahead. After five years in the market, copycats came up. We considered that as normal in view of China's history. The copycats that came up were products for which patents had expired, so there was some indication about what IP is and what it could mean. Being copied today by 10 companies resulted in a gradual slowdown of Orfit's growth.

Mr. Cuypers believes that local presence is really mandatory if you want to be successful in China. The middle class population in China is estimated at around 400 million, so it's a huge potential market. In that market with a huge population, there is since many years a growing cancer incidence, which is due to the lifestyle in China, as many people smoke, even during dinners. Modern radiation therapy is also growing thanks to the government which understood that in order to fight cancer, they had to install multiple cancer treating centers. Today, there are 1,800 triple A hospitals in China, hospitals that are comparable to the service that we know in Belgium or in Europe. Not all of them have cancer centers, but most of them have. In Belgium, there are probably 15 to 20 university hospitals. In the U.S., there are around 300 university hospitals. Another reason why we are present locally is that we want to make sure that our products are available to as many patients as possible anywhere in the world. The last reason is that among Chinese consumers, there is a growing preference for Chinese, for local, for domestic brands. One of my competitors in China told me a couple of weeks ago that for local vendors, most of the time, foreign products are not even considered anymore.

Planning of Orfit's local presence in China started in 2018 with preparations for a joint venture with the at that time exclusive distributor. That attempt of forming a joint venture failed. Instead, Orfit established a wholly foreign-owned enterprise (WFOE) in Ningbo as a 100% daughter company of Orfit Belgium. When Mr. Cuypers announced that the company would not proceed with a joint venture but would invest in a WFOE, my Chinese partner said, now you're really starting to think and act as a Chinese person. When everything in the plant was ready, it couldn't start due to Covid-19. When Mr. Cuypers went back to China in March 2023, as soon as the borders reopened, a lot of things had changed, such as the position of the distributor and the management.

Ningbo was considered to be too far out and it was decided in October 2023 **to move the company to Jiashan, a small industrial city in Zhejiang province** about one hour travel from Shanghai. The old equipment was outdated and had to be scrapped and raw materials had expired, so the company had to start anew. That was an indication to our Chinese partners that we really meant what we wanted to do in China. The reasons to move to Jiashan were two-fold. The distributor that Orfit worked with on an exclusive basis was acquired by Shanghai Electric, which was involved in a huge scandal with money laundering and the grey economy. The second reason was that Ningbo was a little bit too far from where the action is. In Jiashan, the company is located in an development zone and is supported by the Zhejiang government. The company will not have to pay rental fees for three years and gets support on social security payments for its employees. Representative of the Jiashan government went to visit Orfit's plant in Wijnegem to know more about the company, which created a strong bond with Orfit in Belgium. The company in Jiashan has four people, including Mr.

Cuypers as Managing Director, in addition to a General Manager, a Marketing and Sales Strategy Manager and two workers. After getting several licenses, the provincial governmental authorities informed the company it was also necessary to register on the provincial medical product platform in every province. Today, we are only registered in a couple of provinces so sales are still relatively low, Mr. Cuypers explained. There are also many other administrative requirements.

Based on Orfit's experience, there are a number of minimal requirements for success. You have to organize your IP. Never start negotiations with Chinese partners before you have registered your product names or your company name. If you don't do that, and a Chinese party registers your company name or your product names, you have to buy that registration back from them. Obviously, you have to study the competition. You have to understand who's doing what. Linked to that is study the market price for your products. You might find out that products from your competitors are sold at a very high price. There is a heavy impact of the grey economy in that final end-user price, which means you can't ask for the same high price level. You have to find a location for your activities where the local government provides financial incentives. You have to fulfill all requirements with respect to registrations and product labeling. You need to label your products with Chinese characters. You have to comply with local Chinese FDA regulations. If you don't respect those regulations, you are unable to sell. Set up multiple distribution channels. Never trust a company that says, we can handle the whole Chinese territory, the whole Chinese market for you. That is simply impossible. It's a vast country with a very big population, and one company is never able to do that. Find key opinion leaders and make them what they call in China, speakers. These are advocates of your products who will speak loudly and positively about your products in the market. You have to hire local staff for your marketing and sales activity who speak English. You really need someone with a very, very good knowledge of active and passive English, otherwise, communication becomes very difficult. It is imperative to hire a local company for fulfilling your financial requirements. You must also hire a local company to fulfill all your legal requirements. Most importantly, take the time to build a network at different levels, not only the local government level, but within your market. Even form a network with your competitors, maybe one day you may need them. Also make sure that your Belgian owners remain well informed because the route to success may be long and they have to supply you with continuous oxygen to make sure that you will be successful with your endeavors in China. And last but not least, **be present in person several times per year.** A lot of Chinese people want to speak with higher executives, preferably the CEO or the owner of the company. Once you have that level of connections, you can send other staff, but you should be going at least twice a year yourself.

A Q&A session concluded the webinar.

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FOREIGN TRADE

Overcapacity: the buzzword fueling the EU-China clash



In November in Brussels, officials and experts from the EU and the United States were locked in a technical

debate over a cryptic bit of economic jargon: **global non-market overcapacity.** The conference, organized by the European Commission, was designed to thrash out solutions to the problem of overcapacity in China's economy and the second-order effects Europe fears. Decades of over-investment and state subsidies in China, weak domestic consumption, an addiction to manufacturing, crashing corporate profits, zombie companies that the state does not let die, and a superpower trade war have, the EU believes, created a perfect storm. **China's industrial overflows must go somewhere, probably at a discount, and the only logical destination is Europe, according to the EU Commission.** European governments fear companies that make everything from industrial machinery and chemicals to hydrogen electrolyzers and wind turbines will be eaten

alive, industries decimated and jobs lost forever. They worry about a wave that could sweep populist parties to power in Europe's hollowed-out manufacturing heartlands. They insist that Beijing should worry too, or face a European anti-China backlash similar to the one that has coursed through the United States over the last decade.

"We are seeing a new 'China shock' – as China's economy slows down, Beijing floods global markets with subsidized overcapacity that its own market cannot absorb," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said at the G7 meeting in Canada last week. Back at the Brussels forum on global non-market overcapacity last year, the discussion was becoming bogged down in terminology – "decreasing profit margins", "returns on capital", "underutilized assets" – when an arm shot up in the middle of the room. "I have to make some remarks, because China is the elephant in the room, and everything is about China on the agenda," a Chinese diplomat said. The diplomat angrily disputed speakers' remarks that there was deflation in China – despite official government data showing a 31st successive monthly fall in producer prices in May – and flatly denied that China's industrial success was due to subsidies. **The Chinese diplomat rejected the argument that overcapacity in China could be a problem for anyone,** particularly in cleantech industries at a time of climate emergency. "There is no country which produces as they consume, otherwise, there will be no need for global trade, the challenge we're facing in new energy sectors is not overcapacity, but undercapacity," he said.

The word "overcapacity" has become a battleground in China's rivalry with the West, and the episode in Brussels shows that the two sides have started airing their dirty laundry in public. After years of complaints, Europe has grown frustrated by Beijing's lack of response. Chinese officials brush off EU grievances, pointing out that Germany exports more cars than Germans can drive, while Belgians could not possibly eat all the chocolate made there. A running joke in Brussels is that the official Chinese term for the trend is "so-called overcapacity". "Western politicians and press have repeatedly hyped up the so-called Chinese 'overcapacity'," wrote Peng Gang of China's Mission to the EU in an article for Euractiv, a Brussels media outlet. "Some Western countries, in order to protect their vested market shares and dominant positions hype up the 'Chinese economic threat' or Chinese 'overcapacity' by all means."

In a highly polarized world, a seemingly innocuous economic term has become, in itself, a geopolitical tinderbox. Any mention of "overcapacity" is enough to get eyes rolling in some quarters, and not just in Beijing.

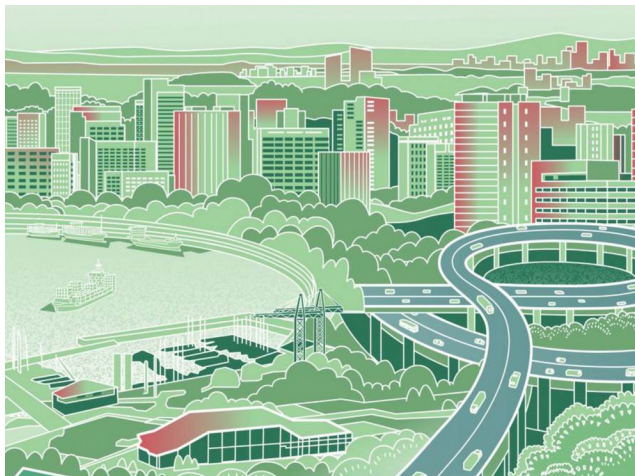
Prominent Western critics insist it is an ideological stick with which to beat China. "We're seeing the emergence, from the standpoint of the West, at least, of a country that is from outside the West, from the South, an economic threat. I definitely think there's an ideological element behind these accusations of overcapacity," said Jostein Hauge, an expert in development economics at Cambridge University, on a recent episode of the Sinica Podcast. Adam Tooze, a noted economic historian, told the South China Morning Post late last year it was "significant that the debate has come up at this moment, because it provides a kind of justification for industrial policy in the West". He asked: "Why would you not simply take advantage of the subsidy that Chinese taxpayers effectively have provided to give us all really cheap vehicles?"

Part of the problem could lie with the imprecise nature of the term "overcapacity". In Western discourse, the phrase has become a Frankenstein monster, a catch-all criticism for many of the structural issues critics do not like in China. Trey McArver, co-founder of the Trivium China consultancy, said it "has become a byword for either angst or anger regarding the Chinese economy". "It's applied in a lot of different instances, and it's not applicable in every context in which it's used. It is such a broad and abused term that it doesn't help further productive discussions from a policy perspective about what the EU wants to achieve," he said. Those gripes include opaque subsidies, zombie companies kept alive by local governments, an unwillingness to turbo-boost consumption, a proliferation of industrial policies throughout the country and, latterly, a group of highly competitive companies, many of which struggle to turn a profit in China.

"The way China does industrial policy leads to overcapacity," said Bert Hofman, Adjunct Professor at the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. "More importantly, it leads to inefficiencies – just look at profitability. Even BYD, the greatest success in electric vehicles, can barely make ends meet amid strong price competition. In the automotive industry, one-third of companies is making a loss," said Hofman, who was previously World Bank Country Director in China. "There's no formal definition for overcapacity and so that's what makes it such a fraught, complicated term to use," said Agatha Kratz, a China specialist at Rhodium Group, a research house whose work on the topic has been cited widely by Western officials pushing for China to change, and for Europe to act. Kratz pushed back strongly against the idea that an endless supply of Chinese cleantech products would be good for the world, even during a climate emergency, since it would kill European industries, the South China Morning Post reports.

MACRO-ECONOMY

Development zones to drive economic growth



To mitigate the headwinds of a volatile external environment, **China is capitalizing on the strengths of its state-level economic and technological development zones (ETDZs) to maintain steady growth in foreign trade and investment**, which are critical to the country's overall economic development, officials and analysts said. These development zones are at the forefront of China's push to further open up its economy and align with international best practices, they said, adding that new models and mechanisms deemed replicable will be scaled up nationwide, to ensure China remains responsive to the evolving global landscape. As part of China's ongoing efforts to open its door even wider despite rising protectionism, the Chinese government has adopted a work plan aimed at deepening reform and innovation in the development zones. "The international economic and trade order is facing a serious shock," said Ling Ji, Vice Minister of Commerce. "The role of these development zones in stabilizing foreign trade and investment is becoming increasingly prominent."

As of last year, China had established 232 state-level economic and technological development zones in 31 provincial regions, which collectively generated CNY16.9 trillion in regional GDP. They facilitated CNY10.7 trillion in exports and imports last year, making up 24.5% of China's total foreign trade volume, and attracted USD27.2 billion in actual foreign direct investment (FDI), accounting for 23.4% of the national total. The work plan calls for prioritizing foreign-funded projects in sectors such as integrated circuits, biomedicine and advanced equipment manufacturing within the zones, for inclusion in the list of major foreign investment projects. It also encourages the development zones to deepen engagement with leading global investors and financial institutions by leveraging trade promotion platforms while vowing support for the zones in organizing delegations to go overseas to attract foreign capital.

TUV Rheinland Greater China, a testing, inspection and certification company, plans to further expand its laboratory

space in the **Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone** this year, said Xie Qin, Senior Government Affairs Manager. The company will focus on enhancing its service capabilities in the medical device and electronics sectors to support the steady growth of its business, Xie said. As the sole national-level development zone in Beijing, the Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone recorded nearly USD1.4 billion in actual utilized foreign capital last year, a historical high and a nearly 26% increase year-on-year. Song Xiangqing, deputy head of the Commerce Economy Association of China, said localities should further optimize their policy and services, and increase support for foreign-invested enterprises, to ensure foreign companies feel at home and have greater confidence in their development in the economic development zone.

In terms of underpinning the country's foreign trade sector, the work plan calls for collaboration between these development zones and the China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation, the country's only policy-oriented insurer specializing in export credit insurance. The plan encourages the development zones to establish commodity trading centers, global distribution hubs and international logistics centers if conditions permit. Eligible development zones can also establish overseas logistics facilities, according to the plan. At a development zone in Hefei, Anhui province, a bonded logistics center has provided a new engine for the zone's foreign trade growth. "Thanks to the efficient services at the bonded logistics center, our company's customer orders have continued to increase and we have doubled our warehouse space, equipment investment and staffing," said Wu Mansong, Manager at Hefei Shunzhuo Supply Chain Management Co. With the Hefei Economic and Technological Development Zone in Anhui province as one of 13 national-level development zones, the region has seen a significant boost to its foreign trade. Peng Xinmin, an official at the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), said that authorities will optimize government services in areas that deeply impact enterprises, such as market regulation, and make concerted efforts to reduce the time, procedures, documents and physical visits required.

Looking ahead, Zhu Bing, Director of the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Foreign Investment Administration (FIA), said that these development zones will actively foster industry-led consortia uniting enterprises, universities and research institutions. Qualified zones will be supported in establishing offshore innovation bases. This facilitates "overseas R&D, domestic commercialization" – utilizing global talent pools while anchoring production within China, Zhu said. China's national-level economic and technological development zones are home to over 700 national-level incubators and maker spaces, with more than 4.9 million operating entities, including 85,000 high-tech firms, which account for 18.3% of the country's total, according to the Commerce Ministry, as reported by the China Daily.

LOGISTICS

Land-Sea Trade Corridor links West-China to global commerce



The inland municipality of Chongqing, where mountains and hills account for 90% of its terrain, **has been transforming itself into a pivotal logistics nexus**, linking the world via multiple trade arteries. In April, a freight train loaded with polyester goods departed from Chongqing to Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent, launching the first regular freight train route, which operates twice monthly, from the municipality to Central Asia. "The 12-day route spanning 4,700 kilometers slashes the transportation time by 30%, empowering Chinese enterprises to better serve Central Asian markets," said Xu Meiqiong, an engineer with China Railway Chengdu Group Co. This freight train route shows how **China's western landlocked regions are seamlessly integrating into global commerce through the new International Land-Sea Trade Corridor (ILSTC)** — a multimodal transportation network integrating rail, road and sea transport. Established in 2017 through cross-regional collaboration between provincial-level regions in western China and Southeast Asian countries, the corridor now pulses with commercial vitality.

In March, 200 vehicles from Changan Automobile, a leading auto brand in China, boarded a specialized JSQ freight train for export. Unlike traditional cargo trains featuring containers, it has 29 special carriages, each able to accommodate nine to 10 vehicles, which can be driven on and off the carriages. Cars were transferred directly onto roll-on/roll-off vessels to Qinzhou Port in Guangxi bound for Dubai. "This integrated logistics solution reduces transport time by over 10%, cuts costs by more than 8% compared to traditional methods and minimizes potential vehicle damage," said Li Yan, Deputy Director of the Chongqing Port and Logistics Office, adding that the debut

of the multimodal logistics route provides a more competitive solution for Chinese automobile exports. **The ILSTC network, extending to Europe and Southeast Asia, now connects 563 ports across 127 countries and regions.** As of mid-May this year, the cargo throughput transported via ILSTC had surged 72.3% year-on-year to 549,600 TEU. Apart from the capacity to deliver bulky items, the international corridor also facilitates the transport of perishable goods. In recent years, fresh durians, mangoes and other tropical fruits from Thailand and Vietnam have reached the Chinese market at competitive prices, while citrus from Guangxi has found swift global distribution.

Yang Ming, General Manager of Zuncheng (Chongqing) Logistics Chain Management Co, said imported fruit previously entered from China's coastal metropolis of Shanghai and then sailed more than 1,600 km westward along the Yangtze river before being transported to his firm. "In recent years, our customers no longer worry about fruit getting moldy due to long transit times," he added.

Dutch company New Silk Way Logistics has used the China-Europe rail services for nine years. The company introduced temperature-controlled containers to help European pharmaceutical enterprises access the Chinese market. Hanno Reeser, a strategic expert from the company, said that medical products are highly sensitive to temperature and transit times, while the freight trains have reduced the journey from Europe to China to less than 20 days, which is far quicker than by sea. For ASEAN-bound shipments from Chongqing, ILSTC cuts the transit time by approximately 25 days via smooth intermodal coordination, which outperforms traditional routes along the Yangtze river waterway to coastal ports in East China. ILSTC also creates greater value in the development of remote areas. After a 43-day journey, Arctic sweet shrimp were shipped from Canada, via Qinzhou Port, to a factory of Jiajiarong food company in the mountainous area of Chongqing. Following streamlined manufacturing processes including cleaning, shelling and flash-freezing, shrimp products are packed and transported via refrigerated trucks to Shandong province, and then shipped to their final destination – counters of sushi shops and supermarkets in Japan, with a total transportation time of only one week.

In the first quarter, the import and export volume via the ILSTC exceeded CNY200 billion, marking a year-on-year growth of over 10% and setting a historic high, according to Chongqing Customs, as reported by the China Daily.

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue canceled due to lack of progress

According to an EU official, the EU has decided not to hold the EU-China High Level Economic and Trade dialogue due to lack of progress in preparatory consultations. Commenting on the reports, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) Spokesperson He Yadong said at a press conference that China and the EU are each other's major trading partners, and China attaches great importance to China-EU economic and trade relations, and has maintained close communication with the EU at all levels to promote the sound and stable development of bilateral trade and investment cooperation.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the EU, the MOFCOM spokesperson said, noting that China will work with the EU to fully implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of both sides, actively promote the upgrading of China-EU economic and trade cooperation, address each other's concerns, and jointly prepare economic and trade deliverables for high-level exchanges. Trade issues are of vital importance to both China and the EU, and have long been a matter of mutual concern, and **for trade disputes to be resolved, it is important to meet each other halfway**, a Chinese expert said. "A stable China-EU economic and trade relationship plays a key role in anchoring market expectations, which is crucial for both sides. In this context, it is essential for China and the EU to move toward each other and work to build effective consensus," Zhou Mi, Senior Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times.

At a Chinese Foreign Ministry press conference, a reporter referred to a Financial Times report claiming that the EU had canceled the EU-China high-level economic dialogue because of a lack of progress with China on trade issues. Asked to comment on the report, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun said in an increasingly volatile world with rising unilateralism and economic bullying, greater strategic communication and further dialogue and cooperation between China and the EU benefit both sides and the rest of the world. Guo added that the two sides have maintained communication on trade and other issues.

When asked to comment on the European Commission President's criticism toward China at the G7 summit, including comments on trade rules, industry subsidies, dominance in rare earths, and so-called overcapacity, a spokesperson of the Chinese Mission to the European Union (EU) said: "We have noticed relevant reports and expressed strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the claims, which ignore the facts and are filled with prejudice and double standards." The so-called overcapacity issue is essentially a result of certain countries' concerns over their own competitiveness and market share, and the aim is to use this as an excuse to pursue protectionist measures, the spokesperson said, adding that what is excessive is not

capacity, but anxiety, the Global Times reports.

Empyrean aiming to become one of the world's top EDA providers

Chinese chip-design software company Empyrean Technology aims to become one of the world's top electronic design automation (EDA) providers, as new U.S. export restrictions bring both opportunities and challenges to the domestic industry. Founded in 2009 and based in Beijing, Empyrean aims to ascend to the top tier of EDA providers, capitalizing on the struggles faced by its U.S. competitors in selling to China because of new export controls on chip-design software, said Yu Han, Senior Market Director at Empyrean, at the **World Semiconductor Conference in Nanjing**, capital of Jiangsu province, on June 20. The remarks came after Cadence Design Systems, Synopsys and Siemens EDA – the three leading EDA suppliers that collectively hold about 80% global market share – confirmed they had received notices from the U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security regarding new export restrictions on software that could be used for developing advanced artificial intelligence (AI) chips. Those export controls have raised hopes among Chinese investors and analysts that local companies could seize new market opportunities. Besides Empyrean, other domestic EDA tool vendors, such as Primarius Technologies and Semitronix, have also garnered attention.

Yu said **China currently had over 100 domestic EDA companies, with Empyrean capturing half of that market share**. He said Empyrean was the only Chinese company positioned among the second-tier global EDA providers, along with U.S. firms Ansys and Keysight Technologies. The company supplied about 80% of the 58 EDA tools required for the complete chipmaking process, with the aim of eventually offering all of them, Yu said.

However, Yu also acknowledged that a considerable gap remained between Empyrean and U.S. companies. "The main gap lies in digital integrated-circuit design tools," he said. "While we have this area covered, there are still challenges related to process nodes and software maturity." Building a robust ecosystem is the most difficult part, according to Yu. "When others have already established a solid ecosystem, it takes time for clients to trust our products," he said. "Collaborative efforts from China's semiconductor industry are needed." With about 1,400 employees in China – the largest workforce among domestic EDA companies – Empyrean's scale was still less than one-tenth that of Synopsys or Cadence, underscoring the gap with U.S. rivals. While Yu declined to say whether the recent U.S. ban has brought new orders for Empyrean, he expected it to hurt American companies' ability to provide EDA services to Chinese chip foundries, particularly advanced process nodes, the South China Morning Post reports.

China leads commercialization of 5G-A mobile communications technology

As a global pioneer in commercializing 5G-advanced (5G-A) technology which plays a key role in bridging 5G to 6G, China has already deployed such networks in over 300 cities, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT). The progress showcases China's first-mover advantage in defining the next-generation network, which is of crucial importance to the nation's industrial upgrade, experts said. He Biao, General Manager of China Mobile, said the company "will trial 6G technologies on its 5G-A infrastructure, and promote the integrated research and development of the two". As an important upgrade of 5G, 5G-A networks theoretically deliver tenfold improvements in peak data rates and connection density compared to 5G. It will also unlock a market connecting 100 billion internet of things (IoT) devices, according to China Mobile. More importantly, **5G-A base stations** have integrated sensing and communication capabilities. They not only handle voice and data transmission, but **can also function as distributed radar systems, enabling real-time detection of airborne objects** within their coverage zones, China Mobile said, adding that it is testing such a system to facilitate the development of the low-altitude economy, such as drone delivery in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

More than 30 provincial-level regions in China have launched 5G-A service packages, with subscribers surpassing 10 million. Meanwhile, telecom operators in China, the Middle East and other regions are also introducing new initiatives to explore applications combining 5G-A and artificial intelligence (AI). According to Huawei Technologies, the convergence of 5G-A and AI is driving transformation. In the industrial sector, 5G-A's ultra-low latency and high bandwidth are enabling precise perception and decision-making for robots. Real-time data processing via 5G-A supports closed-loop "sense-decide-act" operations, reducing high-risk work hazards while boosting efficiency and safety. For robots to truly integrate into industrial production and everyday applications, low latency is the basic requirement, and collaborative decision-making is the key to commercial application, said Chang Lin, CEO of Leju Robot. Drone deliveries leveraging 5G-A make smarter path planning possible, significantly improving speed and reducing operational expenses, according to Huawei.

Challenges still exist. Wu Hequan, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), said that in recent years, emerging applications such as augmented reality and the low-altitude economy have created growing demand for high uplink bandwidth. However, current 5G networks face shortcomings in insufficient uplink speeds. While China's mobile networks have achieved remarkable progress in downlink speeds – with 5G being seven times faster than 4G and 5G-A 10 times faster than 5G – the uplink speeds still significantly lag behind downlink performance, the China Daily reports.

Consumption gets a boost from "618" shopping festival

Chinese consumers unleashed their purchasing power during the midyear "618" shopping festival, a weeks-long sales event that began in mid-May and reached a crescendo on June 18, which experts said is pivotal to bolstering the recovery of consumption and shoring up economic growth. They noted that the buying frenzy indicates the enormous vitality and potential of the country's consumer market, with household appliances and intelligent electronic products gaining popularity among Chinese shoppers amid the country's steps to boost consumption, including the expansion of the consumer goods trade-in program. To further stimulate people's purchasing appetites, they called for more measures to increase household incomes, distribute consumption coupons, and nurture diversified purchasing scenarios and new types of consumption.

Data from e-commerce firm JD, which initiated the midyear promotional campaign, showed that as of 11:59 pm on June 18, the number of users placing orders more than doubled year-on-year, while the total order volume from its online and offline retail and food delivery businesses, exceeded CNY2.2 billion. The number of new electronic gadgets that saw their sales surpass CNY10 million surged 200% year-on-year during the shopping festival, which officially kicked off at 8 pm on May 30, JD said. The turnover of over 2,000 brands in the home appliances and home furnishing sector increased 100% from a year earlier. According to Tmall, Alibaba's business-to-customer platform, the sales of 453 brands exceeded 100 million yuan from 8 pm on May 16 to midnight on June 18, an increase of 24% compared with the same period last year. The transaction volume of Apple, Midea, Xiaomi, Huawei and Nike each reached more than CNY1 billion.

In addition, **outdoor sporting goods, beauty and skin care products, apparel and trendy toys** witnessed robust growth on online marketplaces during the shopping festival that now extends to around one month. Noting that consumption has become the main driving force boosting China's economic growth, Hong Yong, Associate Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the online shopping bonanza has played a vital role in bolstering domestic demand, unleashing consumers' purchasing potential and shoring up the economy. Hong estimated that the country's consumer market is poised for steady growth this year, fueled by a series of pro-consumption policies, online shopping festivals and stable recovery of the macro-economy despite external uncertainties. He called for more efforts to strengthen employment support, cultivate new types of consumption in the digital, green and intelligent fields, and improve the consumption environment, the China Daily reports.

Huawei's Ascend AI-chips outperform Nvidia processors in running DeepSeek R1

Huawei Technologies' advanced data center architecture CloudMatrix 384 has enabled the company's Ascend chips to surpass the performance of Nvidia's H800 graphics processing units (GPUs) in running DeepSeek's R1 artificial intelligence (AI) model, according to a technical paper jointly written by researchers from Huawei and Chinese AI infrastructure start-up SiliconFlow. The paper described CloudMatrix 384 as a specialized "AI supernode" that is purpose-built for handling extensive AI workloads. Huawei expected CloudMatrix "to reshape the foundation of AI infrastructure", according to the paper. It consists of 384 Ascend 910C neural processing units (NPUs) and 192 Kunpeng server central processing units, which are interconnected through a unified bus providing ultra-high bandwidth and low latency. The advanced large language model (LLM) serving solution, dubbed CloudMatrix-Infer, leverages that infrastructure. It surpassed the performance of some of the world's most prominent systems in running DeepSeek's 671-billion-parameter R1 reasoning model.

The architecture reflects Huawei's efforts to overcome U.S. tech control measures and sanctions, as the company pushes the boundaries of AI system performance. Data centers are facilities that house large-capacity servers and data-storage systems, with multiple power sources and high-bandwidth internet connections. In a so-called prefill phase involving the initial processing of prompts, CloudMatrix-Infer reached a throughput of 6,688 tokens per second per NPU for a 4,000-token prompt length. That equates to a computational efficiency of 4.45 tokens per second per trillion floating-point operations per second (TFLOPs). Tokens are the basic units that LLMs – the technology behind generative AI services like ChatGPT – use to process text. Token length directly impacts cost, processing time and an AI model's ability to understand and respond to complex instructions or narratives. TFLOPS is a measure of a computer's processing speed – specifically, its ability to perform complex calculations in tasks such as training AI systems.

In the subsequent decode phase that generates output from an AI model, the paper's findings showed that CloudMatrix recorded 1,943 tokens per second per NPU for a 4,000-length key-value cache – a memory structure that enables more efficient use of AI processors. The same phase showed output generation times consistently below 50 milliseconds per token, yielding an efficiency of 1.29 tokens per second per TFLOPS. According to the paper, those metrics surpassed the performance of Nvidia's SGLang fast-serving framework for LLMs based on the U.S. firm's flagship H100 GPU and another system running DeepSeek's R1 using the H800 processor. The paper marked the first time that Shenzhen-based Huawei formally provided details about the capabilities of its flagship Ascend 910C AI accelerator, the South China Morning Post reports.

Ant Group promotes AI-enabled smart glasses for mobile payments

Chinese fintech firm Ant Group is pushing the wider adoption of smart glasses to facilitate digital transactions, extending the reach of mobile payments beyond smartphones. The first such payment outside mainland China was recently completed in Hong Kong using Meizu's StarV smart glasses. That transaction was made via AlipayHK, the Hong Kong platform of Ant Group's flagship Alipay app, using Meizu's smart eyewear to scan the QR code and use voice command. The whole process – including voice interface, intent recognition and voice authentication – was powered by Ant's artificial intelligence (AI) system. The Ant-Meizu initiative comes days after a similar launch on the mainland by augmented reality (AR) glasses maker Rokid with the Hangzhou-based fintech giant. The Rokid eyewear supports in-store payments by scanning the QR code and confirming payment with a voice command. "In the coming years, this technology could enable people to complete transactions simply by looking at or gesturing towards a product," Ant said.

The latest Ant announcement confirmed an interview in the South China Morning Post in April with Meizu owner DreamSmart Group, operated by Zhejiang Geely Holding Group. The firm said it was working with Ant International, which was spun off from the fintech company last year, to enable mobile payments via Meizu's smart glasses. Ant said it expected to expand the adoption of smart glasses for payments through its e-wallet partners worldwide. This includes 36 mobile payment apps, including Line Pay and GrabPay, through the Alipay+ network that connects more than 1.7 billion user accounts in 70 markets.

Global shipments of smart glasses, excluding AR eyewear, more than doubled to 1.6 million units in 2024, according to Beijing-based market researcher Runto. On top of its QR code and facial-recognition functions to facilitate payments, Alipay in June last year introduced its tap-and-pay service on the mainland, enabling consumers to settle transactions by tapping their smartphones on merchant terminals or payment tags. While that technology is similar to those used by Visa and Apple Pay, the nationwide coverage of Alipay has helped the platform sign up 100 million tap-and-pay users as of April 2025. Alipay rival WeChat Pay, owned by Tencent Holdings, introduced its palm-recognition payment technology on the mainland in 2023, the South China Morning Post reports.

China to further streamline approval of rare earth exports

China will further streamline the approval process for compliant rare earth export applications as part of broader efforts to maintain the stability of global industrial and supply chains, said Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) Spokesman He Yadong, adding that China stands ready to enhance communication and dialogue with relevant countries on export control matters, with the aim of promoting legitimate, rules-based trade and facilitating the compliant flow of critical materials. In line with relevant laws and regulations, the government has accelerated the review of export license applications for rare earths and

has already approved a number of requests, said He. In early April, China implemented export controls on seven types of medium and heavy rare earth elements to better protect national security and fulfill related international obligations. Rare earths are elements that play key roles in modern technologies, including in smartphones, fighter jets and wind turbines.

China's leadership in the global rare earth sector, encompassing a substantial portion of mining and a considerable share of processing, has drawn "accusations" from some foreign critics that it may be seeking to "weaponize" these critical materials, an allegation they claim could "destabilize global supply chains". Despite such concerns, China exported 5,865 metric tons of rare earth products in May, bringing total exports to 24,827 tons in the first five months, up 2.3% year-on-year, according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC). The export increase indicates that global demand for Chinese rare earths remains strong, said Ding Rijia, Professor specializing in industrial supply chain operations at the China University of Mining and Technology in Beijing. Noting that many Western countries have developed and released their own control lists of critical minerals, Ding said it is critical and necessary for China to improve its rare earth export policies. The recent export control measures can better regulate the management of its rare earth resources.

Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, during his talks in Paris earlier this month with European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic, explained China's export control policies to the European Union, emphasizing that the implementation of export controls on rare earth elements aligns with widely accepted international practices, the China Daily reports.

Retail sales rise the fastest since late 2023

China's retail sales rose in May at the fastest pace since late 2023, while industrial production and investment posted steady gains. Analysts said the growth points to a recovery that remains on course, backed by targeted stimulus and accommodative macro policies. However, lackluster demand and external uncertainties are fueling calls for more decisive and coordinated policy support. Figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that China's retail sales, a key measure of consumer spending, grew 6.4% year-on-year in May compared with a 5.1% rise in April. "Consumers found a bit of retail therapy in May, helped along by the early start of the '618' shopping festival and incentives from the government's trade-in program," said Louise Loo, Lead Economist at British think tank Oxford Economics. Loo said that her team believed **China's second-quarter GDP is on track for 5.2% year-on-year growth.** "That is a touch higher than our current baseline, reflecting more exuberant export-front-loading and a services sector that has broadly held up. As such, we will likely nudge our forecast upward in the forthcoming forecast round."

Loo's views were echoed by Ming Ming, Chief Economist at CITIC Securities, who said that China's economy is

gathering further steam despite lingering external uncertainties, with more proactive and effective macro-economic policies taking hold. "Industrial output kept recovering, consumption rebounded at a faster pace, and investment in manufacturing and infrastructure remained solid, further reinforcing the foundations for economic recovery," Ming noted. NBS data also showed that China's value-added industrial output rose 5.8% year-on-year in May, while fixed-asset investment (FAI) increased 3.7% during the January-May period after a 4% rise in the first four months of the year.

Lu Ting, Chief China Economist at Nomura, said that the increase in retail sales and slower FAI growth underscore the shift in China's policy focus from investment to consumption. However, he cautioned that the boost from the trade-in program may fade in the second half of this year, especially given the high base, while payback from the front-loading of exports might come after the 90-day truce period for the United States-China trade dispute ends. For China to achieve its annual growth target of around 5% this year requires the rolling out of a sizable stimulus package, he said, as reported by the China Daily.

EU SME CENTRE JOB OPENINGS

Business Advisor and Training Centre Manager/Consultant

The EU SME Centre is a European Union initiative that provides a comprehensive range of hands-on support services to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), getting them ready to do business in China. Specifically, the Centre assists SMEs to establish, develop and maintain commercial activities in the Chinese market – through export and investment – particularly at the crucial early stages of their market penetration strategy. Created in 2010, this initiative will soon start its Phase V (July 2025 – June 2028). For this new phase, we are opening the following positions:

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Employment type: Full-time

Starting date: 1 July 2025

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Seniority level: Mid-level

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