

China Business Weekly

20 January 2026

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中國商會

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

FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Chinese New Year Reception – 5 February 2026 – Brussels

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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 法蘭德斯-中國商會 春節晚會

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
演講嘉賓

MR JOHAN VAN OVERTVELDT
Chair of the Committee on Budgets,
European Parliament
歐洲議會預算委員會主席

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

5 FEBRUARY 2026 – 18h00
2026年2月5日 18:00

KBC Bank
法蘭德斯大區議會
Havenlaan 2, 1080 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

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MR WOUTER GHYOOT
Vice-President Government Affairs

FCCC FOUNDING MEMBERS 創辦成員



FCCC STRUCTURAL PARTNERS 重要合作伙伴



The **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce** has the pleasure of inviting you to celebrate the Year of the Horse on **Thursday, 5 February 2026, at 18:00, at KBC Bank, Havenlaan 2, 1080 Brussels.**

Honorary Guests and Speakers:

Mr. Johan Van Overtveldt, Chair of the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament

His Excellency Mr. Fei Shengchao, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Belgium

If you are interested in attending this event, please register via the button below.

We look forward to welcoming you to our New Year Reception.

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

Practical information:

Date: 05.02.2026

Location: KBC Bank, Havenlaan 2, 1080 Brussels

Price members: €65 (excl. VAT)

Price non members: €85 (excl. VAT)

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Sponsorship Opportunity for the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce Chinese New Year Reception



On Thursday, 5 February 2026, the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) will commemorate the Chinese New Year. The FCCC New Year Reception is scheduled to commence at 18:00 at KBC Bank in Brussels. We are privileged to welcome Mr. Johan Van Overtveldt, Chair of the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament, and His Excellency Mr. Fei Shengchao, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Belgium (tbc), as our distinguished guests and speakers.

This event presents a singular opportunity to enhance the visibility of Flemish enterprises engaging in trade with China, as well as for Chinese corporations operating in Belgium. We cordially invite your esteemed company to consider becoming a sponsor, thereby capitalizing on this prominent occasion to elevate your profile.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please consult the information at the bottom of the page or contact us by email at info@flanders-china.be.

- [sponsor-package-2026.pdf](#)

Exclusive Meeting-Reception with H.E. Mr Bruno Angelet, Ambassador of Belgium in China – 10 February 2026 – 18h00 – Brussels

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EXCLUSIVE MEETING-RECEPTION

With
H.E. Mr. Bruno Angelet
AMBASSADOR OF BELGIUM IN CHINA
Keynote: China's Economic Prospects
Tuesday 10 February 2026 • 18h00-20h00
KBC Bank, Brussels



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) is organizing an exclusive meeting-reception with **His Excellency Mr. Bruno Angelet**, Ambassador of Belgium in China.

The event will take place on **Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 18h00 at KBC Bank**, Havenlaan 2, 1080 Brussels.

During this gathering, the Ambassador will share his views on China's economic prospects. This event is an excellent opportunity to present your company's activities in China and Belgium and to engage directly with the Ambassador.

Programme:

18h00 – 18h15 Registration and welcome networking

18h15 – 18h20 Introduction by **Mr. Philippe Latour**, Chairman, Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce

18h20 – 18h50 Keynote by **H.E. Mr. Bruno Angelet**, Ambassador of Belgium in China: China's Economic Prospects

18h50 – 20h00 Networking reception

Practical information

Date & time: Tuesday 10 February 2026, 18h00 – 20h00

Location: KBC Bank, Havenlaan 2, 1080 Brussels

Price:

Members: €95 excl. 21% VAT (€19.95)

Non-members: €135 excl. 21% VAT (€28.35)

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PAST EVENTS

Webinar: China 2026 Business Forecast – 20 January 2026



The **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce** organized a webinar on the **China 2026 Business Forecast** on **20 January 2026**. Jan Borgonjon, Founder of InterChina, presented the conclusions of the report.

A detailed report of the webinar will follow next week.

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY FCCC

2026 SME Business Mission to China – Mid-April 2026 – Hainan Expo & Shenzhen



SME Business Mission to China
Consumer Products
Hainan Expo & Shenzhen
Mid-April 2026

To support the internationalisation of European SMEs to China, the EU SME Centre is organising a business mission in mid-April 2026 with an invitation to join our pavilion at the Hainan Expo.

In addition to the participation in the Hainan Expo, the 2026 SME Business Mission will include further activities in Shenzhen, such as site visits, B2B matchmaking sessions, market briefings and networking opportunities. The full programme will be published soon.

Who can register

This call for applications is open to SME owners and individuals working for SMEs, start-ups, or clusters and industry associations from the European Union and countries associated to the Single Market Programme, active in consumer product industries, including the following eligible sectors:

- Food & beverage and food supplements;
- Cosmetics and personal care;
- Textile, footwear and apparel;
- Jewelry and fashion accessories;
- Home and household products;
- Baby and infant products;
- Toys and games;
- Pet products;
- Consumer electronics;
- Health and wellness products.

The list above is non exhaustive. If you wish to enquire whether your industry segment is eligible to participate in the 2026 SME Business Mission, please contact our team.

How to participate

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Work for a legal entity located in the European Union or a country participating in the Single Market Programme.
- Be supported by their employer through a signed letter (in case they do not belong to senior management).
- Be able to participate in the entire programme.
- Have a good command of English.

Cost

The EU SME Centre's services are funded by the European Union and are free of charge to the mission's participants. All the activities included in the programme are covered by the EU SME Centre.

Participants are responsible for covering their travel, accommodation, and meal costs, including:

- Flights and other travel expenses to and from China.
- Inter-city travel.
- Hotel accommodation.
- Other living expenses in China, including local transportation and meals.
- Approximative estimated cost per person: EUR 2,750 – 3,500.

Assistance in flight booking and accommodation options with discounted offers will be provided to the participants.

[Find out more](#)

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FOREIGN TRADE

China's foreign trade in goods increases by 3.8% in 2025



China's foreign trade in goods grew by 3.8% year-on-year to CNY45.47 trillion in 2025, hitting a new record and marking the first time that the volume has exceeded the CNY45 trillion threshold. China also maintained its position as the world's largest trading nation in goods last year. As China navigated through internal and external uncertainties throughout the turbulent 2025 – ranging from rising geopolitical tensions and tariff wars to weak global demand – the record-breaking reading not only shows the strong resilience, adaptability and competitiveness of its foreign trade, but also underscores the country's irreplaceable role as both locomotive and stabilizer of the global supply chain, observers said. **China's exports grew by 6.1% year-on-year to CNY26.99 trillion last year, while imports grew by 0.5% year-on-year to CNY18.48 trillion,** according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC).

"Under the complex situation where the international environment undergoes profound changes and the global economic and trade order faces major challenges, the achievements in China's foreign trade sector are extraordinary and hard-won," Wang Jun, GAC Deputy Director said. "The performance has beaten market expectations, especially taking into account that the effects of China-U.S. trade conflicts, rising global tariffs and the appreciation of the Chinese yuan against the U.S. dollar were kicking in," Tian Yun, a Beijing-based economist told the Global Times. In 2025, China's goods imports reached CNY18.48 trillion, setting a new historical record, and the country has maintained its position as the world's second-largest import market for the 17th consecutive year, according to Wang. "Some countries are politicizing economic and trade issues, imposing restrictions on exports of high-tech products to China under various pretexts. Otherwise, China would import even more," Wang said.

Tian noted that the 0.5% growth in imports, though modest, still carries great ramifications in terms of how China has been sharing its development dividends with the world – backed up by a consumer market of 1.4 billion people. This

is particularly evident in **the noticeable import growth from developing countries and least developed countries**, he added. China's export market was increasingly diversified last year. The country has established trade ties with over 240 countries and regions, and its trade with over 190 countries and regions reported positive growth.

Trade with Belt and Road partner countries increased 6.3% year-on-year, accounting for 51.9% of the country's total foreign trade value. China's trade with ASEAN grew by 8% year-on-year, trade with Latin America rose 6.5%, and trade with Africa jumped 18.4%, according to the GAC. China's high-tech exports have been gearing momentum, a trend that is in line with the country's industrial upgrade. Numerous milestones were recorded last year. For example, China's exports of high-tech products climbed 13.2% year-on-year to reach CNY5.25 trillion in 2025. In particular, the exports of industrial robots jumped 48.7%, with exports exceeding imports for the first time, which transformed China into a net exporter of such robots.

China's foreign trade is expected to grow in a stable and sound manner this year. Tian said that although downward pressure due to geopolitical tensions could weigh in this year, it is likely that China's foreign trade could grow at around 5% this year, which will further drive the total volume to hit the CNY46 trillion threshold. "China's standing in the global industrial and supply chain will be further cemented," Tian noted. Analysts expect that this year, China is likely to sustain and accelerate import momentum as more measures to stimulate domestic demand gradually take effect.

China's trade with the U.S. exceeded CNY4 trillion, accounting for 8.8% of China's total import-export value in 2025. China is the third-largest export destination and the third-largest import source for the U.S., while the U.S. is China's largest export destination and third-largest import source, the Global Times reports.

The China Daily adds that the "new trio" of green exports – electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products – collectively rose 27.1% year-on-year. Wind turbine exports grew even more sharply, climbing 48.7%. Robert Koopman, former Chief Economist of the World Trade Organization (WTO), said that over the next five to 10 years, "an important evolution in China's role is going to be being a big center of demand". The Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) launched the **"Big Market for All: Export to China"** initiative in November to **motivate foreign businesses to increase their exports**. "In today's global economy, a reliable and growing market is perhaps the rarest resource," said Liao Fan, Director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics. China represents an annual consumer market of about CNY50 trillion.

AUTOMOTIVE

Vehicles with L3 autonomous driving license plates enter Beijing's roads



On the bustling roads of Beijing, a subtle revolution is taking shape, marked by a series of distinctive license plates. To the untrained eye, they are just alphanumeric codes. To China's intelligent vehicle industry, they are emblems of a historic leap. These are not ordinary plates but **the nation's first official license plates issued specifically for level 3 conditional autonomous driving vehicles**, symbolizing a formal transition from prolonged testing to regulated on-road commercial driving. This tangible milestone follows the recent announcement from China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), granting the first-ever batch of market-access permits for L3 conditional self-driving vehicle models. Two models – one optimized for stop-and-go urban congestion, the other for structured highway driving – are now authorized for limited public use in designated areas of Beijing and Chongqing. This move decisively shifts L3 technology from closed proving grounds into the complex, unpredictable realm of real-world traffic interaction.

The approved models were developed by Changan Automobile and BAIC Motor's Arcfox brand. Changan and BAIC are among a batch of joint groups in a pilot program for access approval and road testing of intelligent connected vehicles in China. The pilot program was initiated as early as 2023 by several ministries, including MIIT and the Ministry of Transport, to accelerate the development of intelligent connected vehicles and boost local innovation. Other participants in the pilot program include BYD, Nio, FAW Group and SAIC. The program is not limited to passenger vehicles. It also covers trucks and buses. Participating manufacturers include heavy-duty truck maker SAIC Hongyan and Yutong Bus.

The core of L3, or "eyes-off, mind-on", automation lies in its conditional nature. Under specific conditions, such as certain highways or slow urban traffic, **the system can take full control of dynamic driving tasks, legally allowing the driver to disengage**. However, the human

must remain ready to intervene when prompted. This phase fundamentally changes the relationship between human and machine, moving the industry's focus from perfecting "hands-off" technology to defining clear lines of "liability-on". Sun Hang, Chief Engineer of the China Automotive Standardization Research Institute, said: "The approval of the first L3 models means that **for the first time, China has allowed autonomous vehicles to enter the market as formal products at the policy level**. We are exploring commercial application through pilots, which is a landmark in itself," Sun said.

In China, driving automation is defined by six levels, from 0 to 5, with L0 meaning that such vehicles are entirely operated by humans. Levels 1 and 2 are considered driver-assistance systems, in which the human driver remains perpetually responsible for monitoring the environment and must be ready to intervene instantly, according to the MIIT. Liu Fawang, Deputy Director of the Ministry's Equipment Industry Development Center, said that **L3, or "conditional automation", is the pivotal threshold**. The vehicle itself can perform dynamic driving tasks such as steering, accelerating and braking under specific conditions, and **the driver is not required to monitor the road continuously, but only to respond when the system requests intervention**. "The shift to L3 formally enters the realm of automated driving where the responsibility for driving can be allocated among the driver, the car manufacturer and the system supplier. This represents a monumental shift from the unequivocal driver liability associated with L1 and L2 cars," Liu added.

Fu Bingfeng, Secretary General of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, said: "The move means that China's autonomous vehicle sector is accelerating from the 'technical validation' phase into a new stage of 'mass production and application'. This progression is not merely a reflection of technological maturation, but also a vivid example of the nation's coordinated strategy to balance high-quality development with high-level safety." Sun said: "The pilot is designed to better ensure the safety of drivers and passengers. It reflects an overarching philosophy of prioritizing safety and advancing step by step, starting with low-risk, limited-scenario trials before considering broader applications. While the full integration of autonomous driving into daily life still requires time, this step clearly indicates that autonomous driving technology is one step closer to us."

The move came after China established a comprehensive industrial system for intelligent connected vehicles, with **more than 60% of new passenger cars now equipped with combined driver-assist functions, or L2 systems**, according to the Ministry. China's move places it among the first group of major nations to formally regulate L3 vehicles, alongside Germany and Japan, which approved models from Mercedes-Benz and Honda, respectively, with conditions, in recent years, the China Daily reports.

FOREIGN TRADE

China and EU reach agreement on EV trade



China and the EU announced an agreement to resolve their years-long trade dispute over Chinese electric vehicles. The European Commission issued a document outlining how Chinese exporters can submit price undertakings, which it said must be “adequate to eliminate the injurious effects of the subsidies and provide an equivalent effect to duties”. It added that it would amend its existing regulations if it accepts such offers. To strengthen the proposals, the Commission encouraged exporters to include commitments such as annual shipment volumes and planned future investments in the EU. The EV dispute has been a major thorn in China-EU trade ties in recent years. Brussels opened its anti-subsidy investigation in October 2023, and concluded it a year later by imposing countervailing duties ranging from 7.8% to 35.3% over a five-year period. In response, Beijing launched probes into European cognac, dairy products and pork.

While the EU’s tariffs remain in place, they could be replaced with minimum import prices under the new scheme. In a separate statement, China’s Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said “the progress fully reflects the spirit of dialogue and the outcomes of consultations between China and the EU. It shows that both China and the EU have the ability and willingness to properly resolve differences through dialogue and consultation under the framework of WTO rules and maintain the stability of automotive industrial and supply chains in China, the EU and the whole world,” the Ministry said. “This is conducive not only to ensuring the healthy development of China-EU economic and trade relations, but also to safeguarding the rules-based international trade order.”

In December, the EU launched a formal review of a price undertaking offer from Volkswagen’s Chinese joint venture – the first of its kind by a company seeking to bypass the EU’s tariffs on made-in-China EVs. That case played an important role in bringing about last week’s announcement, as both sides accelerated negotiations following the proposal. The proposed move to swap tariffs for price floors marks a major development in the trade dispute, according to Alicia Garcia-Herrero, Chief Economist for the Asia-Pacific region at French investment bank Natixis. The China Chamber of Commerce to the European Union

(CCCEU) said the progress marked a “soft landing” in the EV dispute and “a constructive step forward for China–EU trade and investment cooperation, as well as for the broader bilateral relationship”. “The consensus and arrangements reached will significantly strengthen business confidence, and create a more stable and predictable environment for Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers and related supply-chain companies investing and operating in Europe,” the Chamber said in a statement. It would also encourage further cooperation between China and the EU in areas such as market development and technological innovation, it added. The China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products echoed that view, saying a proper resolution of the EU’s anti-subsidy case was a “shared hope” for upstream and downstream players across the sector.

But Cui Hongjian, a former Chinese diplomat and the head of EU studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, said major concessions to address trade tensions are unlikely in the near term as both sides face economic constraints along with uncertainties in relations with Washington. **“At present, both sides are grappling with a certain lack of confidence in each other.”** Garcia-Herrero at Natixis, meanwhile, warned the scheme could be bad news for Europe, undermining the credibility of EU tariffs and pushing up costs for European buyers. Its emphasis on increasing Chinese investment could deepen the bloc’s dependence on the country, she said, adding that it would allow Chinese producers to sell at higher profit margins without paying tariffs, the South China Morning Post reports.

The China Daily adds that though the EU intends to achieve the same outcome through price undertakings as by imposing tariffs, for Chinese automobile exporters, this means the portion equivalent to the duty is retained as their own revenue, effectively increasing their profit margins, said Sun Xiaohong, Secretary General of the Automotive Branch of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products. In October 2024, Brussels decided to impose tariffs for five years of up to 35.3% on imports of Chinese EVs on top of the standard 10% duty, following a probe into allegations of unfair subsidies in China’s EV industry. Chinese carmakers captured 12.8% of Europe’s electric-vehicle market in November, according to Dataforce.

Following a series of high-level meetings, Ji Xuehong, Director of an Automotive Industry Innovation Research Center at the North China University of Technology, said that “The next phase of development for intelligent and connected new energy vehicles will hinge on innovation rather than price competition. The industry is entering a period of opportunity in areas such as advanced materials, industrial software, autonomous driving, and solid-state batteries, while the electrification of heavy-duty trucks and the globalization of China’s NEV supply chain are also set to gather pace in the years to come.”

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

China and other countries trading with Iran to face additional 25% U.S. tariffs

U.S. President Donald Trump announced new tariffs targeting nations maintaining commercial ties with Iran. “Effective immediately, any country doing business with the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a tariff of 25% on any and all business being done with the United States of America. This order is final and conclusive,” Trump said. It is expected to hit China and India the hardest, given their significant energy and commercial ties with Tehran. **China is Iran’s largest trading partner, accounting for roughly 30% of the country’s total foreign trade and 90% of shipped oil exports.** Russia and India follow at a distance. However, according to China Customs reports from late December 2025, official trade between China and Iran plunged by 24% in the first 11 months of last year. Last year, Trump imposed 25% “reciprocal” tariffs on India, along with an additional 25% penalty for New Delhi’s continued purchases of Russian crude oil.

Despite an agreement between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea, to roll back some trade barriers, **the average U.S. tariff on Chinese imports has remained at 47.5%**, according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Washington-based think tank. Trump is expected to rely on executive authority to impose the new tariffs without seeking congressional approval. Last year, he levied additional duties on all U.S. trading partners under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). That approach is now facing a legal test, with an active challenge questioning whether a President can invoke “national emergency” powers to impose permanent tariffs. An adverse decision could require Washington to refund billions of dollars in collected duties, but for now, the Administration is pressing ahead. Trump has explicitly linked the latest tariffs to Iran’s crackdown on anti-government protests and near-total internet blackout, the South China Morning Post reports.

China builds its own “small yard, high fence” to shut out U.S. tech

“Small yard, high fence” was how Jake Sullivan, National Security Adviser under President Joe Biden, described U.S. tech policy towards China. The approach, designed to fence off sensitive U.S. technologies from China, was most commonly associated with export controls that, among others, restricted Chinese firms’ access to Nvidia’s advanced chips, the critical inputs

for developing cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) systems. China is now fighting back by taking a leaf out of that playbook. For years, it was the U.S. erecting barriers and driving decoupling between the world’s two tech superpowers. But **two developments at the start of 2026 suggest that the Chinese government is** no longer just the target of such measures, but **also a driver of decoupling itself:** its apprehension towards Nvidia’s high-end H200 chips being allowed into the country, and its probe into Facebook-owner Meta Platforms’ acquisition of Chinese-founded AI start-up Manus.

Last week, **Beijing told domestic tech companies not to purchase Nvidia’s chips unless absolutely necessary**, with new rules set to cap the total number of advanced AI chips that local firms can import. A Chinese data center employee told the South China Morning Post that they have been preparing to build server stacks in Inner Mongolia based on H200 chips to serve major clients such as Alibaba and ByteDance. However, the government had instructed the firm to reserve stack space for domestic chips, the person said. In this new phase, the Chinese government has shifted to proactively restricting imports to accelerate domestic substitution and ensure self-reliance across the entire AI stack.

The key question for industry observers is whether China’s tech industry can stand on its own two feet without significant U.S. involvement. For many years, the answer to that was a no. From the late 1990s to the early 2010s, U.S. capital and technical expertise were vital for building up China’s tech capabilities, according to Chen Li, Assistant Researcher at Beijing-based think tank Anbound. During that period, tech firms from Apple to Microsoft localized their products, opened research and development (R&D) centers, and partnered with Chinese internet firms. Major Chinese companies, from Alibaba to Baidu, were able to rapidly scale up operations after blockbuster listings on U.S. exchanges.

The first Trump Administration marked an inflection point with the first round of U.S. sanctions targeting ZTE and Huawei Technologies starting in 2016. For the first time, Washington showed that it would leverage its dominance of critical components, from chips to chipmaking equipment itself, in its tech war with China. Beijing responded by kick-starting nationwide efforts to pursue self-reliance in semiconductors and AI, spearheaded by Huawei. When the Biden administration added export controls on advanced semiconductors and the tools that make these chips in a significant escalation on October 7, 2022, the fences some had hoped would be temporary instead became firm fixtures. “After that, Chinese firms had

to assume access to U.S. technology was conditional and political, while U.S. firms had to price geopolitical risk into their China strategies,” said Ahmad Shadid, Founder of Swiss-based AI research lab O Foundation.

The recent loosening of U.S. chip export controls, first on Nvidia's H20 and then H200, marked the end of extensive multi-year lobbying efforts by the leading U.S. chip designer and its charismatic founder Jensen Huang. But Beijing's reported ambivalence over these chips now being allowed into the Chinese market suggested a different dynamic. The H200, Nvidia's second most powerful AI chip, would be the most powerful AI processor available to Chinese firms, should they be given a license to purchase it. However, after years of navigating U.S. export controls and sanctions, Chinese policymakers seem to be taking the view that escaping this U.S. chokehold long term is more important than technological progress in the short term, the South China Morning Post reports.

Tianjin container terminal achieves fully automated and unmanned loading and unloading operations

Tianjin Port's intelligent container terminal has recently achieved fully-automated and unmanned loading/unloading operations, integrating cutting-edge technologies such as Beidou navigation, 5G communications, and artificial intelligence-powered transport robots. On December 25, the patented technology “alongshore fully-automated container terminal handling system and its process” won the 13th Tianjin Patent Gold Award. Unmanned quay cranes precisely grasp containers, while AI transport robots seamlessly shuttle back and forth. “The digital system provides real-time mapping of production operations, making the entire process resemble a meticulously choreographed ‘digital ballet’,” said Qu Ming, Deputy Director of the Digital Transformation Office and Director of the Big Data Center at Tianjin Port Group.

“Autonomous control of core technologies is the key to Tianjin Port's smart transformation, and we hope to leverage digital transformation as a new driver for high-quality port development,” Qu said. On January 17, 2023, Tianjin Port Group announced the completion of the world's first fully internet of things (IoT) container terminal, marking significant progress in the deep application and integration of high-tech technologies such as IoT, big data and AI at Tianjin Port. Yang Rong, General Manager of Tianjin Port Second Container Terminal Co, said Tianjin Port runs a fully IoT-enabled container terminal which was upgraded from the previously established global first “smart zero-carbon” terminal. “On the wharf, wind turbines and photovoltaic panels are used to generate electricity. The wharf has truly achieved 100% reliance on electricity, with 100% of the electricity being green power, and 100% of the green power being self-produced and self-sufficient. This also indicates that our wharf is a green, low-carbon and energy-efficient wharf,” said Yang Jiemin, Vice President of Tianjin Port Group.

In addition to ships docking at the port, heavy trucks for freight transportation have also adopted new energy. “In June 2024, the new energy heavy truck charging base

jointly established by us and Tianjin Port Bulk Logistics Co was put into operation,” said He Rui, a comprehensive energy technician in the Marketing Department of Tianjin Binhai Electric Power Co. “With 35 high-power charging piles of 300 kilowatts each, the base can meet the daily charging needs of approximately 250 new energy heavy trucks.”

Currently, Tianjin Port's installed capacity of wind power, photovoltaic and other new energy sources exceeds 150 megawatts, with an annual power generation capacity of 350 million kilowatt-hours, meeting over 70% of Tianjin Port Group's power production needs, the China Daily reports.

Zhejiang targets 3- to 7-nanometer AI chip breakthrough to counter U.S. embargo

Zhejiang province, home to Alibaba and Unitree, has set clear targets to develop cutting-edge chips and chipmaking equipment over the next five years. The province is the latest locality to prioritize innovation under its new five-year plan. It joins other hubs, including Shenzhen and Shanghai, that have thrown their weight behind the Chinese government's nationwide strategy to develop indigenous technologies amid an intensifying rivalry with the United States. The province will focus on chip design and wafer manufacturing, aiming to achieve rapid progress across 3- to 7-nm processing nodes, according to its draft industrial development document for 2026 to 2030. Advanced chips have become the main pillar of income for some global tech firms, underscoring the weight of Zhejiang's ambitions.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker, announced that combined shipments of its 3-nm, 5-nm and 7-nm chips made up 77% of its total wafer revenue in the fourth quarter of 2025. A 7-nm chip contains about 90 million to 100 million transistors per square millimeter, while a more powerful 3-nm chip boasts about 200 million to 224 million. Zhejiang also plans to develop low-power, high-end general-purpose and artificial intelligence (AI) chips, as well as fifth-generation RISC-V chip architecture. The province has nurtured a new breed of start-ups in AI, chips and humanoid robots in recent years, supported by a vibrant tech and innovation ecosystem and the prestigious Zhejiang University.

Alibaba's semiconductor design arm T-Head has developed an AI chip that is said to be approaching parity with Nvidia's H20 in performance benchmarks. Zhejiang's ambitions dovetail with China's broader pursuit of self-reliance, as it strives to break a U.S.-led stranglehold on some critical technologies, including export controls on advanced chips and the equipment needed to mass-produce them. Beijing's strategy shows no sign of slowing, despite the Trump Administration green-lighting sales of Nvidia's H200 AI chips on the condition that Nvidia's China shipments account for no more than half of the amount sold domestically.

A January report by Bernstein Research, a global equity research and brokerage firm, forecast rapid growth in China's AI chip production capacity, projecting domestic

sales would grow at a compound annual rate of 74% over the next three years. The firm also estimated domestic vendors' market share rising from an estimated 58% in 2025 to 93% in 2028. Zhejiang's plan also outlined ambitions to develop compound semiconductor materials, electronic speciality gases, high-purity sputtering targets and photoresists. Advanced lithography machines were also mentioned, as China mobilizes resources to push for breakthroughs in chipmaking equipment.

In the field of next-generation semiconductors, the province set goals to develop gallium oxide, diamond, silicon carbide and gallium nitride, as part of a broader shift towards new materials over traditional silicon. Meanwhile, the bleeding edge of the semiconductor industry has moved to the even more advanced 2-nm chips, which have been developed and are on the cusp of entering mass production at TSMC, with preparations for sub-2-nm ones, the South China Morning Post reports.

Beijing's "Rocket Street" project is completed

The Beijing "Rocket Street" project is entering the hand-over and commissioning phase, according to a statement from the Beijing Economic Technological Development Area (Beijing E-Town). The project will become the country's first experimental research-and-production base for commercial aerospace development. Located in Yizhuang in southeastern Beijing, the project covers 145,000 square meters of floor area. It will include four major functional zones, covering a generic technology platform, innovation center, high-end manufacturing center, and an exhibition and mission control center. The project will provide a dozen shared services, including rocket and satellite R&D and testing, intelligent manufacturing, and integrated space-air-ground mission control, matching the full industrial-chain needs of commercial spaceflight development, said the statement.

The innovation center and the high-end manufacturing center of the project are not conventional workshops, but specialized heavy-duty workshops boasting a clear height of 7.9 meters with a load-bearing capacity of 3 tons on the first floor, while floors above the second level have a clear height of 5.4 meters and a load-bearing capacity of 1 ton. These specifications are designed to meet the research and production requirements of large aerospace systems such as rockets, supporting enterprises engaged in system design, key components, control systems, satellite terminal manufacturing, as well as related R&D, manufacturing and office functions, the statement read.

Commercial aerospace is a pillar industry in Beijing E-Town, and has already attracted more than 200 related enterprises. The commercial rocket companies here account for 75% of the national total, forming a complete industrial chain covering launch vehicles, satellite manufacturing, aerospace new materials, and space technology applications.

In 2025, rockets developed by companies from Beijing E-Town carried out 24 successful launches, placing more than 160 satellites into orbit. The aerospace sector generated over CNY30 billion in revenue in 2025, the Global Times reports.

In related news, the China Daily adds that Galactic Energy, a private rocket maker in Beijing, conducted the sixth sea-based launch of its Ceres 1 carrier rocket from a mobile launch platform in the Yellow Sea off the coast of Shandong, marking the first private space mission in China in 2026. The launch sent four satellites into a low-earth orbit about 850 kilometers above earth. The satellites were built by Guodian Gaoke, a Beijing-based private satellite operator, for its Tianqi network, which now has 41 satellites and global coverage after the latest launch. To date, 21 of the rocket's 23 flights have been successful, placing 89 commercial satellites into orbit.

Shanghai aims to become world capital of eVTOL

With favorable policies, abundant capital and unique airspace, Shanghai is expected to develop into a "world capital of the electric vertical takeoff and landing sector", industry experts said. On January 4, the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization, together with five other departments, issued measures to link the Yangtze River Delta to accelerate the construction of advanced manufacturing clusters in the low-altitude economy. The measures are effective till December 31, 2028. According to the measures, by 2028, the core industry of Shanghai's low-altitude economy should reach a scale of approximately CNY80 billion, forming a complete industrial chain for new low-altitude aircraft, aiming to become the "world capital of eVTOL". **Shanghai should cultivate and attract 10 leading aircraft manufacturers** – including eVTOLs, industrial drones and new energy general aviation aircraft – forming a mass production capacity of over 500 new aircraft, and driving the industrial chain to achieve additional investment of over CNY20 billion.

Gao Chengyuan, Consultant at the low-altitude economy branch of the China International Association for Promotion of Science and Technology, said: **"Shanghai has three core advantages.** One is the Yangtze River Delta super supply chain, where batteries, motors and composite materials required for eVTOL aircraft can be fully equipped within 200 kilometers, naturally minimizing logistics costs. Second is its unique one-stop airworthiness resources, which can reduce the certification cycle by more than 30%. Third, with a vast array of scenarios – including logistics, emergency response and business travel – the order volume is sufficient enough to feed the first mass production line. More importantly, the CNY80 billion target has united the government, capital and central enterprises with funds, airspace and policies all being given the green light simultaneously. This level of synchronization is not something other cities can learn in the short term." Specifically, the measures provide support of up to CNY100 million to complete aircraft manufacturing projects with high technological innovation and outstanding contributions to industrialization, such as eVTOLs and ton-scale industrial drones.

Ma Liqi, Co-founder and CEO of drone maker McLean (Shanghai) Intelligent Technology Co, said: "The support of up to CNY100 million for complete machine enterprises is exemplary. For enterprises like us, which invest heavily in research and development (R&D) and have long cycles,

this not only alleviates financial pressures, but also strengthens our strategic determination to base ourselves in Shanghai and participate in global competition,” the China Daily reports.

European test pilots evaluate China's C919 airplane

European aviation evaluators have begun test flights of China's home-grown C919 airliner in Shanghai as the manufacturer of the narrow-body jet presses ahead with its bid to secure Western safety certification – a crucial step to be able to compete with industry leaders Boeing and Airbus. Two test pilots from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) have conducted verification flights. Meanwhile, senior foreign pilots working in China have been deployed to help demonstrate the C919's reliability. The moves, following a delay in the high-stakes certification process last year, were part of ongoing exchanges between Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (Comac) – the C919's manufacturer – and the European regulator. EASA pilots conducted in-flight tests in November on a C919 that took off from Shanghai's Pudong Airport, near the aircraft's production base, the source added.

“EASA agreed the aircraft is good and safe, other than some teething problems that required tweaks,” a source said. Another source confirmed the test flights and said there had been an increase in exchanges between Comac and EASA recently. Jason Li, an aviation and logistics analyst, said progress was being made and EASA's test flights would be crucial. Flight tests are a key part of compliance demonstration, the third stage of EASA's four-part assessment regime. They validate critical aspects as the aircraft is put through extreme maneuvers, stalls and weather environments. After successful flight testing and other demonstrations, EASA reviews the complete compliance package and ensures any issues are resolved before issuing certification.

The C919, China's challenger to the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 narrow-body airliners, still needs Western certification to bolster its international standing and fly beyond Chinese skies, despite more than two years of smooth domestic operations since May 2023, with four million passengers transported by the end of last year.

In May last year, EASA Executive Director Florian Guillermet said the approval timeline for the C919 could be extended to “three to six years”, dashing hopes the Chinese airliner would pass inspection soon. “The C919 cannot be certified in 2025. We should be certifying within three to six years,” Guillermet said, while adding he was optimistic the plane would eventually receive certification, the South China Morning Post reports.

Foreign and Hong Kong retailers close stores in mainland China

China's retail and retail property sectors are experiencing a wave of store closures by foreign and Hong Kong brands. “The series of closures come as a combined result of their outdated business models and profound changes in the macro-economic environment,” said Wang Tianshi, Analyst at the Shanghai-based LeadLeo Research Institute. “Compared with emerging mainland retailers, Hong Kong and foreign brands often remain under a ‘selling on the mainland’ phase, rather than a ‘creating for the mainland’ phase.”

Upscale Hong Kong department store chain **Lane Crawford** was expected to close its outlet in Chengdu, Sichuan province, after February 28. There was a core mismatch between the chain's high-end business model and consumers' rapidly evolving lifestyle, according to Wang. Multinational furniture retailer **Ikea said seven mainland stores would cease operations from February 2**, as the company shifted its focus on opening more than 10 small-format stores over a two-year period. As of December 31, German lingerie maker **Triumph Group International** had closed all its bricks-and-mortar stores on the mainland. Spanish retailer **Zara Home** closed its last two stores in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, and in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in June and July 2025, respectively. Zara Home expected to continue operating shops in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, while integrating online and offline retail operations. Its sister company, fast-fashion retailer Zara, last year shut down more than 10 mainland stores, mostly in second-tier cities, following store closures in previous years. Still, Zara opened some large-scale stores at prime locations in cities like Shanghai.

The closures underscored how these brands struggled to keep pace with China's evolving market dynamics, in spite of efforts to strategically transform their retail operations in recent years. “The successive withdrawal of foreign and Hong Kong retail brands reflected a lack of local market awareness in organizational structure and a lag in decision-making efficiency,” LeadLeo's Wang said. “Digital transparency has wiped out the information asymmetry edge that used to support multi-brand boutiques, and consumers are no longer willing to pay for channel premiums,” he said. “High rents and slow inventory turnover have squeezed these stores' cash flow.”

In the first 11 months of 2025, online retail sales of physical goods in China climbed 5.7% year-on-year – outpacing the 4% growth in total retail sales of consumer goods – and accounted for 25.9% of the overall market, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). After next month's store closures, Lane Crawford was expected to continue operating its stores at Beijing Seasons Place, Shanghai Times Square and its outlet at Bicester Village Shanghai. The retailer's Chengdu store closure would follow the shutdown of its Beijing Yintai Center location in 2021, the South China Morning Post reports.

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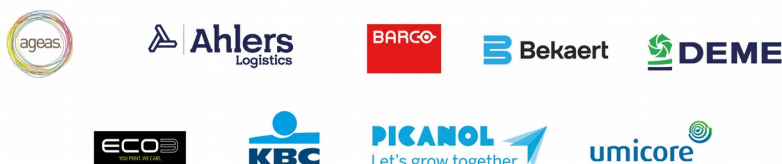
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