China Business Weekly

13 October 2026

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

FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

China AI in Focus: What European Businesses Need to Know Now
Monday, 19 October, 16h30 – Ghent



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce is organizing an Expert Keynote: "China AI in focus: What European businesses need to know now"on 19 October at 16:30 atCercle Royal La Concorde, Kouter 150 in Ghent.

During this expert keynote, **Mr Etienne Charlier, AI & Business Strategy Expert**, will provide insights into China's fast-moving artificial intelligence landscape and explain how Chinese companies are turning AI technologies into practical applications across industries.

China's AI ecosystem is developing rapidly, moving from computer vision and large language models to robotics and increasingly sophisticated real-world applications. Chinese companies are not only developing new models, but are also integrating AI into manufacturing, mobility, services, automation and other areas of the economy.

The keynote will look beyond the familiar US technology platforms and introduce participants to **Chinese open models, tools and technologies that European companies can test, adapt and further develop**. It will also examine how these technologies are being operationalised and where they may offer new opportunities for European businesses.

At the same time, adopting AI technologies involves important strategic considerations. Mr Charlier will address key **risks and trade-offs related to data, models, cybersecurity, compliance and critical technological dependencies**, and discuss how European companies can assess these issues when developing their own AI strategies.

The session will also explore why the current competitive window is particularly important and why and how European companies should act now as AI capabilities continue to advance rapidly in China and globally.

The keynote will provide CEOs, business leaders and internationally active companies with a practical perspective on China's AI ecosystem, the technologies emerging from it and the implications for European companies seeking to remain competitive in an increasingly AI-driven global economy.

Programme

16h30-17h00 Registration and networking

17h00-17h05 Welcome by **Ms Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director, Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce**

17h05-17h50 Presentation: "China AI in focus: What European businesses need to know now" by Mr Etienne Charlier

17h50-18h15 Q&A session

18h15-19h00 Networking drink

The programme will conclude with networking drinks, offering participants the opportunity to exchange views with the speaker and fellow business leaders on the opportunities, risks and strategic implications of China's rapidly developing AI ecosystem for European companies.

About the speaker

Mr Etienne Charlier is an **AI & Business Strategy Expe**rt with almost 30 years of professional experience in China. He holds an **MBA from MIT Sloan School of Management** and degrees in **Engineering and Philosophy from UCL**.

Throughout his career, Mr Charlier has combined technology expertise with extensive business experience in China. He previously served as **China General Manager and Vice President for a telecommunications equipment company** and later founded a consulting firm in Shanghai, advising companies on strategy, technology and business development.

His engagement with artificial intelligence dates back to his early work with **deep learning in 1988**, and he renewed his focus on the field in 2016 as advances in machine learning began transforming industries. Drawing on his long-standing experience in China and his understanding of both technology and business strategy, Mr Charlier offers a practical perspective on how China's AI ecosystem is evolving and what these developments mean for European companies.

Practical information:

Date: October 19, 2026

Time: 16h30 – 19h00 CEST

Location: Cercle Royal La Concorde, Kouter 150, 9000 Ghent, Parking: Kouter

Price for members: €75 + 21% VAT

Price non members: €115+21%VAT

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Webinar: EU-China 2026: Trading Under Pressure, Investing Under Scrutiny 28 October 2026, 10:00 CET



The **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce** is organizing a webinar entitled "**EU–China 2026: Trading Under Pressure, Investing Under Scrutiny"** taking place on **28 October** at **10:00 a.m. CET.**

EU–China goods trade reached approximately €760 billion in 2025, making China the EU's second-largest trading partner in goods after the United States and its largest source of imports. At the same time, the regulatory environment surrounding it has changed considerably. New EU instruments on subsidies, carbon, supply chains and economic security have entered into application in quick succession. Trade defence investigations have risen sharply, and additional duties now apply to a growing range of products. Against this background, Chinese direct investment in Europe (EU and UK) rose by 67% in 2025 to its highest level since 2018, as companies increasingly serve the European market from within it as well as from abroad, a shift that raises a different set of regulatory questions, now centred on investment screening.

In the first part of the webinar, **Mr Xiaoyi Tang, Partner, International Trade at Dentons,** will set out the current state of the EU–China trade relationship and the regulatory and commercial factors that shape it in practice, from tariffs and customs treatment through to product, origin and compliance requirements. He will conclude with the sectors in which Belgian and Chinese companies continue to find genuine commercial complementarity.

In the second part, **Mr Richard Liu, Senior Associate, Corporate and M&A at Dentons,** will address the investment side. He will briefly address greenfield investing and will then comment on the current and future foreign direct investment screening framework in Belgium.

The programme is as follows:

10:00 – 10:05 Introduction by **Ms Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director, Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce**

10:05 – 10:25 Presentation on EU–China trade relations, tariffs and regulatory challenges by **Mr Xiaoyi Tang, Partner, International Trade at Dentons**

10:25 – 10:45 Presentation on investment opportunities and foreign direct investment screening in Belgium by **Mr Richard Liu, Senior Associate, Corporate and M&A at Dentons**

10:45 – 11:00 Q&A session

Practical Information

Date: 28 October 2026

Time: 10:00-11:00 AM CET

Location: Online

Participation fee:

Members: Free

About the Speakers:

Mr Xiaoyi Tang is a Partner in International Trade at Dentons. He advises companies on international trade and regulatory matters, including tariffs, customs treatment, product and origin requirements, and compliance issues affecting cross-border business.

Mr Richard Liu is a Senior Associate in Corporate and M&A at Dentons. He advises clients on corporate transactions and investment matters, including greenfield investment and foreign direct investment screening in Belgium.

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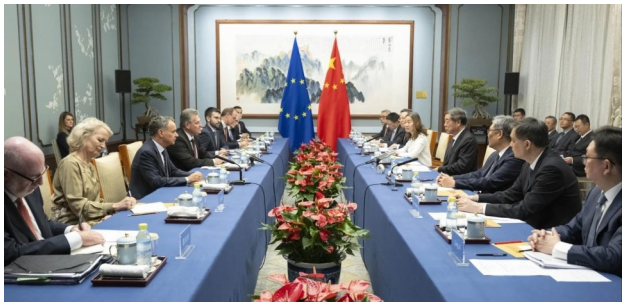
FOREIGN TRADE

China, EU agree on steps to stabilize trade



The European Union and China have "reached an understanding" that will cut Chinese hybrid car shipments by "more than a half", in a temporary cooling of trade tensions that have threatened to boil over into a full-blown trade war. Speaking after marathon trade talks in Beijing, EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic said the deal would see China slash its hybrid car exports "by several million cars" over a four-year period. "This is the first time that China has accepted to moderate its exports without going through the phase of prior trade tensions, and I very much appreciate that," Sefcovic told reporters in the Chinese capital. The sides also agreed to expedite EU applications for rare earth mineral export licenses and improve market access for goods including car parts, olive oil and textiles, which Sefcovic said could be worth "almost €4 billion" in current export value. **EU national leaders are to decide this week whether China's concessions are enough, but an all-out tariff war seems to be avoided.**

"It's very easy to declare a trade war or any war, but it's very difficult to stop it," Sefcovic said. "So therefore, I put so much emphasis on negotiations, and I'm glad that today I can present to you the outcome." Sefcovic declined to share further details on the arrangement on hybrid cars – shipments of which have ballooned in recent months – but hinted that it could follow a recent import curb the bloc placed on Chinese steel. "There are different techniques," he said. "If you look to recent months, I think you would find the answer." **EU was seeking a "proof of concept" deal in a single sector – hybrid cars – which would be seen as a test** of whether Beijing was negotiating in good faith. A joint statement by the two sides, published following two days of negotiations, said that talks would continue over reducing tariffs and creating minimum price deals that would allow Chinese electric vehicles to enter the EU market at a lower duty rate.

The 16-point agreement listed a series of deliverables from the latest round of talks, with the two sides set to meet for further discussions in March next year. Most of these centered on long-standing trade disputes, including over medical equipment and power inverters. Commissioner Sefcovic met with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Vice Premier He Lifeng in Beijing. "We never had the level of intensity of our exchanges and contacts as we have had over the last three to four months with our Chinese counterparts," Sefcovic said. But he cautioned that the outcomes laid out in the joint statement would not be enough by themselves to reduce tensions between the two sides. **"It is a crucial first step, but only a first step in the process of rebalancing," Sefcovic said.** "As EU Commission President von der Leyen has said, dialogue needs results, and where the dialogue cannot deliver, the EU will use its tools to ensure rebalancing," he added.

Chinese and European Union representatives also agreed to explore cooperation in areas including new energy and artificial intelligence (AI) during their just concluded trade talks, which Beijing described as "equal, professional and constructive". Both parties "explored the possibility" of introducing mutual facilitation measures for the compliant trade of dual-use items between China and the EU. They agreed to strengthen policy communication, keep global supply chains stable, and support the "substantive launch" of a process for the "mutual delisting" of sanctioned firms under their respective legal frameworks.

The China Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) welcomed the "pragmatic outcomes", saying they showed both sides' "willingness to handle trade frictions and stabilize bilateral trade relations through dialogue". The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association said "this announcement is a positive step in easing trade tensions between the two" sides, as reported by the South China Morning Post.

The China Daily added that China and the EU agreed on a package of measures to ease trade frictions, improve market access and strengthen the stability of industry and supply chains. The two sides also agreed to continue to explore the possibility of reducing tariffs on certain goods within the framework of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. The progress was made during the second meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism. The third meeting will be held in March 2027, with a ministerial video meeting scheduled for January. China and the EU also agreed to continue dialogue on market access for medical devices, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, as well as technical discussions concerning the EU's Foreign Subsidies Regulation.

An editorial in the Global Times said that by continuously deepening their economic ties and shared interests, China and the EU can not only unleash the innovative potential of their respective markets but also reinforce each other's development and contribute to global economic recovery.

Meanwhile, in a resolution adopted by 454 votes in favor, 86 against, and 110 abstentions, **the European Parliament demanded a "stronger and principled EU-China policy"** that combines dialogue with more protection of European interests, calls for "economic reciprocity," and what it calls a proportionate EU response if China "does not open its markets".

RETAIL

Gold bars and coins increasingly popular as investment



Shoppers crowd jewelry counters during major Chinese holidays, yet a noticeable shift is unfolding across retail outlets nationwide: sparkling gold ornaments are losing ground to plain gold bars and coins. For ordinary households, gold is evolving from a festive gift or fashion statement into **a favored store of household wealth**. “The premiums you pay for jewelry just aren’t worth it anymore,” Fu Hao, a 35-year-old Marketing Manager in Beijing, said after purchasing a 50-gram gold bar at a local bank. “We want our purchases to hold their pure value. It may not be wearable, but a plain gold bar provides real peace of mind.” This retail trend mirrors a far-reaching strategic shift, according to a recent report by S&P Global. Far from a short-term rush, China’s growing engagement with gold spans household asset allocation, domestic mining expansion, central bank reserve building, cross-border financial infrastructure, and outbound resource investment, all unfolding against a broader wave of gold accumulation across emerging economies.

Chinese buyers are re-prioritizing gold bars and coins over decorative jewelry, with many families now viewing physical gold as an alternative safe-haven asset, according to the industry data released by the China Gold Association (CGA). This structural divergence is becoming increasingly pronounced. According to the CGA, China’s gold consumption reached 511.41 metric tons in the first half of 2026, up 1.23% year-on-year. However, **demand for gold jewelry plummeted 33.88%** to 132.13 tons, **while** robust investment demand pushed the consumption of **gold bars and coins** to 339.34 tons, **surging 28.42%**. Periodic price drops have consistently stimulated sales of gold bars through domestic banking channels, cementing them as a popular hedge against market risks. “This demand cannot be suppressed, even with gold prices at historical highs,” said Zhao Xiangbin, Chief Strategist at Beijing Gold and Forex Fortune Investment Management. “Investor anxieties about the geopolitical situation and tariff wars have intensified, leading to a gold market rush to balance asset portfolios and hedge against risks,” he said.

This consumer phenomenon is not unique to China. S&P Global data point to similar patterns across emerging markets: retail investors are cutting spending on ornamental gold while lifting investment-grade gold purchases when geopolitical and domestic economic risks rise. Even with changing buying patterns, **China retains its title as the world’s largest gold consumer**, with total household gold demand dwarfing that of the United States and European markets combined. Gold’s status in Chinese policy documents has undergone a meaningful upgrade. Under mounting global geopolitical and trade uncertainties, Chinese authorities have re-defined gold not merely as a commodity or financial asset, but as a “strategic mineral” underpinning national financial and industrial security.

Released last year by nine central government departments including the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), the **Gold Industry High-Quality Development Action Plan 2025-2027** marks this policy turning-point. According to the S&P Global analysis, China’s gold-related policies serve long-term objectives: bolstering domestic economic resilience and expanding the global usage of the renminbi. Progress will likely unfold gradually, underpinned by consistent policy commitment rather than short-term, opportunistic moves.

According to the China Gold Association, China added 40.12 tons of gold in the first half, lifting its official reserves to 2,346.45 tons – the fifth-largest stockpile globally. Despite this scale, S&P Global notes that gold represents just 6.7% of China’s total official reserves, trailing significantly behind median allocations in developed markets (16.6%) and African nations (17.5%).

This gap creates underlying sentiment for further gold accumulation, either through central bank spot purchases or expanded domestic and overseas mine output, according to the Plan. China’s gold reserves grew by over 40 tons in the first half of 2026 – more than double the 19 tons in the first half of the previous year. Emerging-market central banks across Africa, Latin America and Asia have ramped up gold reserves since 2022, while developed-market physical stockpiles have stayed largely flat. According to Wang Qing, Chief Macro-economic Analyst at Golden Credit Rating International, higher gold reserves can strengthen confidence in the renminbi as a sovereign currency and support its gradual internationalization.

Despite China’s total official reserve assets of roughly USD4 trillion, its gold reserves remain relatively low in both absolute terms and as a share of total assets compared to major global economies, said Zhao Qingming, Specialist in International Finance. Pointing to the growing momentum of global de-dollarization, Zhao believes that with U.S. dollar assets facing certain risks, moderately trimming dollar holdings in favor of gold is a logical safe-haven strategy.

While international gold prices have surged in recent years, global mine output has remained largely stagnant. The average lead time for new gold projects from discovery to commercial production has stretched to 17.5 years for 2020-25 projects, nearly doubling from the 10.6-year average in the period 2000 to 2009, according to S&P Global, as reported by the China Daily.

Premium products and stronger brands drive the beer market



China's beer market is no longer growing through simple volume expansion. Instead, the sector is entering a new phase where companies are competing for market share through premium products, stronger brands and more targeted consumer occasions. In the first half of 2026, leading brewers, including China Resources Beer and Yanjing Beer, delivered broad-based growth, driven by premium beers and the rise of higher price segments. Beer output among enterprises above designated size (with an annual revenue above CNY20 million) reached 19.36 million kiloliters from January to June, up 0.2% year-on-year. The performance highlighted a widening gap between domestic and international brewers. While local players gained momentum by strengthening their mid-to-high-end offerings, foreign brands such as Budweiser APAC continued to struggle with shifting consumer habits and weaker demand in traditional premium channels.

China Resources Beer, the country's largest brewer by sales volume, reported first-half beer sales volume growth of 1.7%, with beer revenue rising 2.2% and profit increasing 1.2%. Overall revenue reached CNY24.24 billion, up 1.2% year-on-year. Average selling prices increased 0.5%, while profit from the beer segment continued to grow when excluding one-off items. Growth was mainly driven by sub-premium and premium products. **Brands including Heineken and Amstel continued to gain consumer recognition**, with sales volume in China Resources Beer's sub-premium segment rising 10% year-on-year. The company's performance reflects a broader industry trend: Chinese consumers are not simply drinking less beer, but are becoming more selective about what they drink and where they consume it.

Yanjing Beer emerged as one of the strongest performers among China's major brewers. In the first half, the Beijing-based company reported volume growth of 3.2%, revenue growth of 5.5% and net profit growth of 26.9%. Its flagship U8 product remained the key growth engine. Sales volume of U8 exceeded 614,100 kiloliters during the period, surging more than 25% year-on-year. The success of U8 helped Yanjing strengthen its position in the CNY8 price segment and overtake Chongqing Beer to become China's fourth-largest brewer. The company's rise demonstrates the growing importance of the "new mass market" – products positioned above traditional mainstream beers but below premium imported brands. The CNY8-10 price range has become one of the most competitive battlefields in the beer industry.

Pearl River Beer also benefited from this trend. The company's premium segment, centered around the CNY8 price point, recorded an 8.16% increase in sales volume, with gross margins reaching 58.1%. Meanwhile, other domestic players including Tsingtao Beer and Kingstar Beer maintained relatively stable performance, Five years ago, the beer market was dominated by five major players: China Resources Snow, Budweiser, Tsingtao Beer, Yanjing Beer and Carlsberg. Today, these companies still control more than 90% of the market, but their competitive ranking has evolved. **Tsingtao has overtaken Budweiser in recent years**, while China Resources Beer and Tsingtao have continued expanding across price segments. **Foreign brands have gradually lost momentum.** Industry estimates suggest Budweiser and Carlsberg have collectively lost more than 5% of market share over the past five years.

The shift reflects a deeper transformation of the beer industry. Competition is moving away from a period of rapid market expansion toward a mature, zero-sum battle where large domestic companies increasingly compete directly against global giants. Budweiser APAC, once the symbol of the country's premium beer boom, delivered mixed results in the first half as weakness in its China business continued to weigh on growth. The company reported first-half revenue of USD3.17 billion, down 1.4% year-on-year, while net profit increased 15.6% to USD473 million. Global sales volume declined 2.2% to 4.26 billion liters. First-half sales volume in China dropped 6%, while revenue declined 6.4%. In the second quarter, the decline accelerated, with China volume and revenue falling 9.7%.

Budweiser APAC attributed the weakness to unfavorable weather conditions and continued softness in restaurants, nightlife venues and entertainment businesses. The company has attempted to offset pressure by expanding into off-trade and online-to-offline channels. Budweiser said its O2O business achieved double-digit growth in both the second quarter and first half, supported by brand investments and packaging innovation. Growth has shifted toward home consumption, casual dining and everyday occasions – areas where domestic brands have stronger distribution networks.

At the same time, domestic companies are increasingly moving upward. China Resources Beer has used its national distribution network after acquiring Heineken's China business to accelerate premium expansion. Yanjing's U8 has successfully captured consumers trading up from mainstream beers, creating pressure on Budweiser's traditional customer base. Beyond premium beers, another growth opportunity is emerging in healthier beer categories. Zero-sugar, low-calorie and non- alcoholic beers are gaining traction as younger consumers become more health-conscious, the China Daily reports.

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

Most G20 members pressure China on overcapacity

Most G20 members, including the European Union, signed a U.S.-led joint statement calling for action to eliminate industrial overcapacity, a move experts say reflects a coordinated effort to assemble a "multilateral coalition" to pressure China amid growing trade imbalances. In the statement, issued by the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the U.S. and 14 other economies agreed to "take effective actions" to address structural excess capacity in several sectors such as electric vehicles, batteries, semi-conductors and solar panels. Signatories included the Trade Ministers of Argentina, Australia, Canada, the EU, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Poland, Turkey, the UK and the U.S. China, Brazil, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa – also G20 members – were not signatories.

The statement, which did not name China, also **urged countries to end "non-market" policies** and practices that distort markets and perpetuate excess production. The agreement was reached on the sidelines of an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Trade Committee meeting. It came just days after G20 Trade Ministers failed to reach consensus on the issue at a meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Following the G20 meeting, China's Commerce Ministry said most participating economies held differing views on excess industrial capacity, while Washington said only a handful of Ministers had opposed efforts to establish a pathway for cooperation.

The joint statement meant the U.S. wanted to "use the overcapacity narrative to assemble a multilateral coalition to put pressure on China", said Zhao Minghao, Deputy Director of the Center for American Studies at Fudan University. While this strategy had been pursued since the Biden administration, the U.S. was amplifying it further now, he added.

At the same time, Europe wanted to use the statement to demonstrate a willingness to align with the U.S. in pressuring China, Zhao said. "While U.S.-Europe relations face significant challenges and their shared policy objectives are limited, pressuring China over capacity issues is one of the few areas where their goals genuinely overlap." Similarly, Zhu Feng, Dean of Nanjing University's School of International Studies, said the statement marked "a clear attempt by the EU to capitalize on Washington's current momentum to further suppress China". Zhu said the recent joint appeal by the leaders of France and Germany for tougher measures to address market distortions "aimed to further curb China's production capacity". He added that China should not assume it was just a "formal threat" from Europe, as it could turn into new trade measures, the South China Morning Post reports.

German President preparing a trip to China as trade relations worsen

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is planning to visit China in the coming weeks, even as relations between the two countries sour over trade. It will mark the first official visit to China since 2018 for Steinmeier, a former Foreign Minister whose decade-long tenure as President ends in March next year. The visit will coincide with Chancellor Friedrich Merz's trips to Japan and South Korea this month. In Germany political power sits mainly with the Chancellor and the government, but President Steinmeier represents Germany abroad as President. The trip will be watched closely for signs of further cracks in the Sino-German relationship.

Germany has pivoted dramatically in recent weeks towards a more hardline approach to China on trade amid fears that its manufacturing heartland will be hollowed out by intense Chinese competition. In a speech last summer, Steinmeier spoke in favor of a carefully calibrated de-risking from China, even if it was couched in the language of partnership. "We want good relations with China, and we are working towards that. At the same time, we must continually readjust our relationship with China without slamming any doors. But we must insist on further reducing asymmetries – that is, differing levels of market access," Steinmeier said. In the intervening year, however, mainstream German politics has shifted significantly. It has become common belief that the symbiosis between the two economies – whereby German manufacturers made the machinery to equip China's factories – has worn off. These same factories have swiftly moved up the value chain to become fierce rivals of their erstwhile vendors.

A security thread runs through the relationship now as well. **The German government blocked the sale of large parts of Hamburg logistics company Zippel to Chinese state-owned shipping giant Cosco** because of security concerns. "The acquisition would have deepened dependencies and jeopardized the resilience of Germany's and the EU's supply chains," the Economy Ministry said in a statement. While Steinmeier does not manage these policies, they are likely to be discussed when he meets Chinese President Xi Jinping this month. It will mark the

first major German diplomatic trip to China since Merz went there in February. Upon returning from stops in Beijing and Hangzhou, he told the Bundestag that he could envisage a free-trade agreement in the longer term with the People's Republic of China. That moment, however, appears to have passed.

Last week, the South China Morning Post reported that Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron had co-signed a paper calling for a new trade weapon that could see China or other trading partners deemed to be flouting the rules excluded from the EU single market almost immediately, the South China Morning Post reports.

China to take 19 key measures to strengthen innovation

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council have issued 19 key measures to strengthen technological innovation, deepen its integration with industry, and improve institutional support for high-quality development. The guidelines cover five main areas, including technological and industrial innovation, innovation in development approaches, institutional reform, and talent management. They identify developing new quality productive forces as an inherent requirement and a key priority for promoting high-quality development, with a substantial increase in total factor productivity as the core indicator. The document also highlights stronger support for enterprises' role in technological innovation. The guidelines call for establishing a corporate research and development system, increasing the additional tax deduction rate for R&D expenses of technology-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and supporting capable private enterprises in leading major national technological research tasks.

Enterprise R&D projects that meet national strategic needs can be elevated to national projects through prescribed procedures. To accelerate commercialization, the document proposes deploying research and commercialization tasks together when technological projects are initiated and assessing actual application results upon completion. It also encourages universities and research institutions to license technological achievements to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises on a use-first, pay-later basis. The new guidelines combine traditional industrial upgrading with emerging and future industry development, placing particular emphasis on fully implementing the "AI Plus" initiative.

"Developing new-quality productive forces is not about simply abandoning traditional industries, but rather **empowering the existing real economy with intelligent technologies, so that old industries can regain new vitality**," Xi Junyang, Professor at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, told the Global Times. AI can be widely applied across industries, making it an important avenue for developing new quality productive forces, Xi Junyang said.

China's high-tech manufacturing sector has maintained strong growth. Its value-added output among large enterprises rose 16.7% year-on-year in August, compared with 5.2% growth in overall industrial output. Industrial robot production increased 34.6%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The guidelines also call for advancing the energy revolution, developing advanced nuclear fission energy, and building a power system with a high proportion of renewable energy, while improving its integration and regulation, the Global Times reports.

Port of LA, key for China imports, has best-ever quarter

The Port of Los Angeles, the largest container port in the United States and the country's **leading gateway for imports from China** and other Asian countries, **had its busiest three-month period on record** from July to September, despite persistent uncertainty over tariffs and shifting global trade supply chains. "If there was ever a time for a drum roll, this is it," said Gene Seroka, Executive Director of the Port of Los Angeles, during a media briefing. "July through September was our best quarter in port history at almost three million TEU. Stretch it back to June, and we moved almost four million container units. That's the strongest four-month stretch that we've ever had," he added.

Seroka cited several factors behind the increase, including a reduction in tariffs from 2025 levels, strong consumer demand ahead of the festival season and continued operational challenges at the Suez and Panama canals. **The port's imports rose 19% year-on-year in September, while exports increased by a more modest 10%.** "Outbound volumes remain softer than normal, which reflects the ongoing challenges facing American farmers and manufacturers," Seroka noted.

While China's share of imports through the LA port has declined from roughly 60% in 2018 to a projected 40% in 2026, it remains the port's largest source of imports, followed by Vietnam. **U.S. imports from China totaled USD308 billion in 2025, down close to 30%**, according to the U.S. Trade Representative Office. U.S. imports from Vietnam rose 42% in the same period.

Willy Shih, Professor at Harvard Business School, said countries like Vietnam and Mexico have seen "a lot of growth" in their emports to the United States, but they still rely on "Chinese intermediate goods". "So companies, in some sense, are rearranging the final assembly step while the upstream dependence remains," he said during a discussion at the LA port media briefing. Speaking about last month's summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington, Shih said that the economic outcome remained modest and both sides had decided to "kick the can down the road", as reported by the South China Morning Post.

Supreme Court promotes mediation in solving business cases

China's Supreme People's Court (SPC) has pledged to strengthen cooperation with commercial federations to promote mediation in resolving business disputes, aiming to better protect the legitimate rights and interests

of enterprises and support the development of the private sector. The SPC and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) released details of 10 notable cases, highlighting the role of cooperation between judges and business experts in resolving disputes involving private enterprises. “Commercial experts can apply their business acumen and experience to craft targeted solutions for resolving disputes among private enterprises. They can harness the benefits of mediation, such as low cost, high efficiency and the preservation of amicable relations,” the Court said. “This approach is conducive to achieving a win-win outcome by facilitating creditor repayments, providing relief to debtors and mending cooperative relationships,” it added.

In one case, a small company that primarily supplied materials received numerous orders from a construction engineering enterprise for a project. Although the two sides had not signed a formal contract, their continued transactions involving supply, delivery and payment established a de facto sales relationship. After repeated demands for payment of CNY224,700 went unanswered, the small company filed a lawsuit against the construction engineering enterprise at the Pingshan District People’s Court in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. As the facts of the dispute were clear and both parties agreed, the court referred the case to mediators from the local commerce federation for pre-litigation mediation.

During their preliminary investigation, the mediators found that neither side disputed the amount owed. Instead, the main disagreement concerned how and when the debt should be repaid. The mediators explained the legal risks and commercial implications to both parties. The construction engineering enterprise was warned that failure to repay the debt could damage its reputation and future business prospects, while the supplier was informed that **mediation could provide a quicker resolution** with safeguards incorporated into the agreement. The mediators also adjusted the repayment schedule to better match the construction company’s cashflow situation, easing the supplier’s concerns over indefinite delays. The dispute was ultimately resolved through mediation, and the court subsequently confirmed the legal validity of the agreement.

The SPC praised the cooperation between the court and local business experts, saying mediation provides a cost-effective and efficient alternative to litigation. “For private companies, especially small and micro ones, such solutions resolve their problems and support their ongoing business operations,” the top court said, as reported by the China Daily.

Huawei and Qualcomm reach multi-year patent agreement

U.S. chip firm Qualcomm has agreed to license and acquire patents from China’s Huawei Technologies for the first time as part of a “multi-year, broad patent license agreement” covering 5G, computing and artificial intelligence (AI). The deal involved cross-licensing between both firms’ patent portfolios. The transaction remained subject to regulatory approvals and its value was not disclosed. The two tech powerhouses settled a dispute in 2020, with Huawei agreeing to pay Qualcomm USD1.8 billion in back licensing fees. Meanwhile, Huawei has been pushing to monetize its vast patent portfolio in telecommunications, audio and video to boost returns on its continuous investments in research and development (R&D). The latest deal not only showed “the value of Huawei’s innovations”, but also recognized Qualcomm’s “foundational contributions to modern communication technologies”, said Alan Fan, Huawei’s Chief Intellectual Property Officer. John Han, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Qualcomm Technology Licensing, said the agreement “reaffirms industry recognition of Qualcomm’s 5G technology leadership” and “likewise reflects Qualcomm’s recognition of Huawei’s continued innovation and intellectual property in 5G and other technology fields”.

Including the Qualcomm deal, Huawei’s total contract value from patent licensing agreements has exceeded USD6.9 billion since the first such income from Motorola in 2011. Huawei has expanded the influence of its intellectual property through **more than 260 licensing deals with major global tech firms** including Nokia, Samsung and Amazon, alongside domestic smartphone rivals like Oppo, Vivo and Xiaomi. Prior to the Qualcomm deal, Huawei settled disputes with HP in August via a multi-year global patent cross-licensing agreement covering their respective Wi-fi patents.

According to its annual report, Huawei invested CNY192.3 billion in research and development (R&D) in 2025, equal to nearly 22% of its total revenue. One of the world’s largest patent holders, Huawei held 165,000 active granted patents worldwide as of 2025.

In 2022, Huawei Founder Ren Zhengfei urged the company’s intellectual property team to step up efforts to turn its vast pool of patents into revenue via “reasonable pricing” and to “generate an appropriate return” on its investments. In June, Huawei announced that it would start charging royalties for its Wi-fi 7 technologies, the newest wireless standard, with the rate set at USD0.50 per unit. A key player in Wi-fi licensing, Huawei’s patent licensing deals covered 1.6 billion devices globally by the end of 2025, the firm said, as reported by the South China Morning Post.

Chinese brands drive global 3D printer boom

Once viewed as a niche technology reserved for laboratories and tech enthusiasts, **3D printing is moving into the mainstream as consumer-grade machines become easier to use and more affordable**. Chinese brands have emerged as leading players in the sector, leveraging their advantages – and the manufacturing advantages of the country at large – to turn complex hardware into consumer products. **Shenzhen, home to many of China’s major consumer 3D printer makers** – including Bambu Lab, eufyMake, Anycubic, Elegoo and Creality – **accounted for 90% of the global consumer 3D printing market**.

In the first eight months of 2026, China exported more than USD1.9 billion worth of 3D printers, with shipments reaching 5 million units, a 90% increase in volume from a year earlier, according to Chinese customs data. “The key factors in our competitiveness are the improvement of

China's smart manufacturing capabilities and efficiency advantages brought about by a complete supply chain," Bambu Lab said. "Consumer 3D printers are complex hardware systems. Chinese companies' strengths in engineering, supply chain coordination and large-scale manufacturing have helped turn the technology into reliable, user-friendly and affordable products."

Those attributes, according to the company, have aligned well with changing user priorities. Consumers, who once focused on whether a 3D printer would work, now pay more attention to ease of use, reliability and the broader product ecosystem, which is driving growth in the global market. More affordable pricing has also contributed to the rapid growth of Chinese 3D printer brands, Bambu Lab said. A single unit from major Chinese brands can cost as little as around USD200, according to information on supplier websites. Overseas markets currently account for a significant share of sales for China's consumer 3D printer makers. **Shenzhen-based Creality disclosed in its prospectus that 74% of its 2025 sales were from abroad**, while Bambu Lab said overseas sales that year accounted for about 70% of its total. Bambu Lab attributed a portion of overseas demand to the mature maker communities in those markets, where interest in DIY technology has been strong.

Domestically, demand for 3D printers is expanding rapidly. **Manufacturing output rose 29.9% year-on-year in August**, according the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Industry insiders said the growth was mainly driven by consumer-grade machines, Shanghai-based media outlet Cailian Press reported in August. The Chinese government pledged policy support for the niche market. In a guideline released in late August, 3D printers were identified by Beijing as a product category with the potential to boost consumption, the South China Morning Post reports.

Chinese show appetite for overseas trips

During this year's Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day a trending topic on Chinese social media was "the whole world knows China is on holiday". **Chinese tourists ventured further overseas, while international visitors continued to pour into China.** China recorded 15.46 million inbound and outbound border crossings during the National Day holiday from October 1 to 7, up 6.7% year-on-year, according to the National Immigration Administration (NIA). Chinese mainland residents made 4.44 million outbound crossings, up 9.3%, while foreign nationals made 682,000 inbound entries, an increase of 5.4%. Of those foreign entries, 505,000 were visa-free, a rise of 9.2%. With the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday falling between September 25 and 27, travelers could take three days of annual leave to create a 13-day-long break, opening up opportunities for longer and more distant journeys.

Europe was the leading long-haul destination for clients of the Beijing-based travel operator **Utour Group** during the National Day holiday, with **a 140% year-on-year increase in Europe-bound travel bookings**. The region accounted for nearly half of Utour Group's outbound business during the holiday period. Marketing Manager Li Mengran said that demand for Europe, North America and Oceania reflected Chinese travelers' growing appetite for higher-quality overseas experiences. The growth, however, was uneven. Japan dropped out of the top 10 of overseas destinations on travel platform Tuniu this year, after ranking first a year earlier. Indonesia, Turkiye and South Korea were among popular choices. Arrivals in Japan from the Chinese mainland fell 56.7% year-on-year to about 2.9 million in the first eight months.

Meanwhile, overseas visitors were increasingly discovering more of China. Trip.com Group reported double-digit growth in inbound travel during the combined holiday period, with bookings from Russia jumping 173% year-on-year. Britain, Malaysia and Canada each registered growth exceeding 50%. Wu Liyun, Professor at the China Academy of Culture and Tourism at the Beijing International Studies University, attributed the growth to expanded visa-free policies, China's rising visibility on social media overseas, and interest in experiencing Chinese festivities, the China Daily reports.

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