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

FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

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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PAST EVENTS

In-person Keynote: The Next Big Arenas of Industrial Competition in 2026: Shaping the Future of Chinese and Global Growth – 8 October 2026 – Ghent



Which industries will drive the next wave of global growth, how are China and the United States positioning themselves to lead them, and where does that leave Europe? Earlier this month, the **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)** hosted an exclusive keynote at Cercle Royal La Concorde in Ghent with Dr **Karel Eloot**, Senior Partner at **McKinsey & Company**, Greater China, on "The Next Big Arenas of Industrial Competition in 2026." Drawing on almost 30 years of experience in China and research from the McKinsey Global Institute, Dr **Eloot** walked us through the

18 “arenas of competition” expected to reshape the global economy. They range from semiconductors, AI and cloud to robotics, EVs, batteries, space and new biotech.

A few takeaways that stayed with us:

- These 18 arenas could account for 18% to 34% of global GDP growth between 2022 and 2040.
- From 2022 to 2025, companies in these arenas grew their market capitalisation by 29% a year, against 8% for other industries.
- US companies hold about 75% of the arenas’ market value. But measured by revenue, Greater China’s share rises to around 30%, driven by EVs, batteries and industrial technology.
- The two countries run on very different models. US firms win on software, intellectual property and high margins. Chinese firms win on scale, supply chains and fierce competition, which benefits consumers through better products at lower prices.
- Europe has a lot of catching up to do. Future arenas make up only 7% of European companies’ market value, against 37% in the US and 31% in Greater China. Dr **Eloot**’s advice: evaluate your business focus versus relevant arenas. Build on existing strengths and look at how AI, robotics and other new technologies will change your customers, suppliers and production processes.

Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director of the **Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)**, opened the session with a clear message: China is no longer just a market or a supply base. It’s a place to learn about speed and innovation. That is exactly why we organise innovation and inspiration trips, giving our members a first-hand look inside Chinese factories.

An interactive Q&A and networking drinks followed, with lively discussions on global industrial competition and what it means for European businesses. A sincere thank you to Dr **Karel Eloot** for his valuable insights, and to all participants for making this such an inspiring afternoon!

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FOREIGN TRADE & INVESTMENT

MNCs tap China for global scale; FDI in high-tech up 33.8% in nine months



Multinational companies are investing in China to develop technologies for global markets, while Chinese companies are working with foreign partners to turn their innovations into overseas manufacturing and service businesses, executives and economists said. **High-tech industries attracted CNY228.53 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the first nine months of 2026, up 33.8% year-on-year**, according to the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). They accounted for 41.6% of China’s total incoming FDI, up 11.9 percentage points from a year earlier. FDI in technology commercialization rose 76.8% year-on-year, while investment in research and development (R&D) and design services increased 59.2%. Investment in electronic and telecommunications equipment manufacturing rose 41.9%.

Pan Yuanyuan, Researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ Institute of World Economics and Politics, said the value of FDI in China extends beyond capital injections to R&D, technology, sales networks and management expertise. **Foreign-invested enterprises have become an important part of China’s innovation system**, she said. For **Finnish elevator and escalator maker KONE**, development work in China is already contributing to its overseas business. China is KONE’s largest single market and hosts its largest R&D center outside Finland. Predictive maintenance solutions for escalators developed in China have already reached

overseas markets, said Joe Bao, Executive Vice President of KONE and President of KONE Greater China. “For us, the value of China has never been just about cost,” Bao said. “What makes it particularly valuable for KONE is the speed at which we can test, scale and bring new digital service models to local customers and even to the world.” The company opened its South China headquarters earlier this year after increasing investment in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. A cooperation agreement with Guangzhou’s Tianhe district aims to apply green and digital technologies to urban renewal, Bao said.

Other foreign companies are also extending their operations in China beyond sales, Shanghai Vice Mayor Lu Shan said at a news conference on October 16 ahead of the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE), which will run from November 5 to 10 in Shanghai. Lu noted that market responses to new product debuts at the CIIE have bolstered foreign exhibitors’ confidence in investing in China and accelerated a growing trend of participants transitioning from “six-day exhibitors” to “long-term investors deeply rooted in China”. Some have **moved from trading to manufacturing in China for global markets**, while others have established research centers with wider international responsibilities, Lu said.

German drugmaker Bayer plans to move several innovative medicines from packaging in China to manufacturing finished drug formulations locally. Its Beijing plant is Bayer’s largest prescription drug packaging facility worldwide, and is undergoing digital and environmental upgrades, according to the company. Bayer’s research partnerships connect it with Chinese biotech companies and universities. Its Co.Lab incubator in Shanghai brings together 13 Chinese biotech startups, while its E-Town Open Innovation Center in Beijing supports research, clinical translation and industrial cooperation. The group has conducted more than 110 joint research projects with Tsinghua and Peking Universities over the past decade or so. “We will continue to increase investment in China and strengthen our innovation capabilities across research, production and commercialization,” said Stefan Oelrich, Member of Bayer’s Board of Management and President of its pharmaceuticals division. In industrial technology, Chinese teams are also taking on more product development work.

Swiss engineering group ABB has invested more than USD1.3 billion in China over the past decade, expanding manufacturing and research, said Dong Huijuan, Global Vice President of ABB Group. Speaking at a briefing on international investment trends in Xiamen, Fujian province, in September, Dong said about 85% of ABB’s sales revenue in China comes from locally manufactured products, systems and services. Chinese teams lead or participate in developing products ranging from electrical equipment to intelligent factory solutions, she said.

Liu Zhaohui, an official with the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce, described a change in research responsibilities at the same event. “Previously, foreign-funded R&D centers mainly undertook tasks assigned by overseas headquarters. Now, **more projects are being conceived and carried out by local teams in Shanghai**, which are also participating more deeply in global innovation decisions,” Liu said. Some companies are applying experience gained from upgrading their Shanghai operations to factories elsewhere. They are also reinvesting profits in emerging industries, research and production upgrades, Liu said.

Zhou Mi, Senior Researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said deeper investment in China could help foreign companies cushion external shocks from rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions. Pan estimated current returns on FDI in China range from about 9% to 10%, based on aggregate macro-economic data, the China Daily reports.

ENERGY

Inner Mongolia leads the world in energy storage



For a long time, electricity has been a unique energy commodity, with production and consumption happening almost simultaneously. You use it the moment it is generated. But today, as solar and wind power have become China’s largest sources of installed capacity, **energy companies are building “warehouses” for the power grid**. These massive facilities store surplus green electricity during the day and deliver it to factories, shopping malls and millions of households at night. This time-shifting has found its grandest stage in North China’s Inner Mongolia autonomous region. Driven by the massive deployment of new-type battery facilities designed to support its vast wind and solar power bases, **Inner Mongolia has overtaken California to become the world’s largest energy storage region.**

As of the end of 2025, the region’s cumulative installed capacity of new-type energy storage exceeded 25 million kilowatts, ranking first in China. Under the blueprint of the

15th Five Year Plan (2026-30), this figure is projected to break the 50 million kW mark, cementing the region's role as the most critical power "reservoir" for the country's renewable mega-bases in the Gobi desert and other arid areas. The sheer scale of this deployment has triggered a profound industrial metamorphosis. In the past, Inner Mongolia's vast Gobi Desert served merely used equipment purchased from manufacturing clusters in China's eastern provinces. Today, Hohhot, Baotou and Ordos are forming a differentiated energy storage equipment manufacturing cluster. Each city has its unique strength, but the regional capital Hohhot stands out for its focus on system integration and custom solutions for extreme environments. Hohhot's produces energy storage equipment uniquely designed to withstand the severe cold and punishing sandstorms characteristic of the northern frontiers. While Baotou boasts the most comprehensive industrial chain and Ordos combines equipment manufacturing with ultra-large applications at sites like Envision's zero-carbon industrial park, Hohhot's tailored approach to hostile climate operations ensures these massive systems remain reliable year-round. "Deploying gigawatt-scale battery facilities in the Gobi desert is fundamentally different from installing systems in temperate coastal plains," said Lin Boqiang, Dean of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

"Extreme sub-zero winters can degrade battery performance and lower efficiency by double digits, while seasonal sandstorms pose severe risks to thermal management and air filtration systems." **Hohhot's focus on hostile-climate customization addresses the industry's biggest operational bottleneck:** ensuring that massive desert storage parks don't just get built, but actually run safely and reliably 365 days a year, he said. Inner Mongolia's regional achievement mirrors a broader national strategy. In 2026 the strategic importance of new-type energy storage has reached unprecedented levels. For the first time, it has been listed among the nation's six emerging pillar industries in the 15th Five Year Plan.

The **China New Energy Storage Development Report 2026**, released recently by the National Energy Administration (NEA), said China's cumulative installed capacity of new-type storage had reached 136 million kW/351 million kilowatt-hours by the end of 2025, representing a year-on-year surge of 84.3%. Accounting for roughly 50% of the global total, new-type energy storage has surpassed pumped-hydro storage to become China's largest regulating resource, it said.

The years of rapid expansion have ended and "the industry has formally entered a new phase characterized by market oriented selection, value priority and a focus on quality," said Dai Hongcai, Director of the New Energy Institute at the State Grid Energy Research Institute. While the "forced pairing" of storage with renewable projects drove early growth, future expansion will rely on sustainable business models. The market is also demanding longer duration capabilities. While the average storage duration was around 2.5 hours at the end of 2025, **four-hour storage has now become the mainstream**, and eight-hour long-duration storage is moving from demonstration to commercial application. This shift ensures that "giant power banks" don't just respond quickly, but can actually sustain the grid through the entire evening peak.

As the technology matures, the application boundaries of energy storage are expanding far beyond the traditional power grid. **A new and highly lucrative frontier has emerged: the intersection of energy storage and artificial intelligence computing power.** In the era of AI large models, a massive global "compute-power race" has sparked acute anxiety over electricity consumption. A single 10,000-GPU computing cluster can consume roughly 100 million kWh of electricity annually. While technology companies in the West are resorting to isolated gas turbines or small nuclear plants to power their AI ambitions, China is leveraging its robust wind, solar and storage eco-systems to pioneer a "compute-power and electricity synergy" model. Inner Mongolia is at the absolute forefront of this revolution. **Ulaanqab**, a city once known primarily for its grasslands and potatoes, **is rapidly transforming into one of the Asia-Pacific's largest and fastest-growing AI computing clusters**. In under two years, the region's computing power has nearly quadrupled.

HEALTH

China's innovative therapies lead new battle against cancer



Foreign cancer patients are drawn to China to use a world-leading China-developed treatment that targets solid tumors. Shanghai-based biopharmaceutical company **CARsgen Therapeutics Holdings**' satricabtagene autoleucel (satri-cel) treatment uses chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy, involving collecting T cells from a patient's blood and genetically modifying them before re-infusing them into the body so they can better recognize and attack cancer cells.

The new procedure was given the all clear by the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) in June. It is **the world's first approved CAR T-cell therapy for the treatment of solid tumors**. Until satri-cel's arrival, commercial CAR T-cell products had been restricted to treating blood cancers. Conquering solid tumors, which make up most human cancers, marks **a monumental leap for Chinese biotechnology**, medical experts said.

The breakthrough is mirrored by rapid commercial expansion of treatments, after **the Administration approved nine of the world's 17 commercial CAR T-cell treatments, seven of which were developed in China**. China is neck-and-neck in a race with the United States for industry dominance. Of the top 10 institutions driving the world's 1,520 CAR T-cell research and development pipelines, half are from the Chinese mainland. Leading the pack is the Shenzhen Geno-Immune Medical Institute in Guangdong province, with 98 R&D pipelines. Fueled by a massive patient pool, rapid iteration as well as improved insurance and payout systems, China's CAR T-cell market is exploding and is forecast by one industry analysis to grow from USD900 million last year to USD16.18 billion by 2035. However, hurdles must be overcome for global expansion, including challenges such as the different classification of infectious materials in various jurisdictions and the transportation of "living drugs".

Hematologist Kwong Yok-lam, who heads the hematology, oncology and bone marrow unit at the University of Hong Kong, said he is unsurprised by the satri-cel breakthrough. It mirrors historical drug development, where innovations emerge for treating blood cancers that are later expanded to treat solid tumors, he said. Kwong helped introduce equecabtagene autoleucel (Fucaso), a multiple myeloma CAR T-cell therapy from **IASO Biotechnology** based in Nanjing, Jiangsu province to Hong Kong. In December 2024, a 73-year-old advanced myeloma patient became the first person in Hong Kong to be treated with Fucaso through the city's Named Patient Program, a pathway for drugs not yet registered in Hong Kong but having already received approval for use on the mainland. Fucaso became the first mainland-produced CAR T-cell treatment registered in Hong Kong.

IASO Biotechnology has proved that supplying CAR T-cell treatments to other markets is viable, paving the way for Singapore, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Japan to acquire them. "The process wasn't easy," said Zhang Jinhua, Founder of IASO Biotechnology. A patient's blood samples are classified as "Category A" – infectious substances that require strict customs clearance – and have to reach a laboratory within 48 hours. Hong Kong's Department of Health inspected IASO's Nanjing factory for compliance with international Good Manufacturing Practices. "By keeping core production on the Chinese mainland, we can better control costs. **Fucaso is priced at about one-third to one-half of comparable U.S. CAR T-cell therapies**," said Zhang. Since the launch of Fucaso in 2023, at least 60 patients from more than 10 countries and regions have traveled to China to receive treatment.

Zhang expects that within three years, overseas revenue will grow from 10% to 50% of total revenue. As the overseas market expands, IASO's new production capacity will also scale up to 3,000 batches a year. Hong Kong registration has helped Fucaso enter international insurance networks, she added. The city is also IASO's natural launchpad for global expansion. Singapore gave Fucaso the green light in June, and Zhang expects Saudi Arabia to do the same this year.

At the commercial vanguard of CAR T-cell therapy is Carvykti, a drug produced by Nanjing-based Legend Biotech that targets multiple myeloma. Carvykti is the first Chinese CAR T-cell product approved by the U.S. FDA. The drug is available in 18 markets, and has so far been used to treat more than 10,000 multiple myeloma patients, according to Legend Biotech's first-quarter financial report. Following strong sales of about USD1.9 billion (up 96% year-on-year) in 2025, Carvykti had USD597 million in sales in the first quarter of this year, up 62% year-on-year and cementing its position as the world's top-selling CAR T-cell product. IASO Biotechnology's Zhang is hopeful China's innovative drugs will win a significant market share within five years, driven by unrivaled research and development efficiency, rapid clinical trials and superior cost control, the China Daily reports.

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

President Xi and King Philippe exchange messages on 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called on China and Belgium to take their all-round friendly cooperative partnership to new heights, as he exchanged congratulatory messages on October 25 with Belgium's King Philippe to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In his message, Xi said that over the years, China and Belgium have adhered to mutual respect, equal treatment and mutual benefit, and bilateral relations have developed steadily. The two sides have achieved fruitful results in exchanges and cooperation across various fields, and people-to-people ties have grown closer, he said, adding that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Belgium relations. Xi said that he stands ready to work with King Philippe to take the anniversary of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to guide the China-Belgium all-round friendly cooperative partnership to new heights, and to make new contributions to the sound and stable development of China-European Union relations.

In his message, **King Philippe noted that Belgium and China have built extensive and diversified cooperative relations** since the establishment of diplomatic ties. He recalled Xi's state visit to Belgium in 2014, which he said left him with wonderful memories. The King said that he firmly believes that the two countries will continue to advance open dialogue, expand practical cooperation and enhance mutual understanding. Belgium is willing to develop a balanced and mutually beneficial relationship with China, jointly address global challenges, and promote peace, stability and sustainable development, he added, as reported by the China Daily on its front page on October 26.

EU considering new quotas and tariffs on Chinese imports

The European Union may hit more Chinese industries with quotas or tariffs before further negotiations take place, Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic said, naming plastics as a sector in which investigations are advanced. When the EU needs to move quickly to protect its industries, it will consider safeguards, which allow emergency measures to curb surges in imports, instead of engaging in longer negotiations. "We clearly will have to put it in order, prioritize, and always look at what would be the most efficient tool to use. In some cases it will for sure be further negotiations with our Chinese counterparts. For others, what would be more appropriate and faster would be safeguard measures," Sefcovic told reporters at a press conference in Dublin. He explained that the European Commission is currently gathering feedback from EU members on which **areas to prioritize for protectionist measures**, "when they feel that this particular sector is under a lot of stress". "But currently, what I think is the closest is **the plastics sector**, and there we are working with the Directorate of Trade and looking into it," he said, adding that the EU needed to ensure it had a "very solid case, not only from an economic but also from a legal point of view".

Sefcovic spoke after a meeting of EU Trade Ministers in Dublin. During a debate on China, attendees outlined the industries they are most concerned about. Irish Foreign Minister Helen McEntee, who chaired the meeting, named **chemicals, machinery and some agri-food sectors** as among those raised. French Trade Minister Nicolas Forissier said he was confident that his country's push with Germany for a tougher EU China policy propelled China to moderate its hybrid car exports, despite the Chinese government warning that pressure tactics won't work. The EU should "harbor no illusions about extracting concessions through pressure, still less underestimate China's determination and ability to defend its own interests", China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said.

The European Commission, which manages trade policy for the EU's 27 members, is set to propose three new instruments by Christmas. DiversifyEU, a European Commission policy proposal to address strategic economic dependencies on single non-EU countries for critical goods and inputs, will compel companies in key sectors to broaden their pool of suppliers in an effort to stop the weaponization of key inputs. A "solidarity mechanism" will compensate companies hit by retaliation from trade rivals, which is seen as a way of ensuring that EU member states do not block trade actions against China.

A "kill switch", meanwhile, will give the bloc the power to kick Chinese companies out of the EU market with near-immediate effect. **Minister Forissier said** that "Chinese authorities understand when you're clear, when you speak frankly, when you're firm on your positions; this is necessary. We have not done that for a long time. This has to be done not only country by country but also in an EU way," adding **that Europe must "be able to say no" to China**, the South China Morning Post reports.

U.S. investment curbs on biotech could slow global drug development

The U.S. government's latest proposal to tighten outbound investment restrictions on China, extending scrutiny into the fast-growing biotechnology sector, signals a push to curb American capital's involvement in China's emerging industries. But **the restrictions could** shut U.S. investors out of China's innovation boom and **slow global advances in drug development**. The U.S. Treasury Department unveiled proposed regulations covering semiconductor technologies and micro-electronics, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technologies, high-performance computing and supercomputing, and hypersonic systems, with biotechnology added to the list. Under the proposal, certain outbound U.S. investments would be prohibited, while others would require notification. Although the Treasury's announcement did not name China, an accompanying fact sheet identified China, including Hong Kong and Macao, alongside countries including Russia, Iran, and Cuba, among the "countries of concern" covered by the proposed restrictions.

Biotechnology is among the most significant sectors, as technologies shaping the future of drugs and treatments could also enhance China's military capabilities or deepen U.S. reliance on Chinese supply chains. Zhou Mi, Researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times that Washington's widening investment curbs reflect an increasingly aggressive attempt to contain China's emerging sectors. "By cutting off the flow of U.S. technology, capital and talent, Washington seeks to protect its traditional advantages in fields such as biotechnology and prevent China from overtaking it," he said. But Zhou called **the attempt to hold back China's progress "wishful thinking,"** arguing that restricting investment cannot reverse China's rapid advances in biotechnology, a field where innovation is moving at an accelerating pace.

The proposed rules, issued under the Comprehensive Outbound Investment National Security Act (COINS Act), enacted in December 2025, would update the Treasury's existing Outbound Investment Security Program. The Treasury claimed the restrictions aim to prevent U.S. investment in dual-use strategic technologies from supporting foreign adversaries' military modernization and surveillance capabilities. In biotechnology, **the proposal would prohibit investments involving** certain technologies and activities, including **biological design and sequencing, bio-manufacturing equipment and brain-computer interfaces**. The measures are still at the proposal stage, with the Treasury seeking public comments through December 7. Concerns are emerging within the U.S. biotech industry. The Biotechnology Innovation Organization, a leading Washington-based industry lobbying group, warned that an overly broad approach could create uncertainty for innovators and investors and "may unintentionally risk weakening U.S. biotechnology competitiveness," the Global Times reports.

China takes 81.8% of global new ship orders in first nine months

Statistics on China's shipbuilding industry for the January-September period, released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), show that **China continues to lead the world in the three key shipbuilding indicators**. Notably, **more than 80% of global new ship orders went to China**, consolidating the country's dominant position in the global shipbuilding market. According to MIIT, in the first nine months of 2026, China completed 58.05 million deadweight tons (DWT) of shipbuilding output, a year-on-year rise of 50.7%. New ship orders hit 175.29 million DWT, surging 163.2% year-on-year. As of the end of September, the order backlog stood at 399.13 million DWT, up 64.8% from a year earlier.

China's shipbuilding output, new orders and order backlog accounted for 63.6%, 81.8% and 72.4% of the respective global market shares, MIIT data shows. Beyond the robust performance of the three core indicators, China is accelerating the green transition of its shipbuilding sector. It secured 74.1% of the global new-order market for green-powered vessels, up 5.7 percentage points from the January-June period, the Global Times reports.

Restaurant in Taiyuan entirely staffed by robots

At a newly opened restaurant in Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi province, the kitchen is staffed not by human chefs, but by robots. The Weikong Robot Restaurant opened its doors on August 15. Covering an area of nearly 500 square meters, the venue is divided into a robot-operated restaurant and a Future Living Pavilion, marking a significant step in the integration of intelligent technology into everyday dining. The restaurant, a joint venture between the Wanbailin district government and Shanghai Xunlong Robot Technology Co, is the first in Shanxi to offer a highly automated dining experience. **The establishment has automated the entire process from ordering to cooking, serving, and dish collection.**

Zhang Pan, Chief Technical Engineer at Xunlong, said that most existing robot restaurants rely on fixed equipment and pre-programmed processes, which limit their flexibility. "Our wheel-based dual-arm robots are highly adaptable, mimicking human work patterns and operating independently of fixed equipment locations," he said. The system is meticulously configured to ensure consistency in every dish by controlling cooking temperatures, the adding of ingredients, and seasoning quantities, he said. This technological precision guarantees that each meal meets the everyday dining needs of consumers. Customers can simply scan a QR code at their table to place an order, which is then automatically relayed to the backend system. The dual-arm robots spring into action, retrieving bowls, selecting ingredients from the refrigerated storage, and transporting them to the cooking station. The cooking robot then autonomously handles the entire cooking process, from electric heating to the sequential addition of ingredients and stir-frying.

One customer was impressed by the dining experience and said watching the entire process was fascinating.

Another customer expressed excitement at the prospect of such robots entering home kitchens. The restaurant's open kitchen, where robots handle food without human intervention, alleviates concerns about kitchen hygiene. The restaurant's manager said that the system took over three years to develop, with the team overcoming significant technical challenges in robot cooking. Despite the high-level automation, human involvement remains essential. "Robots handle repetitive tasks like stir-frying and washing pots, but humans are still needed for initial ingredient preparation, equipment checks, and troubleshooting," said Ma Xiaoli, an employee at the restaurant.

The Future Living Pavilion features a wellness robot area providing massage and health monitoring services, as well as a snack zone where visitors can watch robots make coffee, ice cream, and traditional pancakes. According to the recently released **"2026 China Cooking Robot Industry Development White Paper"**, the market for cooking robots in China reached CNY38.1 billion in 2025 and is expected to exceed CNY125 billion by 2030, highlighting the immense potential for **growth in the smart dining sector**. In the short term, cooking robots are not expected to replace human chefs, but they will drive a transformation in the culinary profession. "Chefs of the future will focus more on assessing dishes and ensuring that they meet taste standards," Zhang Pan said, as reported by the China Daily.

China tightens export controls on drones, tunnel-boring and dredging equipment

China has unveiled a package of export control measures covering drones, tunnel-boring machinery and dredging equipment, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) announced. The new regulations, which will take effect on November 18, have been jointly issued by the Ministry and other relevant authorities to better coordinate development and security, safeguard national security and interests, and fulfill international nonproliferation obligations. Under the measures, China will adjust export controls on certain unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and related equipment, including autopilot systems, aviation engines, communication systems, flight control software and navigation technologies. Exporters of the controlled items must obtain licenses from the Commerce Ministry, although simplified procedures will be available for certain drone exports and temporary exhibition shipments, as well as for companies with established export compliance systems. The updated controls cover drones capable of flying beyond visual range and meeting specified endurance or performance thresholds, as well as certain UAVs with a range of at least 300 kilometers.

The Ministry and the General Administration of Customs (GAC) have also introduced export controls on tunnel-boring machinery, including shield tunneling machines, and their key components and related technologies. The measures cover walking excavators capable of operating in difficult terrain and specialized machines designed for construction projects at altitudes above 3,000 meters. Exports of these items to sensitive countries and regions involved in disputes with China will require government approval, while shipments to other destinations may proceed through a registration-based system, subject to restrictions on subsequent transfers.

China has also adjusted export controls on dredgers and related equipment, including dredge pumps and cutter heads that meet specified technical thresholds. Exporters of these products will be required to apply for licenses under the country's export control regulations. A Spokesperson for the Commerce Ministry said the controlled items have clear dual-use characteristics, and the measures are consistent with international practices and China's obligations to safeguard national security and prevent proliferation, adding that China is willing to engage in dialogue with relevant countries and regions to facilitate compliant trade and maintain the stability of global industrial and supply chains, the China Daily reports.

China's GDP increases 4.6% y-o-y in first nine months

China's GDP expanded 4.6% year-on-year to reach CNY107.11 trillion in the first nine months, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported. The figure is within the annual GDP growth target of around 4.5% to 5% for this year, laying a solid foundation for achieving the full-year growth target. In the third quarter, China's GDP grew 4.5% year-on-year, accelerating from the 4.3% growth recorded in the second quarter. In the first quarter, China's GDP jumped 5%, NBS data showed. Observers said the third-quarter reading reflects multiple factors, including the manufacturing strength of China's high-tech and equipment sectors, which continued to underpin robust external demand, the strong drive from new and emerging industries, as well as the steady progress in the course of high-quality development. Amid mounting uncertainties, the steady growth of the Chinese economy – which serves as both the "world's market" and a "super buyer" – is an anchor of growth, providing much-needed certainty to the world economy, analysts said.

"Based on the forecasts by some international institutions, China's growth rate of 4.6% still leads among the world's major economies. Also, in terms of absolute increase, the Chinese economy in the first three quarters added CNY5.7 trillion in output, the largest increment in the past five years," NBS Deputy Director Mao Shengyong said at a press briefing of the State Council Information Office (SCIO). **China's CNY5.7 trillion increment in economic output in the first three quarters is roughly equivalent to the annual GDP of Belgium, the world's 23rd largest economy.** Mao also stressed that China's third-quarter GDP growth rebounded by 0.2 percentage point from the second quarter, which is "hard-won and highly commendable," as the greater impact of higher international oil prices caused by the Middle East conflict led some international institutions to lower their third-quarter growth forecasts for major economies compared with the second quarter.

"The Chinese economy demonstrated a clear trend of advancing toward new and higher-quality development in the first three quarters, with growth momentum shifting

toward new drivers from old ones," Hu Qimu, Professor at the Maritime Silk Road Institute of Huaqiao University, told the Global Times. "China has achieved almost the best result it can, taking account downward pressures, especially the increasingly complicated geopolitical environment," he added.

One of the major takeaways from the first nine months' data is the continuous improvement of the economic structure, as "what matters more at this stage of economic upgrade and transformation is the quality," analysts said. New growth drivers continued to gain ground, with contributions to the overall economy exceeding 40% in the first three quarters. The value-added of high-tech manufacturing rose 14.3%, while equipment manufacturing grew 10.2%. The output of 3D printing equipment, lithium-ion batteries and industrial robots surged 62.5%, 39.5% and 29.1%, respectively, the Global Times reports.

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Contact

Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce
Office: Ajuinlei 1, B-9000 Gent, Belgium
New telephone and fax numbers:
T ++32/9/269.52.46
F ++32/9/269.52.99
E info@flanders-china.be
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The FCCC Newsletters are edited by Michel Lens, who is based in Beijing and can be contacted by e-mail michel.jc.lens@gmail.com
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