



Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche __ Cattedra International Public Policies

THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

RELATORE

PROF. Arlo Poletti

CANDIDATO

Marco Mura

MATR. 624932

CORRELATORE

PROF. Mario Telò

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the master thesis submitted is original except for the source materials explicitly acknowledged and that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the same degree or for a different degree.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Family: one, united and unique. To Carla: my mother and my guide. To Corrado, my father and my strength. They made all this possible. To all the rest of my Family that, even if physically divided and far away from me at the time being, has succeeded in making me feeling one, unite and incredible love.

I also want to dedicate this thesis to the family I chose during my life, my Friends.

Last but not least, I want to dedicate this thesis to my home countries: Italy, whose homesickness always reminded me where I belong in the first place, and Europe, for which we all hope a brighter and prosperous future.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

This work will investigate the complex relations and interconnections that occur between China and the European Union. The EU-China relations have been object of academic discussion and debate for the last 45 years. They have been analysed from several and different perspectives many times: from a cultural, social, economic as well as political point of view. This work will try to take into account all of them, in order to achieve a better comprehension of the hardly understandable context. However, this research will mainly focus on the EU-China strategic features and it will try to understand their development during the years. For doing so, it will be necessary to take in consideration both the internal and the external factors having somehow influenced the relation.

Throughout their history, the EU-China relations have been at best ambivalent and hard to fully comprehend in their complexity. They have experienced different degrees of closure, in the sense that there have been several ups and downs, which have obviously made even more difficult the investigations and the studies on the field. However, this work has divided the relation in different periods, which has been helpful in order to understand the major factors of influence in each of them.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the EU in 1975, both sides have experienced fundamental internal changes that have profoundly transformed each actor. Indeed, in none case the domestic factors and breakthroughs can be fully separated from the foreign policy decisions and the EU-China relations do not represent an exception. In facts, China, during the years, has moved from a relative backward situation (in economic terms) to a super power status. This has helped with no doubts to increase its influence and contractual power in dealing with all the Nations around the world, including supra-national entities such as the EU. Europe, from its side, has basically become the first world market starting from a post war situation. It

used to be a mere common market for trade and goods and it ended up being a supra-national entity, a political Union and a global actor.

In dealing with each other, their relations have followed their respective domestic developments. In the past about 25 years, they moved from freezing their diplomatic relations, up to the point in which they referred to each other as “strategic partners”. These latter definition, together with all the complex interconnections, changes, boosts and stops in their diplomatic liaison will constitute the object of this work.

1.2 Research question and purpose

“Why the EU-China relation is not a “strategic partnership” yet?”

This question needs some clarifications that are strictly linked with the research purpose. Indeed, only looking at the research question would be limitative of the scope of this work. The question actually entails in itself another amount of preliminary questions that had to be answered to reach any conclusion.

From what it has been analysed for this work, it has emerged there is a strong debate around how to describe the EU-China relations, especially when it comes to the definition “strategic partnership”. The first question it had to be addressed was weather it exist any strategic aspect in the Sino-European relation. Thus, it was necessary to understand what “strategic partnership” would actually mean: starting from a quick overview of the many definitions given by several scholars, this work have eventually found its own. Then, since all the evidence would not allow to speak about a strategic partnership (although it has been rhetorically proclaimed many times by both sides), it turned to be interesting to analyse why the EU-China relation is not a strategic one.

Thus, the purpose of this work has been to identify the causes hurdling the development of such a partnership. These have been identified as “structural obstacles” for the development of a strategic partnership. In

conclusion, looking forward to a stronger relation between the two sides, this work presents a case study which can help the EU and China to move toward that direction: the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, its repercussion on the Sino-European relations and how it would positively affect a the development of a future strategic partnership.

1.3 Research significance

- **Special Audience:** this thesis has mainly been conducted for the Chinese audience as well as all other foreign audience. However, this research aims to clearly and simply answer the question of development the EU-China relations in a way that is understandable and interesting also for those who are not familiar with the topic.
- **Contribution to the field:** This work is aimed to contribute to the academic field through combining the EU-China relations historical background, scholars' analysis, official data and reports. Thus, this research will try to furnish its modest contribution by giving some guide lines for a further strategic development, following the case study path and reasoning. Finally, this research paper aims to present a problem and analyses it from different points of view in order to most objectively present one story everyone would understand if not accept.
- **Contribution in materials:** this work has used official data reports, coming from both China and the EU, which means official documents from almost all the European institution, from the European Delegation to China and Mongolia, located in Beijing as well as Chinese official statements and proclaims released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Chinese institutions. In addition, the work has also used a part of the long literature on this academic debate as well as historiographical contributions.

1.4 Hypothesis

After having analysed all the documents at disposal and after an accurate analysis of their implications, it appeared reasonable to say that the impossibility of calling the EU-China relation as “strategic” (following the above mentioned definition present in this work) is caused by different factors, namely “structural obstacles”. Starting from an historical analysis, both sides have demonstrated certain behaviours that are fundamentally going against this direction.

Successively, these have been analysed from an academic perspective, and many scholars have confirmed what the pure facts have already anticipated. The conclusion they reached is that there are fundamental differences in reciprocal perceptions and in the theoretical understanding of “the other” that do not allow to develop a strategic partnership. More precisely, they regard not only the mutual feeling toward each other, which varies from threat to hope, but also a radical difference in opinions, values and priorities. When the European Union is claiming for an institutional reform of the Chinese society, which should move in the direction of respecting the Rule of Law, implementing democracy and human rights protection, the EU is acting exactly in this way. This is the first structural obstacle.

At the same time, the People’s Republic of China is doing the same when sticking in the non-interference positions, which means no room for dialogue in any of its domestic issues that might be of European interests. In such an environment, where both parts find their position as irremovable, it is unlikely that both sides can develop a constructive dialogue for a strategic partnership. Thus, when China and the EU are claiming for a more practical and resulted-oriented dialogue, they are both standing on a position that is not very reliable, at best.

Further, there emerged also different practical issues hurdling additional developments in security issues, namely the EU arms embargo toward China, the European Commission decision to not recognize the PRC as a Full Market Economy; on the other side, the Chinese way of dealing with human rights

issues as well as the Taiwanese question raises several concerns within European decision makers. The total amount of concrete unsolved issue between the two parties will be identified as the second “structural obstacle”.

This work will basically argue that, in order to achieve the long-awaited strategic partnership, both sides have to step back on their respective strongest position, so that they can focus on more realizable issues on the security fields. This will be possible due to certain conditions that are about to take place, which means opportunities (mainly the OBOR initiative) for both sides to adjust their position to reach a compromise for a future strategic partnership.

Further, as it has been already mentioned, this work will demonstrate that such a strategic partnership does not exist yet. This is mainly due to the fact that there exist several structural obstacles that are hurdling the formation of such a partnership. Those will be basically divided into two categories, the practical and the theoretical ones. However, it is important to notice that this work has used the term “structural obstacle” to refer not only to significant hurdles but especially to those obstacles that are fundamentally and irremediably against the formation of such a partnership. To demonstrate that those are actually such fundamental obstacles is basically the main goal of this thesis.

1.5 Research methodology

The approaches used in the research are mostly descriptive, with analytical and historical approaches. The descriptive and historical approaches are used to describe the historical factors as well as the internal and external factors that influence BH development. Parts of this main body hold analytical approach as to better understand the issues in question.

The inductive method was used for research, however the deductive method was used for better understanding of the problem. It is not a quantitative research, but more a qualitative one, due to the specificity of the subject treated.

1.6 Research structure

This work has been divided in several chapters and subchapters. However, the structure is macro-divided as following.

The first part will describe the historical developments of the EU-China relations: it will start from modern history times, in order to give a general framework and idea of which kind of influences they have exercised among each other during the years. The second part of the analysis will focus on the academic debate. As said before, the historical developments have shown some critical behaviour from both sides that have somehow anticipate the focal point of frictions between the two.

The second part of the research will then focus on the academic analysis of these critical and problematic junctures, pointing out which are the main areas of concerns, according to a relatively significant part of the doctrine. After giving a definition of “strategic partnership”, this section, will basically underline the first the structural obstacles to the EU-China strategic partnership by comparing different scholars’ perspectives, namely the misperception of the mutual partner.

The third part will instead emphasize what has been positively built among China and the EU, using a proper dataset of public EU funds directed to China. This would allow us to put in evidence which are the main areas that are relatively working out and, consequently, which are the fields in which the two sides should insist in the future. Indeed, it will be necessary to stress their joint cooperation programs, rather their growing trade volume, the public European investments that go on several and enormously important fields. These data will be indicated as a possible starting point for the future EU-China collaboration in strategic partnership. Indeed, from them, it will be possible to draw a fundamental conclusion: China and the EU, in order to join together those projects, have left a part their respective position in order to achieve a bigger common goal and, at the same time, they have been able to accomplish real practical results.

Successively, the work will present a case study. This is the One Belt One Road initiative. It will be analysed in which way it could positively contribute to the EU-China relations and it will be explained why, given the current situation and the historical background of the Sino-European relations, it could represent an historic opportunity for both side to move in the direction of a strategic partnership.

2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE EU-CHINA RELATION

Europe and China have historically influenced each other since ancient times, regardless for their great cultural, social, economical and political differences. For the purpose of this work, it is necessary to briefly take in consideration which were the main signs of this long-lasting and complicated, relation. In fact, in order to analyse the current situation between the European Union and China, it is necessary, first of all, to have a look and their old tradition of reciprocal influence.

It is reasonable to start from the period of Modern China, which goes from 1500 to 1800 and in which China reached its peak in terms of urbanization, living standards and agriculture¹. Interestingly, during this period, China made greater contribution to Europe than Europe made to China. However, this is valid only as far as trade and economic issues are concerned. Indeed, with China dominating the so called “Sinic world order”, and European States struggling among each other for their own sovereignty, geopolitical or diplomatic concerns were at last marginal if not inexistent².

Successively, after the first Industrial revolution and the advent of important European cultural movements such as the Enlightenment, Chinese policy makers started to be influenced by the European culture and, little by little, the ended up adopting the European political model. For example, Chinese officers began to accept the doctrine of sovereignty, as intended by

¹ Needham, J. “Science and Civilization in China, Volume I Introductory Orientation”. Cambridge, 1961, Cambridge University Press.

² Yahuda, M., “ The Sino-European Encounter: Historical influence on the Contemporary Relations”, 2008, in Shambung, D., Sandschneider, E., Hong, Z., (eds.), “China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects”. London, 2008, Routledge,

Europeans at that specific moment in time. Further, in 1861, a Chinese Foreign Affairs office was established and, in the same year, China accepted permanent embassies in Beijing for the first time. This meant both that China allowed an equal diplomatic level status to another Country (which had never happened before) and that China wanted to play an important role in the already European-dominated international order³.

As a matter of fact, the late 18th Century was a turning point in Chinese way of intending international relations. China moved from a policy of exclusion of all the “European barbarians” to a more inclusive position of welcoming “all useful Europeans to serve their practical needs”. This is particularly evident when one looks at one of the statements of the first Chinese Minister in London, who basically declared that if China wanted to be as powerful as the European States and, as a consequence, compete with them or at least having more contractual power, they had to make the Chinese more ‘familiar with Europeans doctrine and methods’. In facts, the Chinese adoption of European practices resulted to be effective once China had found itself in a state of adversity: they really had increased their diplomatic skills acquiring more legitimacy in dealing with Western powers.

Furthermore, the Chinese officials also ended up by adopting another important European diplomatic concept, which is the Balance of Power. Since the 17th Century, the European States took the balance of power as a guiding principle in pursuing their foreign policy, which emphasise that no single power should be allowed to lay down the law to all the others. The balance of power system aims at preserving the multiplicity of states that have stood approximately in overall equilibrium⁴. Consequently, China adopted this model, which turned to be significantly useful, especially when it found itself in a situation of domestic and foreign turbulence, due to significant shocks from both those sides, as it happened the fifty years between 1860 and 1912.

However, it is necessary to point out that the Chinese acceptance of such a doctrine has actually come as urgency. Indeed, it is possible to say that it came as a result of China’s defeat by the foreign powers and the race among the great European colonial powers for staking out spheres of influence in China at the

³ Hsu, I., “The rise of modern China: A Survey of their relations from their earlier time to 1800”. London, 1931, Edward Arnold & Co.

⁴ Sheehan, M., “The Balance of Power: Theory and History”, London 1997, Routledge.

end of the century put even more pressure on Chinese officials to accept it. In fact, at the end of the century, when China found itself in the great powers' scramble, the Chinese remained convinced that the involvement of several powers in China's political arena was necessary to check the domination by a single power, because a form of equilibrium could emerge from that competitive manoeuvre⁵.

A practical example of the Chinese absorption of the European and Western way of managing foreign policy was presented at Paris Peace Conference on 1919. At that moment in time, the Shangdong province, which used to be a German concession, was about to be fall under Japanese sovereignty. In order to defend their territory, Chinese delegates, who were mostly trained in the law schools of Europe and, to a less extent, in the US, staunchly applied the principle of *rebus sic stantibus* in their negotiations on the issues of sovereign rights and territorial integrity. Accordingly, China's independence and territorial integrity should have been preserved due to the fact that European powers and the US had previously insisted upon this general principle: equality in trade opportunity and equilibrium in power distribution in a internationally recognized sovereign State such as China. As a consequence, any change to the current situation at that moment in time would have been destructive of the equilibrium that symbolized the foreign powers' vested interests and the existing order in China⁶. In sum, this attitude was what the great powers of the day upheld as the "open doors policy". Chinese officials and diplomats were perfectly aware of the fact that such a political policy toward the Western powers and toward Europe coincided with their commercial and trade national interests.

These efforts culminated eventually at the Washington Conference in 1922 in which the so-called Nine Power Treaty has been signed. On that occasion, the Chinese officials stated, once again, that the Chinese national priority, in terms of security, would have been the territorial reunification together with the strengthening of the already existent borders. This was,

⁵ Wang, T-Y., "International Law in China", in "Academie de Droit International" (ed.), Recueil Des Cours. Dodrecht: Matrtinys Nijhoff Publishers.

⁶ Whyte, A. F., "China and Foreign Powers: An Historical Review of their Relations". 1928, London, Oxford University Press.

perhaps, the most important and practical evidence of a total absorption of the European politics influence⁷.

From what it has been analysed so far, it emerges pretty clearly that the European influence on China was not limited to the international law or to the diplomatic and political sphere. In fact, the great amount of Chinese students who went to Europe during the 19th Century had also learnt new technologies and practical skills that helped China to understand the great gap that at that moment in time still separated China and Europe, at least in technological terms. Furthermore, with the translation of the classical texts of the most important European thinkers such as Voltaire, Smith or Mill, the Chinese entertained the hope that one day China could be strong and affluent enough to stand up alone to its adversaries, so as to allow it to assume its rightful place as one of the greatest powers in the world. In sum, the engagement of China with Europe had awakened the drowsy giant⁸.

After having briefly overviewed which are the more ancient bases of the EU-China relations, it is now necessary to put the attention on the most recent years of relation and their latest developments, especially in political and diplomatic terms.

Talks and economic agreements started to take place in 1975, when the EC (European Community; now European Union, EU) established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). After several years of negotiations, agreements and mutual balancing, the EC formally opened its Delegation office in Beijing in 1988. However, until the end of the Cold War, the EU-China relations could have been said as derivative or secondary relation. In fact, until 1989, they were pretty much dependent on the geopolitical world order at that moment in time, which of course was a bipolar one. Consequently, EU-China relations were a reflex of the Sino-Soviet and especially Sino-US relation. Thus, when the Cold War ended, a new phase of diplomatic ties for the two partners began, the so-called "transitional period"⁹.

The transitional period started in 1989 and lasted until 1994. Interestingly, after years of difficult relations, due to the Cold War environment,

⁷ King, W-S., "China at the Washington Conference in 1921-1922", 1963, New York: St. John's University.

⁸ Raymond, A., "Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations.", 1962, London, Weidenfeld&Nicolson.

⁹ The following historical divisions can be found in Song, X., "Challenges and Opportunities in the EU-China relations", in Vogt, R., (eds.), "Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?", 2012, Hong Kong University Press.

an even tougher period was about to start. At the basis of this new rift in the diplomatic ties lie the Tiananmen incidents of 1989. After that, the EC, given to the great domestic pressure coming from different internal groups, decided to freeze their diplomatic relations with China with until undetermined date. At the same time, the EC agreed to impose different economic sanctions to the PRC, included an arms embargo that is still in force today. Also, the major point of agreement between the two powers, that is the trade cooperation, took a big dip. It felt from 23.51 billion dollars in 1989 to 11.61 billion dollars in 1991.

There was no diplomatic relation until October 1990, when the European Council, together with the European Parliament, decided to move toward a normalization of the ties. Anyway, this process was relatively slow: the only real and concrete measure took place in 1992 when bilateral relations were re-established. During this period, the major achievement was the launch of an environmental dialogue and, later, the establishment of a political dialogue. As a matter of fact, despite the few real tangible results occurred in the last part of the transitional period, it is true that it was fundamental in order to set the bases for a new framework in which the two powers could start a new diplomatic and political relation.

After all, the '89-'94 period was really transitional. In facts, both Europe and China were experiencing fundamental domestic developments. The EC, after the Maastricht Treaty, became the EU, with all its consequences. Concomitantly, China did not stop its economic raise and, instead, speeded up its economic growth due to an increasing foreign trade market. All these considerations, however, could be useless if one does not consider that, at the same time, the US-China relation was about to go into normalization. After Bill Clinton became President, in fact, a new policy of "engagement" with China took place and this highly influenced the ties between China and the European Union.

What happened next was mainly because of the circumstances present at that moment in time, which basically means eternal factors. Indeed, in 1994 the economic growth of Asia became a reality all the Western powers had to deal with. The EU realized it could ignore it anymore and that they had to take a position toward it. In facts, they figured out that "the rise of Asia is dramatically changing the world balance of economic power" and, as a consequence, "the

European Union needs therefore to accord Asia a higher priority than is at present the case”¹⁰. Consequently the EU issued its very first Asia Strategy in 1994 and successively, in 1995, the first China policy paper was emanated¹¹. These two papers have obviously changed the course of EU-China relations, setting in a new trend for the future.

Indeed, from then on, the two powers pulled themselves into a new phase, the so-called “development period”. As the name suggests, from 1995 to 2002, China and the EU actually developed their relation both in economic and political terms. The trade amount between the two passed from 31.52 to 86.75 billion dollars in 2002. Also, the European Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) towards China overtook Japan’s one, 20.9 billion dollars against 17.6¹². However, this change did not regard only trade.

Indeed, new talks for political dialogue were scheduled, as well as a framework of annual summits in 1998. Also, they started a new human rights dialogue in 1996 and in 1998 and after the second EU policy paper was launched¹³, they intensified their social and political talks. From what is has been said so far, it would worth notice that the EU-China relations developed so quickly also because they had clear which were their respective interests. The EU’s China papers are a good example of that. The EU wanted to promote its own trade and foster it economy in the very lucrative Chinese market and, at the same time, it had the intention to improve EU’s image within China. Indeed, the 1998 policy paper words, when defining the relation, moved from a “practical cooperation” and form “constructive” into a “comprehensive engagement” or “comprehensive partnership”, in order to emphasize the upgrade of political dialogue and supporting China’s economic and social reforms. From the Chinese perspective, a closer relation with Europe was not

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities, “Towards a new Asia Strategy”, Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM (94) 314 final, 1994 Brussels.

¹¹ Commission of the European Communities, “A Long-Term Policy for China-Europe Relations, Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM (95) 279, Final, 1995 Brussels.

¹² For a more detailed description the amount of China trade in the 1995-2002 period, please see: Commission of the European Communities, “A Maturing Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations”, updating the European Commission’s Communications on EU-China relations of 1998 and 2001, Commission Policy Paper for the Transmission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (2003) 533 final, 1993 Brussels

¹³ Commission of the European Communities, “Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China”, Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM (98) 181 final, Brussels.

only important to foster the economy, but also for China's domestic social and political stability¹⁴.

The third period that has to be analysed is the one occurred between 2003 and 2005. Many Chinese referred to this period, especially the two years '03-'04, as a "honeymoon" in the EU-China relations. This optimism was basically due to several events occurred at that time.

First of all, the Iraqi invasion of 2003, led by a US-UK coalition. Since it was strongly opposed by both France and Germany, many Chinese thought that was a sign of the long-awaited independence of Europe from the US influence. Someone went even further and started arguing that could have been a turning point in EU-China relations, as they could start working together against the so-called US unilateralism.

Secondly, in June 2003, the Solana Report was released. This was the first ever-official European Security Strategy, emanated by the Council of European Union. In that paper, it was stated that the EU looked at China as one of its "Strategic Partners"¹⁵.

Simultaneously, and this is the third event, the EU as a whole confirmed what was already stated in Solana report, reaffirming, among other things, that "China is one of the EU's major strategic partners" and that they both have "an even greater interest to work together as strategic partners". Accordingly, the paper went global, stating, "It is in the clear interest of the EU and China to work as strategic partners on the international scene"¹⁶.

The fourth event that has to be taken into account is perhaps also the most interesting. For the first time since the birth of the PRC, the Chinese government released its own EU Policy Paper in October 2003. In that paper, the Chinese official did not refer yet to Europe as a "strategic partner" but, at the same time, they stated they were looking forward to a "full partnership with the EU", in order to promote "China-EU all-round cooperation and promote a long term and stable development of China-EU relations". However, some controversial aspects were still evident in that paper. As a matter of fact, the

¹⁴ Song, X., "The impact of Domestic Politics on Chinese Foreign Policy" in Zhong, Y., Chen, W., (eds.) "Leadership in a Changing China", Palgrave Macmillan, 2005 New York.

¹⁵ Solana, J., "A secure Europe in a Better World", European Council, Thessaloniki, 2003.

¹⁶ Commission of the European Communities (2003a), "A Maturing Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations", updating the European Commission's Communications on EU-China relations of 1998 and 2001, Commission Policy Paper for the Transmission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (2003) 533 final, 1993 Brussels

European arms embargo kept bothering Chinese officials. For this reason, in the last sentence of the report they suggested “the EU should lift its ban on arms sales to China at an early date so as to remove barriers to greater bilateral cooperation on defence industry and technology”¹⁷. Although this could be seen as an unfriendly statement, it is worth point out that it actually reflected a relatively spread idea throughout Europe. In facts, both Chirac and Schroder had already hinted to put an end to the embargo in order to start new talks with China.

Last but not least, the sixth EU-China summit came took place in Beijing in October 2003. On that occasion, both sides reciprocally recognized themselves as “strategic partners”. As a proof of it, they welcomed and positively look at the Galileo project, a satellite navigation cooperation agreement, which was regarded as “strategic program”¹⁸.

Except for these extraordinary events, which really fostered a lot the cooperation between the two, the period between '03-'04 has also seen many progress in several other areas. It is just worth to mention the fact that on 2004 the EU officially became China’s biggest trading partner and China appeared to be the second European’s one, just behind the USA. Further, they went together in many fields such as arms control and no-proliferation joint declarations, or on the peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as agreements on climate change.

However, the main and the biggest Beijing’s concern were still in force: the European arms embargo and the issue of recognizing China as a full market economy. Consequently, 2005 is referred as the year in which the “honeymoon” ended. In facts, Britain, which used to be perhaps the strongest ally of China among the European States, gave up the attempt to shut down the arms embargo, after the Chinese government passed a controversial anti-secession law. Concomitantly, Britain’s attempts to convince the other Member States to recognize China as a full market economy were also unsuccessful. Critics started arguing not only that honeymoon was over, but also that it had been a “honeymoon without a marriage”. Scholars from both sides started wondering

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). PRC (2003) “China’s EU Policy Paper”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMA), PRC (2004). “Wen Jiabao Attends Sino_Europe Investment and Trade Conference and Delivers Speech”, May 6, 2004.

¹⁸ Commission of the European Communities (2003a), “A Maturing Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations”, updating the European Commission’s Communications on EU-China relations of 1998 and 2001, Commission Policy Paper for the Transmission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (2003) 533 final, 1993 Brus

weather there had ever been a real honeymoon period and in case, what it would have meant.

As a matter of fact, neither China nor the EU, have never concretely specified what the term “strategic partner” could mean, leaving huge room for interpretation. In sum, the question was if the change between the term “comprehensive” to “strategic” have signified a qualitative change in the relations or weather it was just a mere swift in terminology.

From the late 2005 on, both China and the EU started to reconsider their reciprocal positions towards each other and, as a consequence, their bilateral relation. This emerged clearly at the eight EU-China summit hold in Beijing, in September 2005. On that occasion, among other things, appeared the intention, from both side, to specify and to go much more in detail about the term “strategic partnership” or, at least, that was the intention. In facts, according to the joint statement of the summit, “The leaders now wished to look ahead to the future, developing the strategic relationship through concrete actions”¹⁹.

However, it needed to wait until 2007 to see a major step forward. On that year, during the annual summit, both parts agreed on analyse and discuss on many issues of common interests. As a matter of fact, the joint statement of that year declared that the EU and the PRC agreed on 47 issues²⁰. However, the most important part of this summit was the agreement on launching negotiations on a new “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” to encompass the full scope of their bilateral relationship. This would include enhanced cooperation in political affairs, in order to reflect the full breadth and depth of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the EU and China.

The negotiations were launched on 2007 and they are still on going today. On the same year, in December, the Council of the European Union adopted the Guideline on the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia, which was of course particularly referred to China. Economically speaking, it stated which were the challenges posed by China, rather than the opportunities. It affirms the “current trade imbalance between China and the EU in not sustainable in the long term”.

¹⁹ Commission of the European Communities (2005), “Joint Statement of the 8th EU-China Summit”, Beijing, Semptember 5, 2005.

²⁰ Commission of the European Communities (2007), “Joint Statement of the 10th EU-China Summit”, Beijing, November, 2007.

The document issued several topics in market access field, intellectual property rights as well as security. As regards the latter, there were some concerns about the risk of nuclear proliferation, given the program that North Korea was carrying on that moment in time and, of course, some issues related to Taiwan question.

Generally speaking, in terms of security in the East Asia, it noticed “the potential for competitive nationalism in the region: with China’s economic development and active diplomacy, the strategic balance in the region is shifting. Despite growing regional economic interdependence, the uncertainties generated by such geopolitical changes, combined with unresolved historical and territorial disputes, have the potential to create tensions. Rising energy demand and the desire for energy security can compound these tensions”²¹.

It is also worth to put the attention on the 12th EU-China summit that took place in Nanjing in 2009. Both China and Europe reaffirmed their reciprocal commitment onto a comprehensive and strategic partnership. However, Zhai Jun, the Chinese vice minister of foreign affairs, stated the follow at the conference press before the meeting: “one of the major task of this meeting is to enhance China-EU strategic mutual trust, strengthen the support of each other’s development path, further deepen understanding of the strategic meaning of China-EU relations and make clear the basic principle of mutual respect, equal treatment and win-win cooperation in order to consolidate the political foundation of bilateral ties”²². All these claims and concern clearly shown that Chinese were worried about uncertainty of the further development of the EU-China relations.

The Nanjing summit indicated that bilateral relationship was back on track. However, none of the major problems between the EU and China- arms embargo, the recognition of China’s full market economy status, trade frictions, human rights, contestation over intellectual property rights- have been addressed or solved. Both sides have gradually come to realize that these problems are normal and inevitable due to the huge volume of their economic transactions, their different political systems and their ideological differences.

²¹ Council of European Union (2007), “Guidelines on the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia”, Brussels, December 11-12, 2007.

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). PRC (2009b), “Wen Jiabao Meets with European Commission President Barroso”, November 29 2009.

In the process of transition in EU-China relations, it has become more pertinent to address the following challenges in the bilateral relationship.

On December 2010, during the EU summit in Brussels, the then High Representative for the Common and Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, presented a decisive paper, in which she took a fundamental position, surprisingly, against the EU arms embargo on China. On that occasion, the HR tried to convince the sceptic representatives of the other EU institutions that the EU embargo was the main and last hurdle obstructing a stronger commitment and a further strategic involvement with China.

Ashton defined the PRC as a “major world power” and suggested the EU should “design a coherent communication strategy” to “explain” its view of China to the European public, with “facts about China [to] be mainstreamed at all levels of education”. As regards the US influence she stated, “Europe is no longer the main strategic preoccupation of US foreign policy. [...] The US has recognized the need for an increased engagement with Asia and there is a risk it will see the EU as a less relevant partner given our relative strategic weakness there”.

The HR went further, affirming that the US interest in partnership with the EU is also linked with the European capacity to stand for its own interests: “The US values the EU as a partner that has means at its disposal and can provide a degree of international legitimacy.” But she warned that internal EU muddles are damaging relations: “If we over-promise and under-deliver; if we prioritize process over substance or if we don't know what we want, the US will turn its attention elsewhere.”²³

Over the next couple of years, both the EU and China have tried to strengthen their ties, focusing on detailed issue and, once again, trying to go more “specific” into the term of the “strategic partnership”. Examples of these attempts can be found in several areas of international affairs in which both sides have deepened their reciprocal commitment: the cooperation on Iran within the EU3+3 framework, China’s contribution to the UN-mandated anti piracy mission of the EU in Gulf of Aden (the so-called operation Atlanta) and, perhaps most importantly, China’s increasing involvement the UN

²³ Andrew Rettman, “Ashton pragmatic on China in EU foreign policy blueprint”, EUobserver, Brussels, 17 December 2010, <https://euobserver.com/china/31538>

peacekeeping missions, such as in Mali, alongside the EU and with other Member States.²⁴

The key meeting between the European and the Chinese official took place in Beijing in November 2013 as the 16th summit between the two powers. The major achievement on that occasion was the adoption of the so called “EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda”, in which they both set the bases for concrete goals to be achieved within that year²⁵. It is worth notice that 2020 is also an important date because, on that year, the Chinese government has scheduled the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Party Congress for accomplishing the new Chinese reformed agenda²⁶.

During 2014, two events occurred which are worth to mention and to be analysed too. In facts, in March the PRC President Xi Jinping fled to Europe for a diplomatic visit to both the Member States and the European institutions. During his journey, President Xi released many interviews and issued different topics. Xi talked about the classical view of China toward Europe with the already famous “win-win economic cooperation” formula. He also addressed the issue of and a possible Investment Partnership Agreement (IPA) and a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between China and the EU, both under negotiations.

The international dimension of President Xi’s message was two-fold. On the one hand, China’s mantra of peaceful development was presented as China’s continuing path. Nevertheless, the President admitted that “pursuing peaceful development is China’s response to international concerns about the direction of China’s development”, an explanation that gives a somewhat tactical undertone to the adoption of such reassurance language. Moreover, well-established Chinese formulas were used: “the pursuit of peaceful development represents the peace-loving cultural tradition of the Chinese nation over the past several thousand years”, a statement that Xi then used to reiterate that in the future China “will never seek hegemony or expansion”.

²⁴ European Commission Memo, “EU-China relations and the 16th EU-China Summit”, Beijing, 21 November 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1012_en.htm

²⁵ “EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation”, Beijing November 2013, http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/eu-china_2020_strategic_agenda_en.pdf

²⁶ Eoin McDonnell, “The EU-China Summit 2013- Real Progress?”, 25 November 2013, <http://www.iiea.com/blogosphere/the-eu-china-summit-2013--real-progress>

However, such well-worn claims had the sting in the tail that “China will firmly uphold its sovereignty, security and development interests”²⁷. A final twist in the President’s trip was a renewed focus on the EU. In the previous few years, there had been signs of China perhaps side lining the EU by moving into greater sub-EU engagement with East European subgroupings, and with important national actors like Germany. However, Xi made a point of being the first Chinese President to visit EU headquarters in Brussels. The reason for this renewed focus on the EU institutions may be that if China wants any EU-wide investment and free trade agreements, then it has to engage directly with the EU machinery in Brussels.

The second and perhaps most important event that has to be analysed is the release of the second China’s EU Policy Paper in April 2014, titled “Deepen the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit and Win-Win Cooperation”²⁸. As just said, this is the second paper promulgated by the PRC about their EU’s policy after the one in 2003, and it has been welcomed (even though, surprisingly, without great media attention) as a big step forward the deepen of the so called strategic partnership. The first paper came in a period that, as explained before, was named as “honeymoon” phase in EU-China relations. The 2014 paper arrived in a different situation. More than ten years have passed and the relation between the two has become far away more institutionalized and regularized. As it has been pointed out, among other changes, the EU has turned to be the first Chinese commercial partner. Given all the changes and the differences in circumstances, it is now the case to look more specifically at this last policy paper, in order to understand if there were significant swift in the Chinese attitude toward Europe and, most importantly, weather the 2014 statement has contributed to the stabilization of the “Strategic Partnership”.

First of all, it has to be notice that, in the new paper, both the tone and the language that have been used are at least less harsh. Furthermore, the 2014 policy paper has included more fields of analysis, such the environment and climate change and a new entire chapter is dedicated to urbanization. However,

²⁷ Xi, J., President of the People’s Republic of China, speech, Berlin, Körber Foundation, 28 March 2014, retrieved 18 June 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1148640.shtml.

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). PRC (2014) “China’s Policy Paper on the EU: Deepen the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit and Win-Win Cooperation”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMA), PRC (2014).

the most important changed, surprisingly, have occurred in the security field, in which there can be underlined at least three significant differences in some of the most sensitive issue for the PRC. Those regarded the Human Rights issue, the Tibetan issue and the Taiwan question.

On Human Rights, to start, although reaffirming the Chinese intention to cooperate with Europe, in the sense that “The Chinese side is ready to continue human rights dialogue with the EU based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs” it is also true that the 2014 version has been far more specific than its predecessor in what had bothered Chinese officials. Indeed, it stated “The EU side should attach equal importance to all forms of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, view China's human rights situation in an objective and fair manner, stop using individual cases to interfere in China's judicial sovereignty and internal affairs, and to create a good atmosphere for human rights dialogue and cooperation between the two sides”. From these rows it is possible to perceive the Chinese annoyance for what took place in the Human Rights dialogue with the EU over the last decade and what it sees as its negative aspects.

Going further, the Tibetan issue. While in 2003 the policy paper had encouraged the European Union “not to have any contact with the Tibetan government in exile”, and “not to provide facilities to the separatist activities of the Dalai clique”, the 2014 spoke more softly about the “Dalai groups”. On the other hand, while the first version contained invitations to EU personages to visit Tibet, the second one does not present this part anymore. In fact, the first paper, when dealing with the Tibetan issue, titled “Promote the EU's understanding of Tibet”; the equivalent part of the 2014 version's title was “Properly handling Tibet-Related Issues”. Consequently, it has been argued that perhaps, “the understanding of Tibet is no longer a priority”²⁹.

Thirdly, it has to be analysed the section regarding the One China Principle. The 2014 one is slightly more moderate in tones than the previous version on that. In fact, the 2003 version listed a number of actions that the EU should not allow to do, while the 2014 started with a more comprehensive

²⁹ Wacker, G., “What's New in EU-China Relations?”, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2014, Berlin

statement such as “Exchanges between the EU and its member states and Taiwan should be strictly limited to nonofficial and people-to-people activities”. As far as military cooperation with Taiwan is concerned, the 2014, unless the 2003 one, not only asked the EU not to sell arm to the Taiwanese government but also “not to carry out military exchanges or cooperation with Taiwan in any form”. No great difference was present as regards the passage on Taiwan’s international space but, at the same time, the 2014 lacked the 2003 part in which it was stated that Taiwan access to the WTO as a customs territory did not mean any change in “Taiwan’s status as part of China”.

From what it has been analyzed so far, it emerged clearly that the differences between the two papers are proofs of how broad the relations and the cooperation between the EU and the PRC has become but, at the same time, it is also possible to see certain dissatisfaction with some of the developments overs the last decade on the Chinese side.

3.0 STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES TO THE EU-CHINA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Moving forward in the analysis of the factors that obstruct a stronger commitment between China and the EU, it is impossible to ignore a general trend that affects almost every kind of relations between Nations, which the basic difficulties to build an alliance.

Generally speaking, it is true that alliances are among the strongest forms of international relationship. In the case of EU-China, at this moment in time, there are both encouraging signs as well as problematic ones in the direction of a future commitment. Encouraging signs come from the fact that they do not have any kind of dispute among each other, in the classical way of intending them. They do not share borders, which implies that there is no room for territorial conflicts. Neither they have some geostrategic interests in the partner’s region. Instead, they come from forty-five years of friendly relations and, in addition, there is a strong economic interdependence among the two.

However, if one looks at these encouraging signs from a different perspective, they could turn into problematic ones. The fact that they do not

share common borders could be seen as a cause for their cultural, historical and social distance. Further, this lack of common values and background and, in a way, of political ideology, makes the economic and trade cooperation the only one possible at this moment in time. In addition, it has been argued that leaving the relationship with China to a mere economic cooperation level, it could be dangerous for the EU interest. Accordingly, China has been able, during the time, to shape its political demands in compliance with its business interests, playing off sometimes with the MS of Europe and other times with the EU proper institutions. This is mainly because the Chinese usually look at the Common Foreign and Security Policy as a goal, rather than an achievement. Indeed, the PRC “hedged its bets by simultaneously cultivating separate partnership with Europe’s three leading states (France, Germany and Britain) as well as with the supranational institutions of the EU”³⁰.

3.1 Strategic partnership: an attempt of definition

Before analysing all the factors that do not allow defining the EU-China relations a “strategic” partnership, it will be necessary to better define the concept of “strategic” and to give a definition of “strategic partnership” among the many that have been presented by several scholars.

The term “Strategic partnership” has been broadly discussed for many years and it will still be in the future. The research and the analysis that will be presented in this work will plainly explain there is no clear definition of such concept nor there is agreement among scholars about what that means. Arguably, this could be seen as a first weakness of the EU-China relations. In fact, it would be hard to qualify this partnership as strategic when it is already difficult to understand what the “strategic” would entail.

However, in this context it is not the case to let much space to the etymologic debate. In fact, for the purpose of this work it will be taken into account only

³⁰ Goldstein, A., “Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security”, 2005. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

one definition that would best fit in the EU-China relations context. Besides, the idea beyond this work is to prove the relation is not strategic by bringing up theoretical and empirical evidences, instead of dismantling the European and Chinese political proclaim of the existence of a strategic partnerships in itself.

Thus, as it has been mentioned above, the EU does not provide a clear definition of “strategic partnership”. Generally speaking, this would not be a problem. In facts, as some scholars have argued, “it might even be an advantage, since a certain degree of flexibility and constructive ambiguity is indispensable for a concept such as this”. This could be actually true, if the expression of “strategic partnership” had remained a mere guideline for the EU foreign policy, to adapt from time to time to a specific situation. Instead, the EU insisted on it until the point that it has now to be considered one of its central foreign policy principles in dealing with specific actors. This difference makes the investigation on its consequences worthy not from an etymologic point of view, but for its practical applications in the EU foreign affairs. Indeed, this formula can be easily found in several EU official documents, referring to a number of relations with different States, for instance Russia, the US, Japan, India, Brazil and of course China. It all started in 2003, when the European Security Strategy (EES) published a document in which referred to different actors as strategic for the EU interests. Then, in 2008, the concept was further developed in a second EES official document. However, although referring to these States as strategic, none of these documents made the definition clear. Initially, it seemed the EU wanted to aim to jointly promote effective multilateralism in pursuit of common challenges. In concrete, it would have meant to “actively seek common ground on issues of mutual interest, support each other’s political agendas and take joint political action at regional [...] or global level”³¹. However, this definition does not clarify what these issues of mutual interest would be in practice. Officially, their object would differ depending on which partner the EU is dealing with. It derives that, in the case of China, these would focus on energy security, climate change and the protection of the environment. Later on, this work will prove the relation effectively covers only few of these areas, since

³¹ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Towards an EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, COM(2006) 347 final, Brussels, 28.6.2006

most of both the EU and China have been putting the attention on different issues.

It is true, however, that both parties have kept on reciprocally defining themselves as strategic partners, without clearly knowing what that means. It could be worth to take in consideration few of the definitions, which have been proposed both by scholars and officials. The former PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has once declared that the cooperation in a strategic partnership should be “long-term and stable, transcending both differences and ideology and social systems and the impact of individual events. Furthermore, it should take place on an equal footing and be mutually beneficial”. Many of these expressions such as “transcending mutual differences”, “equal footing” or “mutually beneficial” are common in Chinese official statements, regardless of who the partner is and the type of the relation the Chinese have established with them. Once again, the vagueness persists. Besides, this work will also demonstrate how hard it is to “transcend” the reciprocal differences and to what extent these can be identified as structural obstacles.

Other authors have gone a bit more on the specifics. Bandiek and Kramer, for instance, defined the strategic partnership as “a well-planned pursuit of a clearly-defined long-term goal or as a planned realization of a certain long-term interest which has precisely defined objectives, timeframes and action plans”³². Even though the authors arrived at the conclusion there should be a common, precise and mutual interest to pursuit for both parties, this definition still lacks the accuracy it would need. In facts, the main point of struggle between China and the EU is how to define interests, regardless of the “timeframes” or the “action plans”. In sum, it is not the case to ask “how”, but “what”.

Some other scholars have stressed the possible misunderstanding between actors on the concepts of multilateralism and even partnership in itself. In facts, these ideas are not world wide recognised and sometimes they could be interpreted differently. As far as the EU is concerned, the Lisbon Treaty sets few indications about both principles. The Art. 22 of the TUE entrust the European Council to indicate the “strategic interests” of the EU; as regards the choice of the partners, the Lisbon Treaty establishes some criteria

³² Bandiek, Annegret, Kramer, Heinz, *The EU as a Would-Be Global Actor: Strategic Partnerships and Interregional Relations*, in: Husar, Jörg/Maihold, Günther/Mair, Stefan (eds.): *Europe and New Leading Powers. Towards Partnership in Strategic Policy Areas*, Nomos, 2010, pp. 21-42.

which can also go beyond the so-called idea of “principle-sharing”. Furthermore, the EU also aimed at a common understanding of shared global responsibility among the different strategic actors for global peace and security. This could also be seen as an attempt to set common global governance and as a consequence, it could also become rather sensitive for other actors. China, for instance, but Russia too, has different ideas of multilateralism: this is more linked with the traditional idea of balancing power, rather than with a new global governance, something that could question the principle of non-interference. In the EU-China relations, this is actually a strongly debated issue among scholars of the two sides and the resulted misunderstanding will be labelled as another structural obstacle for the development of a future strategic partnership between China and the EU. This idea of multilateralism often reflects on the concept of strategic partnership. Indeed, it has been argued that beyond the EU adoption of a strategic partnership and policy toward a given Country, there is an attempt for westernisation. This theory sees the “constructive engagement” EU policy as value-based behaviour that interferes in the domestic affairs of the partner in order to push their internal orientations toward Western values. It will be discussed and eventually refused in the following chapters. For the moment, it is just necessary to mention a similar trend of thought that identifies a normative power of the EU in engaging with China. Hence, for some authors the adoption of the “strategic partnership” expression within the foreign strategy “can be seen as a strategy to not only pursue economic, security and political interests but also to implement a value-based foreign policy”³³.

Others authors have started asking if the EU foreign policy would actually represent the real intentions of the Union in itself. The argument is basically that the Member States can deeply pressure the European institution in order to make their specific interests prevail over the Union’s ones. Furthermore, they are convinced this attempt was successful most of the times. Consequently, the EU has not chosen the right policy in dealing with its strategic partners. This can arguably seen as a failure of the idea of a “strategic partnership”³⁴.

³³ Blanco L., “Strategic Partnership: a new form of association in International Relations?”. 2011, http://www.wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC_2011-523.pdf

³⁴ Among others, see Müller-Brandeck Bocquet, Gisela, *European Foreign Policy: What Role for Policy Area Centered Approaches?*, in: Husar, Jörg/Maihold, Günther/Mair, Stefan (eds.): *Europe and New Leading Powers*.

Following this reasoning, some have found the cause of this failure in the incapacity of the EU in becoming a strategic partner itself. More concretely, the EU would not be able to satisfy certain conditions that would allow to define the Union a potential strategic partner. First of all, the EU cannot make commitments to set principles and is not able to clearly define its priorities. Secondly, it does not have sufficient policy tools nor the capacity to negotiate as a unique actor with a third party. Thirdly, it would lack the sufficient international recognition from the others. Regardless of the specific causes they found, the conclusion they reached is worthy be analysed. It basically says that while the EU has succeeded in speaking as a united actor for economic and trade issues, the political side of the strategic partnerships are, as other foreign policy tools, often “highly disputed between member states”³⁵. It is undeniable that the Members States still plays a central role in defining the EU CFSP and, above all, in identifying the EU priorities due to an implicit or explicit exercise of lobbying. Indeed, the MS’ role in the strategic partnership with China will be further and deeper analysed later on. However, it will be argued that their position is still not strong enough and not sufficient to deny the existence of a strategic partnership in the case of the EU-China relations and, as a consequence, it will be necessary to find the causes of this inconsistency somewhere else. In sum, the role of the MS has not to be considered as fundamental and will not be part of those already mentioned “structural obstacles” preventing the formation of a strategic partnership between China and the EU.

Few other authors have stressed different aspects of the “strategic partnership” concept, which can be food for thought for the purpose of this work. For instance, it has been argued that a relation can be strategic when “it involves two actors that are powerful and capable of taking strategic action together”³⁶. In turn, the Routledge Encyclopedia of Political Economy defines a strategic partnership between states as a political instrument to facilitate the intensification of the economical relationship between the parts involved. Both of the two can be taken as basic definitions in this context. The first one lacks a fundamental definition of “powerful” and “strategic action”, which can be part

Towards Partnership in Strategic Policy Areas, Nomos, 2010, pp. 43-49.

³⁵ Grevi, G., “Making EU strategic partnerships effective”. Working paper (FRIDE), n. 105, December 2010

³⁶ Emerson, M., “The Elephant and the Bear: the European Union, Russia and their Near Abroads”. 2001.

of another difficult and different debate from the current one. The second one focused too much on the economic aspects of the relation. Indeed, although the economic aspect between China and the EU is a fundamental part of the partnership and which has also shortly analysed here, this work will mainly focus on the political realm which, compared to the economic interconnections, has been rarely discussed.

It is also worth to analyse some others authors' idea of similarities between two partners. The argument beyond this basically insists on the common grounds two actors should share in order to reach a strategic partnership status. Hence, they are convinced that "the presence of common values, common interests and mutual understanding are essential criteria for a partnership, as opposed to mere co-operation"³⁷. As a consequence, two strategic partners should share "common values" to be defined as such. As regards the EU-China relations, this is a controversial point, which will be better analysed in the further in the text. In facts, it is undeniable that China and the EU not only do not share common values and interests, but their respective cultural, historical and social situation differs until the point it can sometimes prevent the improvement of their relations. However, here it will be argued their differences are just one of the cause that can lead to a broader misperception of the other partner. In sum, when it comes to common values and shared interest, China and the EU can really be at odds. However, this work will conclude that there is actually a fundamental and reciprocal misperception. Yet, the cultural, social and historical differences together with their different scale of values are just ones of the many causes leading to the above mentioned misperception, which will be identified as another structural obstacle for the development of a strategic partnership.

From what it has been analysed so far, it emerges clearly there is no a unique definition of strategic partnership. This chapter, until now, has tried to give some samples of what many scholars have argued about it. Yet, it has not been reached a definitive conclusion. From now on, this work will try to give another definition of strategic partnership, drawing inspiration from what it

³⁷ Vahl, M., "Just good friends? the EU-Russian strategic partnership and the northern dimension, working document n. 166 (ceps), march 2001.

has been said so far. Although all the scholars' definitions greatly differ from one to another, it is possible to find at least one common aspect among them. Indeed, it is undeniable that when an actor decides to engage with another in a strategic partnership, this can be basically translated into an attempt to upgrade the relations with such partner. In fact, every strategic partnership (and here lays the consensus among scholars) entails in itself a profound endeavour to move from a situation of mere co-operation and to improve their relations. In sum, the degree of commitment in a strategic partnership is undeniably superior. Hence, the task is now to understand in which sense a given relation has upgraded in order to complete the definition. For this purpose, it could be useful to restore Grevi's idea of strategic partnership, or at least part of it. Indeed, for the scholar strategic partnerships are "those that both parties regard as essential to achieve their basic goals. This is because the cooperation of strategic partners can lead to win-win games and, conversely, because such partners are those who could inflict most harm to one another were relations to turn sour". Here Grevi has found his own reason to achieve the same just mentioned conclusion. Indeed, the fact that both actors should be able to reach the maximum result in both a negative and a positive sense is a consequence of the upgrading relation among the two. They are able to win and lose a lot at the same time, because the relation has moved from a co-operation to an essential partnership. However, he has not explained yet what this upgrade concretely would mean. Indeed, his definition further states: "Strategic partnerships are therefore important bilateral means to pursue core goals. As such, they may concern pivotal global but also regional actors. What matters is that they deliver"³⁸. Regardless of the role the actor would play in the international arena (global or regional), here Grevi elucidates a fundamental aspect that every strategic partnership should present. Indeed, according to him, these relations, as strategic, are first of all means to pursue core goals, which is a largely sharable context. Arguably, from an essential and upgrading relation can only derive a means to obtain fundamental objectives or goals. Furthermore, Grevi adds these goals should also be achieved. In the end, what really matters is that "they deliver", which basically means they must obtain concrete results on core issues of the actors. Thus, combining the two parts of

³⁸ Grevi, G., "Making EU strategic partnerships effective". Working paper (FRIDE), n. 105, December 2010

the latter reasoning, from now on it will be considered as strategic only those partnerships between to actors who decided to upgrade their relations to such a higher degree, and which can deliver tangible results on issues that are fundamental for both parties.

3.2 The Chinese perception of Europe

Once having briefly analysed and understood the current situation of the EU-China relations, it is now necessary to move toward an academic investigation of the European perception of China and the China's perception of Europe. This would allow drawing some important conclusions about the relation between the two powers. More specifically, it might be possible to understand which are the specific issues that sometimes limit the so-called Strategic Partnership between China and the European Union. Generally speaking, it has been pointed out that China and the EU do not face any sever obstacles to their partnership since the strategic elements of that have always remained vague and general³⁹.

As far China's perception of Europe is concerned, it has been argued that, since the end of the Cold War, there have been three levels of Chinese expectations toward Europe. The first one regards the Global Governance concerns. In a world that is getting more and more globalized and interconnected every day, China is strongly on the side of avoiding any form of unilateralism in the Global Governance. Accordingly, China expects a more integrated and united Europe to play a substantial role in this direction, which means working together with China to build a multipolar world order in which no State can overtake the others. As a matter of fact, some European States, together with China, have repeatedly argued that they are in favour of an "effective multilateralism", which entails and looks forward to a stronger involvement of the United Nations in the disputes settlement mechanism, while they both are strongly opposing the so-called US model which, according to several scholars, could entails the use of force any times it deems necessary.

³⁹ Feng, Z., "Issues related to the EU's Foreign Policy", 2006, in Contemporary International Relations, vol. 16, no 4 (April 2006).

Consequently, China has started several joint programs with Europe in different fields of common interest, such as anti terrorism policies, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized criminal association fights, poverty relief, environmental protection, human rights and so on. From this perspective, it can be argued that Beijing has tried to tie its relations with Brussels with a view of curbing the US in global affairs. However, it is also worth to notice that this aim is unlikely to be successful. In fact, it appears clear that China has underestimated the dimensions and the saliency of transatlantic solidarity, since the long lasting and reciprocal commitment the US and Europe have done among each other⁴⁰. As regards this, indeed, it has also been pointed out how dangerous could be for China to play “the EU” card in challenging the US, since the Europeans have much more in common with the Americans than China and Europe do. In addition, it is even less probable to see a joint European and Chinese venture aimed to challenge the US supremacy, given the reciprocal relations that the EU and China have with the USA.

The second level that is worth to be analysed regards the military power, in the classical way of intending the term. Many have argued that China still persists in considering Europe from a realist point of view⁴¹. The Chinese mistrust Europe’s ability to influence and rebalance hard power in the global scale, in particular with relation to the EU military force. This idea laid its basis in the multipolar and multilateral decision making mechanism within the European Union which would inevitably affect the EU capacity and effectiveness in the use of force. Accordingly, the EU intervention in the Libya crisis would not be an exception. On the other hand, it is possible to argue, as it has been done, that the realist approach could be misleading in judging Europe’s capability. This would mean to overestimate EU disunity in era of globalization: as it has been noted, “to make the military power the litmus test of European integration is to repeat Stalin’s mistake of judging the Catholic Church by the number of its [military] divisions”⁴².

Furthermore, it could be argued that, in the 21st globalized world such as the one of today, the European Union has chosen a different way of dealing with

⁴⁰ Nye, J.S. jr, “The Paradox of American Power”, 2002, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁴¹ Chen, Z-q., “Difficult situation of EU Common Security Policy”, in Political and Social Studies of European Union, 2002, Tianjin: People’s Press.

⁴² Reid, T. R., “The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy”, 2004, New York, Penguin Books.

power, which strongly differs from the classical realistic view and, as a consequence, from the American's one. Indeed, to quote one of the most advocates of the European integration Jean Monnet, the EU could eventually become a "civilian great power". This basically means that it is necessary to intend the European current power and capabilities from a new point of view. If one can admit that it is possible to look at the EU as a non-fighting political entity, it is also possible to conclude that its power does not derive from battlefields or military force. Instead, the EU could draw its own contractual powers by diplomatic and political means, which are, for instance, the several votes in the UN Security Council, in the World Trade Organization and in all the others international or intergovernmental organizations in which the EU, if united, can make its voice louder than any other States. In addition, Europe has also other means on its side. It can win its supporters by economic and development aids, preferential market access or free trade agreements and, as far as neighbouring countries are concerned, even the EU membership in itself. Consequently, it can be legitimate to argue "for better or worse, Europe could be America's equal in power"⁴³.

A third level which is worth to be analysed is the one regarding the European integration and its raising power. It is unclear in which way the Chinese use to intend this process. On the one hand, many Chinese scholars pointed out that the EU pacific way of leading international affairs could be a mirror of the potential rise of China⁴⁴. This is particularly true when one looks at the Chinese attitude in approaching international relations. Indeed, the PRC's has always denied any aim to seek hegemony in a hypothetical new world order lead by China; neither it is possible to find any sign of aggressive policies (in classical realist terms) when facing international issues. However, this comparison could be hardly applied in the practice, especially when one looks at the different backgrounds that both the powers have. Indeed, the European Union is, was and will probably be the status quo power, rather than the one seeking to disturb it, as it could be the case of China.

On the other hand, the EU integration and rise came together with a series of concepts and beliefs that can hardly match with the Chinese ones. As an

⁴³ Macmillan, A., "Strategic Culture and National Ways in Warfare: The British Case.", 1995, RUSI Journal, vol. 140, no. 5 (October).

⁴⁴ Song, X., "China's Peaceful Rise and the European Experience", 2004, Teaching and Research, no. 4.

example, the constant European criticism of China's human and religious rights (the Tibetan Issue included) could shake the confidence each has in the other. Indeed, the Chinese are generally still sensitive to criticism by the individual states, the NGOs, the media and the national parliaments in Europe, when not the European Parliament in itself. Some Chinese analysts and young students in particular even view concerns as part of a long-standing European scheme to westernize China, that is, to transform it into a "Western-styled republic if not a political dependence"⁴⁵. Arguably, this perception of the West, relating both to Europe and the USA, prevails among the Chinese.

3.3 The European perception of China

Once having analysed the Chinese perspective of Europe, it is now necessary to investigate which are the competing narratives in Europe toward China. For doing so, it could be useful to look at the International Relations theories that have taken into account this complex interconnection between the EU and China during time. Generally speaking, two major narratives have mostly discussed the implications of the rise of China for global politics.

The first one to be analysed will be the one that see China's growing influence in international politics in a positive light. This doctrine basic argument is that China is inextricably interested in stability, partnership and pragmatic international behaviour. Indeed, it has been pointed out, as a proof, that the PRC's actually needs this kind of stable environment in order to keep promoting and fostering its internal development and its domestic reforms process⁴⁶. This argument basically entails that China is a *status quo* power with very few interest in challenging it or even taking any kind of responsibilities both financial, diplomatic or military ones. In facts, it has been argued that these types of responsibilities in the international order are currently carried on by the USA and, accordingly, China does not need and does not want to pay an higher cost or take any further risk in employing force to improve its

⁴⁵ China Daily, April the 6th 2009.

⁴⁶ Jia, Q., "Learning to Live with the Hegemon: Evolution of China's Policy towards the US since the End of the Cold War", 2005, Journal of Contemporary China, vol. 14, no. 44, pp. 395-407

standing in the international hierarchy or, at least so far, very few sings of that can be found in the Chinese policies⁴⁷.

On the opposite side there is the doctrine saying that the rise of China will inevitably bring instability to the world order. Accordingly, this is due to the fact that the rising power of China is at the expenditure of the American power and leadership, which means that it would be eventually possible to witness a competition between the two super powers. What is feared by this part of the international literature is upcoming of a global instability, which can lead to any scenario, even war; indeed, they argue, "History shows us that periods of rise and fall of great powers are often times of great instability"⁴⁸.

Obviously, it is not the purpose of this work to stand for one or another school. However, it is at least necessary to point out that, even if one can admit that China's rise is fundamentally pacific and mostly oriented toward the regime preservation, the economic growth and its domestic prosperity, it is also true that, together with the latest economic expansion, the PRC's is also acquiring a discreet amount of power and political prestige in the international arena. Given that, some scholars are still undecided inasmuch it is not clear which direction this increasing Chinese influence within the international world would be oriented to, that is, either toward cooperation or conflict⁴⁹.

As far as the official and political level is concerned, it is still not clear which position and which role the EU is likely to play. Indeed, it is not a secret that, within the decision making process of the EU, Members States' interests are still playing an important role. Arguably, many Chinese are currently looking at the EU as a partner who can only play a "secondary role"⁵⁰. This dilution of multi level governance works both ways: national issues also influence developments at the European level. The effect of this general trend in Europe has been that political decision makers now enjoy less autonomy and room for manoeuvring than was the case only two or three decades ago. The European integration played a significant role in it. Indeed, before the Lisbon Treaty and especially before the Maastricht one, it was largely an elite project,

⁴⁷ Lanteigne, M., "China and the International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power", 2005, London, Routledge.

⁴⁸ Nye, J., "The case of Deep Engagement", 1995, Foreign Affairs, vol. 74, no 4, pp. 90-102

⁴⁹ Wang, Fei-Ling, "Preservation, Prosperity and Power: What motivates China's Foreign Policy?" 2005, Journal of Contemporary China, vol14, no. 45, pp. 669-694

⁵⁰ Yahuda, M., "The Sino-European Encounter: Historical influence on the Contemporary Relations", 2008, in 1. Shambung, D., Sandschneider, E., Hong, Z., (eds.), "China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects". London, 2008, Routledge,

which counted on general but disinterested public opinion and support. Yet, with increasing influence of European institutions over domestic politics, this “permissive consensus” has waned. This will have a consequence for the way the EU as a whole engages with other players around the world: the US, Russia, and also China. Consequently, it has been pointed out that the European Member States are caught in between wanting to keep some degree of autonomy in the realm of foreign policy and needing a European Union that can defend its own interest’s vis-à-vis China⁵¹. On the other hand, it is also true that, so far, the attempts to create a more unified and coherent foreign policy structure for the EU have failed due to the lack of public and elite support in key MS (Member States).

Interestingly, the raise of China could eventually represent a turning point for the Union. Indeed, it has been noted that the EU’s China policy is likely to continue to be based on the “smallest common denominator”⁵² among Member States. However, it is still hard to conclude that this background can represent a starting point for a Europe’s stated ambition to upgrade its relations with China to a “strategic partnership”. Even if Europe has been somehow successful in gradually and consistently expanding its cooperation with China in numerous fields of “low politics”, it has struggled very much as far as “high politics” are concerned and the case of the arms embargo is a clear evidence of it.

From what it has been explained so far, it can be concluded that it is particularly difficult to picture a clear European position toward China, due to the several division a throughout the EU. Indeed, hereby Europe is clearly facing a fundamental dilemma. Political developments within MS influence and constrain the way in which the EU and its Members can interact with China. In facts, the division between overlapping institutions competences together with multiple parliamentary constellations and coalitions, the public opinion as well as the special interest groups and lobbies, is still an obstacle to the implementation of a coherent Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) in general: China’s policy is not an exception yet.

⁵¹ Cabestan, J-P., “The Role of France in Sino-European Relations: Central or Marginal?” in David Kerr and Liu Fei (eds.), “The international Politics of EU-China Relations”, 2007, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 129-150

⁵² *Ibidem*.

3.4 Limits in the reciprocal attitudes

So far, it emerged clearly that the road towards a stronger commitment, not to mention a strategic partnership, between China and the EU, is still a long and steep one. For this reason, it would be useful to understand which are the reciprocal attitudes that are obstructing such a stronger involvement between the two powers.

The first one, which is worth to point out, is what has been called the “contradictory Chinese behaviour”. This regards the fact that, in dealing with the PRC, the EU must be aware of the fact that Beijing has often shown two faces of its own politics. One of these is represented by the innermost government elites who continue to enjoy a very high degree of autonomy on matters of foreign policy, strategy and national security. On the other hand, it present the other face of the Chinese behaviour, which is the result of China’s increasing participation in international organizations, multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, the professionalization of its foreign policy bureaucracy, as well as its increasing adherence to international norms and best practices.

However, the Europeans, as well as other Chinese partners, are actually fully conscious of the fact that the PRC’s first face could eventually blow in abrupt changes in the foreign policy attitudes, probably due to the fact that the system in itself is still compartmentalized and personalized at the very top⁵³. More precisely, it can be helpful to bring up two cases in which the EU has witnessed those kinds of shifts from Beijing attitude. The first one occurred in Berlin late 2007, when the German Chancellor Angela Merkel received the Dalai Lama at the Federal Chancellery. A similar reaction from Beijing came in 2008, when the Chinese government decided to cancel the annual EU-China summit, following the meeting between the French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Dalai Lama. Once again, the PRC’s government judged the EU leaders’ actions as interference in Chinese domestic affairs.

Interestingly, both France and Germany had to patch up their position in order to reaffirm their commitment with China. In facts, both Nations

⁵³ Lampton, D., “China’s Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process: Is It Changing and Does It Matter?”, 2001, in Lampton, D., “The making of Chinese foreign and security policy in the era of reform”. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

eventually made pro One China Policy statements or distanced themselves from further contact with the Dalai Lama. These similar episodes revealed two different contradictions within the MS' internal politics. The first one regards the intentions of the two EU leaders. As a matter of fact, neither Sarkozy or Angela Merkel have met the Dalai Lama in order to annoy China; instead, these meetings were responses to domestic and international pressures from international organizations and human rights supporters to publicly sympathize with the Tibetan issue. However, the Chinese reaction came as soon as the meetings took place. Having underestimated the PRC's sensitiveness to the topic, both the European leaders had immediately to veer toward China's position. That was mostly because, in turn, they experienced another kind of pressure that came from business and groups of interest, who were scared of suffering negative economic consequence from distancing to China. As a matter of fact, this is a clear sign of the European difficulties in balancing often-contradictory demands of domestic politics and pressures with the necessity of foreign policy and *Realpolitik*⁵⁴.

Secondly⁵⁵, it has been pointed out that the EU should not take Beijing commitment for a strategic partnership for granted. Indeed, even though it is true that Europe's China policy has been highly reactive to developments in China, it is also true that all the European efforts are doomed to fail unless Beijing is actually willing to engage both European States and the EU in such a partnership. Indeed, despite the official statements, China might have very little interest in involving itself into a stronger commitment with Europe. Instead, the PRC's may probably want to maintain its large freedom of manoeuvring in foreign policy rather than reducing its options due to a new partnership. Furthermore, China keeps looking at the EU more as regional power, instead of considering an equal global actor such as the USA. Consequently, China would unlikely constrain itself when flexibility in alliances, partnerships and support bases is crucial to China's growing influence in the international arena. Also, Beijing has skilfully played off different European countries and the EU against each other, which has given Beijing a high level of leverage.

⁵⁴ The following divisions can be found in: Vogt, R., "Europe and China – Strategic Partners or Rivals?", Hong Kong University Press, 2012 Hong Kong.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

What emerged clearly, so far, is that Brussels should not take China's involvement with Europe for granted. However, it is also true that there is an important spread of "wishful thinking" about Europe among Chinese scholars and officials, especially due to the fact that Beijing has always looked forward to have a "multipolar international order", which means to have even more than two powers (China and the USA) settling the international order⁵⁶.

Anyhow, it is also evident that the EU as unit will eventually have to make an important decision as far as China's policy is concerned. In fact, European leaders will have to decide to what extent they want to push China toward the rule of law, the respect of human rights (including the Tibetan issue), the safeguard of intellectual property rights and the climate change: they eventually must choose a trade off between China's demands and the domestic ones.

3.5 Domestic problematic factors

As far as domestic developments are concerned, there have been identified at least three major problems within Europe that could obstruct the current EU-China relation to upgrade into the hoped "strategic partnership".

In order to analyse the scope and the origin of the EU-China relations, it is impossible to ignore the large scale of changes that have occurred in Europe in the last century. These have definitely and irremediably shaped the face of the world politics, affecting the agenda of countries all over the world. Indeed, some of the major cleavages that were at basis of the European society have radically erupted into a different way of organizing the *civis*: ideology, Church-State relations, rural-urban division and class fight⁵⁷. In addition to those, organizations that had used to be fundamental block of aggregation such as the political parties and the trade unions suddenly stopped to play their significant role. All these factors contributed to the creation, among the European

⁵⁶ Zhu, L., "Chinese Perceptions of the EU and the China-Europe Relationship", in Shamburg, D., Sandschneider, E., Hong, Z., (eds.), "China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects". London, 2008, Routledge, pp. 148-173.

⁵⁷ Lipset, S., and Rokkan, S., "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignment: An Introduction" in Lipset, S., and Rokkan, S., (eds.) "Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspective, 1967, New York, The Free Press.

countries, of the so-called “issued based politics” which grown up together with the creation of the “post-materialist” society.

These factors are not dangerous in it. Instead, they have some kind of repercussion as far as the ability to govern is concerned. In facts, with the gradual collapse of traditional parties, governments from all over Europe had to adapt themselves and move toward more unstable coalitions to obtain the parliamentary majority. Consequently, this had significant repercussion for the leadership, which had to dramatically decrease its room for manoeuvring. Indeed, foreign policies became the result of a series of negotiations and bargaining process. Accordingly, “weak coalitions diminish the ability of the governments to commit to a course of action in foreign affairs”⁵⁸.

At the same time, the gap that has been left by the traditional cleavages and the old political parties has been fulfilling by several groups coming from the civil society. These are, for example, NGOs, interest and business groups. These are able to exercise a significant influence and occasionally even pressure on the national and, of course, supranational political institutions. Accordingly, it is not surprising that most of the current EU politics has increasingly incorporated single issues and sectorial interests into the diplomatic agenda. This factor used to be seen as a European weakness from a Chinese perspective.

Indeed, it has been clearly pointed out that “The autonomy of decision makers on matters of foreign policy is delimited by those group actors who favour an expansion of ties with China (business lobbies), those who seek protection from Chinese exports (trade unions, small businesses) and those who demand a proactive European policy on non-economic issues (HRs. groups, NGOs, environmental movements). The growth in these new political players is setting novel pressures on the development of European policy toward China”⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ Hagan, J., “Political Opposition and Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective”, 1993, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

⁵⁹ Vogt, R., (eds.), “Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?”, 2012, Hong Kong University Press.

3.5.1 The role of the Public Opinion

When looking at the domestic developments that constrain decision makers to move toward a more strong commitment between the EU and China, it is also worth to note the role played by the public opinion within European countries. Even though foreign policy, in general, does not matter very much as regards European leaders' elections and, as a consequence, it is not the first public opinion's concern, it is nonetheless an important enabling or limiting factor for it. Consequently, public opinion plays a significant role in modifying the current position of the EU, both toward a stronger or a less involvement with China. However, it is important to notice that in the last years public opinion has dramatically been moving in the latter direction. Indeed, the general European perception of China has become more negative. This trend is inevitably connected to the above-mentioned Chinese behaviour, which is, for better or worse, what is perceived by the public opinion, not only in Europe but also all over the world.

According to a recent study⁶⁰, conducted on 2007 by the Pew Global Organization, it emerged clear which is the attitude toward China in Europe. If one looks at the graph (Fig. 1) below, it is possible to note that the general European trend is perhaps the one that reaches in the lowest average around the countries taken into account or, at least, the general perception is more unfavourable than favourable.

⁶⁰ Pew Global Attitudes Survey, "Rising Environmental Concern in 47 Nation Survey: Global Unease with Major World Powers", Washington, 2007.

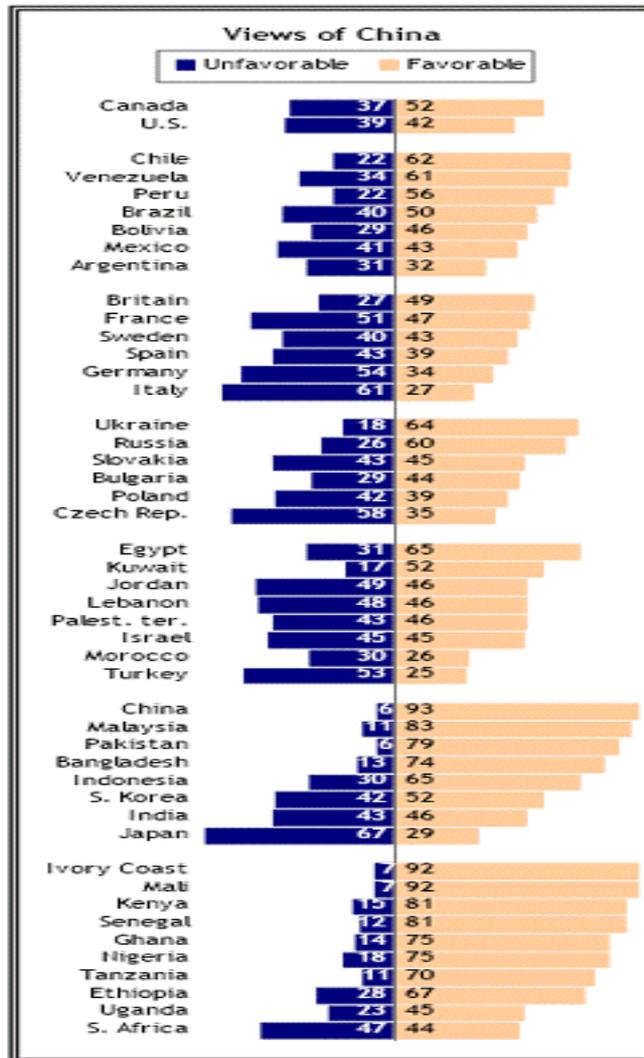


Fig. 1

Indeed, with the only exceptions of Britain and marginally Sweden, majorities around France, Germany, Spain and Italy have a negative view of China. Furthermore, it is important to notice that is a decreasing trend. In facts, it is “decidedly downward in many of the European countries that were surveyed in earlier Global Attitudes studies. Since 2005, favourable ratings for China have fallen 18 points in Spain, 16 points in Great Britain, 12 points in Germany and 11 points in France”. As far as Chinese economic growth is concerned, Europe has shown mostly the same attitude: the 65 per cent of Italian population and the 64 of the French thinks this development will be bad for their country. Germany follows with a 55% negative look. Interestingly, in Germany the portion saying that Chinese economic growth will have a negative impact on domestic economy has risen from 38% to today’s level. Similarly, the

percentage of Britons saying that China's growth will positively contribute to British economy is about 45 while only two years earlier it was 56%.

However, China's military power increase is not seen with concern. Neither Americans nor Italians nor Frenchs and Germans think it could damage the strategic interests of their own country. Despite the last data, it is clear that the incentive fro leadership on Sino-European partnership are thus reduced. Indeed, any kind of strong statement or though attitude towards China is actually well rewarded from the public opinion. In a word, being anti-Chinese is popular. The decision made by some European leaders not to attend the Olympic games in Beijing in 2008 is a clear sign of that. In facts, they were highly pressured by the public opinion to act in that way. In sum, "if public opinion is mobilized, the room for decision makers is greatly reduced"⁶¹.

The last but not less important factor that has to be considered among the domestic developments in Europe is the institutional incoherence. In facts, it is not a secret that within the EU, there are multi level of incoherence and sometimes incompatibility: not only among different European institutions, but also among Member States and between EU institutions and MS. However, it would be too easy and simplistic to say that the EU policies lack coherence only because of these struggles between multi players and because of the different levels in which the decision making process is distributed. Indeed, the topic is much more complex than this, especially regarding China's policy.

In the last decades, the EU has experienced a fundamental transformation as well as a radical change of role in the international arena: Europe is not anymore a mere technocratic institution dealing with trade and economic integration, rather it became a global actor that has to face with all the major world challenges. However, this evolution has inevitably brought a significant amount of side effects, such as more complex and interconnected institutional framework, which could be considered as one of the main cause of the above-mentioned incoherence.

In any case, this has not prevent Europe from adapting common and clear positions toward China in several cases, no matter if they had a negative or a positive effect on the relation. Thus, even with the latest enlargement of 28 States, the EU has been able to stand in a common side toward China. Given

⁶¹ Vogt, R., "Europe and China – Strategic Partners or Rivals?", Hong Kong University Press, 2012 Hong Kong.

that, it is clear that the incoherence does not come from the European institutions. Rather, it is necessary to look, once again, at the single Members' interests, which can provide a better comprehension of the framework. Indeed, as it has clearly elucidated by some scholars, "China does not have the same degree of importance for Poland, Malta or Greece as for France, the United Kingdom and Germany⁶²". In fact, the most involved into the relation are clearly the latter, both in economic and political terms and, apparently, they want to maintain their predominant position or, at last, expanding their own ties with Beijing.

Yet, these Member States are caught into a strategic dilemma. They want to maintain their preeminent status as visible European powers abroad but, at the same time, they are looking forward to have a more unified and coherent EU that would eventually support their own foreign policy toward China⁶³. This especially true for Britain, France and, to lesser extent, Germany: these countries already have a stronger commitment with China, also due to historical reasons. However, given their peculiar position, decision makers of these Nations see very little interest in reducing their own clout in foreign policy making in order to achieve a greater and more prominent EU role in global affairs and, as a consequence, in dealing with China. Consequently, the EU has the absolute need to seek a new way of interacting with China, which has to differ from economic issues.

Beijing has gained great bargaining power in this field and has been able to leverage European diplomacy by granting or shutting down the access to its lucrative market. Thus, to quote Cabestan again, the EU has absolutely to find a new method that has to be inclusive for all its members, from Malta to Germany.

⁶² Cabestan, J-P., "The Role of France in Sino-European Relations: Central or Marginal?" in David Kerr and Liu Fei (eds.), "The international Politics of EU-China Relations", 2007, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁶³ Vogt, R., "Europe and China – Strategic Partners or Rivals?", Hong Kong University Press, 2012 Hong Kong.

3.6 The “Constructive Engagement”: obstacle or incentive?

Until now, this work has been mainly focus on the “strategic” partnership between China and Europe. However, it is also true that especially Chinese officials have described the relation between the two as “comprehensive strategic” partnership, first and foremost in their Policy Papers.

The term “comprehensive” basically entails that there should be a sort of comprehension between the two sides. More specifically, it means that the two of them have reciprocally decided to engage themselves into a dialogue in many fields, leaving aside their differences, or trying to, in order to become closer political partners. Thus, this discourse developed from an older concept, which is named “constructive engagement”. It is now time to take to it into consideration, especially given the fact that many have argued it could be one of the causes of the missing “strategic partnership”.

This argument moves from some practical evidences. It is true, in facts, that despite many years in which the EU-China relations used to seem so close to even overtake, in terms of strategic geopolitical importance, the USA-EU relations (the so called “honeymoon” period), the Sino-European relations have been experiencing a dramatic turnaround in the last few years. Thus, the reason for that could be the policy of “constructive engagement”. This definition, for some scholars, differs from the day-to-day policies that have been named several times in official EU-China papers. Indeed, it refers to a long-term political project in which the EU has tried, explicitly or implicitly, to transform China more or less in the image of European self⁶⁴.

The basic idea beyond this discourse is that Europe has tried, implicitly or explicitly, to impose to the rest of the world a sort of “Normative power Europe”. This feeling probably developed from the fact that, arguably, the European Commission, the European Council and the Parliament, they all share a common consensus on what is, or should be, the role of the EU in the world:

⁶⁴ This theory could be found in Vogt, R., (eds.), “Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?”, 2012, Hong Kong University Press.

“The EU plays a distinctive role in international politics, eschewing traditional power politics and acting as a ‘force for good’ in the world”⁶⁵.

However, as a matter of fact, the Normative Power Europe had existed. It is a fact that basically all European Security Strategies are grounded directly on the historical achievement of European integration in the second half of the 20th Century. The European Union, like it or not, has primarily contributed to “the progressive spread of the rule of law and Democracy had seen authoritarian regime change into secure, stable and dynamic democracies”. As a consequence, “successive enlargements are making a reality of the vision of a united and peaceful continent”⁶⁶. Some scholars have successively elucidated this concept by affirming that “simply by existing as different in a world states and the relations between them, the European Union changes the normality of international relations”⁶⁷.

However, here the question is not weather the EU has effectively got this Normative Power. Indeed, “it is one thing to say that the EU is a normative power by virtue of its hybrid polity consisting of supranational and international forms of governance; it is another to argue that the EU *acts* as a normative power”⁶⁸. Arguably, for the purpose of this work, the interesting question to be addressed is if Europe has actually acted a Normative Power entity and, in case, which were the consequences of this behaviour.

In any case, EU officials, in anchoring their position to values such as the rule of law, democracy, and liberty, have to understand that it is possible to be misperceived by the interlocutor. One example could be easily found in the words of the former Commission President José Manuel Barroso, who argued that “we are one of the most important, if not the most important, normative power in the world [...]. It is because we have been successful in establishing norms, and applying them to different realities. In a way, we are a laboratory of globalization. The most advanced ever. It is a in fact the EU that sets standards for other much of the time”⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Hyde-Price, A., “A Tragic Actor? A realist Perspective on ‘Ethical Power Europe’”, *International Affairs*, 2008, vol. 8, no 1, pag. 29-44.

⁶⁶ Council of the European Union, “A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy”, December 12, 2003

⁶⁷ Manners, I., “The Normative Ethic of the European Union”, *International Affairs*, 2008, vol. 84, no. 1, pag. 238-258.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem.*,

⁶⁹ Peterson, J., “José Manuel Barroso = Political Scientist: Jhon Peterson interviewes the European Commission President”, *EU Consent*, 2007, (Constructing Europe Network).

Thus, it does not really matter if one agrees or not with this statement. What matters, instead, is the perception the others can have from these kinds of words that basically and put a great divide between “Us” and the “Otherness”. And that is particularly evident from some scholars’ ideas: “When accentuating the European uniqueness as a normative power committed to liberty, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance, it is obvious that the EU implicitly casts China as less than ethical actor”⁷⁰.

From these bases, it is even easier to say, as it has been argued at the beginning of this chapter, that the European constructive engagement” strategy could be easily misunderstood. From a concrete a real possibility of reciprocal commitment, which is supposed to be the European intention, to as a means to both “reinforce the self identity through its implicit goal of transforming Chinese Other”. But if one looks from the Chinese perspective, they are rightly proud of the cultural, social and political difference: for this reason, when they perceive this feeling is almost automatic to react in a way that could avoid such a Western transformation and consider both the constructive engagement and its “second aim” as “a false promise and a mission impossible”.

As a matter of fact, the EU has occasionally emanated contradictory statements. For example, on the one hand the EU Commission has some times invited and hoped that China will eventually “embrace full democracy, free market principles and the rule of law”⁷¹. Indeed, this invitation could effectively sound as what China as repeatedly referred as “interference in domestic affairs” and eventually bothered, if not deterred, the EU-China relations. On the other hand, the EU has tried to make China understand that its real intent is not a transforming one, rather an aim to achieve common solutions to common issues and, in order to so, the EU have looked forward to a jointly cooperation through what it consider its values.

Indeed the Commission has also stated that “The EU’s fundamental approach to China must remain one of engagement and partnership [...]. The Partnership should meet both sides’ interests and the EU and China need to work together as they assume more active and responsible international roles,

⁷⁰ The Constructive engagement theory has been largely debated among scholars. Here is presented one its most famous advocates: Chengxin P., “ Problematicizing ‘Constructive Engagement’ in EU-China Policy”, in Vogt, R (ed.), “Europe and China – Strategic Partners or Rivals?”, Hong Kong University Press, 2012 Hong Kong.

⁷¹ Commission of the European Communities, “A maturing partnership- Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations”, COM (2003) 533 final, Brussels.

supporting and contributing to a strong and effective multilateral system. The goal should be a situation where China and the EU can bring their respective strengths to bear to offer joint solutions to global problems”⁷².

It is also true that, many times, the European attempt to converge with China can be implemented in different ways. One of those, without a doubt, could be identified with the goal to find a meeting point in the convergence in the adaptation of common norms and regulatory means in the most technical terms. Indeed, it is not a secret that, in many fields, China and Europe do not share the same regulatory measures and parameters of efficiency and this could easily turned into a point of friction between the two. More than an ideological request, the European one seems to be rather a basic demand of alignment to “its rules and practices in line with the European and *international norms*” (emphasis added)⁷³.

It is worth notice that the norm under discussion are not only European in the proper sense of the 28 Countries members of the European Union, but are basically those that almost all the world has accepted at its own. Needless to say, it seems clear that the Chinese adaptation to these regulatory norms, far from being a request of regime changing or a western imposition on culture, could really help to have a stronger commitment and collaboration on mostly all the fields.

Therefore, it is possible to assume that as long as the European requests do not assume an ethical dimension, the shape of formal demands for regime change, not to mention an attempt of transforming China into a Westernized democracy, they appear to be generally acceptable or, at least, understandable. However, it is also true that, sometimes, the perception of the above mentioned request could be misled. Indeed, both from scholars’ opinion and official EU documents as well as leaders’ opinions that have been analysed so far, the intention can appeared to be a converting one. In any case, even if one assumes that this would be right, the Europeans must be aware of the impossibility of this mission from the beginning.

⁷² Commission of the European Communities, “EU-China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities”, COM (2006) 631 final, Brussels

⁷³ Crossick, Stanley, Fraser C., Berkofsky A., “EU-China relations: Toward a Strategic Partnership, EPC working paper, 2005, Brussels: European Policy Centre.

Indeed, such a policy of conversion, due to the potential normative power it can have, in order to be efficient, should be composed by coherence and recognized credibility. As it has been pointed out, “normative power can only be applied credibly under a key condition: consistency”⁷⁴. The European Union is a long term and ambitious project and, although it can have had several positive repercussions on domestic policies and economies, it is not a secret that it does not have yet the same contractual power internationally. EU officials are perfectly aware of that. Therefore, it is improbable that a EU foreign policy in the short term could possibly look aspire to convert a partner such as the PRC, which has shown narrow room for it, and it is even less plausible that it would currently identify a normative power in the European Union.

However, the European inconsistency comes mainly for its action in foreign policy. The causes of its incoherence have been largely discussed and it is not the case here to analyse them. In any case, it is widely accepted that one of the main cause of it must be the deep difficulty the EU face in make all the Europeans Member States’ interests agree with each other. For deep one can go in this investigation, it is hardly acceptable the argument of the military inconsistency⁷⁵. Accordingly, the EU normative power would be an alternative to its military weakness.

Thus, the European way of intending foreign policy would be a choice made out of necessity, rather than a virtue. In facts, here there is a strong misunderstanding of the political intentions of the European Union and of its very nature and identity. As a matter of fact, ten out of 35 of the strongest armies in the world belong to States that are part of the Union and three of them are in the first seven positions⁷⁶. What it has not been understood here is that the very nature of the EU is not a belligerent one. Indeed, it is a fact that the European Union was born after a war, supposedly the most tremendous one, the Second World War. Just about 70 years ago, the European States were fighting among each other and committing the worst atrocities the entire world had ever seen and today they have a Common Foreign and Security Policy. The

⁷⁴ Nicolaidis and Nicolaidis, quoted in: Manners, I., “The Normative Ethic of the European Union”, *International Affairs*, 2008, vol. 84, no. 1, pag. 56.

⁷⁵ Kagan, R., “Of paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order”, 2004, New York: Vintage.

⁷⁶ See the entire ranking in the following links: <http://scenarieconomici.it/classifica-delle-35-forti-forze-armate-mondo/>

European Union has passed through the War. Thus, it has shown to the world that the balance of power is already out-dated and it is no longer an available option for the European States. If there exists, or if it has ever existed a normative power of Europe, it lies in it.

In any case, Europeans have always to keep in mind that the Chinese are anything but passive learners. In this regard, indeed, it has been argued that, although the Chinese autonomy in many fields such as the economy or in geopolitical relations has been widely recognized, its independence as an international relations actor still finds some hurdles in being accepted by the West. This Chinese perception came from the fact that, sometimes, Western powers in general and European countries in particular, tend to identify China as a potential passive learner who has to accept *in toto* the modern theories coming from the West. China, from its point of view and given its subjectivity, will not learn from others. Rather, it will assimilate new useful concepts as well as compatible theories in its own terms. As a matter of fact, this has already happened. About 200 years ago, in China, it was next to impossible to talk about the Westphalia system, nationalism and balance of power. In fact, China has eventually made these concepts the foundations of the current Chinese society and it became the well-known PRC of today. However, when learning these basic contemporary concepts, China truly did it on its own terms. Indeed, the PRC used those Westphalia concepts such as national integrity and inviolability of domestic affairs to resist and to defend itself from the European and Western attempts to interfere in its internal politics. As it has been clearly pointed out: "China is not necessarily learning the lessons the EU is teaching. Rather than reproducing the Eastern European reform experience of becoming democratic in a peaceful borderless community, Beijing is setting its own standards in order to promote the party-state's interests: authoritarian capitalism and a multilateralism that preserves national sovereignty".⁷⁷

Thus, if the EU aims to teach something to China, it has to take into consideration that it has to be ready to learn something else itself. Indeed, both the above-mentioned Chinese and European policy papers toward each other, repeatedly emphasize the importance of a "mutual partnership" in which there

⁷⁷ Callahan, W. A., "Future Imperfect: The European Union's Encounter with China (and the United States)", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2007, vol. 30, no. 4 pag. 77-807

should be a sort of continuous exchange and reciprocal enrichment. Furthermore, assuming again that the EU first idea is to teach China, the European officials have to keep in mind that, as already suggested before, the Chinese will adapt such theories to their own interest and benefit. As it has happened with the 19th Century theories (balance of power, national sovereignty etc.), it could easily occurred with today's concepts such as the rule of law, democracy and the free market.

In sum, if one assumes that the European Union have been pursuing a policy of "constructive engagement", aimed to influence, to convert if not Westernize China, it is evident that it could not ever work out. As it has been explained, it is perfectly understandable and it is possible to agree with the statement that converting China is a mission impossible.

However, from what it has been analysed so far, it could also be argued that the policy of "constructive engagement" entails in itself a fundamental misunderstanding between the two sides. Indeed, it appeared that sometimes China was right in perceiving the policy in this way: the EU has often left much room for interpretation, both in its statements, in the policy papers and in the institutional leaders' speeches. However, it has also been demonstrated that most of the times the EU intent was more related to an approaching goal.

Indeed, it can be concluded that the idea of coming closer partners with China, reciprocally adapting their standards and according to their many-times-mentioned mutual and reciprocal benefits, was at the core of the engagement policy promoted by the European Union in the past few years. Obviously, the EU has to understand that the cultural, historical, social and not to mention political difference with China still represent a deep gap and obstacle to a stronger commitment with China. Therefore, recalling the definition of strategic partnership this work has previously provided, it can be argued that the reciprocal misperception of the "constructive engagement" is currently one of the many already mentioned "structural obstacles" that do not allow to refer to the EU-China relation as strategic.

For this reason, the European Union must abandon, if it has ever had it, any intention of transforming China into some Western or European political entity that will never see the light and that can be easily defined as a utopian view.

Thus, both sides have to restart from their own practical achievement and from what this “constructive engagement” policy has really made possible. Indeed, when they both went pragmatic they achieved important results, which have contributed, in a way, to transform some Chinese practices in fields such as the death penalty, democratic governance promotion at the village level and new regulations in the field of criminal procedures⁷⁸.

3.7 The current situation: ground for a future strategic partnership

So far, this work has been focused on the main obstacles to a EU-China strategic partnership. It has been argued that, especially from a theoretical point of view, there are still many factors hurdling it. Also, there are several practical friction points that cannot be ignored, such as the EU arms embargo, the European decision to not recognize China as a full market economy, the different standards adopted by both sides (especially as far as human rights, intellectual property rights, etc. are concerned).

However, it is now necessary to show how the current situation on cooperation between China and the EU looks like, which means to analyse the numerous projects that have been settled down by both parts in order to foster their cooperation in several fields. These basically constitute the most efficient part of the EU-China relations and it will be argued that, in order to achieve a complete strategic partnership in the future, they should look at the good grounds they have already settled, which could turn into a good starting point.

In facts, the PRC and the EU have a long lasting tradition of collaboration, which uses to pass through public funds and investments injections. In facts, during the years they have both recognized in which measure this kind of cooperation satisfies their reciprocal interest and, above all, they have realized that usually collaboration in a field brings more cooperation in more areas.

Thus, in order to have a complete picture of how the EU and China work together, it will be necessary to keep an eye on the Appendix A of this very

⁷⁸ Balme, R., “The European Union, China and Human Rights”, in Laidi, Z., (ed.), “Eu Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: Normative Power and Social Preferences.”, London, 2008, Routledge, pp. 143-173

work, which contains all the joint projects between China and Europe of the last 6 years. These are basically fostered by European funds. In fact, the European Union has repeatedly chosen to invest in China in different areas, in order to promote not only the specific goal set for each project, but also the general cooperation with China.

It has been chosen to cover the last six years only because it has been considered a large enough range of time to allow understanding the current situation of the EU-China relations and to draw some conclusions about it. Further, given to several amount of projects that have take place only in these six years, it would have been unlikely feasible to well understand and analyse a broader period and perhaps not very useful for the purpose of this work.

However, it is worth point out that this research has not put his primary attention on the economic aspect of the relations. Indeed, there is a large parte of the literature that has already stressed the lately dramatic increase in trade between China and the European Union. Obviously, that is an important part and also an aspect that has not to be forgotten in analysing the relations among countries. However, unlike the above-mentioned previous researches, this work has first and foremost put the attention on the strategic dimension of the EU-China relations. In fact, even though it has repeatedly mentioned and underlined its importance, this was not its primary concern of the present work. Thus, in order to understand and develop a complete discourse on the EU-China strategic relation, it has been chosen to focus firstly on the public investments made by the Union toward the PRC in a certain amount of time. This was mainly due to the fact that a broader dialogue on a specific issue usually precedes those kinds of projects and, above all, they usually reflect political intentions of a given party.

Therefore, it is now necessary to briefly explain how the EU funds are lavished in practice and what is the procedure by which the European Union joins different development and cooperation programs⁷⁹. The EU has basically three ways in which it can fund and joint whichever project. These are constituted by: grants and contracts, budget support and sector support. The first way of funding, grants and contracts are generally similar but they are

⁷⁹ The following data and information are official. They come from the EU Commission website https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/about-funding_en and from the EU Delegation to China and Mongolia (as far as the Appendix is concerned).

slightly different in some ways. Generally speaking, a grant or call for proposals is a public invitation by the Contracting Authority, addressed to clearly identified categories of applicants, to propose operations within the framework of a specific EU programme. Grants are direct financial contributions from the EU budget or from the European Development Fund. They are awarded as donations to third parties that are engaged in external aid activities. The Contracting Authority awards grants that are used to implement projects or activities that relate to the EU's external aid programmes.

Grants in themselves are divided can be divided in two categories. First, grants for actions: these are aimed to achieve an objective that forms part of an external aid programme. Secondly operating grants: this is a way to finance the operating expenditure of an EU body that is pursuing an aim of general European interest or an objective that forms part of an EU policy. Grants are based on the reimbursement of the eligible costs, in other words, costs effectively incurred by the beneficiaries that are deemed necessary for carrying out the activities in question. The results of the action remain the property of the beneficiaries. Grants are subject to a written agreement signed by the two parties and, as a general rule, require co-financing by the grant beneficiary. Since grants cover a very diverse range of fields, the specific conditions that need to be fulfilled may vary from one area of activity to another.

Contracts, also known as tenders, are slightly different in the procedure process but the general scope and the way in which they are implied is basically the same as grants. Usually, calls for tender are notices published by Europe Aid when seeking applicants who can deliver specific services, goods or work in exchange for payment. Calls for tender are one phase of the procurement procedures, which lead to the conclusion of public contracts. The procurement procedures, which follow calls for tenders, are governed by specific rules, which vary depending on the nature of the contract (service, supplies or work) and the threshold.

A second way by which the EU lavishes its funds is the budget support. Budget support is an important tool to finance partner countries' development strategies. It consists of financial transfers to the national treasuries, and also involves policy dialogue and measures to assess the use made of these funds. Budget support helps to deliver aid adapted to the needs identified by the

countries themselves. To benefit from budget support, a beneficiary country must demonstrate commitment to the fundamental values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. To quote an official EU statement “Where the conditions are right, the Commission is committed to provide budget support as a means to strengthening country ownership, financing national development strategies (including poverty reduction strategies) and promoting sound and transparent public finances. Budget support involves the direct transfer of funds to a partner country’s budget where they can be managed using national systems”. More specifically, Budget support involves direct financial transfers to the national treasury of the partner country – conditional on policy dialogue, performance assessment and capacity building. This is a way of fostering partner countries' ownership of development policies and reforms and addressing the source, not the symptoms, of underdevelopment. Budget support accounts for around a quarter of all EU development aid. In 2011, the percentages were 26% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 16% in Asia, 23% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 30% in Neighbourhood countries. There are five challenges addressed by budget support: promotion of human rights and democratic values, better financial management, macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth and less corruption and fraud; sector reforms and sector service delivery, state building in fragile states/addressing the specific challenges of small island development states (SIDS) and overseas countries and territories (OCTs), better domestic revenue mobilisation and less aid dependency.

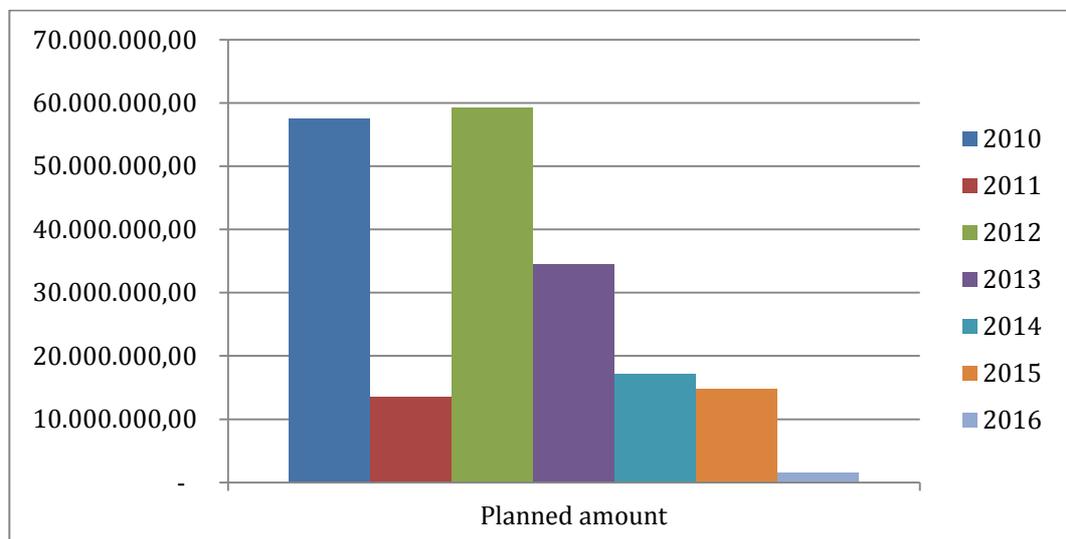
Thirdly: the sector support. A large part of the development funding made available by the EU targets specific sectors in partner countries. This so-called sector approach increases the effectiveness of aid by supporting government-owned strategies. Sector support gives a boost to sector programmes run by partner governments. The funding can take on the form of sector budget support, grant and contract funding, or ‘common basket funding’ pooling resources from different donors.

However, even though the 16% of the total EU budget support is destined to Asia, it is though fundamental to notice that China has never benefit from it and neither it had from a sector support funding. This is important also given

the political premises the EU has stated, regarding the standard a given Nation has to have, in order to successfully obtain these kinds of public investments.

Thus, the EU has historically cooperated with China through financing project only by contracts and grants. Indeed, the above-mentioned collected data refer only to those. Therefore, it is now necessary to have a look at the general trend of the projects, which means which are the main covered area and the shared interest between China and the EU. To do so, it is important to keep an eye to the Appendix I. As mentioned above, this data represent a significant period of time and its projects, with all the amount of EU public money spent for such cooperation investments.

Specifically, it can be noticed that the money flow has not a regular path. If one looks at the Graph 1, this appear suddenly clear.



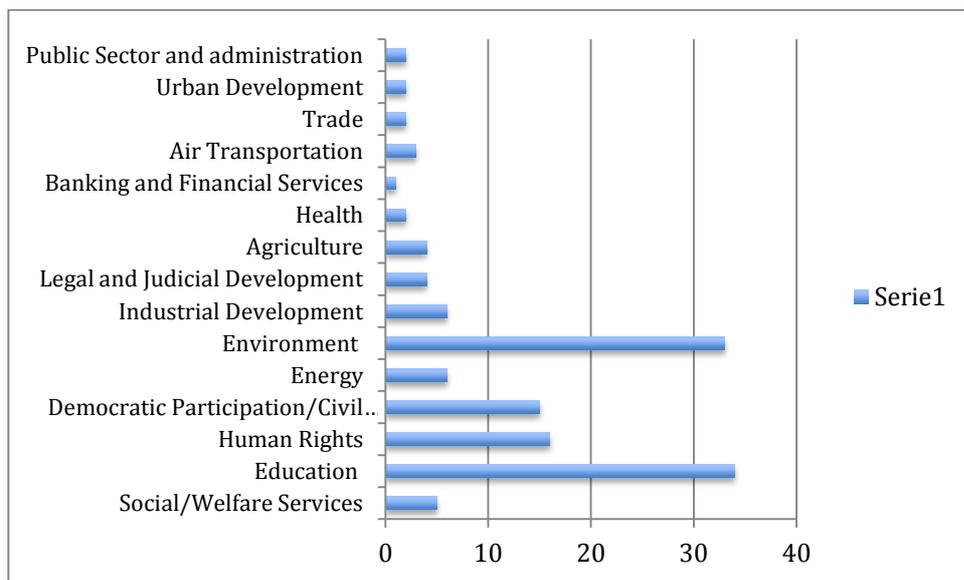
Graph 1

-The amount of money is in Million of Euros-

In the given period between 2010 and 2016, the 2012 has been the most “expensive” year for the EU, with almost 60 million of euros invested in only a year. Although it is true that there is impossible to find a regular path in the invested money flow, it is also true that, since 2012 until today, there has been a significant decrease in the investment money. For the time being, it is true, a very few 2016 months have passed but the current trend does not allow to be too optimistic in looking forward to see an increase in it. Thus, it can be concluded that there has been a decreasing attention at the EU-China relations from both sides.

However, since this work is not aimed to be a mere quantitative research. Indeed, if one looks at the Appendix, it will be possible to notice that, a part from the money invested, it is also written on which specific sector this money has been invested. What appears clear is that the sectors do not vary much, which means the fields the EU has historically put more attention on are relatively specific and restricted.

Thus, it is important to analyse also on which sectors and in which projects this flow has been canalised on. This would allow drawing some conclusions on which are the most significant areas of interest for both side and, most importantly, the area of agreement.



Graph 2
Sector - Quantity

The Graph 2 perfectly answers to those questions. From a first look, it emerges clearly that the two main areas of interest are Environment and Education, with a slight advantage for the latter. During the 6 years in questions, there have been more than 30 projects regarding “Education” and “Higher Education”. Almost the same amount for the Environment: this category is relatively broad, inasmuch it includes several and different projects aimed to improve the Chinese environmental situation from different perspective, from the air quality to the forestation and creation of green eco-city projects.

Although it is not indicated in this graph, it is true (if one looks at the Appendix) that the last few years have seen an increasing number of projects

in the “Human Rights” and “Democratizations” field. This could be an explanation of the decreasing amount of invested money: given the sensitiveness of the topics, it would be reasonable that both sides want to be cautious in investing time, money and energy in such areas. However, even if the amount of invested money is less, the qualitative change is significant. It has moved from an often-generic project trend of Education and Environment, in which both sides do not commit each other too much, to significant sensitive areas of investments such as the HR and the Democratization.

In conclusion, those data have shown that, despite the main and great differences still in place between China and the EU, and despite the theoretical obstacles hurdling the comprehension of the reciprocal counterpart, there are still some optimistic signs that allow hoping for a growing cooperation in strategic terms. Thus, if it is possible to assume the collaboration among the two is definitely growing, it is also reasonable they both are in need of an occasion to renew their reciprocal commitment. This is offered by the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. Indeed, from what has been argued so far, it clearly emerges that China and the EU have not operationalized their strategic partnership yet. Surely, there have been several attempts to move toward this direction, but they still do not satisfy the conditions to define the relation “strategic”. In fact, these trials have missed what it has been earlier defined as the necessary requirement to call a partnership “strategic” which is to focus on *core goals* of both parties in order to deliver substantial results on those fields. Therefore, as it will be now explained, the OBOR initiative could greatly and positively affect the collaboration between the two in this sense and, as a consequence, it will possibly be a springboard for a the long waited strategic partnership between China and the European Union.

4.0 THE “ONE BELT ONE ROAD” INITIATIVE: A CASE STUDY

The precedent part of this work has briefly analysed the academic debate around the definition of “strategic partnership” between the EU and the PRC. Indeed, as it has been explained in the very first part of the work, the two sides have recently started to define each other as strategic partners. However, from what has been investigated so far, it has appeared clear that the definition of this terms, and especially what they would practically mean in term of tangible achievements is anything but precise. What it will be argued from now on is that, although we have seen a growing cooperation in many fields between China and the EU, these are still not sufficient to let the two countries define each other as strategic partners.

As a consequence, it will be presented a case study in which the two of them would have finally the occasion to strengthen their ties once and for all. This opportunity will actually come from the Chinese side and, more precisely, from the innovative initiative that has been launched on September 2013 by the current PRC’s President Xi Jinping, the so called “One Belt One Road” initiative.

During that year, Xi made an official visit to Kazakhstan and, on the very occasion, he argued that “to forge closer economic ties, deepen cooperation and expand space for development in the Eurasian region, we should take an innovative approach and join hands in building an ‘economic belt along the Silk Road’. We may start with work in individual areas and link them up over time to cover the whole region”. That was the first formulation of the idea in question.

The next month, on October 2013, Xi attended an APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting and he argued that China was ready to strength its maritime cooperation with all the South East Asia countries, in order to rebuild the ancient and wealthy “Maritime Silk Road”. Indeed, he stated that “China is willing to strengthen maritime cooperation with The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) by making good use of the China-Asean Maritime Cooperation Fund set up by the Chinese government and

establishing a sound maritime partnership for the purpose of jointly building the 21st Century “Maritime Silk Road”⁸⁰.

4.1 The “One Belt One Road initiative” key features

For the purpose of this work, it will be definitely necessary briefly explain which are the main characteristics of this initiative, and also to go deeper in the analysis of its economic, geopolitical and, above all, strategic implications.

It is clear, first of all, that the two new Silks Roads represent an evident sign of the new Chinese diplomacy approach, all over the world but especially as far as its neighbours are concerned. Indeed, China has lately adopted the idea all-round opening-up policy and the One Belt One Road is not an exception. However, before that, the initiative is, first of all, a transport network in the Eurasian area. It will consist of railways, highways, air and seaways, oil and gas pipelines, transmission lines and also communications networks. Services for these networks and important industrial clusters will gradually take shape along these traffic routes. Through industrial agglomeration and radiation effects, the construction industry, metallurgy, energy, finance, communications, logistics, tourism and the like will make up an integrated economic corridor. The very first attempt is mainly to connect the Asia-Pacific area, which is without a doubt the world’s economic engine, to the largest economy in the world, the European Union. This will obviously create several economic opportunities but, above all, it will allow China to form an East Asia, West Asia and South Asia economic zones.

As it has been briefly mentioned earlier, this initiative is not only a potentially very effective economic goal, but it also signs a turning point in the way of implanting the Chinese foreign policy, in terms of open up to the world but in a different ways⁸¹. These changes can be highlighted in several ways. First of all, instead of the usual “bringing in” idea, China wants to start to apply a mentality of “going out”. The PRC is actually looking for a better combination

⁸⁰ Jointly Writing a New Chapter of China-Indonesian Relations and Working Together to Create a Better Future of China-Asean Community of Common Destiny”, People’s Daily, 4 October 2013, 1st Edition

⁸¹ The following divisions and analysis of the “One Belt One Road” initiative can be found in: Amighini A., Berkofsky A., “Xi’s Policy Gambles: The Bumpy Road Ahead”, ISPI insitute, 2015, Milan.

of the two, in order to fosters new competitive edges of participating in and leading international economic cooperation, resulting in promoting reform through opening up.

As regards internal and domestic development, since several Chinese governments have tried to implement the relative backwardness of West and South of China, it will bring new inputs to that policy. Indeed, for the sake of development in China's western area, westward and southward strategies will be implemented to form a new pattern of all-round opening up. Thirdly, in order to implement the flow of goods, labour and especially capitals, new Free Trade area and agreement will be pursued. In sum, the ultimate aim of the One belt One Road initiative is to better facilitate trade and investments toward China, to deepen the economic and technical cooperation and establish as many free trade zones and agreement as possible, by connecting not only the conventional and ancient Silk Road but also the maritime rout to Europe and to the rest of the world. As a consequence, China and all the many Nations involved in the initiative will have to work hard in order to optimize the allocation of trade and production factors, promote regional economic integration and strive for synchronized economic and social development in the region. In the end, by establishing the Eurasian Continental FTA (Free Trade Area) or Eurasian big market, it can be also argued that, once in force, this initiative could easily represent a turning point not only for the China-EU relations but also for the entire world and perhaps promoting if not enforcing a new world economic order. However, for interesting it would be, this work will only focus on the most probable effects and consequences on the Sino-European relations both in the economical, social and especially strategic areas.



Given these assumptions, it is worth notice that the Chinese initiative is not original, in terms of historical attempts to make such a commercial connection. Indeed, among many other States, it is sufficient to mention Japan, which in 1998 launched the idea of a new Silk Road of diplomacy; or even the United States, looking forward to the cooperation of South Korea, wanted to initiate the idea of a New Silk Road that could reach the Central Asia within 2011; India too, presented its own plan called “Mausam Project”, which aimed to reconnect the trade and the relations among all the countries on the coast of the Indian Ocean. However, despite the many attempts, the Chinese initiative contains certain features that can allow saying it is different from the others and, in a way, unique.

Indeed the Chinese idea of trading, strength economic ties with the touched countries it is strictly linked with a development oriented strategy and with the aim to establish a new community of countries with a common destiny, the implementation of their own economic development. Furthermore, China idea’s supremacy does not lie in its unquestionable economic capability; instead, the PRC was able to create a strong net of successful diplomatic relations with the countries and regions among the route. As a matter of fact, those specific countries have a strong and long-awaited desire for development; consequently, they look at the Chinese initiative in a very positive way.

China, from its side, needs to give full play to its own advantages, not only regarding the Maritime route as a self-interest policy of promoting domestic

industrial transfer and expanding overseas investments, but also treating the economic belt along the Maritime Silk Road and the Overland Silk Road as “a pair of wings to boost Asia’s economy”, thus promoting regional economic integration in depth. Most importantly, it has to be notice that this situation of win-win cooperation it is easier to create when there are only economic interests at the negotiation table, rather than the treating with political and security issues. Indeed, as far as the last point is concerned, China has been able to create a very good conciliating environment: by time to time, it has kept leaving the floor open for discussion.

The very idea of the One Belt One Road has at its own basis the principle of openness and tolerance toward partners’ interests and claims. All these futures can be individuated is at least two practical aspects. First of all, the Chinese initiative (following the original ideas) has to be compatible with the already existent programs of cooperation, in all the countries touched by the route. Secondly, its inclusiveness is not mere propaganda. China has openly declared it would have accepted positively the participation of other partners such as Russia, the EU as well as the USA in the initiative. The idea is to tolerate, rather than excluding. In sum, the One Belt One Road is not a unilateral action of the PRC. Indeed, “One Belt One Road” is literally practicing the idea that “China’s dream is in common with the dream of the world’s people to pursue a better life”. Sri Lanka's dream, Russia’s revival dream, Indonesia’s marine power dream, and the Mongolian dream are all interlinked with the Silk Road dream, fully turning Chinese opportunities into the world’s opportunities and vice-versa⁸².

However, despite the many ideological, political and theoretical feature of this Chinese initiative, the new route is a monumental project that will sign historical turning points for many developing countries, but it will also significantly affect the West and the most industrialized part of Europe. Looking at some data, in facts, along the “One Belt One Road” route, there are 65 countries from Central Asia, ASEAN, South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, West Asia, and North Africa, house of 4.4 billion people with the disposable income of about 21 trillion dollars, accounting for 63 per cent (one belt) and 29 per cent (one road) of global capacity respectively. In 2013, China’s trade

⁸² <http://cpc.people.com.cn/pinglun/n/2013/0609/c241220-21802192.html>.

volume with the countries along the line exceeded \$1 trillion, making up one-fourth of China's total foreign trade. Over the past 10 years, China's trade with countries along the route has increased at the annual average rate of 19 per cent, which was 4 per cent higher than the annual average growth rate of foreign trade to China during the corresponding period. There is more room for growth in the future. The 13th Five-Year Plan is being devised, in which China is expected to import \$10 trillion worth of goods and invest more than \$500 billion abroad. Out-bound visitors are projected to be about 500 million. China's neighbouring countries as well as countries along the Silk Road will be the first to receive the benefits.

At this point, it appears clear that the One Belt One Road initiative is totally different from any other previous attempt to construct a new Silk Road, both because of the Chinese way to intend it and for all it has been argued so far. Further, the Chinese project is also different from the ancient Silk Road and, in a way, even superior. As a matter of fact, the new Route, if considered in both the maritime way and in the Overland one, covers a much larger portion of the Earth. It goes from East to the West, touching respectively Latin American Countries and Germany; also, it entails Moscow in the North and the Countries in the South Pacific Ocean, in the South. Secondly, it is not only and no longer just a matter of land portion. The content too, is different. While the ancient Silk Road was arguably a mere agglomerate of national roads connecting the Eastern to the Western World, the One Belt Road, given the period in which it will take place, will contain much more characteristic and connections. In facts, as a 21st Century route, it will provide infrastructures, coordinates policies, promotes trade (both maritime and by land) as well as currency circulation. In conclusion, there is also a different historical meaning of the project. The ancient Silk Road is, in the collective imaginary, a way in which the West was finally able to overcome the absolute closure of the East World. People generally link that to the Marco Polo's travels, which are still very popular among China.

Thank to the Silk Road, and supposedly thanks to Marco Polo, the Europeans were able to engage relations with the Far East, especially economic ones, through trading and purchasing silk, chinaware, spices and the like. The One Belt One Road is exactly the opposite. As it has been mentioned above, the

Chinese initiative not only represents the opening up of China to the World, but also it is China that goes abroad: it is the first historical example (for magnitude) of a Chinese “going out” foreign policy. It will be probably be a new attempt to create a giant Eurasian Market, bringing up new questions not only about commerce but especially as regards cultures involvement, as it is expect to create a new pattern of globalization for the entire world.

4.2 The “One Belt One Road” implications for the European Union

For the time being, the One Belt One Road has only been analysed from a Chinese perspective. Thus it is now time to see how this initiative will impact the EU-China relations in different aspects of their partnership.

As a matter of fact, as soon as president Xi launched the idea of a new Silk Road, the EU responded positively to it and they also added that they would have establish their own Silk Road, starting from Vladivostok to Lisbon. This can be seen as a conciliatory measure, in the sense that the EU avoided all the country partners involved to choose between Moscow and Brussels. In facts, the European Silk Road Project is aimed to interlink China and Europe by establishing a free trade area. In total, this monumental project will be able to connect Central Europe with Central Africa, and also to put in contact the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Eastern Mediterranean. The final outcome will not only be the consolidation of the rise of China or the Indian, rather it will be a means by which the entire world will experience a new path of globalization. Indeed, it is a fact that globalization, in its traditional meaning, affected mainly costal areas and countries with an access to the sea. Consequently, those nations were the first to develop and they are still the most developed so far.

Yet, even with such an access, it is true that the costal areas experienced a faster rate of growth that the countryside areas and cities. Thus, an historical gap of wealth within several countries was the immediate consequence of this process. Instead, The New Silk Road project is aimed to invert this path. It advocates and encourages opening to the West, and drives the development of western regions as well as Central Asia, Mongolia, and other landlocked

countries, thereby implementing inclusive development philosophy. Europe, from its side, has its second opportunity with China to rediscover the East. Indeed, transcending the West and discovering the world can be seen as Europe's second opportunity with China. Thanks to globalization, both sides have rediscovered the world, leaving their own behind. This futuristic project could only contribute to a greater rediscovering of "the other" and, consequently, to form a new East-West comprehensive integration. In practical terms, it has been pointed out that the European Union, thanks to the One Belt One Road, will be able, if it would have the inclination, to seize at least seven real opportunities in the process of integration with China⁸³.

First of all perhaps but not only for importance, the economic gain. The possibility of creating a new Eurasian market is not only appealing from an economic point of view, but is also linked with historical reasons, in the sense that it could be a chance to revive the Eurasian culture. Historically speaking, Europe and China, as well as East and West, were linked by the Silk Road. It was not until the rise of Turkey's Ottoman Empire and the cut of the Silk Road by it, also known as the Ottoman wall, that Europe was forced to move towards the sea. Europe's movement to the sea was in part facilitated by the spread of China's great inventions such as the compass and gunpowder that have been exported to Europe through Arabia.

If one has to briefly summarize how China and Europe had lost touch during the time, it could be argued that it was after the decline of the Silk Road. In fact, after Europe moved to the sea in mass, it was able to start the process of globalization and its side effect was the infamous phenomenon of colonization. Obviously, the colonization by the West led to the loss of parity between the Eastern actors and the Western ones. Consequently, the decline of the Silk Road was already on the table and the entire world became Western-centred. Later, Western-centred turned into American-centred. Indeed, with the unstoppable rise of the USA during the 20th Century it came also the European decline, perhaps well represented by the loss of international prestige of Great Britain and its Commonwealth, which gradually became less and less powerful. This dramatic and sudden decline was irreversible even after the latest European integration. In fact, although Europe is still the first

⁸³ Berkofsky A., "EU and China: Making Room for Result-oriented Dialogue", Milan, 2015

world market for amount of GDP, good traded and so on, it has undoubtedly lost the ancient prestige and power, especially when challenging the global super powers in the international arena.

Today, the One Belt One Road initiative is offering a unique and perhaps historic opportunity to regain its primary role in the centre of the world. In addition, if the EU will be strong and independent enough to seize this chance, it will bring back not only a great market, but also the Eurasian culture in its ancient pivotal position in front of the world. As it has been clearly elucidated, the EU could easily included, with China and all the countries in Asia, in the so called “world islands”, which basically means the Eurasian block. On the opposite side, the USA which, accordingly, can be pushed out of the games by this new block, and return at their original role of “isolated island”. In accordance with this theory, if the Eurasia will succeed in managing their own integration, it will allow it to return to the centre of human civilization, thereby reshaping global geopolitics and landscape. Eventually, if China and the EU, which are clearly the actor with the main capability and also responsibility to interlink the Eurasian block, will be able to connect their respective plans (the One Belt One Road and the European New Silk Road Project), they will enable ‘five-way’ connection in policy, trade, transportation, currency and people to mesh with China-Europe’s ‘four great partnerships’ of peace, growth, reform and civilization, allowing Eurasia to return to the centre of human civilization while radiating to the African continent⁸⁴.

Second benefit: the European integration. The long waited and long term process started by few European countries about 25 years ago is nowadays facing a new opportunity or a challenge. Historically speaking, it is not a secret that the EU has never established a priority standard to decide weather it was more important to implement the “Mediterranean Partnership” or the “Eastern” one. Both were definitely relevant as well as difficult to be enforced. Today, the situation has turned to be more complicated in the East of Europe and that was caused, of course, by the Ukraine crisis.

Europe is thus facing a major challenge in that area and it aims to not loose its influence there, both economically and politically. For this reason, the One Belt One Road is basically the occasion the EU has to catch. Indeed, thanks

⁸⁴ Z. Brzezinski, “The Grand Chessboard”, Basic Books, 1997.

to the Chinese initiative, it will be possible to strengthen the ties with all those countries with which the EU is dramatically losing contact and power, such as Hungary, Poland, Greece and the Balkans area in general. If Europe will be able not only to tolerate the One Belt One Road initiative but also to include itself in the project by successfully implementing its own project (the already mentioned European New Silk Road one), it will allow the Europeans not only to reconnect with the peripheral countries which are already in the EU, such as Greece and Hungary, but also to gain influence in the Balkans area.

In particular, Poland, Greece, the Balkans, Hungary's railway, the port of Piraeus have become competitive products in the "16 plus 1" cooperative projects as well as bridges to link overland and maritime Silk Roads. The inclusive development advocated by "One Belt One Road" can be seen as an opportunity for European integration, urging a dozen of Chinese provinces along the line, especially inland frontier provinces, to establish close economic partnerships and investment ties with European regions.

Successively, the third advantage is, in a way, linked to the previous one. Indeed, as long as the European influence grows in the Balkans, in East Europe and in all the former Soviet Union area, it is undeniable that Russia will be at least concerned about it. In addition, the European Union and the Russian Federation were born approximately on the same year and from then on they have been sharing not only borders but also sometimes controversial relations and some others friendly ones.

However, upon the birth of the EU, the main idea and predominant policy among the States Members has been to "keep Russia out" as much as possible. However, it is possible to argue that such a strategy was at least not that efficient, given the current situation in East Europe. Indeed, if the strategic goal was the stability of the area, it has totally failed. For this reason, the EU needs to fundamentally reconsider its priority and its Russian strategic policy too. To do so, the One Belt One Road, once again, seems to offer a perfect chance. In fact, EU-Russian reconciliation lays the cornerstone of stability in Europe.

The Chinese initiative, from its side, provides the means to limit and, in a way, contain Russian involvement in East Europe (and East Asia too) but, at the same time, it allows the to "keep Russia in", by linking several organizations like the Eurasian Economic Union, Collective Security Organization of

Commonwealth of Independent States and Shanghai Cooperation Organization compatible with each other via Moscow. As Angela Merkel, the current German Chancellor, elucidated, “we are unable to choose neighbours, we must interlink the Eurasian Economic Union with the EU as a wise choice to resolve the Ukraine crisis and seek for long-term peace and stability in Europe”: this comes as new and unrepeatably opportunity the One Belt One Road has open up and apparently the only solution (so far) to reconcile the EU-Russian relations.

Following this path, it is worth to analyse another important potential benefit that the EU could gain through the One Belt One Road. This is linked with the historical turnaround made by the US during the Obama’s presidency. Indeed, the US President has recently declared a shift in its Asian policy toward a “return to Asia”. This basically meant the US have planned to gradually increase their already significant presence in Asia. Also, given the renewed partnership with some of US historical allies such as Japan, South Korea as well as the Philippines, they are likely to succeed. Except from China, which is probably concerned about the US choice, most of Asian government have positively welcomed the US initiative.

However, the European Union too started to perceive a sort of anxiety, in the sense that they understood there was a real possibility to be excluded if not left behind in the international game. Consequently, the result of this feeling was a confuse and uncertain European policy toward Asia, trying to accelerate a Free Trade Agreement in a compulsive way, which has not, of course, obtained any result so far. For these reason, the One Belt One Road, again, represents an opportunity to make not only the EU-China relations easier, but it will also allow the EU to set a better environment for the entire Eurasian relations.

Thus, an interlinking initiative such the Belt Road would permit the EU to finally get more into the Asian-Pacific affairs. Also, the EU could assume a pivotal role in what has been defined as the Asia-Pacific development, enhancing cooperation, trade and political partnerships and, last but not least, the EU would finally gain the long waited influence in the Asian- Pacific region.

Influence, indeed, is at the centre of the fifth potential advantage for the EU to join the One Belt One Road. Indeed, Europe could practically benefit from it in order to obtain again its global influence, which today it seems to be lost. It is a fact that many of those countries along the route of “One Belt One Road” are

Europe's former colonies; for this reason, it is of absolutely important to stress connection with EU's peripheral strategy. These countries have the need to learn from European experience and practices in national and local governance. If the EU will be able to actively participate in the Chinese initiative and if it will positively operate within the One Belt One Road framework, there will be more opportunity for China and the EU to cooperatively develop and act on several markets like West Africa, Indian Ocean and Central Asia countries and so on.

If it is true that the Chinese have the real intention to develop a trade initiative based on solidarity, mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit, tolerance and learning from each other, and win-win cooperation, then it is also true that the European experience, in terms of its historical background, cultural heritage and standard achievement can literally play a key role not only for China but for the entire Asian area. If the European Union and China will really manage to interlink their reciprocal points of force, namely the spirit of the One Belt One Road initiative for China and the normative power for the EU, the Sino-European relations would be significantly upgraded.

As far as the sixth factor is concerned, it is important to remind that this could be an important occasion, if not the most important, to finally put in practice the so-called “ comprehensive strategic partnership”, which has already been mentioned many times in this work and which difficulties are now evident. Although China and the EU have established their diplomatic relations more than 40 years ago, it was only in the last decade that, under the framework of this strategic partnership, they started to achieve important goals, wide-ranging opportunities for cooperation, embodied in the Strategy and Plan of China-EU Cooperation 2020.

Today, even if there are still many hurdles, the PRC and the EU are negotiating what it could be an historical Free Trade Agreement, the so-called Bilateral Investment Treaty. Although all the best intentions the two sides certainly have, they both recognize that the possibility to reach soon an agreement, not mention the probable concerns about how to implement or enforce it, are still very low. For this reason, the One Belt One Road is a more practical and feasible project, at least ad regards its dynamics, since it will allow to connect Europe and China through rail networks of Yu-Xin-Europe, (Chong-qing-Xin Jiang-Europe) Zheng-Xin-Europe (Zheng-Xin Jiang-Europe) and Yi-Xin-

Europe (Yiwu-Xin Jiang- Europe): this could easily make possible a further interconnection of the two worlds, to jointly develop and further establish a new form of partnership with win-win cooperation.

Last but not least, there is a seventh factor to take into consideration: the trans-Atlantic alliance. The EU and the USA have gone along many years together and it is undeniable that this represents one of strongest alliance the world has seen in all the history. The USA were fundamental after the second World War in reconstructing Europe through the Marshall Plan, and from then on they have been able to influence the EU in almost every question that really mattered and of course they have really helped the Europeans in so many cases that is not case to go into details here.

However, despite the long-lasting alliance, the EU has lately tried to differentiate its positions from the US. This, of course, does not mean that Europe is turning is back to the Americans. The EU wants to maintain its best and strongest ally but, at the same time, it wants to appear to the world as a unique an independent actor. However, although it has tried many times, the attempts were not remarkable for their success. Indeed, the EU still seems to be too much influenced by the USA and, so far, it has not been able to highlight its independence and, as a consequence, it is about to compromise its international credibility. Given its ambivalent and problematic position, the EU could find in the One Belt One Road a valid solution. It will allow Europe to maintain its closeness to the US, while expanding their influence through the world.

Indeed, the Chinese initiative emphasizes openness and inclusiveness. In other words, it does not exclude any country, or seek any spheres of hegemony. Further, and perhaps most importantly, it does not engage in any military expansion. It advocates keeping the US inclusive, which transcends the bilateral exclusivity of the EU-USA relation. Once the One Belt One Road” will be implemented, it will promote China-EU cooperation in preserving Silk Road safety, thus it may also contribute to upgrade the European position in the NATO, and ultimately help balance the development of trans-Atlantic relations.

4.3 The consequences of the “One Belt One Road Initiative” on the EU-China relations

Generally speaking, it appears now clear that the Belt Road project is first and foremost an economic initiative, which entails in itself several geopolitical and strategic implications. However, besides the latter consequences, it is important to keep in mind that the EU is primarily facing an economic and trade-booster opportunity. Europe, as it has been already said many times above, is the first Chinese economic partner. In addition, the EU is also the main destination of the majority of Chinese FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) and this data does not consider the flow coming to Switzerland or other European areas (in geographical terms) that can be defined as “tax heavens”. In facts, these data could and should be important indicators for European decision makers, who are facing the proper and most adaptable strategy to implement toward the Chinese initiative.

Europe, it is fundamental to remark it once again, is about to deal with an historic opportunity that can radically change the global geopolitical framework. Indeed, the One Belt One Road can be seen as a further European chance to fully implement the trade relation with China, in order to make the PRC the first European economic partner. Consequently, it would also foster their reciprocal political and strategic partnership, up to the point in which they will be able to swift the world geopolitical centre of gravity to the Eurasian area. However, as a matter of fact, it would be possible only in the case in which the Eurasian market will first become a trade reality.

In sum, the strongest political relation will be a consequence of the strengthening of the economic ties and these, in turn, would occur only if the One Belt One Road initiative will rightly implemented. Obviously, this is a rather optimistic view but it may be less improbable than expected. Indeed, the EU, together with China, should look forward to correctly implement Eurasian trade and investment, especially in terms of supporting new infrastructure building and other development initiative. As regards this, indeed, it is worth to notice that some Member States’ recent decision to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) goes in that direction. The AIIB, in facts, is a Chinese-leaded bank for development-oriented investments. More

precisely, it is not a case that the Member States that decided to join the Chinese institution are basically the most influential ones: Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy. Even though these Members alone cannot represent the entire European Union, it is true that this economic joint venture with China represent a major swift in the EU mentality, toward the above-mentioned independence and a first step in the European emancipation, if not departure, from the US positions. Although this decision could be easily seen as a political one, in terms of expanding their own national influence in the growing Asian market and even if it could have important geopolitical repercussions for the majority of the Asian countries – especially for a strong US ally such as South Korea, which might reconsider its decision not join the AIIB - it is important to consider its economic implications too.

These, indeed, lie at the bases of the precedent discourse about the construction of a powerful, united and dynamic Eurasian market and this could represent the very first step in this direction. Specifically, the UK's intent is to gradually become the main recipient to the Chinese Foreign Direct Investment, in order to boost its own economy; Germany too has its proper interest in it, since right now is the first receiver of the Chinese outward investment flows. Thus, The idea is to build a bridge between China and the EU, which, together with the on going negotiation on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), could hopefully facilitate trade, and investment policy dialogues.

Accordingly, if the aim is to create a grand Eurasian Market from which both sides could actively benefit, in order to create the right environment for a future and consequent political closure between China and the EU, it is necessary to eliminate, or at least leave a part in the short term, the factor that avoid the Sino-European relation to improve and be strengthen in political and strategic terms. These factors are by no means difficult to identify. Among many others, in facts, they are the several obstacles to a further strategic partnership, namely the incredibly great number of “sectorial dialogue”.

Since the beginning of their cooperation, but especially in the last years, China and the EU have started a number of talks for about more than 50 topics, covering a wide range of areas and topics related to economic governance, trade, investment as well as industrial policies, environment etc. Among them, some were very successful some others were not. It is not difficult to imagine

that the political dialogues, especially those related to sensitive topics such as human rights or democratization, lie in the unsuccessful group. However, it is important to note that some other talks, such as the on economic and trade governance ones, have produced significant results in terms of mutual benefits. As a matter of fact, those successful dialogues were the proof of both sides' intention to cooperate among each other in order to obtain a common positive result: in a word, a win-win cooperation.

Despite these latter exceptions (which, by the way, represent a large portion of the total) many other fields were at best unproductive: namely, the ones covering issues focused on the Chinese domestic policy and internal PRC's governance have not. In fact, with no so much surprise, the sectorial dialogues have arguably not led to any measurable EU influence on the Chinese domestic governance at all. Arguably, sometimes both sides try to emphasize their achievements in such areas, with the result of a less credibility, when not reliability, for a future agreement. In fact, despite the political rhetoric proclaims might at times suggest otherwise, European influence on issues such as human rights, freedom of speech and expression and the rule of law will most likely keep being few, if not absent.

As far as the European influence is concerned, it has already been argued above what could be the Chinese response. Indeed, instead of being perceived as an encouraging involvement and hand of help to ensure domestic the right domestic policy, or to address the right issue, the "European influence" can easily turn into "European interference". In fact, Beijing has made clear more than once that it would consider any kind of foreign involvement in its internal policies as an intrusion to its domestic affairs, if not a violation of its own sovereignty. Consequently, whenever one of those talks starts to be perceived as interference, the Chinese government has reserved its right to either stop going deeper into the topic or give more details about if at best, or even interrupt any kind of further dialogue on the topic.

As it appeared clear, any form of critic on these very sensitive topics could represent a significant hurdle for the EU-China relations, especially as far as the strategic and the political fields are concerned. Thus, once again, the EU is facing the very same fundamental dilemma that has already been explained earlier: either insist on its values and ideals in order to push China toward

issues such as human rights, freedom of speech and expression and the rule of law, either going pragmatic, leaving at present them aside, in order to improve its strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China. The immediate consequence of the latter would be a significant reduction of the sectorial dialogues with China and, in turn, focusing on the very actable ones.

Thus, a reduction in the number of EU-China sectorial dialogues could consequently enable both sides to focus more efficiently on fewer issues, which are also of primary importance for both them, and set the framework for a more realizable bilateral strategic agenda.

As it has been argued many times, one of the major problem China and the EU are facing in the development of a real strategic partnership is the difficulty to adopt a pragmatic approach in agreeing and implement a joint security policy. From a first view, it could be argued this might be a fundamental obstacle in the sense that both sides found it impossible to overcome due to its nature that lead to radical different positions among the two. This perception is perhaps misleading.

What the EU and China have lacked so far is rather a change in their respective mentalities and in their own approach in dealing with any kind of issues, especially security and strategic ones. They both have repeatedly insisted on the wrong way, emphasizing the impossibility to leave their respective values a part in order to achieve a common position. They have been standing on their petrified assumptions, namely human rights protection and enforcement, the need of adopting the Rule of Law together with a democratization of the Chinese institutions and so on, as far as the European claims are concerned; on the opposite side, the Chinese official position stands on different grounds but with the same level of intransigence: principle of non-interference, national sovereignty and territorial integrity are among the main concerns for China.

Thus, within this framework, both side have obviously found difficult, if not impossible, to actively join, implement and enforce a common security policy and, if a change in their respective mentalities will not occur soon, the stalemate is unlikely to be removed. Consequently, if the European Union keeps on insisting upon what it considers its core values and if it continues to encourage the Chinese officials along with the Chinese society to move in that

direction, and if on the other side, Chinese decision makers will persist on their apparently irremovable positions the EU-China relations will hardly evolve in the future.

Interestingly though, this research has shown both parts have claimed to look forward a more practical cooperation among each other in security issues. One of the latest examples is the “2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation”. This document sees both sides claiming a “raising on the level of EU-China dialogue and cooperation on defense and security, advancing towards more ‘practical cooperation’ ”. Although it might sound good and charming on paper, it could also remain a mere political and rhetorical proclamation with no real consequences in practice.

Indeed, China and the EU have started referring to each other as “strategic partners” since the first EU China Policy Paper, more than ten years ago. They have repeatedly insisted on a future great cooperation and discussion on several important topics and the result of those talks have been described during this work. This time, the 2020 Agenda could turn into a real forum for practical discussion if and only if both sides will be ready to negotiate without internal and intrinsic limits. Politics, it is a fact, is led by ideals most of the times; but some times politicians and decision makers have the duty to be pragmatic, leaving aside their respective ideals and values in order to reach a remarkable compromise.

The 2020 Agenda entails a good occasion to demonstrate to the world that the EU and China are actual strategic partners and they can successfully cooperate and address security issues. However, even though this is a good occasion, it could also turn into one of the many window-dressing events, which does not produce any real results, not to mention a joint security policy. Indeed, it remains yet to be seen how the “EU-China High Level Strategic Dialogue” will turn from an informal dialogue to one able to formulate and adopt concrete EU-China security cooperation on the ground. This will depend first and foremost on decision makers’ attitudes. As a matter of fact, the Europeans have argued many times that the EU-China strategic dialogue on Asian security is more a forum to informally consult on security issues going on in Asia; accordingly, this platform would have not the intention nor the objective in its own nature to adopt joint policies on whichever issue.

Thus, if Europeans along with Chinese decision makers will keep on maintaining this position it will continue to be very unlikely that the bilateral dialogue on security leads to concrete EU-China security cooperation on sensitive issues. However, the outcome of such dialogues and consequently the EU-China relation's destiny will mainly depend on two factors. First, the already mentioned attitude of both the bargaining sides. The second factor thus comes as a consequence of the first. As soon as the parts will decide to move from their of stagnant position, they will be able to address real security issues and perhaps adopting a joint strategic policy; indeed, it is also true that the impossibility of cooperation faced so far mostly depends on the sensitiveness of the treated topics. Once they will both leave a part, for the moment, to address the Taiwan question, the Tibetan issue as well as Asian maritime disputes (all them have an international visibility, which derives from ideological and mainly Western perspective), they will be able to deal with more feasible issues such as, nuclear non-proliferation in North Korea and Iran, terrorism in the MENA region, Southeast Asia and Central Asia as well as joint confidence-building measures in East and Southeast Asia.

Once again, the outcome of this talks will depend on the respective attitudes but the final result will be able to tell the world whether China and the European Union can really address security issues together as new global actors and, most importantly, weather they can manage them as Strategic Partners.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The EU-China relation is not yet a strategic partnership because there exist a number of structural obstacles for it, both in practical terms and in the way in which the two sides approach to each other.

In order to reach this conclusion, this work has been focusing on different aspects of the Sino-European relations. Indeed, although the China-EU relation has been object of debate for long time, given to its geopolitical importance, the result of such argumentations most of the times has remained opaque. Consequently, this research has tried to adopt a polyhedral approach in order to not leave apart any important aspect of it.

Thus, it was firstly fundamental to give an historical framework to the topic. Albeit the central question remained the current strategic relation between China and the EU, it would have been next to impossible to separate the present situation from its past, since the latter has been keeping on giving significant crucial point and it has been useful to fully understand how the two sides ended up in their respective current position. In addition, the significant changes occurred in China as well as in Europe in the last decades have been dramatically changing both the domestic environment, upon to the point that it was impossible to ignore them.

Successively, the work has gone more into details, trying to briefly analyze which was the current situation of the partnership, in economical terms. However, for the purpose of this work it would have been almost useless to only stress the already well-known trade cooperation. It is nowadays clear and evident both sides have significant interests in maintaining their economic relations as close as possible. As it has been said many times, the first Chinese economic partner is the European Union and China, in turn, is the second EU trade contractor. However, although this is data is anything but useless, it does not say much about possible EU-China strategic perspective. Instead, it has been necessary to stress their joint cooperation programs, the public European investments that go on several and enormously important fields. These data have been defined as a possible starting point for the future EU-China collaboration in strategic partnership, given to a simple but dramatically fundamental fact: they both have left a part their respective position in order to

achieve a bigger common goal and, at the same time, they have been able to accomplish real practical results. Those two factors, which basically are the above-mentioned structural obstacles, have been overcome and they allowed China and Europe to strengthen their ties.

Hence, it was then necessary to underline the fact that it is still impossible to define the EU-China relation as strategic partnership. Then, the work has left some room to the academic debate, which has been divided in two parts: the Chinese perception of Europe and the EU's perception of China. This division entails a fundamental reason in itself. Indeed, it has been recognized their mutual feelings of fear and threat, which can be easily defined as a "theoretical misunderstanding" of "the other", together with some practical and undeniable facts, (e.g. the EU arms embargo toward China, the not recognition to China as a MES, the HR issue and so on and so forth) still represent important hurdles or, to define them better, structural obstacles. These are basically the most important causes preventing the EU and China to have a real "strategic partnership", as defined earlier in this work. Accordingly, both parties have not established a relation able to *deliver* fundamental results on *core goals*.

However, this work has also shown the presence of some encouraging signs, which basically are joint programmes between China and the EU on several important issues. Those examples of co-operation between the two are encouraging inasmuch they were able to achieved actual results. This was possible only because in those specific situation the above mentioned structural obstacles were missing or their influence decreased. However, many discouraging signs have been presented as well. In facts, what is really missing between the EU and China is an attempt of cooperation that would regard *core goals*.

The occasion came from the One Belt One Road. The work has explained the main feature of this ambitious Chinese initiative, presenting both its cons and pros. In any case, the OBOR is not only a mere Chinese economic program. This could and will probably have several important geopolitical implications for the entire world, including the European Union. As a growing global actor, the EU will have to develop a unique and coherent foreign policy in order to rightly deal with challenges and opportunities the OBOR initiative will eventually bring up. Consequently, this work has firstly defined the Chinese

initiative as a historical opportunity for the EU to become a stronger and adult political actor. Secondly, the OBOR initiative has been presented as a vital opportunity for the EU to finally upgrade the partnership with China to a strategic partnership. Indeed, if the initiative will actually take place and if Brussels will be able to seize this opportunity, it will presents all the necessary conditions to define the partnership as strategic.

In conclusion, although the Sino-European relations cannot be defined as strategic for many causes yet, this work has briefly tried to explain that both side still have large room for turning in this direction. If both them will be able to overcome the structural obstacles that today still persist in a significant measure and if they will be able to concretely pursuit *core goals* together with several joint action able to *deliver* practical results, then it is likely they will move toward a real and long-awaited “strategic partnership”, in a future that might be closer than expected but surely brighter for the EU-China relations.

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8.0 Appendix

EU funds toward China from 2010 to 2016

Source: European Union (EU) Delegation to China and Mongolia, Beijing – China

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
HUM	2010	259054	Ongoing	Decent work and social protection for persons with disabilities	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/11		ASSOCIATION FEDERATION HANDICAP INTERNATIONALE		Asia	1.750.131,83	1.750.129,38	2,45	21148	China, Laos, Vietnam	Social/welfare services
ACA	2010	254519	Closed	Pre-feasibility study mission on EU-China social protection cooperation	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	10/01/11	02/08/11	ARS PROGETTI SPA - AMBIENTE RISORSE SVILUPPO	Italy	China	35.824,00	35.824,00	-	21502	Beijing China.	
ACA	2010	259524	Closed	Final Evaluation on Cleaner Production Revolving Fund of EU-China Liaoning Integrated Environmental Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	25/02/11	26/07/11	FINEUROPS SPA		China	47.176,00	47.176,00	-	21502	China (Beijing, Liaoning Province)	BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
ASE	2010	240216	Closed	Evaluation of 5 Project Reports under the Energy Efficiency Component of the EU-China Energy and Environment Programme (EEP)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	09/06/10	01/11/10	COWI AS	Denmark	China	32.200,00	32.200,00	-	3258	Experts' base of operation.	
ASE	2010	238833	Closed	Final Evaluation of the EU-China Trade Project (EUCP)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	16/06/10	17/11/10	ECORNS NEDERLAND B.V.s	The Netherlands	China	65.936,00	65.936,00	-	2469	Europe (Brussels, with the European Commission services, namely DG TRADE, ENTR, RELEX, SANCO, COMP, AGRI, TAXUD etc., as well as the Contractor's headquarter in Brussels) and China (Beijing and provinces to be defined, with the beneficiaries/stakeholders)	
DCI-ASIE	2010	247660	Closed	Institutional Capacity Building for the Civil Aviation Sector in China	China	Implementation	Services	28/10/10	27/08/10	BUREAU VERITAS - REGISTRE INTERNATIONALE DE CLASSIFICATION DE NAVIRES ET DAERONES	France	China	3.202.518,42	3.202.518,42	-	20128	China, European Union, third countries	
PP-AP	2010	234067	Closed	programmed cell death pathways – focus on regulated mRNA stability and translation.	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	RYBARSKA		China	49.680,36	49.680,36	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234274	Closed	Communication strategies for sustainable social innovation.	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	VALSECCI		China	50.253,62	50.253,62	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
ASIE	2010	245144	Closed	Mid-term evaluation of the Business Management Training Project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/08/10	03/05/11	ARS PROGETTI SPA - AMBIENTE RISOSE E SVILUPPO	Italy	China	45.382,00	45.382,00	-	18237	Belgium (Brussels) China (Beijing, Shanghai, selected provinces Jiangxi, Sichuan)	Higher education
ACA	2010	237430	Closed	Audit of project Asia Link 129036 (BIOSEC)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/07/10	05/09/12	MAZARS SA	France	China	14.898,26	14.898,26	-	21502	Italy	
DCI-NSA	2010	247313	Closed	Mongolia (Amélioration de la qualité des soins hospitaliers dans la région du Selengué)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/09/10	29/06/11	DELOITTE REVISEURS D ENTREPRISES SC SRL	Belgium	China	13.070,25	13.070,25	-	22347	Marseille (France)	
ACA	2010	248913	Closed	Audit of project Asia Link 128498 (FARCOBIR)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/12/10	03/11/11	PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS BEDRIJFSREVIS OREN CVBA PWC BEDRIJFSREVIS OREN	Belgium	China	7.400,00	7.400,00	-	21502	Leuven (Belgium) Action Location: Beijing, China Target Group: EU-China Policy Dialogue partners (e.g. in standardization bodies, European Commission services and Chinese administrations)	
ASIE	2010	252911	Closed	Addendum 4 to Technical Assistance to EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility Programme	China	Implementation	Services	25/10/10	24/08/12	GRONTMIJ AB		China	646.098,34	646.098,34	-	17655	China (administrations)	Sectors non specified
EIDHR	2010	227111	Closed	x	China	Grant	Action Grants	10/01/11	25/03/16	THE GREAT BRITAIN CHINA CENTRE	United Kingdom	China	978.316,19	978.316,19	-	21315	China	Human rights
PP-AP	2010	247659	Closed	Mid-term Evaluation of the Science and Technology Fellowship Programme China Audit of project GPSUC (Asia Invest 137265: Capacity building and establishment of cleaner production service units & campaigns for the industry in the less developed regions of China)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	14/10/10	03/05/11	IBF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING	Belgium	China	47.140,00	47.140,00	-	21142	Beijing and other provinces in China	Higher education
ACA	2010	253489	Closed	Dummy contract for closed Asia-Link contract 110-74-- Human Resources Development for the improvement and protection of environment in Asia (HRD)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/12/10	05/08/11	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	18.155,27	18.155,27	-	21502	Beijing, China	
ASIE	2010	253059	Closed		China	Implementation	Environment	26/10/10	15/03/11	TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT DELFT	The Netherlands	China	13.321,50	13.321,50	-		China	Higher education

Domain	Contract Year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
HUM	2010	253133	Closed	Community Based Psychiatry: promoting the integration of mental health care into primary health services in three districts of China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/11	23/09/14	SOLIDARIETA E SERVIZIO ONLUS ASSOCIAZIONE		China	588.907,43	588.907,43	-	21135	People's Republic of China, in three health districts: -- District of Haidian. City of Beijing. -- District of Nanguan. City of Changchun. Province of Jiling (North East of China) -- District of Tongling. City of Tongling. Province of Anhui (South of China)	HEALTH
PP-AP	2010	234062	Closed	Competition law v. trade law, trade law v. environmental law: 'cross-area issues' effects on EU-China relations	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	FORGANNI		China	49.809,47	49.809,47	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234063	Closed	Plataspidae: revision of the fauna of China in global context	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	REDEI		China	46.271,08	46.271,08	-	21142	China (Beijing and Tianjin)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234065	Closed	Integration of an in-line protein digestion microreactor in the interface of a comprehensive two-dimensional liquid chromatography system	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	BEDANI		China	49.897,70	49.897,70	-	21142	China (Beijing and Dalian)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234066	Closed	Novel Structural Similarity Object Tracking in Video Sequences with Application to Surveillance	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	LOZA		China	50.256,46	50.256,46	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234069	Closed	Quality control of Chinese medicinal herbs by chemical fingerprints & metabolomic analysis	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	WEIBECK		China	46.683,42	46.683,42	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234078	Closed	Application of the AWO spatial concept in peri-urban Chinese landscapes	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	ARAN GUIU		China	49.182,93	49.182,93	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234083	Closed	Exciting genes in development	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	LUNSEN		China	48.344,37	48.344,37	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234085	Closed	Sustainable urban metabolism assessment – The case of Beijing and the impact of hallmark events organisation	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	CERSOSIMO		China	48.641,83	48.641,83	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234090	Closed	Colonial entertainment and Chinese apocalypse: Festival culture in the foreign concessions of the late Qing Dynasty	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	HOWALD		China	49.669,19	49.669,19	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research

Domain	Contract Year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
PP-AP	2010	234094	Closed	Final evaluation of the Eu-China Natural Forest Management Project (1979-2009)	China	Grant Specific contract (framework contract)	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	FARDELLA		China	49.706,51	49.706,51	-	21142	China (Beijing and Changchun)	Educational research
ASE	2010	233998	Closed	Implementation of an "Air pollution and health" observation network in Central Project	China	Services	Services	14/04/10	17/08/10	SPRL COWI BELGIUM	Belgium	China	52.995,00	52.995,00	-	3253	China (Beijing, Sichuan, Hunan)	
PP-AP	2010	234273	Closed	Comparative study of the Chinese and the European ICT standardisation landscape	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	GUINOT		China	47.705,88	47.705,88	-	21142	China (Beijing and Xi'an)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234276	Closed	From Tang to Shang: Early copper smelting remains in central China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	HEIGA GERST MARTINA		China	49.579,46	49.579,46	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234278	Closed	Hybrid control of cooperating multi-agents. An application to platoons of vehicles on highways and rescue missions in unknown environments	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	25/04/14	GARCIA LARREINA		China	50.369,06	50.369,06	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	233524	Closed	The impacts of contemporary architecture on tourism destinations	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	01/04/14	MALLOCI		China	49.551,33	49.551,33	-	21142	China (Beijing and Hangzhou)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	233531	Closed	Microwave Clock using Ultracold Atoms Trapped in an Optical Lattice	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	SPECHT		China	49.935,36	49.935,36	-	21142	China (Beijing and Guangzhou)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	233534	Closed	Road safety in China: Development of targets and pathways using a backcasting approach	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	VOGT		China	49.618,53	49.618,53	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234268	Closed	Chinese people's information retrieval in the web: beliefs, self-regulation and performance	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	16/05/11	MUIR		China	14.100,00	14.100,00	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234269	Closed	Design, synthesis and intracellular evaluation of fluorescent sensors for metal ions	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	RODON		China	47.690,79	47.690,79	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234272	Closed		China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	AMIGUES		China	47.860,57	47.860,57	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research

Domain	Contract Year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
PP-AP	2010	235833	Closed	Mathematical modelling and simulation of two-phase flows with breaking interfaces	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	HYSING		China	49.923.62	49.923.62	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	235834	Closed	Role of Public Administration Reform and Governance in China's Transition Process	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	HOSSZU		China	46.500.00	46.500.00	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234026	Closed	Search for cosmic rays with 21CMA and radiodetection of high-energy neutrinos	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	SAUGRIN		China	47.190.46	47.190.46	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234032	Closed	Quenching and Intensity redistribution due to external magnetic fields and hyperfine interaction	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	ANDERSSON		China	46.756.98	46.756.98	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234036	Closed	Measurement Based on Quantum Light Sources and Atomic Coherence	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	HUDELIST		China	49.943.54	49.943.54	-	21142	China (Beijing and Shanghai)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234039	Closed	Internationalization: two case studies	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	PINNA		China	50.459.66	50.459.66	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234043	Closed	Internet addiction: measurement and its personality psychological, psychopathological correlates	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	KORONCZASZE REDI		China	47.955.87	47.955.87	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
PP-AP	2010	234059	Closed	Identification of novel components in the plant hormone ABA signalling pathways as mechanisms of stress tolerance in plants	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/06/10	30/04/14	PORTOLES COMERAS		China	47.683.43	47.683.43	-	21142	China (Beijing)	Educational research
ACA	2010	255344	Ongoing	EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy. Strengthening the Role of Citizens in Public Policy Making and Implementation.	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/11		THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM	United Kingdom	China	995.476.00	893.805.41	101.670.59	21756	In the PR China: Beijing, Shanghai, Ningbo, Guangzhou. In Europe: Essen, Germany and Nottingham, UK.	Democratic participation and civil society
ACA	2010	247593	Ongoing	Technical Assistance to "Support to China's Sustainable Trade and Investment System, Beijing China"	China	Implementation	Services	01/09/10		CARDNO EMERGING MARKETS BELGIUM SA	Belgium	China	19.023.197.27	15.210.726.14	3.812.471.13	20127	China (Beijing and countrywide), European Union (Brussels)	

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
ACA	2010	254818	Ongoing	EU-China Environmental Governance Programme	China	Implementation	Services	12/12/10		GOP A-GESELLSCHAFT FÜR ORGANISATION PLANUNG UND AUSBLDUNG MBH	Germany	China	3.324.000,00	2.991.600,00	332.400,00	19804	China - Beijing and other provinces of PRC	
ACA	2010	240213	Ongoing	China-EU Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) at Huazhong University of Science and Technology	China	Grant	Action Grants	02/07/10		ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DES MINES DE PARIS		China	9.360.229,59	5.248.907,15	4.111.322,44	20141	China, Hubei Province, Wuhan China (Beijing principally but also rest of the country) and Europe (study tours, visits, etc.) The main target group consists of the chinese government officials in charge of energy matters, energy experts from public and private energy producers and consumers and energy specialists from universities, research centres, NGOs	Energy education/training
ACA	2010	222185	Ongoing	Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2)	China	Grant	Action Grants	13/03/10		POLITECNICO DI TORINO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION	Consortium	China	9.234.652,29	6.936.277,46	2.298.374,83	19218		Energy policy and administrative management
MIGR	2010	229653	Closed	Phase 2 Management in China: Centre for support to European Union SMEs EU SME Centre	China	Grant	Action Grants	19/11/10	21/04/15	CHINA-BRITAIN BUSINESS COUNCIL LBG	United Kingdom	Eastern Asia	1.540.172,55	1.540.172,55	-	21103	The People's Republic of China, and Macau SAR	Human rights
PP-AP	2010	250290	Ongoing	Agricultural Innovation for smallholder farmers in the Greater Mekong Subregion to improve food security, in the context of impact and adaptation to climate change and in favour of economic development	China	Implementation	Services	22/10/10		INSTITUTE OF PLANT PROTECTION CHINESE ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCES	United Kingdom	EU Europe	4.991.661,00	4.689.630,07	302.030,93	20273	China - Beijing and other provinces	SME development
FOOD	2011	230238	Ongoing	Intra-regional transfer of biologically-based plant protection technology to improve livelihoods of small holder maize farmers in the Greater Mekong sub-region	China	Grant	Action Grants	29/01/11		INSTITUTE OF PLANT PROTECTION CHINESE ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCES	Consortium	Asia	1.785.562,00	1.607.005,80	178.556,20	21076	China, Laos and Myanmar	AGRICULTURE
FOOD	2011	261127	Ongoing		China	Grant	Action Grants	01/04/12		INSTITUTE OF PLANT PROTECTION CHINESE ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCES	Consortium	Asia	2.490.836,00	1.699.945,55	790.890,45	21996	PDR Lao Myanmar Southwestern PR China	AGRICULTURE

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
CSO-LA	2011	264469	Closed	Increasing resilience and decreasing vulnerability of out-of-reach populations through better preparedness for disasters and other hardships	China	Grant	Action Grants	17/05/11	15/05/15	SUOMEN PUUVAINEN RISTI	Finland	China	513.296,39	513.296,39	-	22312	People's Republic of China, counties of Changshun (in Guizhou province), Gejiu (in Yunnan province) and Wuliang (in Chongqing province)	Government and civil society
ACA	2011	265792	Closed	Formulation Mission for EU China Low Carbon and Environmental Sustainability Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/06/11	26/10/11	EURONET CONSULTING GEIE	Belgium	China	88.526,00	88.526,00	-	22571	Beijing, China	Urban development and management
ASIE	2011	260193	Closed	Final evaluation of the EU-China Managers Exchange and Training Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	16/03/11	05/09/11	TRANSTEC SA	Belgium	China	90.665,00	90.665,00	-	5779	Europe (Brussels, Paris, Manchester, and one other location to be confirmed with the EU Delegation) and in China (Beijing and Shanghai and maybe one or two other locations to be confirmed with the EU Delegation).	Advanced technical and managerial training
ASIE	2011	264612	Closed	Final Evaluation of the EU-China Project on the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR2)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/05/11	11/11/11	AIDE A LA DECISION ECONOMIQUE SA	Belgium	China	85.906,09	85.906,09	-	18178	Europe: Brussels, Munich, Alicante China: Beijing, Shanghai	Trade policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	260400	Closed	Mid-term evaluation China-EU School of Law	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	07/03/11	17/11/11	CONSULTANTS ORGANISATION SPRL	Belgium	China	57.938,00	57.938,00	-	18029	China	Legal and judicial development
CSO-LA	2011	240165	Closed	Improving access to the employment market for persons with disabilities in the Tibet Autonomous Region	China	Grant	Action Grants	24/05/11	13/05/15	ASSOCIATION FEDERATION HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL	Consortium	China	287.608,77	287.608,77	-	22312	China, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), prefectures of Lhasa and Shigatse	Social/welfare services
CSO-LA	2011	240116	Closed	Building Capacity for Disaster Mitigation and Poverty Relief in Rural China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/07/11	21/10/14	MERCY CORPS EUROPE	Consortium	China	869.120,47	869.120,47	-	22312	China, Yunnan and Sichuan	Government and civil society
ACA	2011	262965	Closed	Low Energy Housing in Sichuan and Shenzhen, China - Enable and enforce energy efficient building construction	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/12	02/12/15	WUPPERTAL INSTITUT FUR KLIMA, UMWELT, ENERGIE GMBH	Consortium	China	1.135.898,27	1.135.898,27	-	22008	Sichuan Province and Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, China	Environmental policy and administrative management
ASIE	2011	268965	Closed	Final evaluation of EU-China Biodiversity Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	19/05/11	02/02/12	EURONET CONSULTING GEIE	Belgium	China	78.209,00	78.209,00	-	6069	Beijing and selected field projects	Bio-diversity
ASIE	2011	271356	Closed	Audit to Technical Assistance contract for EU-China Social Security Reform Co-operation Project component 1	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/10/11	13/09/12	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	33.763,90	33.763,90	-	3252	CHINA	

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CSO-LA	2011	240124	Closed	FROM CHILD TO CITIZEN - HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO CHILD PROTECTION IN XINJIANG	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/10/11	18/09/15	RED BARNET FOREINING	Consortium	China	655.012,16	655.012,16	-	22312	China – Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Urumqi City, Hotan City and Yining City	Human rights
EIDHR	2011	248669	Closed	x	China	Grant	Action Grants	20/08/11	25/04/14	ISTITUTO SINDACALE PER LA COOPERAZIONE E ALLO SVILUPPO ASSOCIAZIONE AECOM INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EUROPE SL	Italy	China	259.693,69	259.693,69	-	22197	China	Human rights
ASE	2011	269617	Closed	Final evaluation of the EU-China social Security Reform cooperation Project FINAL EVALUATION OF THE EU-CHINA POLICY DIALOGUES SUPPORT FACILITY (PDSF)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/07/11	29/11/11	EUROPEAN CONSULTANTS ORGANISATION SPRL	Spain	China	78.096,00	78.096,00	-	3252	Europe-Brussels, Bab Homburg China	Multisector aid
ASE	2011	271500	Closed	Financial Audit for: "TRAIN OF TRAINERS", A PROPOSAL TO TRAIN CHINESE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR SMES IN ENERGY SAVING TECHNIQUES & TECHNOLOGIES	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	06/09/11	28/06/12	ERNST AND YOUNG BEIJING/RES/VS OREN CVBA	Belgium	China	58.970,00	58.970,00	-	17665	Europe (Brussels) and China (Beijing)	Multisector aid
ACA	2011	272102	Closed	Financial Audit to Technical assistance of EU-China Social Security Reform Cooperation Project-component 2	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/09/11	07/02/13	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	21.341,87	21.341,87	-	3252	Bad Homburg, Germany	Industrial development
ACA	2011	272924	Closed	Financial Audit for Sustainable and Responsible Trade Promoted to Wood Processing SMEs through Forest and Trade Networks in China, India and Vietnam	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	24/10/11	27/03/12	COWI BELGIUM SPRL	Belgium	China	22.212,00	22.212,00	-	22571	Tibet, China	Forestry policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	272103	Closed	Implementing Sustainable Consumption in Civil Society of Urban China	China	Grant	Action Grants	05/12/11	27/11/12	BEIJING UNIVERSITY OF CIVIL ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE	United Kingdom	China	777.192,29	777.192,29	-	22008	Beijing, China P.R. Tianjin, China P.R.	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	278149	Closed	Formulation mission to the EU-China Social protection project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	12/12/11	24/08/12	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TRUST	United Kingdom	China	38.898,00	38.898,00	-	22571	Beijing, China	Administrative management

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ASIE	2011	277529	Closed	Final Evaluation of the EU-China River Basin Management Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	03/02/12	01/06/12	EURONET CONSULTING GIEE	Belgium	China	36,080,00	36,080,00	-	6083	China - Beijing, Zhengzhou (Henan Province) and Wuhan (Hebei Province)	Water sector policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	263220	Ongoing	Premium Environmental Management for Companies in China (EMAS Global China)	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/12		THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE FOR CHINAS AGENDA 21	Consortium	China	987,438,80	887,916,45	99,522,35	22008	PR China, throughout the country	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	262880	Ongoing	Improving energy-efficiency and environmental performance of Chinese SMEs and large companies facilitated by voluntary public-private partnerships	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/12		KONINKRIJK DER NEDERLANDEN	Consortium	China	1,553,786,00	1,398,407,40	155,378,60	22008	Beijing, Nanjing, Jingzhou and other interested megacities like Jinan, Hangzhou, Xi'an, Baoding and Tianjin	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	263084	Ongoing	Improving resource efficiency for the production and recycling of electronic products by adoption of waste tracking system	China	Grant	Action Grants	14/12/11		UNIVERSITAT FUR BODENKULTUR WIEN	Consortium	China	1,401,113,00	1,261,001,70	140,111,30	22008	Electronics production and recycling intensive areas of China, such as Guangdong Province, Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province and Hubei Province	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2011	278782	Closed	Mid-term Evaluation of the Centre for Support to European Union SMEs	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	06/02/12	02/07/12	AECOM INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EUROPE SL	Spain	EU Europe	54,540,00	54,540,00	-	23011	Europe: Brussels China: Beijing	SME development
ACA	2012	308598	Ongoing	Turning Sheep Wool Into Environmentally Friendly Building Material – Integrated Approach for Supply Chain Development	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/13		CLOVER V TISNI OPS	Czech Republic	Asia	713,129,00	641,729,00	71,400,00	22862	Mongolia – Bulgan, Darkhan-Uul, Orkhon, Selenge, Tuv aimags & Ulaanbaatar	BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES
DCI-ASIE	2012	283013	Closed	Capacity Building for Pilot Training in China Enhancing Air Traffic Management (ATM) Training and Awareness in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	17/01/12	07/10/15	ECOLE NATIONALE DE L'AVIATION CIVILE	France	China	988,377,46	988,377,46	-	20128	China and Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC) (Toulouse, France)	Air transport
DCI-ASIE	2012	283014	Closed	Final evaluation of the Governance for Equitable Development Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	17/01/12	25/08/15	NATIONALE DE L'AVIATION CIVILE	France	China	1,000,000,00	1,000,000,00	-	20128	China and Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC) (Toulouse, France)	Air transport
ASIE	2012	283816	Closed	Financial audit of project "Energy/Environment Project (EEP)	China	Implementati on	Recom mitment	02/04/12	08/10/12	ERNST AND YOUNG BEDRIJFSREVIS OREN CVBA DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FUR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ)	Belgium	China	67,664,00	67,664,00	-	18194	Beijing and 1-2 provinces, People's Republic of China	
ACA	2012	293772	Closed	Improving Corporate Environmental Information Disclosure in Zhejiang and Shanxi Province through promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility	China	Grant	Action Grants	31/05/12	05/07/12	DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FUR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ)	Belgium	China	7,375,87	7,375,87	-	23636	Beijing, China	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299301	Closed		China	Grant	Action Grants	03/09/12	15/08/14	GMBH	Germany	China	546,330,49	546,330,49	-	19804	Zhejiang and Shenxi Province, China	Environmental policy and administrative management

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ACA	2012	298416	Closed	Strengthening Environmental Governance in Small Coal Mining Industry in Shaan Xi Province, China	China	Grant	Action Grants	04/09/12	22/07/15	VENTURE EAST CONSULTING LIMITED LBG		China	884,816,04	884,816,04	-	19804	Shaan Xi Province, China	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299562	Closed	Greening the Supply of Chinese Tilapia Improving air quality	China	Grant	Action Grants	21/08/12	01/02/16	CHINA AQUATIC PRODUCTS PROCESSING AND MARKETING ALLIANCE NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION		China	893,743,57	893,743,57	-	19804	Provinces of Hainan, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Fujian	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299560	Closed	Information systems and communication and awareness tools in pilot cities of China to enhance public access to environmental information and environmental governance (AIRNEFORM)	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/11/12	01/02/16	VLAAMSE INSTELLING VOOR TECHNOLOGISC H ONDERZOEK	Belgium	China	927,011,55	927,011,55	-	19804	China - Yangzhou City, Urumqi City, Taiyuan City.	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	301937	Closed	Mid-Term Evaluation of the China-Europe Public Administration Project - Phase II (CEPA II) Promoting Environmental Governance in China: Demonstrating the Positive Impact of Public Participation in the Environmental Remediation Process	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	08/10/12	31/05/13	EUROPEAN CONSULTANTS ORGANISATION SPRL	Belgium	China	55,839,00	55,839,00	-	19646	China	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299421	Closed	Final Evaluation of the Europe China Business Management Training Project	China	Grant	Action Grants	26/08/12	30/03/16	BLACKSMITH INITIATIVE (UK)		China	403,236,75	403,236,75	-	19804	Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Hunan Provinces, China	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ASIE	2012	301656	Closed	Mid-Term Evaluation of the Europe China Clean Energy Centre (EC2) project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	19/11/12	29/05/13	CAMBRIDGE EDUCATION LIMITED	United Kingdom	China	55,378,00	55,378,00	-	18237	China (Beijing, Shanghai, provinces)	Higher education
ACA	2012	297247	Closed	Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project "Institutional Capacity Building for the Civil Aviation Sector in China"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	10/10/12	29/03/13	COMWAS PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF LTD	Denmark	China	52,064,00	52,064,00	-	19218	China (Beijing, Urumqi)	Energy research
DC-ASIE	2012	301639	Closed		China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	05/11/12	25/07/14	PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF LTD	United Kingdom	China	53,967,00	53,967,00	-	20128	China (Beijing, Tianjin) and France (Toulouse)	Air transport

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ACA	2012	304734	Closed	Community Integrated Nature Reserves for a Sustainable China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/12/12	20/05/15	SHANGRI-LA INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES NON PROFIT ORGANISATION		China	710.346,84	710.346,84	-	19804	Yunnan (Three Parallel Rivers National Park), TAR (Yulong Tsimbo National Park and adjacent Gongjujunda Nature Reserve), Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu (Interconnected Panda Reserves), Zhejiang (Xianshan Lake National Wetland Park, Changxing County), Heilongjiang (Sanhuangpao and Dongsheng Nature Reserves)	Environment I policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	302821	Closed	Strengthening the capacity of pollution victims and civil society organizations to increase chemical safety in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/11/12	10/12/15	L POPS ELIMINATION NETWORK IDEELL FORENING	Consortium	China	257.870,00	251.377,67	6.492,33	22941	China (mainly Beijing and areas in and around large cities)	Environment I education/training
CSO-LA	2012	304702	Closed	Development of training curricula and organisation of training courses for judges in environmental law in Shaanxi, Guangxi and Gansu	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/13	28/12/15	DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ)	Germany	China	796.412,42	796.412,42	-	19804	Shaanxi and Gansu Province, Guangxi Autonomous Region	Environment I policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	306330	Closed	Regulating and promoting public participation in EIA in selected pilot Provinces and Municipalities	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/13	16/04/15	ACCADEMIA EUROPEA PER LA RICERCA APPLICATA ED IL PERFEZIONAMENTO PROFESSIONALE-BOLZANO ASSO CIAZIONE	Italy	China	436.804,10	436.804,10	-	19804	Lincang and Xiangge Lila, Yunnan Province; Rizhao and Linyi, Shandong Province, China	Environment I policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	305831	Closed	Engaging the Private Sector in sustainable management of medicinal plants – the multiplier effect	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/13	19/02/16	TRAFFIC INTERNATIONAL	United Kingdom	China	808.611,60	808.611,60	-	19804	Zhejiang and Hunan Provinces, China	Environment I policy and administrative management
ASIE	2012	303083	Closed	Financial Audit of Project Europe-China Business management Training Project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	06/12/12	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	42.199,22	42.199,22	-	18237	china	
ACA	2012	306918	Closed	External assessors to evaluate concept notes and full applications of call for proposals EU-China Environmental Sustainability Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	14/01/13	17/07/13	SACO SASPI		China	36.256,24	36.256,24	-	23636	Beijing	
ACA	2012	283547	Ongoing	Technical Assistance to the EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility II	China	Implementation	Services	15/03/12		SWECO DANMARK AS	Denmark	China	10.246.500,00	8.025.875,81	2.220.624,19	21123	Primarily in China, but may also in Member States of the EU in accordance with the work plans.	

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ACA	2012	283252	Ongoing	Technical Assistance Project on Occupational Health & Safety in High-risk Sectors	China	Implementation	Services	16/04/12		GESELLSCHAFT FÜR VERSICHERUNG SWISSENSCHAFT UND -GESTALTUNG EV	Germany	China	8.203.750,00	5.561.233,63	2.642.516,37	21677	P.R.China and EU Member States	Legal and judicial development
ACA	2012	290016	Ongoing	China – EU Police Training Project	China	Grant	Action Grants	22/05/12		REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE	Consortium	China	5.800.000,00	3.944.539,96	1.855.460,04	21975	China, EU member states	Disaster prevention and preparedness
ACA	2012	292487	Ongoing	EU-China Disaster Risk Management (DRM)	China	Grant	Action Grants	19/05/12		REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE	France	China	5.700.000,00	3.585.327,36	2.114.672,64	21520	China, EU member states	
ICI +	2012	294804	Ongoing	IP KEY : Intellectual Property: A Key to sustainable Competitiveness	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/07/13		OFFICE FOR HARMONISATION IN THE INTERNAL MARKET (TRADEMARKS ANDDESIGNS)	Spain	China	6.000.000,00	4.111.726,92	1.888.273,08	24625	The project will be implemented throughout the People's Republic of China (at central, provincial and local level) and the EU, as appropriate. Activities may also take place, on exceptional basis, in third countries.	
ACA	2012	305506	Ongoing	Impact-based environmental index and labelling system to support SO2 emission trading in Shanxi province	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/13		NORSK INSTITUTT FOR LUFTFORSKNING G STIFTELSE	Norway	China	748.244,00	598.544,00	149.700,00	19804	China, Shanxi Province, Taiyuan	Environment policy and administrative management
EIDHR	2012	297072	Ongoing	"Use less" – judicial restraints on the use of the death penalty in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	28/08/12		BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY	Consortium	China	938.783,76	744.781,83	194.001,93	22809	People's Republic of China	Human rights
ACA	2012	299495	Ongoing	Improving access to environmental justice to protect people's environmental rights in Guizhou province	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/10/12		IVL SVENSKA MILJÖINSTITUT ET AB	Sweden	China	899.645,00	809.645,00	90.000,00	19804	Guizhou province, China	Environment policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299491	Ongoing	Public participation of environmental governance in the laxing model and its applicability in Zhejiang Province	China	Grant	Action Grants	04/09/12		CENTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS OF ZHEJIANG PROVINCE		China	447.560,00	439.005,03	8.554,97	19804	Zhejiang province, China	Environment policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	299481	Ongoing	Hubei Air Quality Information and Early Warning System, complementing Hubei "1+8" city cluster haze monitoring project	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/12/12		NORSK INSTITUTT FOR LUFTFORSKNING G STIFTELSE	Norway	China	772.000,00	617.500,00	154.500,00	19804	China, Hubei Province, "1+8" city cluster: Wuhan, Huangshi, Ezhou, Xianning, Huanggang, Xiaogan, Qianjiang, Xiangtao, Tianmen	Environment policy and administrative management

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CSO-LA	2012	283263	Ongoing	Holistic and right-based approach to People with Disability as poverty reduction strategy in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/11/12		ORGANISMO DI VOLONTARIATO PER LA COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE LA MOSTRA FAMIGLIA ASSOCIAZIONE	Consortium	China	376,521.82	338,869.63	37,652.19	22941	China	Social/welfare services
CSO-LA	2012	283260	Ongoing	Promoting an empowered civil society for Tibetan herders in the Sanjiangyuan Region of Qinghai Province, through capacity building, improved dialogue and the demonstration of sustainable development	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/11/12		FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL L LBG	Consortium	China	618,300.00	557,375.88	60,924.12	22941	China	Democratic participation and civil society
CSO-LA	2012	302292	Ongoing	Enhancing the capacities of Disability-focused civil society organizations (DCSOs) to develop their participation in the decision making processes	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/13		ASSOCIATION FEDERATION HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL	Consortium	China	420,000.00	378,000.00	42,000.00	22941	China	Government and civil society
CSO-LA	2012	302111	Ongoing	Strengthening institutions for care and protection of at risk children and children of executed and imprisoned parents	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/12/12		MORNING TEARS VZW ZHEJIANG PROVINCE ECONOMICS AND INFORMATION COMMISSION	Consortium	China	475,110.00	399,087.27	76,022.73	22941	China	Social/welfare services
ACA	2012	307659	Ongoing	Sustainable Production in the Printing and Dyeing Sector in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/13		TEDA ECO CENTER LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY		China	1,499,000.00	642,861.77	856,138.23	22862	Zhejiang Province, China (with a focus on Shaoxing County)	Industrial development
ACA	2012	305719	Ongoing	Developing a Pilot Regional Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTL) in Tianjin Binhai New Area, China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/13				China	638,801.69	511,503.39	127,298.30	19804	Tianjin Binhai New Area, Tianjin Municipality, China	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2012	305959	Ongoing	The Capacity Building of Environmental Justice and Guarding Environmental Rights in Western China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/12/12		CHINA UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND LAW	China	China	857,612.86	771,812.86	85,800.00	19804	Kunming City of Yunnan Province Qingzhen City of Guizhou Province	Environmental policy and administrative management

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ACA	2012	307186	Ongoing	SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION MODELS AND CERTIFICATION TOOLS IN CHINESE FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS (CAPACTY)	China	Grant	Action Grants	02/04/13		ASOCIACION DE INDUSTRIAS DELAS TECNOLOGIAS ELECTRONICAS Y DE LA INFORMACION DEL PAIS VASCO GAIA	Spain	China	1,250,908,61	1,066,241,54	184,667,07	22862	CHINA: Sichuan, Heman and Qinghai Provinces	Industrial development
ACA	2012	291595	Ongoing	Greening food production and consumption: Transforming the highly polluting and resource consuming edible bamboo shoot industry into a sustainable value chain in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/13		ZHEJIANG A&F UNIVERSITY	consortium	China	1,981,000,00	1,113,177,62	867,822,38	22862	China: Zhejiang Province (Anji and Lin'an Counties) and Sichuan Province (Zigong and Yibin Counties)	Industrial development
ACA	2012	308698	Ongoing	China Heat Pump Water Heater Challenge Program	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/13		CHINA ENERGY CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION		China	1,655,889,20	1,420,545,96	235,343,24	22862	China: Kunming, Hefei, Wuhan, Changsha, Nanchang, Nanning, Chongqing, Chengdu	Industrial development
ACA	2012			Financial audit of EU-China Human Rights Network	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/03/13	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	16,202,10	16,202,10	-	24603	china, Ireland	Trade policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	314414	Closed	Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "EU-China Trade Project II (EUCTP II)"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	02/04/13	05/08/13	AIDE A LA DECISION ECONOMIQUE SA	Belgium	China	78,232,00	78,232,00	-	20127	Belgium (Brussels) and China (Beijing)	Energy education/training
ACA	2013	320644	Closed	Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "EU-China Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE)"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	04/06/13	25/04/14	HTSPE LIMITED	United Kingdom	China	56,066,00	56,066,00	-	20141	France (Paris), China (Beijing, Wuhan)	Energy education/training
ACA	2013	319151	Closed	Financial Audit for the project China-Europe Public Administration project phase II (CEPA II)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/08/13	04/09/15	DELOITTE REVISEURS D ENTREPRISES SC SRL	Belgium	China	26,009,00	26,009,00	-	19646	China and Germany	
DC-ASIE	2013	319182	Closed	Financial Audit for the project Institutional Capacity Building for the Civil Aviation Sector in China	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	02/09/13	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	24,747,77	24,747,77	-	20128	France	
ACA	2013	320618	Closed	Financial Audit for the project "Technical Assistance support to China's sustainable Trade and Investment System, Beijing China"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	05/08/13	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	23,808,25	23,808,25	-	20127	Belgium	

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ICI +	2013	334136	Closed	External assessors to evaluate concept notes and full applications of call for proposals EU-China Research and Innovation Partnership	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	06/06/14	23/11/15	APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SAARL	France	China	71,045,32	71,045,32	-	23765	Beijing, China	
ACA	2013	332478	Closed	Financial Audit for the Project - China Europe School of Law	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/01/14	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	31,437,94	31,437,94	-	18029	China and Germany	Legal and judicial development
EIDHR	2013	318802	Ongoing	Fighting torture in China: strengthening the role of civil society	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/10/13		THE RIGHTS PRACTICE	United Kingdom	China	662,500,00	420,218,69	242,281,31	23790	China	Human rights
ACA	2013	322333	Ongoing	Sustainable Ship Recycling By Adopting Integrated Waste Management Approaches in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	30/07/13		UNIVERSITAT FUR BODENKULTUR WIEN	Austria	China	882,398,00	794,062,90	88,335,10	23093	Coastal and river areas in Jiangsu and Guangdong Provinces of China, where the majority of ship recycling companies are located.	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	322397	Ongoing	China Fluorescent Lamps collection and treatment demonstration project (Project CFL)	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/09/13		TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY	China	China	960,521,60	602,344,06	358,177,54	23093	China: Beijing & Chengdu	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	322484	Ongoing	Emergency response system for heavy metal pollution (METAlert)	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/09/13		VLAAMSE INSTELLING VOOR TECHNOLOGISC H ONDERZOEK NV	Belgium	China	906,308,58	639,614,72	266,693,86	23093	China: Chenzhou, Hunan Province	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	320598	Ongoing	Scaling up Energy efficiency and Cleaner Production in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through Integrated Solutions and Green Credit	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/14		TECHNISCHER UBERWACHUNG GS-VEREN RHEINLAND BERLIN BRANDENBUR G PFALZ EV	China	China	998,000,00	525,000,66	472,999,34	23422	Shaanxi Province, the People's Republic of China	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	322403	Ongoing	Prevention and Control of Heavy Metal Pollution in the Lead-Acid Battery Sector in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	08/08/13		ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY	China	China	968,880,00	935,364,14	33,515,86	23093	Zhejiang Province, China (with a focus on Changxing County)	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	323548	Ongoing	Support on the Development of National Strategy for the Control of Heavy Metal Emissions and its Demonstration in Key Polluted Areas	China	Grant	Action Grants	16/10/13		CHINESE ACADEMY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING	China	China	944,950,98	308,849,00	636,101,98	23093	China: Beijing and Hunan province (Shukoushan Area, Hengyang city, Hunan Province)	Environmenta l policy and administrative management
CSO-LA	2013	316172	Ongoing	Challenging Discrimination: Empowering Disabled Persons' Organization in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	23/10/13		THE RIGHTS PRACTICE	Consortium	China	698,621,00	388,343,14	310,277,86	24630	china	Democratic participation and civil society

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CSO-LA	2013	316185	Ongoing	Developing CSO capacity to participate in policy making and represent marginalized groups: Advocacy methods for a stronger Chinese civil society	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/12/13		BEIJING CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER LTD	Consortium	China	431,643,00	247,367,51	184,275,49	23482	China The project will be implemented mainly in China, at central (Beijing) and local level (municipalities). Some activities can be carried out in Europe and in well justified cases in third	Democratic participation and civil society
ACA	2013	329453	Ongoing	Technical Assistance to the Sustainable urbanization - Europe China eco-cities link (EC-CLINK)	China	Implementation	Services	18/11/13		DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH	Germany	China	9.304.400,00	2.346.219,26	6.958.180,74	23093	China countries.	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	332350	Ongoing	EU-China Environmental Sustainability Programme Policy Support and Networking Mechanism	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/14		ZHONGHUA RENMIN GONGHEGUO ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA AMICI DI RAOUL FOLLEREAU - AIFO - ORGANIZZAZIONE NEPER LA COOPERAZIONE SANITARIA INTERNAZIONALE ONLUS	China	China	900.000,00	227.192,96	672.807,04	23093	China	Democratic participation and civil society
CSO-LA	2013	316265	Ongoing	Strengthening role and capacity of Chinese non state actors towards rightful inclusion in the society of people with mental health conditions	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/03/14			Consortium	China	563,066,00	174.517,33	388.548,67	24630	CHINA	Democratic participation and civil society
CSO-LA	2013	316171	Ongoing	From better health to greater rights: Promoting empowered & integrated young migrant populations in three Chinese cities	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/11/13		MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL L.BG	Consortium	China	665.346,00	412.770,80	252.575,20	23482	china	Democratic participation and civil society
CSO-LA	2013	316080	Ongoing	Strengthen 2 indigenous NSA to support the Yi minority in Butuo country (China's alarmingly high HIV infected country) to take control of the epidemic	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/14		WESOLI ISTAIGA HUMANA PEOPLE TO PEOPLE BALTIC	Consortium	China	700.000,00	410.659,07	289.340,93	23482	china	Democratic participation and civil society
CSO-LA	2013	316146	Ongoing	CSOs partnering to mitigate tobacco-related health risks for women and children in Yunnan	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/14		HEALTH LIMITED	Consortium	China	487.500,00	234.241,66	253.258,34	24630	china Yunnan	Democratic participation and civil society

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				To raise public awareness, understanding and involvement regarding issues of gender, sexuality and sexual health through webcast, media capacity trainings and advocacy events			Action Grants	01/03/14		BEIJING GENDER HEALTH EDUCATION INSTITUTE LTD		China	450,000.00	255,265.00	184,735.00	24630	China	Democratic participation and civil society
CSD-LA	2013	316179	Ongoing	Better water ecological environment in Tianjin Binhai New Area (TBNA) with less pollution discharge to the rivers and Bohai Sea	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/08/13		TIANJIN ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES		China	988,962.00	692,233.07	296,728.93	23093	China: Tianjin, Binhai New Area	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	323550	Ongoing	Supporting the Design and Implementation of Emissions Trading Systems in China	China	Grant	Services	20/01/14		ICF CONSULTING LTD UICN, BUREAU DE REPRESENTATION AUPRES DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE AISBL	United Kingdom	China	5,653,480.00	1,383,109.27	4,270,370.73	23093	European countries. The project will be implemented mainly in China, at central (Beijing) and provincial level. Some activities can be carried out in the EU and in well justified cases in third European countries.	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2013	322963	Ongoing	Mega-cities and their Watersheds: Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Drinking Water Sources	China	Grant	Action Grants	20/07/13		THE BRIDGE FUND EUROPE AISBL	Belgium	China	738,300.00	513,827.86	224,472.14	23093	Beijing, Hebei, and Guangdong of P. R. China	Environmental policy and administrative management
GSO-LA	2013	316271	Ongoing	Promoting inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development to benefit Tibetan communities in western China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/10/13		THE BRITISH COUNCIL ROYAL CHARTER CHINESE RESEARCH ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES (ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CENTER OF ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN CHINA)	United Kingdom	China	499,060.00	427,087.70	71,972.30	23482	western china	Democratic participation and civil society
ACA	2013	325892	Ongoing	China-EU Access to Justice Programme	China	Grant	Action Grants	05/09/13		THE BRITISH COUNCIL ROYAL CHARTER CHINESE RESEARCH ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES (ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CENTER OF ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN CHINA)	United Kingdom	China	4,711,189.81	4,212,585.18	498,604.63	23043	Shanxi, Inner Mongolia and Henan China	Legal and judicial development
ACA	2013	323261	Ongoing	Demonstration of Pollution Discharge Management for Water Quality Improvement in the Songhuajiang-Liaohé River Basin	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/09/13		THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG		China	938,245.67	256,166.31	682,079.36	23093	China: Liaoning Province and Heilongjiang Province	Environmental policy and administrative management
EIDHR	2013	330749	Closed	Regional Anti-Death Penalty Conference	China	Implementation	Services	19/10/13	10/03/15	THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG		Hong Kong	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	23793	Hong Kong SAR, China	Human rights

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ACA	2014	344263	Closed	Complimentary Audit Services for the RFS 2013/332-478	China	Implementation	Services	09/06/14	25/08/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	67.202,50	67.202,50	-	18029	China and Europe	
ACA	2014	340626	Closed	Mid-term evaluation of the EU-China project on Occupational Health and Safety in High Risk Sectors	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	23/06/14	09/12/15	AGRICONSULTI NC EUROPE SA	Belgium	China	49.936,00	49.936,00	-	21677	Germany and China	
DC-ASIE	2014	351178	Closed	Final evaluation of the project "Institutional Capacity Building for the Civil Aviation Sector in China"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/10/14	25/08/15	TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE EXPERTISE GROUP -TEG FEHZ		China	45.923,00	45.923,00	-	20128	Beijing, Tianjin city, China and France	
EIDHR	2014	332022	Closed	Improve migrant workers condition in Zhejiang province	China	Grant	Action Grants	28/09/14	28/12/15	YONGKANG XIAO XIAO YU ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION CONS.SERVICE	Consortium	China	73.496,00	73.496,00	-	24556	Zhejiang Province, Yongkang, People's Republic of China	Human rights
ACA	2014	347561	Closed	Mid-term Evaluation of the EU-China Policy Dialogues Support Facility Project II	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	21/07/14	27/02/15	HISPE LIMITED	United Kingdom	China	69.424,00	69.424,00	-	21123	China	Democratic participation and civil society
ACA	2014	345484	Closed	Financial Audit for the project "EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/09/14	04/09/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	17.003,81	17.003,81	-	24732	UK	Industrial development
ACA	2014	344360	Closed	Financial Audit for the Project "Sustainable revival of livelihoods in post-disaster Sichuan"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	21/07/14	25/08/15	MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	38.342,50	38.342,50	-	24732	China	Industrial development
ACA	2014	350682	Closed	Mid-Term Evaluation of EU-China Disaster Risk Management project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	05/01/15	10/03/16	GEOTEST BRNO AS	Czech Republic	China	55.095,00	55.095,00	-	21520	China: Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Europe: Brussels, Nanterre, Kuopio, Bonn	
EIDHR	2014	332016	Ongoing	Empowering migrant workers and their families against human trafficking and enhancing the protection of left behind children.	China	Grant	Action Grants	05/08/14		INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION	Consortium	China	74.997,48	59.997,98	14.999,50	24556	Guangdong, Henan, Sichuan, Anhui provinces	Human rights
EIDHR	2014	332141	Ongoing	Improve labour and living conditions for the workers exposed to the risk of occupational diseases in the Pearl River Delta	China	Grant	Action Grants	17/07/14		ISTITUTO SINDACALE PER LA COOPERAZIONE E ALLO SVILUPPO ASSOCIAZIONE	Consortium	China	55.384,00	44.307,20	11.076,80	24556	People's Republic of China, Guangdong province, Industrial areas of Huzhou and Dongguan	Human rights
EIDHR	2014	332138	Ongoing	Improving labour conditions for internal migrant workers in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	05/11/14		WAR ON WANT LBG	Consortium	China	74.718,20	57.993,04	16.725,16	24556	China - Guangdong Province	Human rights

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ACA	2014	350601	Ongoing	EU - China Social Protection Reform Project	China	Grant	Action Grants	17/11/14		ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DELLA PREVIDENZASO CIALE	Italy	China	6.700.000,00	1.864.427,00	4.835.573,00	23119	People's Republic of China.	Social/welfare services
ACA	2014	338408	Ongoing	Mid-term Evaluation of EU-China Environmental Governance Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	04/04/14		SAFEGE SA	France	China	73.797,00	73.797,00	-	19804	China, and selected provinces	
ICI +	2014	346276	Ongoing	EU Centre for Support to EU SMEs in China(Phase Two)	China	Grant	Action Grants	07/07/14		CHINA-BRITAIN BUSINESS COUNCIL LBG	United Kingdom	China	5.995.635,00	1.612.361,15	4.383.273,85	24842	China, European Unions	SME development
EIDHR	2014	337379	Ongoing	Multi Dimensional Interventions addressing the rights of injured migrant workers in China	China	Grant	Action Grants	18/07/14		HEPING COUNTY PU GONG YING SELF-HELP CENTRE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE		China	58.777,01	45.284,36	13.492,65	24556	Guangdong Province, China	Human rights
ACA	2014	351386	Ongoing	Mid-term Evaluation of the EU-China Police Training project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/12/14		INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING EXPERTISEGIE	Belgium	China	52.333,00	52.333,00	-	21975	China	Security system management and reform
ICI +	2014	348005	Ongoing	New pathways for sustainable urban development in China's medium-sized cities (MEDUIM)	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/09/15		CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE CNRS	Consortium	EU Europe	800.000,00	262.879,27	537.120,73	23741	China, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium	Urban development and management
ICI +	2014	347910	Ongoing	Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Solutions for Cities (IRES-8)	China	Grant	Action Grants	15/03/15		THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER	Consortium	EU Europe	799.671,24	146.902,12	652.769,12	23741	UK, Italy, Croatia, Norway and China	ENERGY GENERATION AND SUPPLY
ICI +	2014	348013	Ongoing	An interdisciplinary Training Network to Address Key Questions in Plant Development for Food Security	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/15		THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM	Consortium	EU Europe	799.996,71	178.767,30	621.229,41	23741	UK; France; Italy; indirectly other EU States, People's Republic of China, Shanghai Municipality; Jiangsu Province (SITU-Subei Research Institute in Huaiyin)	AGRICULTURE
ICI +	2014	348006	Ongoing	EU-China partnership on novel strategies to treat diabetes from plant-derived proteins	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/15		UNIVERSITA DEGU STUDI DI MILANO	Consortium	EU Europe	600.000,00	290.560,34	309.439,66	23741	China, Minhang, Shanghai; Italy, Lombardy, Milan; Sweden, Stockholm	Health, general

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				SEW-REAP: Addressing food Security, Environmental stress and Water by promoting multidisciplinary Research EU And China Partnerships in science and business		Grant	Action Grants	01/04/15		UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER ROYAL CHARTER	Consortium	EU Europe	681.975,20	127.939,82	554.035,38	23741	UK (Lancaster University), Spain (CSIC, Barcelona/Seville/alamanca /Murcia) China (CAU, Beijing/Hong Kong-Shenzhen/Gansu, CAS, Guangzhou)	AGRICULTURE
ICI +	2014	348010	Ongoing		China	Grant	Late payments	01/04/15										
				Technical Commitment for late interest payment PDSF II TA.283-547	China	Implementation	interest	13/02/15	25/03/15	SWECO DANMARK AS	Denmark	China	2.120,46	2.120,46	-			
DC-ASIE	2015	356088	Closed							APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SMRL	France	China	99.937,00	29.981,10	69.955,90	37781	China	Sectors non specified
				PSF - EU Public Lecture Series in China	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/10/15		APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SMRL	France	China	453.478,00	136.043,40	317.434,60	37781	China	Sectors non specified
PI	2015	364333	Ongoing							APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SMRL	France	China	453.478,00	136.043,40	317.434,60	37781	China	Sectors non specified
				PSF EU-China Competition Cooperation	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/05/16		APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SMRL	France	China	274.912,00	82.473,60	192.438,40	37781	China	Sectors non specified
PI	2015	369180	Ongoing							APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SMRL	France	China	274.912,00	82.473,60	192.438,40	37781	China	Sectors non specified
				PSF - Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Biodiversity in China	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/02/16		PLAN INTERNATIONAL L SVENIGE INSMMLINGSSIT FTELSE	France	China	274.912,00	82.473,60	192.438,40	37781	China	Sectors non specified
CSO-LA	2015	367924	Ongoing		China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/16		BEIJING HUAN ZHU LAW FIRM	Consortium	China	1.472.064,89	335.538,00	1.136.526,89	37625	Qinghai and Anhui provinces, China	Democratic participation and civil society
				Legal Capacity Building of Domestic Environmental NGOs	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/16		BEIJING HUAN ZHU LAW FIRM		China	400.000,00	182.302,66	217.697,34	37396	China	Human rights
EIDHR	2015	370402	Ongoing							THE GREAT BRITAIN CHINA CENTRE	United Kingdom	China	398.976,30	216.806,52	182.169,78	37396:3805	China	Human rights
				Promoting Effective Safeguards During Criminal Pre-Trial Detention	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/04/16		THE GREAT BRITAIN CHINA CENTRE	United Kingdom	China	398.976,30	216.806,52	182.169,78	37396:3805	China	Human rights
EIDHR	2015	370405	Ongoing		China	Grant	Action Grants	01/04/16		THE GREAT BRITAIN CHINA CENTRE	United Kingdom	China	398.976,30	216.806,52	182.169,78	37396:3805	China	Human rights
				Final evaluation of EU-China Environmental Governance Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	31/08/15		SAFEGE SA	France	China	71.531,00	71.531,00	-	19804	China, Beijing and other cities	
ACA	2015	363040	Ongoing		China		Services	31/08/15		SAFEGE SA	France	China	71.531,00	71.531,00	-	19804	China, Beijing and other cities	
				EU Gateway to China Lot 1: Stimulating growth and strengthening EU presence in the Chinese market.	China	Implementation	Services	01/03/16		PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS EU SERVICES	Romania	China	1.580.896,67	623.358,67	957.538,00	37781	China	Sectors non specified
PI	2015	370126	Ongoing		China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/03/16		PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS EU SERVICES	Romania	China	1.580.896,67	623.358,67	957.538,00	37781	China	Sectors non specified
				PSF Arts and Society in China and the EU	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	11/01/16		DAI EUROPE LIMITED	United Kingdom	China	64.520,00	19.356,00	45.164,00	37781	China	Sectors non specified
PI	2015	368741	Ongoing		China		Services	11/01/16		DAI EUROPE LIMITED	United Kingdom	China	64.520,00	19.356,00	45.164,00	37781	China	Sectors non specified

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PI	2015	368824	Ongoing	PSF-T ANTICIPATING THE IMPACT OF CHINA'S TRADE POLICIES ON THE EU	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/01/16		IBF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING SA	Belgium	China	427.125,00	128.137,50	298.987,50	37781;38434	China	Sectors non specified
ACA	2015	368399	Ongoing	Up-scaling and mainstreaming sustainable building practices in western China	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/02/16		WUPPERTAL INSTITUT FUR KLIMA, UMWELT, ENERGIE GMBH	Consortium	China	2.185.606,00	581.002,00	1.604.604,00	34703	Chongqing and Province Yunnan, China	Energy conservation and demand-side efficiency
ACA	2015	358965	Ongoing	Financial Audit for the project "Europe-China Clean Energy Centre (EC2)"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/06/15		MOORE STEPHENS LLP	Consortium	China	30.622,00	30.622,00	-	19218	Various locations Europe and China	Education policy and administrative management
ACA	2015	366770	Ongoing	Financial Audit for the Project " Capacity building of Environmental Justice and guarding Environmental rights in Western China"	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	07/12/15		MOORE STEPHENS LLP	United Kingdom	China	39.926,00	-	39.926,00	19804	China -Italy	
PI	2015	364296	Ongoing	PSF EU-China Low Carbon Cities	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	15/09/15		BUSINESS AND STRATEGIES IN EUROPE	Belgium	China	471.971,00	283.182,60	188.788,40	37781	China	Sectors non specified
ACA	2015	369649	Ongoing	Mid-Term Evaluation on EU-China Environmental Sustainability Programme	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	07/01/16		ACCION INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EUROPE SL	Spain	China	48.742,00	48.742,00	-	23093	China, Beijing and other cities	Environmental policy and administrative management
ACA	2015	367974	Ongoing	Mid-Term Evaluation of Supporting the Design and Implementation of Emissions Trading Systems in China(ETS) project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	09/11/15		SAFEGE SA	France	China	55.632,00	33.379,20	22.252,80	23093	Brussels (Belgium), Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Hubel (China)	Public sector policy and administrative management
ACA	2015	364148	Ongoing	Final evaluation CEPA II	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	08/10/15		DAI EUROPE LIMITED	Consortium	China	44.302,00	26.581,20	17.720,80	19646	China	
PI	2015	364038	Ongoing	PSF T - Understanding Chinese Legal	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	01/10/15		APPLICATION EUROPEENNE DE TECHNOLOGIES ET DE SERVICES SARL	France	China	452.956,00	135.886,80	317.069,20	37781	China	Sectors non specified
CSO-LA	2015	367923	Ongoing	Empowering Chinese CSOs for a more inclusive society for people with mental health problems	China	Grant	Action Grants	01/01/16		ASSOCIATION FEDERATION HANDICAP INTERNATIONALE	Consortium	China	1.016.491,44	303.228,00	713.263,44	37625	Yunnan province, China	Democratic participation and civil society
PI	2015	370234	Ongoing	EU Gateway to China Lot 2: Logistical support to the Business Missions	China	Implementation	Services	01/03/16		DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS EUROPE LTD		China	2.072.541,36	-	2.072.541,36	37781	China	Sectors non specified

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Status	Contract title	Delegation in charge	Contract type	Nature	Implementation starting date	Closing Date	Contracting party	Nationality	Geographical zone (LEF)	Planned amount	Paid	Balance	Decision Number	Action location	Sector code
PI	2015	360948	Closed	PSF - Support to the Aptitude test for Chinese translators in Beijing, China	China	Implementation	Services	29/05/15	13/07/15	FARBARIN FIALHO		Miscellaneous Countries	4.910,00	4.910,00	-	37781	China, Beijing	Sectors non specified
ACA	2015	360551	Ongoing	Financial Audit for the project " China-EU Institute of Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE)	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	06/07/15		MOORE STEPHENS LLP INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION	United Kingdom	Miscellaneous Countries	54.200,00	-	54.200,00	20141	Various Locations France, China and other countries in Europe	
PI	2015	352621	Ongoing	EU – China Migration and Mobility Support Project (MMSP)	China	Grant	Action Grants	11/04/15			Switzerland	Miscellaneous Countries	3.000.000,00	1.025.370,30	1.974.629,70	37781	China	Sectors non specified
ACA	2016	373933	Decided	Supporting the Design and Implementation of Emissions Trading Systems in China - Complementary Services Add 002	China	Implementation	Services	20/01/14		ICF CONSULTING LTD	United Kingdom	China	699.500,00	-	699.500,00	23093		Environmental policy and administrative management
EIDHR	2016	370404	Ongoing	Owning the narrative of diversity in public discourse	China	Grant	Action Grants	24/02/16		INTERNEWS EUROPE LBG		China	400.000,00	194.500,85	205.499,15	38058	China	Human rights
EIDHR	2016	370407	Ongoing	Promoting the rights of women: challenging discrimination in family planning and hukou policy	China	Grant	Action Grants	24/02/16		GUANGZHOU PINGJI CENTER YRP		China	379.958,00	138.398,18	241.559,82	38058	China	Human rights
ACA	2016	370654	Ongoing	Mid term Evaluation of EC Link Project	China	Specific contract (framework contract)	Services	07/03/16		PARTICIP GMBH CONSULTANTS FUR ENTWICKLUNG UND UMWELT	Germany	China	57.494,00	34.496,40	22.997,60	23093	China Beijing and other cities	



Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche __ Cattedra International Public Policies

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS ON: THE
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHINA
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

RELATORE

PROF. Arlo Poletti

CANDIDATO

Marco Mura

MATR. 624932

CORRELATORE

PROF. Mario Telò

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This work is aimed to investigate the relations between China and the European Union. More specifically, the research paper's intent is to try to understand to which extent the partnership between the two can be considered "strategic". For this purpose, it has been presented a definition of strategic, which slightly differs from the ones discussed by the scholars. Thus, through analysing different aspects of the relation, this work has eventually concluded that it is still hard to define the EU-China partnership as a strategic one. This is probably due to different factors, which together can still play a significant hurdling role in the construction of a strategic partnership. In order to demonstrate it, this work has firstly presented the history of the EU-China relations, to have a more complete picture of the current political framework. Successively, it has been introduced the academic debate around the EU-China strategic partnership: this clearly elucidates where their reciprocal misperception lays in the very first place. The work has then proceeded with the current situation of the EU-China cooperation, through analysing some data regarding the EU public funds invested in projects in China. Moving from these considerations, it has presented a case study, the OBOR initiative that, accordingly, could help the EU-China relations to develop a strategic partnership.

The late 18th Century was a turning point in Chinese way of intending international relations. China moved from a policy of exclusion of all the "European barbarians" to a more inclusive position of welcoming "all useful Europeans to serve their practical needs". In facts, the Chinese adoption of European practices resulted to be effective once China had found itself in a state of adversity: they really had increased their diplomatic skills acquiring more legitimacy in dealing with Western powers. The Chinese officials also ended up by adopting another important European diplomatic concept, which is the Balance of Power: however, the Chinese acceptance of such doctrine has actually come as urgency. Indeed, it is possible to say that it came as a result of China's defeat by the foreign powers and the race among the great European colonial powers for staking out spheres of influence in China at the end of the century, which put even more pressure on Chinese officials to accept it. These can be seen as efforts aimed at assimilating some of the European believes, and they eventually reached their peak at the Washington Conference in 1922 in which the so-called Nine Power Treaty has been signed. On that occasion, the Chinese officials stated, once again, that the Chinese national priority, in terms of security, would have been the territorial reunification together with the strengthening of the already existent borders.

In modern times, talks and economic agreements started to take place in 1975, when the EC (European Community; now European Union, EU) established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Then, after several years of negotiations, agreements and mutual balancing, the EC formally opened its Delegation office in Beijing in 1988. However, until the end of the Cold War the EU-China relations were a reflex of the Sino-Soviet and especially Sino-US relation. Thus, when the Cold War ended, a new phase of diplomatic ties for the two partners begun, the so-called "transitional period", which started in 1989 and lasted until 1994. There was no diplomatic relation until October 1990, when the European Council, together with the European Parliament, decided to move toward a normalization of the ties. Anyhow, this process was relatively slow: the only real and concrete measure took place in 1992 when bilateral relations were re-established. In sum, the '89-'94 period was a real transitional period.

After that, both Europe and China experienced fundamental domestic developments: in 1994 the economic growth of Asia became a reality that all the Western powers had to deal with. Consequently, the EU issued its very first Asia Strategy in 1994 and successively, in 1995, the first China policy paper was emanated. These two papers have obviously changed the course of EU-China relations, setting in a new trend for the future. Indeed, from then on, the two powers pulled themselves into a new phase, the so-called "development period". Indeed, new talks for political dialogue were scheduled, as well as a framework of annual summits in 1998. As the name suggests, from 1995 to 2002, China and the EU actually developed their relation both in economic and political terms. The trade amount between the two moved from 31.52 to 86.75 billion dollars in 2002. Also, the European Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) towards China overtook Japan's one, 20.9 billion dollars against 17.6. However, this change did not regard only trade. In 1998 and after the second EU policy paper was launched, they intensified their social and political talks.

From then on, they pushed up their relation until the point they started the third period between 2003 and 2005. Many Chinese referred to this period, as a "honeymoon" in the EU-China relations, especially with regards to the two years '03-'04. This optimism was basically due to several events occurred at that time. First of all, the Iraqi invasion of 2003, led by a US-UK coalition. Since it was strongly opposed by both France and Germany, many Chinese thought that was a sign of the long-awaited independence of Europe from the US influence. Secondly, in June 2003, the Solana Report was released. This was the first ever-official European Security Strategy, emanated by the Council of European Union. In that paper, it was stated that the EU looked at

China as one of its “Strategic Partners”. Thirdly, in October 2003 the Chinese government released its own EU Policy Paper for the first time since the birth of the PRC. In that paper, the Chinese official did not refer yet to Europe as a “strategic partner” but, at the same time, they stated they were looking forward to a “full partnership with the EU”, in order to promote “China-EU all-round cooperation and promote a long term and stable development of China-EU relations”. Last but not least, the sixth EU-China summit took place in Beijing in October 2003. In that occasion, both sides reciprocally recognized themselves as “strategic partners”. More concretely, they welcomed and positively look at the Galileo project, a satellite navigation cooperation agreement, which was regarded as “strategic program”. Except for these extraordinary events, it is just worth to mention the fact that on 2004 the EU officially became China’s biggest trading partner and China appeared to be the second European’s one, just behind the USA.

However, the main and the biggest Beijing’s concern were still in force: the European arms embargo and the issue of recognizing China as a full market economy. Consequently, 2005 is referred as the year in which the “honeymoon” ended. In facts, Britain, which used to be perhaps the strongest ally of China among the European States, gave up the attempt to shut down the arms embargo, after the Chinese government passed a controversial anti-secession law. Critics started arguing not only that honeymoon was over, but also that it had been a “honeymoon without a marriage”. From the late 2005 on, both China and the EU started to reconsider their reciprocal positions towards each other and, as a consequence, their bilateral relation. This emerged clearly at the eight EU-China summit hold in Beijing, in September 2005. In that occasion, among other things, it emerged the intention, from both side, to specify and to go much more in detail about the term “strategic partnership” or, at least, that was the intention.

Even so, a noteworthy step forward only occurred in 2007. On that year, during the annual summit, both parts agreed on analysing and discussing about many issues of common interests. As a matter of fact, the joint statement of that year declared that the EU and the PRC agreed on 47 issues. Furthermore, during the summit they also agreed on launching negotiations on a new “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” to encompass the full scope of their bilateral relationship. The negotiations were launched in 2007 and they are still on going today.

In December 2010, during the EU summit in Brussels, the then High Representative for the Common and Foreign and Security Policy (HR), Catherine Ashton, presented a decisive paper, in

which she took a fundamental position, surprisingly, against the EU arms embargo on China. On that occasion, the HR tried to convince the sceptic representatives of the other EU institutions that the EU embargo was the main and last hurdle obstructing a stronger commitment and a further strategic involvement with China. Over the next couple of years, both the EU and China have tried to strengthen their ties, focusing on detailed issue and, once again, trying to go more “specific” into the term of the “strategic partnership”. Examples of these attempts can be found in several areas of international affairs in which both sides have deepened their reciprocal commitment: the cooperation on Iran within the EU3+3 framework, China’s contribution to the UN-mandated anti piracy mission of the EU in Gulf of Aden. In addition, China decided to increase its involvement in the UN peacekeeping missions, such as in Mali, alongside the EU and with other Member States. The key meeting between the European and the Chinese official took place in Beijing in November 2013 as the 16th summit between the two powers. The major achievement on that occasion was the adoption of the so called “EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda”, in which they both set the bases for concrete goals to be achieved within that year.

During 2014, two events occurred which are worth to mention and to be analysed too. In fact, in March the PRC President Xi Jinping fled to Europe for a diplomatic visit to both the Member States and the European institutions. During his journey, President Xi released many interviews and issued different topics. Xi talked about the classical view of China toward Europe with the already famous “win-win economic cooperation” formula. He also addressed the issue of and a possible Investment Partnership Agreement (IPA) and a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between China and the EU, both under negotiations. The second and perhaps most important event that has to be to analysed is the release of the second China’s EU Policy Paper in April 2014, titled “Deepen the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit and Win-Win Cooperation”. The first paper came in a period that, as explained before, was named as “honeymoon” phase in EU-China relations. The 2014 paper arrived in a different context. More than ten years have passed and the relation between the two has become far away more institutionalized and regularized. The differences between the two papers are clear signs of how far the relations and the cooperation between the EU and the PRC have gone and how deeply committed they were to each other. On the contrary, it was also possible to see certain dissatisfaction with some of the developments overs the last decade on the Chinese side.

After having analysed the historical developments of the EU- China relations, this work has tried to elucidate which are the “structural obstacles” that are still preventing the EU and China to develop a strategic partnership. The term “strategic partnership” has been broadly discussed for many years and it will still be in the future. The research and the analysis that will be presented in this work will plainly explain there is no clear definition of such concept nor there is agreement among scholars about what that means. This work has tried to give another definition of strategic partnership, drawing inspiration from what it has been said among scholars. Although all the definitions greatly differ from one to another, it is possible to find at least one common aspect among them. Indeed, it is undeniable that when an actor decides to engage with another in a strategic partnership it can be understood as a profound endeavour to move from a situation of mere co-operation and to improve their relations. In sum, the degree of commitment in a strategic partnership is undeniably superior. The task was then to understand in which sense a given relation has upgraded in order to complete the definition. For this purpose, it has been considered as strategic only those partnerships between actors who decided to upgrade their relations to such a higher degree, and which can *deliver* tangible results on issues that are *fundamental* for both parties.

Thus, through the analysis of the academic debate, this work has found several “structural obstacles” in many fields of the EU-China relations, such as the misperceptions of the reciprocal partner.

Starting from the Chinese perception of Europe, it has been argued that, since the end of the Cold War, there have been three levels of Chinese expectations toward Europe. The first one regards the Global Governance concerns. China is strongly on the side of avoiding any form of unilateralism in the Global Governance and aims to build a multipolar world order in which no State can overtake the others. As a matter of fact, some European States, together with China, have repeatedly argued that they are in favour of an “effective multilateralism”, which entails and looks forward to a stronger involvement of the United Nations in the disputes settlement mechanism. From this perspective, it can be argued that Beijing has tried to tie its relations with Brussels with a view of curbing the US in global affairs. However, it is also worth to notice that this aim is unlikely to be successful: China has underestimated the dimensions and the saliency of transatlantic solidarity, since the long lasting and reciprocal commitment the US and Europe have done among each other.

The second level that is worth to be analysed regards the military power. Many have argued that China still persists in considering Europe from a realist point of view. This idea lays its basis in the multipolar and multilateral decision making mechanism within the European Union which would inevitably affect the EU capacity and effectiveness in the use of force. On the contrary, the European Union has chosen a different way of dealing with power, which strongly differs from the classical realistic view and, as a consequence, from the American's one. Indeed, to quote one of the most advocates of the European integration Jean Monnet, the EU could eventually become a "civilian great power".

A third level which is worth to be analysed is the one regarding the European integration and its raising power. It is unclear in which way the Chinese use to intend this process. On the one hand, many Chinese scholars pointed out that the EU pacific way of leading international affairs could be a mirror of the potential rise of China. On the other hand, the EU integration and rise came together with a series of concepts and beliefs that can hardly match with the Chinese ones. Indeed, the Chinese are generally still sensitive to criticism by the individual states, the NGOs, the media and the national parliaments in Europe, when not the European Parliament in itself.

As far as the European perception of China is concerned, there are two main doctrines. The first one sees China's growing influence in international politics in a positive light. This doctrine basic argument is that China is inextricably interested in stability, partnership and pragmatic international behaviour. On the opposite side there is the doctrine saying that the rise of China will inevitably bring instability to the world order. It is at least necessary to point out that, even if one can admit that China's rise is fundamentally pacific and mostly oriented toward the regime preservation, the economic growth and its domestic prosperity, it is also true that, together with the latest economic expansion, the PRC's is also acquiring a discreet amount of power and political prestige in the international arena. It is particularly difficult to picture a clear European position toward China, due to the several division a throughout the EU. Indeed, hereby Europe is clearly facing a fundamental dilemma. Political developments within MS influence and constrain the way in which the EU and its Members can interact with China. In facts, the division between overlapping institutions competences together with multiple parliamentary constellations and coalitions, the public opinion as well as the special interest groups and lobbies, is still an obstacle to the implementation of a coherent Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) in general:

China's policy is not an exception yet. Other problematic signs can be easily found not only in the perception of "the other", but also in the actual attitudes of the two actors toward each other, especially from the Chinese side. Indeed, the Chinese can occasionally act with has been called a "contradictory behaviour". The EU must be aware of the fact that Beijing has often shown two faces of its own politics. The PRC's first face could eventually blow in abrupt changes in the foreign policy attitudes, probably due to the fact that the system in itself is still compartmentalized and personalized at the very top. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the EU should not take Beijing commitment for a strategic partnership for granted. Instead, the PRC's may probably want to maintain its large freedom of manoeuvring in foreign policy rather than reducing its options due to a new partnership. Further, China keeps looking at the EU more as regional power, instead of considering an equal global actor such as the USA. From the European side, it is also evident that the EU as unit will eventually have to make an important decision as far as China's policy is concerned. In facts, European leaders will have to decide to what extent they want to push China toward the rule of law, the respect of human rights (including the Tibetan issue), the safeguard of intellectual property rights and the climate change: they eventually must choose a trade off between China's demands and the domestic ones.

As far as European domestic factors are concerned, this work has also identified few of them as serious obstacles to a strategic partnership. In facts, within Europe, the gradual collapse of traditional parties, governments from all over Europe had to adapt themselves and move toward more unstable coalitions to obtain the parliamentary majority. Consequently, this had significant repercussion for the leadership, which had to dramatically decrease its room for manoeuvring. Indeed, foreign policies became the result of a series of negotiations and bargaining process. At the same time, the gap that has been left by the traditional cleavages and the old political parties has been fulfilling by several groups coming from the civil society. These are, for example, NGOs, interest and business groups. The growth in these new political players is setting novel pressures on the development of European policy toward China. According to a recent study, conducted on 2007 by the Pew Global Organization, it emerged clearly which is the attitude toward China in Europe. The general European trend is perhaps the one that reaches in the lowest average around the countries taken into account or, at least, the general perception is more unfavourable than favourable.

Generally speaking, the above-mentioned reciprocal misperception is definitely best explained by the debate around the “constructive engagement”. The basic idea beyond this discourse is that Europe has tried, implicitly or explicitly, to impose to the rest of the world a sort of “Normative power Europe”. The idea of coming closer partners with China, by reciprocally adapting their standards and according to their many-times-mentioned mutual and reciprocal benefits, was at the core of the engagement policy promoted by the European Union in the past few years. However, this was repeatedly perceived as an attempt to westernize China and it has caused several friction points and it has also largely contributed to the already existent misperception context. For this reason it has been suggested that the European Union abandon, any intention of transforming China into some Western or European political entity that will never see the light and that can be easily defined as a utopian view.

However, this work has also shown which is the current degree of cooperation between the two sides, by analysing the numerous projects that China and the EU have settled down. These basically constitute the most efficient part of the EU-China relations and it will be argued that, in order to achieve a complete strategic partnership in the future, they should look at the good grounds they have already settled, which could turn into a good starting point. The Appendix A of this very work contains all the joint projects between China and Europe of the last 6 years, which have been financed by EU public funds, mostly in form of grants. These data are big enough to have a complete picture of the current situation. By looking at them, it emerges clearly that the two main areas of interest are Environment and Education, with a slight advantage for the latter. Even so, it is true (if one looks at the Appendix) that the last few years have seen an increasing number of projects in the “Human Rights” and “Democratizations” field. In conclusion, those were useful to show that, despite the main and great differences still in place between China and the EU, and despite the theoretical obstacles hurdling the comprehension of the reciprocal counterpart, there are still some optimistic signs that allow hoping for a growing cooperation in strategic terms. However, these trials have missed what it has been earlier defined as the necessary requirement to call a partnership “strategic” which is to focus on core goals of both parties in order to deliver substantial results on those fields.

Therefore, the One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) has been presented as a possible springboard for the long waited strategic partnership between China and the EU. The initiative is, first of all, a transport network in the Eurasian area. It will consist of railways, highways, air and

seaways, oil and gas pipelines, transmission lines and also communications networks. The first attempt is mainly to connect the Asia-Pacific area, which is without a doubt the world's economic engine, to the largest economy in the world, the European Union. As it has been briefly mentioned earlier, this initiative is not only a potentially very effective economic goal, but it also signs a turning point in the way of implanting the Chinese foreign policy, in terms of opening up to the rest of the world: China wants to start to apply the mentality of "going out" instead of the usual "bringing in". The very idea of the One Belt One Road has at its own basis the principle of openness and tolerance toward partners' interests and claims. Even so, there is obviously an economic return but the possibility of creating a new Eurasian market is not only appealing from an economic point of view, but is also linked with historical reasons, in the sense that it could be a chance to revive the Eurasian culture. Indeed, if one has to briefly summarize how China and Europe had lost touch during the time, it could be argued that it was after the decline of the Silk Road. Today, the One Belt One Road initiative is offering a unique and perhaps historic opportunity to regain its primary role in the centre of the world.

The EU could also see an improvement in its process of integration. In fact, the OBOR initiative will allow the Europeans not only to reconnect with the peripheral countries that are already in the EU, such as Greece and Hungary, but also to gain influence in the Balkans area. In terms of global governance, the EU could assume a pivotal role in what has been defined as the Asia-Pacific development, enhancing cooperation, trade and political partnerships and, last but not least, the EU would finally gain the long waited influence in the Asian-Pacific region. Thus, The idea is to build a bridge between China and the EU, which, together with the on going negotiation on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), could hopefully facilitate trade, and investment policy dialogues.

In conclusion, given their history, their reciprocal and repeated misperception, witnessed by the academic debate together with some practical unsolved issues, the EU-China relation still cannot be defined as strategic. As it has been briefly exposed above, their partnership does not satisfy certain fundamental criteria to be defined as strategic: indeed, it does not *deliver* results on *core goals* of the two actors. More concretely, this work has found out there exist some "structural obstacles", namely the reciprocal misperception of the other and some of the already mentioned unsolved issues (EU arms embargo to China, the EU decision not to recognize MES to China together with the human rights Chinese position, intellectual property rights protection

and so on and so forth) that do not allow to speak about a strategic partnership in the EU-China case. Even so, this work has also tried to report encouraging signs for a potential strategic partnership in the near future. In fact, it has been demonstrated that when China and the EU go beyond their traditional positions, they are able to set up a strong cooperation. The future will mostly depend on the capacity of both actors to seize the opportunity presented by the OBOR initiative, which although it is a long-term plan, it might be the only one occasion the EU and China have left to finally start a real strategic partnership.