Basic information

1998/2067(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership **Subject** 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries **Geographical area** China	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	BERNARD-REYMOND Pierre (PPE)	22/04/1998

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
RELA External Economic Relations	SEPPÄNEN Esko (GUE/NGL)	20/05/1998
LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	DUPUIS Olivier (ARE)	30/06/1998

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2111	1998-06-29

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
25/03/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0181	Summary
29/04/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/06/1998	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
01/12/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
01/12/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0479/1998	
27/01/1999	Debate in Parliament		
09/02/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		

28/05/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2067(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/09948

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0479/1998 OJ C 098 09.04.1999, p. 0006	01/12/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0072/1999 OJ C 150 28.05.1999, p. 0016-0044	09/02/1999	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1998)0181	25/03/1998	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0552	08/09/2000	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0265	15/05/2001	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2003)0533	10/09/2003	Summary

EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 25/03/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: outlining a new partnership policy between China and the European Union. SUBSTANCE: In July 1995, the Commission adopted a communication of great importance on future relations between China and the European Union (COM(95) 279-COS0282). In view of recent political and economic developments in the country (the ambitious programme of economic reform underway since 1997, more responsible international commitment of China towards Cambodia and Korea and the peaceful handover of Hong Kong etc.), the Commission takes the view that policy regarding this country must be reviewed and strengthened. It accordingly proposes a new strategy based on a long-term vision of Cino-European relations seeking to achieve the five following objectives: (1) engage China further, through an upgraded political dialogue, in the international community: in particular by proposing annual high level summit meetings between the EU and China to encourage the participation of China in the ASEM process to make the G7 more aware of issues affecting China to involve China more closely in international arms control, cooperation in combatting drugs, matters of regional security, strengthening the autonomy of Hong Kong and preparing for a peaceful handover to China of Macao;

(2) supporting China's transition to an open society based on the rule of law and the respect for human rights: China should be persuaded to sign, ratify and implement United Nations' Agreements on human rights and the ILO Agreements, to strengthen bilateral dialogue on human rights and to complement it with a programme of specific cooperation programmes, promote the rule of law and strengthen civil society; (3) integrating China further in the world economy: further impetus should be given to WTO accession negotiations allowing China to benefit from transition periods, improve strategies to gain access to the European market, pursue gradual and reciprocal removal of EU and Chinese quantitative restrictions, develop comprehensive EU investment programme, conclude bilateral agreements in specific sectors, adopt new anti-dumping regulation and promote the use of the euro as an international currency; regarding social issues, it is necessary to develop cooperation in the use of human resources and concentrate on environmental and sustainable development issues. It is also necessary to reduce regional disparities and strengthen cohesion; (4) making Europe's funding go further: in particular, facilitating rapid funding of small projects developed by China and increasing synergy with the European Union, investigating a means of expanding EIB activities and improving the implementation of cooperation projects; (5) raising the profile of the European Union in China: by setting up a Commission Press and Information Service in Beijing, increase the number of Chinese visitors to Europe, increase the intensity of cultural exchange, increasing the presence of the EU at conferences devoted to Chinese affairs and expanding cooperation between China and Europe at university level.

EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 15/05/2001

PURPOSE: an evaluation of current EU -China relations combined with proposals for strengthening existing ties. CONTENT: this Commission Communication is based on the 1998 Communication "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China". Whilst the later document focused on long term options, this Communication focuses specifically on short to medium term objectives. In its Communication the European Commission assesses the current political and economic landscape in China with a view to proposing a number of Action Points aimed at furthering the interests of the EU in China. The key suggestions proposed by the Commission in this report are: - Engaging China in the international community. Specific measures would include better integration of agreed scheduling talks at all levels combined with codifying the framework for EU-China political dialogue. - Supporting China's transition to an open society. Measures proposed include, inter alia, developing human rights-related assistance programmes in support of the rule of law. - Integrating China further in the world economy. With China's accession to the WTO imminent the European Commission sees continuing EU-China co-operation on issues related to the WTO as vital. Action Lines proposed by the Commission encompass the finalisation of China's WTO accession; close monitoring of the correct implementation of China's WTO commitments and implementing EU assistance programmes to make WTO accession a success. Further measures deemed appropriate for the integration of China into the world economy are the strengthening of EU-China business to business dialogue and the reinforcement of efforts to deal with bilateral trade disputes. - Making better use of EU co-operation programmes. Proposals here contain the development of a Country Strategy paper; the promotion of sustainable development; the encouragement of good governance initiatives; the promotion of the rule of law; support for economic and social reform; the fight against poverty and the promotion of equal rights between men and women. - Raising the EU's profile in China. With only a limited budget and with the world's largest population as its target audience, formenting closer relations with China is clearly going to be a daunting task. Nevertheless, the Commission Communication proposes specific measures in which to enhance the EU's profile in China. These include, raising the EU's profile through information packages targeted at the media, opinion formers, schools and colleges. Other methods suggested are user-friendly, regularly updated websites and the creation of an established alumni association of those involved in EU co-operation programmes.

EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 09/02/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The resolution of Pierre Bernard-Reymond (PPE, F) on the Communication from the Commission - building a Comprehensive Partnership with China was approved by the European Parliament. The report expresses the Parliament's continuing profound concern about recent human rights violations and condemns the drastic treatment of a large number of political prisoners. The Parliament proclaims itself to be disturbed by China's current system of administrative detention and urges China to implement measures to guarantee the right to a fair trial open to international observers and to improve prisoners' conditions in custody. It asks for a human rights clause to be included when the 1985 trade and cooperation agreement with China is renewed and wishes to see the proposed comprehensive partnership with China based on the following principles: - respect for human rights; - the rule of law, based on legislation conforming to internationally recognised standards; - freedom of expression; - a pluralist society with multiple political parties; - respect for the rights of free trade unions and recognition of the importance of social dialogue; - abolition of the death penalty. The Parliament further supports a constructive dialogue aimed at: - helping China to accomplish a carefully prepared and considered transition to a market economy; - enabling China better to integrate itself into the international economy; - convincing China that freedom and democracy are the only means of ensuring individual fulfilment and human progress in the future. Within the framework of legal and judicial cooperation programmes, the report wishes to see the European Union and Member States foster the democratic rule of law and justice in China and coordinate closely their political and economic policies on China and asks that the relevant parliamentary committees be kept informed of such EU initiatives. It proposes that the EU should also encourage democratic development and respect for human rights in the field of trade policy, using the GSP scheme and environmental and social incentives. Referring to China's signature of the United Nations conventions on economic, social and cultural rights and on civil and political rights, the report calls for the immediate application of their standards and their prompt ratification. China is called upon directly to end repressive action against the victims of the Tienanmen massacre, take measures to allow the country rapidly to join the WTO, adhere to ILO rules, take environmental protection more fully into account when drawing up development projects, complete its promised reform of the taxation and legal systems and increase its efforts to sharply reduce regional disparities. Furthermore, China is asked to use its influence on North Korea in a constructive way, sign and ratify the Ottawa Treaty banning Anti-Personnel Mines, sign the Statute of the International Criminal Court, undertake negotiations with the Tibetan people on the basis of recognition of their administrative, cultural and religious autonomy, apply the principle of "one country, several cultures" to its territory and relax tensions with Taiwan. Member States are called upon to increase their consular representationto China, together with the Council to comply scrupulously with the embargo on trade with China in weapons and military supplies and with the Commission to introduce or strengthen cooperation on environmental protection and support for SMEs. Further action is called for to combat drug trafficking, money laundering, organised crime, international terrorism and illegal immigration while ensuring full compliance of such policies with the rule of law and democracy. The report finally calls

for the dropping of all support to totalitarian regimes, welcomes the circumstances of Hong Kong's retrocession to China but wishes to be sure that democratic values are developed and safeguarded in the Special Administrative Region and similarly hopes that the joining of Macao to China will comply with all points of the Agreement of 13/4/87.

EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 08/09/2000

PURPOSE : to present a Commission Report on how it has implemented the aims of its Communication "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China." CONTENT : the main aims of the 1998 Communication were to engage China further in the international community, to support China's transition to an open society and to integrate China further into the global economy. Since the Communication was adopted, the EU-China relationship has greatly intensified. The first annual EU-China summits in 1998 and 1999 laid the groundwork for a more broadly based political dialogue. At the same time an increasing succession of meetings and dialogues at all levels, and in numerous areas of concern both to the EU and to China, improved communication and promoted mutual understanding. The agenda dialogue has been expanded to include regional security, economic and trade issues and human rights. This could be broadened further to include other global issues such as illegal immigration and eventually drug-trafficking, money laundering and organised crime. Some of these issues could be included in the next EU-China Summit to take place on 23 October 2000. The negotiation of an agreement on China's accession to the WTO has been at the top of the EU's trade agenda for the past two years. The bilateral Sino-EU Agreement on 19 May 2000 marks a major step forward in our trade relations. China will join the WTO in 2001. The Agreement will secure vastly improved access for EU firms to the Chinese market, and greatly enhances the climate for European companies to do business with China. The EU and China can look forward to a reverse of the recently declining levels of Foreign Direct Investment in China. The Commission will continue to develop new channels of communication with the Chinese authorities, to monitor the implementation of China's WTO commitments, and to identify instances where China faces difficulties in adhering to these obligations. The EU can help China overcome any problems through targeted, technical assistance and the strengthening of regulatory dialogues in key areas. Remaining market access barriers will continue to be addressed. The EU remains committed to supporting the overall reform process in China through its Co-operation Programme. The Commission will need to define further those areas that can benefit most from EU co-operation. The priorities will include socio-economic reform, human resources development, education, the environment, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. Efforts will concentrate on sustainable development projects in the agreed priority areas, but the EU will continue to be flexible. The Commission will continue to bear in mind, when formulating new co-operation projects, that 11.5% of China's population still live in absolute poverty with an income of less than USD 1.00 per day.

EC/China relations: building a comprehensive partnership

1998/2067(COS) - 10/09/2003

PURPOSE : to present a new strategy for a maturing partnership with China. CONTENT : this policy paper adopted by the Commission sets out a framework that is intended to guide EU policy and action towards China over the next two to three years. The paper identifies six priorities for relations in the coming years, including sharing responsibilities in promoting global governance, supporting China's transition to an open society based upon the rule of law and the respect for human rights and promoting China's economic opening domestically and externally. The paper also contains a number of concrete proposals with a view to enhancing EU-China relations in key areas, including economic and trade relations and China's internal reform process. Finally, the paper intends to promote, the ongoing reflection in China about future policy towards the EU, which is to find expression in a policy paper later this year, the first ever of its kind in China's foreign relations. The appearance of this paper is evidence of the new importance China gives to the relationship. The Policy Paper contains a number of concrete proposals: - in the field of global governance, the paper suggests ways to raise the efficiency of the political dialogue. It also recommends to better address global and regional governance and security issues, such as non-proliferation and arms control, international crime or illegal migration, where the EU has a clear interest in a readmission agreement, and to enhance co-operation to promote the multilateral system and rules for global governance - human rights : at the same time, the paper stresses the need to increase the efficiency of the human rights dialogue, which is an essential component of the political dialogue, and to enhance its visibility and transparency. A special emphasis is put on the larger role that should be given to China's developing civil society in protecting and supporting individuals and communities disadvantaged by the ongoing economic and social changes; - promoting the economic opening of China : the paper underlines the need to strengthen the dialogue with the Chinese administration on the implementation of China's WTO Commitments and to work together to ensure success of the Doha Development Agenda, particularly on rules-related issues such as investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement. It also calls for a reinforcement of the dialogue on bilateral trade and investment issues and of the trade-related co-operation programmes; - strenthening cooperation : in order to assist China in its internal reform process, it is suggested that the existing dialogues (on environment, energy, science and technology, information society, etc.) be reinforced and that new dialogues be launched, e.g. in the fields of industrial policy, competition policy, education or human resources development; - raising the EU's profile in China : the paper envisages multiplying contacts, disseminating information and publications through internet and audio-visual media, organising public events like road shows or round tables, promoting people to people contacts (with special emphasis on the conclusion of an agreement on Authorised Destination Status (ADS) in the field of tourism),while ensuring full co-ordination with Member States. The Policy Paper will be transmitted to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament for follow up. The EU's co-operation programme, which supports activities in many of the above areas will follow the aims set out in the Country Strategy Paper approved in 2002, although the National Indicative Programme (NIP) is to be adjusted this year to take account of some operational changes. Outside of the NIP itself, China will continue to be a major beneficiary of the EU's regional co-operation and research programmes, where new initiatives, for example in the fight against SARS, will begin shortly.