

ReConnect China Dialog: Bridging Gaps, Charting Futures with Europe

Date: 24th-26th of October, 2024

Place: University of Tartu Museum, Lossi 25, Tartu, Estonia

Description:

“ReConnect China Dialog: Bridging Gaps, Charting Futures with Europe” assembles a multidimensional perspective of the dynamic relationship between Europe and China. It will cover four themes: science and technology, trade and economy, China’s domestic governance, and China’s foreign policy. In the realm of science and technology, we will explore the interplay of EU research collaborations, dive into the vibrant startup ecosystems that foster tech entrepreneurship, and spotlight the bridges being built in S&T cooperation. The economic spectrum will cover sustainable trade practices, technological innovation, and the challenges of bilateral economic ties. Delving into China’s domestic policy, discussions will elucidate the EU-China relationship’s challenges, economic performance legitimization, and the intricacies of media and information. On the global front, the conference will dissect China’s climate change stance, power dynamics in international relations, and its evolving narrative in global aid.

In a snapshot:

- **Panel topics:** international relations, China’s domestic policy, science and technology, trade and economy.
- **Structure of the program:** 3 days, parallel panels, and plenary panels; each panel has 1 moderator and 3 panel discussants; schedule is local Estonian time.
- **Key-note speakers, moderators, and participants:** high-level scientists, policymakers, and economists; 150 participants (invitations- only);
- **Costs:** no conference fees. However, travel and hotel expenses for participants are not covered. Travel and hotel expenses for moderators, keynotes, and panellists will be covered.

October 24th, Day 1

9.00	ReConnect project consortium meeting (for ReConnect China project members only)
14.00	Tartu city tour for speakers and registered participants (who arrived earlier)
15.00	Conference registration and welcome coffee
17.00	Opening words
17.30	Introductory plenary discussion “EU’s de-risking approach towards China” <i>Description: The panel provides a general introduction to the conference and ReConnect China project and addresses the question of the current status of connections (economic, political and scientific) between the EU and China.</i>
18.30	Welcome words and networking reception
20.00	Night owl session “Looking into the future: How to ReConnect China while de-risking?” <i>Description: This panel focuses on the major dimensions of reconnection — science, economy, and foreign relations — and inspects the ways of reconnection or connection in each dimension.</i>

October 25th, Day 2

8.30	Welcome coffee
9.00	Plenary discussion China’s Foreign Policy “China as a partner? Climate Change as a Field of Collaboration and Competition between EU and China” <i>Description: the panel discussion delves into the dynamics of climate change as a field of competition and collaboration between the European Union and China. Our expert panellists will explore the complexities of this global challenge and the opportunities for cooperation that may shape the future of sustainable development.</i>
10.30	Coffee break
11.00	3 Parallel Panel Discussions: 1. Panel discussion China’s Science and Technology “China’s influence on EU research collaborations and academic freedom” <i>Description: the panel explores the evolving landscape of scientific cooperation, technology transfers, and academic freedom in the context of EU-China relations.</i> 2. Panel discussion for Early-Career Researchers “How to ReConnect China while De-Risking” <i>Description: This panel discussion aims to give early-career researchers a platform to share their insights on how the EU should re-engage with China, as well as to explore the barriers, challenges, and prospects shaping the EU's policy approach toward China in the areas of science and technology, economy and trade, domestic governance, and foreign policy.</i> 3. Panel discussion China’s Domestic Policy “Media, Propaganda, and Disinformation” <i>Description: the panel discussion delves into the complex landscape of asymmetry of information, including its reliability and disinformation. It will explore the pressing issues of how the EU navigates its relationship with China in light of these data limitations, examining strategies for informed decision-making, fostering transparency, and addressing the evolving information environment in the context of China-EU relations.</i>
12.30	Lunch
14.00	3 Parallel Panel Discussions: 1. Panel discussion China’s Science and Technology “ReConnecting Dual-Use Technologies in Trade and National Security” <i>Description: the panel combines real cases from business and scientific knowledge on how to combine technological and political issues on the topic of duality of the technology application between EU and China companies.</i>

	<p>2. Panel discussion China’s Trade and Economy “<i>Sustainable and Economic Considerations in EU-China Relations</i>”</p> <p><i>Description: The panel explores the role of environmental regulations, carbon neutrality commitments, and the potential for economic growth. The aim would be to uncover ways in which economic development can align with ecological and social goals.</i></p> <p>3. Panel discussion China’s Domestic Policy “<i>Perception and Reality: Understanding the EU Through the Lens of Chinese Propaganda</i>”</p> <p><i>Description: The panel discussion explores the ways in which the EU and other political entities are portrayed within the Chinese propaganda system. It aims to unravel the narratives, strategies, and motives behind these narratives.</i></p>
15.30	Coffee break
16.00	<p>Plenary discussion China’s Foreign Policy “<i>China as Systemic Rival: Great Power Competition in China's Global Relations</i>”</p> <p><i>Description: This panel discussion focus on China’s foreign policy promoting a multipolar world and seeking to shift away from American dominance. The panelists shed some light on how such strategy is received in such regions as the Global South, EU, and notably its implication for Taiwan.</i></p>
18.30	Conference dinner and cultural program

October 26th, Day 3

8.30	Welcome coffee
9.00	3 Parallel Panel Discussions: 1. Panel discussion China’s Science and Technology “ <i>De-risking Artificial Intelligence: Convergences and Divergences between the EU and China on Regulating AI</i> ” <i>Description: The panel will focus on how risks and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are understood and arbitrated in the EU and China, with a view to better understanding sources of friction, but also areas of policy overlap and whether enhancing cooperation is possible.</i> 2. Panel discussion China’s Trade and Economy “ <i>Navigating the Trade Imbalance: EU-China Relations While De-Risking</i> ” <i>Description: This panel explores the ongoing trade imbalance between the EU and China as the EU pursues de-risking strategies to reduce economic dependency. Panellists will discuss the challenges of balancing trade relations while safeguarding geoeconomic interests.</i> 3. Panel discussion China’s Foreign Policy “ <i>Unravelling Narratives: China's Approach to Aid in the Global South</i> ” <i>Description: This panel delves into the multifaceted narratives that surround China's foreign aid endeavours in the Global South. Our panellists will analyse the contrasting stories, from infrastructure development to humanitarian assistance, and provide insights into how these narratives impact international perceptions of China's global role.</i>
10.30	Coffee break
11.00	Concluding plenary discussion “ <i>EU’s De-Risking Approach Towards China: What’s Next?</i> ” <i>Description: This panel will explore the future landscape of the EU’s de-risking approach towards China, focusing on the key dimensions of economy and trade, foreign policy, and science and technology. Panelists will discuss potential scenarios for reconnecting with China while navigating the associated risks.</i>
12.30	Concluding remarks
13.00	Farewell lunch
14.15	ReConnect China General Assembly (for ReConnect China project members only)