

China - European Union (EU) Cooperation Summit at the Height of the Ukraine War. Towards a Greater Eurasia

By [Peter Koenig](#)

Global Research, April 01, 2022

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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*The European Union (EU) and China are planning to hold a virtual summit on 1 April 2022, in an attempt to diffuse growing tensions between the two. This was the assessment given to the media by European Commission Vice-President and EU trade chief **Valdis Dombrovskis**.*

*The meeting will be attended by both, Chinese **President Xi Jinping** and **Premier Li Keqiang** and European Union representatives **Charles Michel** and **Ursula von der Leyen**, presidents of the European Council and European Commission, respectively, as reported by Politico.*

The summit comes at the height of the Ukraine-Russian war, that was largely provoked – though not justified – by the west, led by the United States and NATO. The Russian invasion of Ukraine was immediately followed with a barrage of western sanctions against Russia – sanctions which, when properly analyzed, hurt the west, mainly Europe, much more than they hurt Russia.

On 3 March 2022, in a historic Emergency UN General Assembly vote, 141 nations of the 193 UN member countries, reprimanded Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, demanding withdrawal of forces.

China, India and South Africa were among the 35 countries that abstained, while just five – Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, Belarus and of course Russia – voted against it.

China’s abstention, a close ally of Russia, is not only an anti-war vote, but it was also a for-peace signal to the world. Likewise, China has excellent relations with Ukraine. Since 2008, the two countries have built strong trade ties. China has become Ukraine’s largest trading partner, with a trade turnover in 2020 of 15.4 billion US dollar equivalent.

China would be well-poised to play a mediating role in the conflict, precisely what China's Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Wang Yi**, had suggested to Ukraine and Russia, presuming that the EU has an intrinsic interest in Peace in Europe.

Given the halting peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, currently ongoing in Istanbul, Turkey, the upcoming EU-China summit would be an excellent opportunity for Europe to bring fresh wind into the negotiations, by inviting China as mediator. Considering Russia's and Ukraine's friendly relations with China, such a move may bring positive results.

In addition to renewing and easing their currently tense relations with China, the EU might, for example, entering into trade talks with China, that may lead to new trade agreements.

Such treaties might be particularly welcome for Europe, as the current war and the preceding covid pandemic have caused interrupted supply chains, food shortages - potential famine even in Europe. China could be an excellent partner to repair supply chains and fulfill food and other essential requirements - technological goods - while western countries suffer themselves under the weight of their sanctions imposed on Russia and to some extent also on China.

The summit might be an opportunity to rethinking "sanctions" as sanctions have never resolved any political differences. To the contrary. They increase the level of hostilities. Not only are they unethical, but they are also in the purest sense of the word, illegal. Under international law, economic "sanctions", punishment by forestalling economic progress of a sovereign nation by external financial, trading and economic pressure, is illegal.

Lifting of "sanctions" would be by themselves a move towards peace and peaceful relations between Europe and China.

The upcoming summit is also an opportunity for Europe to look eastwards - to renew a history-old geopolitical and trade relation with Eurasia, and especially with China and beyond. **The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**, created in 2001 and headed by China, is a strategic block of some nine countries, including China, Russia, India, Pakistan and Iran, as well as another nine observer and dialogue partners.



The SCO comprises close to 50% of the world population and more than 30% of the globe's GDP - a potentially highly attractive partnership for the EU. It would allow Europe to regain her hundreds of year-old autonomy.

Europe may become free again to trade with east and west, according to comparative advantages. Since economic relationships forge political relations – comparative-advantage trading means win-win trading – leading to peaceful cohabitation.

In general, Eurasia is a logical market for Europe, a contiguous landmass of 55 million km², comprising some 70% of the world's population and accounting for about two thirds of the world's GDP. Historically, Europe has been an integral part of Eurasia. A vivid example is the 2,100-year-old original Silk Road, a trading route, of which Europe was an essential link.

Finally, Europe may be interested in joining the New Silk Road, **President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative** which was launched in 2013.

BRI is a transcontinental long-term policy and investment program which aims at infrastructure development and accelerating the economic integration of countries, while preserving each country's sovereignty. The Belt and Road is patterned along the principles of the historic Silk Road.

More generally, the BRI aims at promoting the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, and eventually reaching to the Americas. It strives to establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries.

A few EU countries, like Greece, Italy, France and Germany, have already links to BRI. A large-scale connection with BRI would offer Europe another series of unique opportunities for trade, as well as cooperation in the fields of technology and research – a true potential economic relief in times of shortages due to supply chain interruptions.

The April 1, 2022 summit will offer Europe and China a myriad of opportunities to reconnecting in a friendly and mutually fruitful, new win-win relation.

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*This paper was first published by the "Chongyang Institute" in **China's Global Times** in Chinese on 31 March 2022.*

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