



Europe and China in World Affairs: Turning Constraints into Opportunities Through Space

**Symposium “Looking to the Future: Changing International Relations
and Legal Issues Facing Space Activities”
11 June 2016, Vienna**

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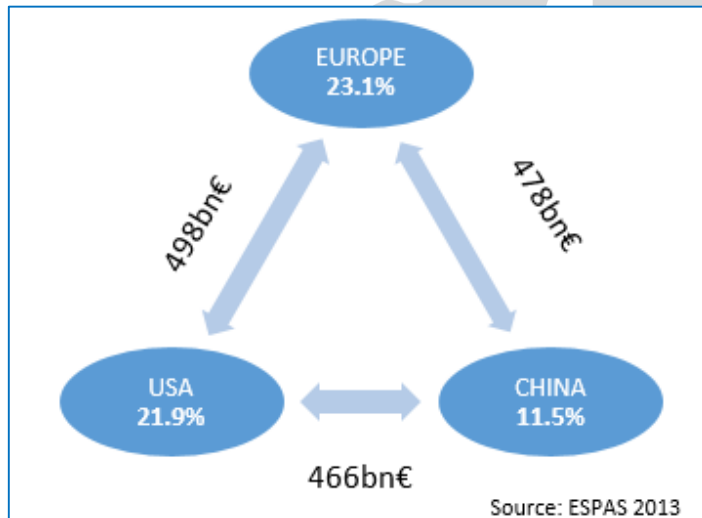
What's the World Affairs' Equation?

Key features of the International System:

- Weakening of the unipolar configuration and resurgence of China
- Future order based on the strategic interaction between US-China > Towards a G2 world?
- Changes in the very nature of power and key role by other “poles”

And Europe?

- An “unfinished project suspended between a past it has not yet overcome and a future it has not yet defined” ...but
- *Intellectual* and *material* resources to become a prominent variable in the World Affairs' Equation



An Economic G-3: GDP Shares and Trade Flows

- Europe – US – China as major geo-economic hubs in the world
- Highly strategic interaction between the US and Europe, and between the US and China
- Low profile of Europe-China relations

Europe China Relations: Where Are We?

Constructive Engagement (1991-2002)

- Lack of structural impediments and shared interests
- Mutual opportunity to reap benefits from cooperation

A Very Serious Engagement (2003-2007)

- Launch of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
- Dissatisfaction with US and power-balancing considerations
- Galileo Experiment and Lift of Arms Embargo

Engagement over? (2008-2010)

- Galileo and Arms Embargo debacles highlight boundaries of EU-China axis
- Emergence of economic and diplomatic irritants
- China's and Europe's foreign policy re-orientation

No, towards a Maturing Relation (2010- present)

- Differences and Disputes Persist (see: MES)...
- But converging geo-economic and -political interests
 - On China's side: growth still reliant of Europe's affluence and cooperation with Europe as counter-balance to Russia and the US
 - On Europe's side: prevent the formation of a stronger Sino-Russian bloc and avoid geopolitical marginalisation resulting from a G2
- Need to elevate the partnership through sound cooperation

A key role for Space?

Europe and China in Space: Turning Constraints into Opportunities

Europe-China Space Relations as reflection of the earthly ones.

The path towards closer cooperation with China in both the political and space arena seems clear

- Ties deepening at ESA, EU and National level with functional moves
- Evolution of the International landscape pushes Europe to rethink cooperation approaches

Potential for Cooperation:

- Alongside relevant strongholds, cooperation potential bedevilled by numerous weaknesses
- Invaluable opportunities offset by inherent risks at both space and political level

Europe currently left with the “dilemma of either not expanding cooperation with China, a restriction that it wants to avoid, or of risking the wrath of the USA, which it neither wants, nor most probably can afford, to do”.

How to overcome? By [Bridge Building](#)

- Leveraging longstanding partnership with Washington and maturing relations with Beijing
- To act as match-maker between isolated players and trailblazer for a multilateral space endeavour
- Securing active involvement without dilemma of choosing between mutually exclusive partnership

Bridge-Building: The Way Forward?

Is There a Basis for such Effort?

- Goal consistent with the policy orientations at European level
- US overtures vis-à-vis China (NASA, OSTP, ...)
- China's interest in cooperating with the US.

The crafting of a multilateral endeavour might, however, prove difficult and putting forward this strategy would be slow. Many Political and Operational issues to be solved:

- Paradigm shift vis-à-vis China (symbolic participation in the ISS programme?)
- Creation of a fully-fledged cooperation mechanism. What model should be adopted?

Benefits would, however, exceed burdens:

- Being a bridge-builder would enhance Europe's profile in the space arena, avoid duplication of efforts and provide a stepping-stone for future human Mars exploration
- Politically, it would project European geopolitical skills and European values, and undermine negative rifts and confrontational stances in international relations

The crafting of a *real and enduring* multilateral partnership in Space as a catalyst for broader cooperation on Earth.

Thank you for your attention!

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