



On August 7, 2017, Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini on the sideline of the series of foreign ministers' meetings on East Asia cooperation in Manila, the Philippines.

The New Era Sees China-EU Interests Align

Former EU Asia Director James Moran believes the common intention of China and the EU to develop their economies is bringing about increased bilateral interests' alignment and closer cooperation. He thinks the China-proposed "building a community with a shared future for mankind" will help unite the whole world to address issues of common concern.

By staff reporter ZHANG HUI

It is my first time to be back in Beijing in seven years. The country has really moved on. If you blink, if you stay away for a month or two, you'll miss so much," senior research fellow of the Belgium-based EU-Asia Center James Moran told *China Today* on November 16 at an international think-tank symposium themed "The 19th CPC National Congress: Implications for China and the World." Before heading to the Middle East to assume his role as Ambassador of the European Union Delegation in the Arab Republic of Egypt in 2012, Moran was EU's Asia Director from 2006 to 2010, and headed the EU's China Division in Brussels before that. The tourism agreements between China and the EU owe a lot to Moran's efforts. "I was very proud of that. Now we have millions of Chinese tourists in EU countries every year," Moran said.

Increasing Alignment of Interests

As an old friend of China, Moran said, "I was very

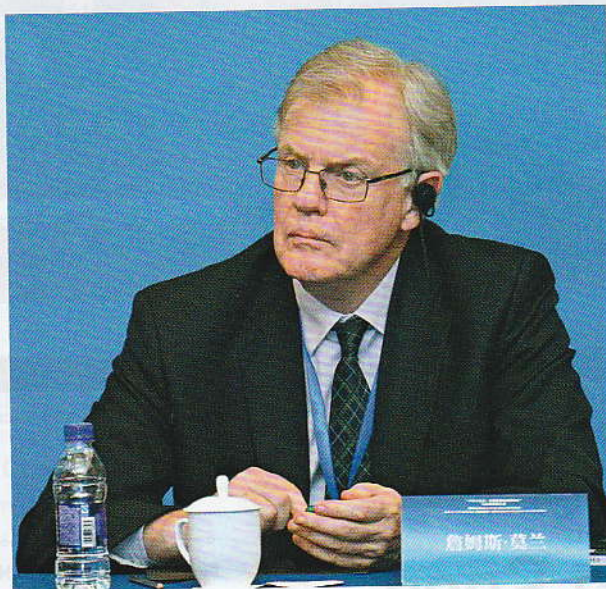
proud of China for the last 20 years, not just economically, but for many other things as well. For Europe and even the whole world, China is no longer a mystery. That's very important. It is not just about business, profit, and trade, which are extremely important of course, but in terms of the way two peoples see each other, and the two cultures relate to each other. It's really progressed."

Over the last two decades, China and the EU have seen increasing bilateral cooperation. "We're cooperating in a variety of fields, for example, climate change and free trade. We both fight against protectionism. We are finding that more and more of our interests are aligned. Of course we have disagreements on some issues. What's most remarkable is that our interests seem to align over time, especially these days," Moran told *China Today*.

China and the EU are both adamant vindicators of the Paris Agreement. Moran regarded the bilateral cooperation on climate convention as exemplary. "The EU and China work very close together to achieve the same objective. That's extremely important. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized green development in his report delivered to the 19th CPC National Congress. At the symposium, everybody has commented that we have to do better at looking after our planet. Both the European and Chinese approaches are very closely aligned. That's very good," Moran told *China Today*.

Since the global financial crisis started in 2008, trade protectionism forces have been rising with the anti-globalization voice growing louder internationally. "The multilateral trading system has come under a lot of pressure recently, but the commitment by Xi and other leaders has allowed the country to move forward with developing the system which benefits the UN, China, and Europe as well," Moran told *China*

Moran applauded the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind.



James Moran attends the International Think-tank Symposium themed "The 19th CPC National Congress: Implications for China and the World" on November 16, 2017.

Today. He said in Europe, people are very clear about the need to protect and develop the multilateral trading system.

Moran in particular highlighted China-EU cooperation on international security issues. As an EU official, Moran once worked in Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, and Libya, so he knows the Middle East area quite well. The European Union's Operation Atalanta (also called Naval Force Somalia) has been patrolling against piracy, criminal activity, and terrorism on the high sea of the region. "It is close to a major trade route of yours, China, and also a major trade route for us, Europe. We work together, the Chinese navy, and the European Union Operation Atalanta very closely, trying to keep the sea open and free," Moran told *China Today*.

Moran said China-EU cooperation and their similar stance on many international issues wasn't seen ten years ago. In his view, the EU and China are seeing more and more alignment of interests.

Same Objective

Moran attributed the increasing bilateral interests' alignment and close cooperation to their common intention to develop their economies. "China needs a new momentum, a new invigoration of its own economy. After dealing with the difficulties of the financial crisis, the EU needs to find new breakthroughs. Both sides depend on the alignment of interests of the economy, including sustainable development, the environment, and the climate change issue, among others. We think the same way in many areas, even if we don't necessarily see eye to eye when it comes to how we organize ourselves," Moran told *China Today*.

In 2013, China and the EU started bilateral investment treaty (BIT) negotiations. Moran is quite confi-

dent about the two sides reaching a BIT agreement. "In Europe, and China too, many people think we will complete that negotiation sooner rather than later. And we should, because we benefit each other. The EU countries' investment in China is huge, with an accumulated value of €168 billion at the end of 2015. However, that's just 50 percent of their investment done in the U.S. Chinese investment in Europe has started but is still very low; only around €35 billion by the end of 2015. There is huge potential for both sides to invest more in each other, which is very exciting. Many of us just hope to see progress. This is never easy, but the big prize is taking the next step, for economic development, for the good of our countries, and for the good of the world."

Moran spoke highly of China's commitment to further free up trade, which was made by Xi Jinping in his report delivered to the 19th CPC National Congress. "As General Secretary Xi said, economies in the world are interdependent on each other, we need to expand trade and promote globalization," said Moran.

Moran also endorsed Xi's emphasis on addressing disparity in income distribution at the 19th CPC National Congress. "One of Europe's biggest problems is income distribution inequality, which can also be seen all over the world. That's how countries get into difficulties. The new thought put forward by General Secretary Xi is very interesting. I think it's part of what you called 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. The new thought that's being given to solve inequality is very enlightening both for you and for us," he said.

Moran also applauded the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, which appears in Xi's report. He said it demanded the concerted efforts of the international community to better look after the planet, create prosperity, and safeguard peace. He believes the China-proposed concept will help unite the whole world to address issues of common concerns. "I'm quite optimistic about this and I believe the CPC's National Congress is helping push these efforts forward," Moran told *China Today*. ■