

Brussels, April 3, 1978

Address by Mr. Hafenkamp, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities, on the occasion of the signing of the Trade Agreement between the European Community and China

Brussels, 3 April 1978

Mr Minister,
Mr President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Trade Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of China is important not only for economic reasons but also - and above all - for political reasons. I should like to take this opportunity to stress these political aspects once again.

1. The Agreement is a sign of the trust between the People's Republic of China and the European Community. This is particularly important in a world in which mutual trust is more necessary than ever to overcome economic and political tensions.
2. The Agreement demonstrates the favourable attitude of the People's Republic of China towards the political unification of the peoples of Europe. China has expressed its approval of European integration and recognized it as a significant factor helping to make world peace more secure. The European Community arose from the spirit of cooperation between its peoples. This principle of cooperation also determines the Community's external relations. Our Agreement is a further expression of this positive will - and is directed against no-one.

.../...

3. The European Community welcomes China's opening toward Europe. China's importance for the world economic and political scene, based on the magnitude and influence of its history, culture, philosophy and political life over thousands of years right up to the present day, is inescapable.

The Agreement is the beginning of a development that will be of benefit to both sides.

Europe can contribute to China's technical and economic development and thus improve the possibilities for strengthening its economy and raising its standard of living.

In this way, a large and receptive market can develop in China for the products of the Community economy.

We are determined to impart life to the Agreement in the same friendly and constructive spirit in which we are signing it today.