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EICC-2021

Brussels, 3 September 2021

Mr. Josep Borrell
EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice-President of the European Commission
242, rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Dear High Representative, Vice-President Mr. Borrell,

Re: **Meeting the China Challenge**

In two months, the world will mark two years when the first known case of Coronavirus death was reported in Wuhan. Over the past two years, the global community has been under a relentless attack by a lethal virus that has forced governments and societies all over the world to take unprecedented measures, at huge cost of lives, economy as well as pressure on the people, in attempts to stay safe.

Unfortunately, the losses have been immense and are still being counted. As of September 2, it had infected over 220 million and taken 4.6 million lives across the world. The economic cost would top tens of trillions of dollars. These two years will be remembered as the most catastrophic and years of trusted human resilience in the shadow of millions of lost lives. Despite these losses, it is a matter of great concern that China is still maintaining blanket secrecy and withholding critical information on the origins of this "Forever Virus" Covid-19. Instead of being compassionate and cooperative, since of the outbreak of the pandemic, China has turned more assertive and aggressive as it saw an opportunity to advance its goals while the entire globe was focused on curbing the virus and dealing with its aftermath.

As if its approach on the pandemic itself was not destructive and obstructive enough, Beijing seems to be also milking the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan to its own advantage. While the world is concerned over whether Afghanistan will once again become the safe haven for global terror organisations, China's romance with Taliban and formation of an axis of nefarious power – with China leading the trident of Pakistan and Taliban – in an already unstable and volatile region could erupt into a major headache for the democracies of the world. China has already made overtures towards the Taliban, trying to suck it on to its Belt and Road Initiative which is nothing but a means to spread its tentacles to as many countries as possible. Just as the allies and partners of international coalition especially US and EU, have suspended their diplomatic presence in Kabul, China is scaling up its own presence, capitalising on the opportunity, even as grave uncertainty over humanitarian crisis continues.

China's statements regarding 'guiding' Taliban as a positive influence is confusing and is dangerous. Chinese statements about 'will of the Afghan people' is also ignorant at best and malicious at worst, as it glosses over the human cost of Taliban's success. China is not only trying to delete Taliban's history of terrorism, but also painting them as heroes and the US and Western allies as culprits for the current unrest. These issues have brought forth the question regarding Beijing's motivation for supporting Taliban. Beijing is either blindly optimistic about Taliban or calculative enough to promote Taliban in order to justify the extremist policy decisions on its own soil, though I suspect it is the latter as Beijing is anything but simple minded. As the situation in Kabul unfolds and more news of terrorists crawling the streets come to light, China seems to be satisfied looking at the ensuing fireworks.

Europe's weak and careless China policy of the past is now becoming China's success of the present and is coming to haunt the Union. It is time that EU finally started taking the Chinese challenge seriously. The future of the European Union will not be decided in the corridors of Berlaymont building, nor it will be decided in the European Parliament plenaries but on the streets of the member states where the real power lies and from where the message is loud and clear: Chuck China.

By contesting basic principles of international law, China is trying to overturn the rules-based order from within, and there is enough evidence of this. China's goal is to overturn the global order and impose in its place a Chinese Brave New World because China is driven by design to conspicuously rebrand its own image especially in the post-pandemic world order.

It is no secret that China is determined to establish regional hegemony in Asia-Pacific and is increasingly challenging the West, notably the United States, for global leadership on all fronts – economic, political, technological, and even military. Chinese President Xi Jinping recently delivered the latest in a long succession of warmongering speeches to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). The speech, a frightening prospect, is another worrisome indication that Jinping appears to be hell-bent on military adventurism in the near future. He called on the "entire party and entire country" to work to realize the Chinese military's long-term goals, saying that the military's needs would need to be considered when drafting plans for societal and economic development.

Yet, in face of these open, not-so-subtle and subtle messages coming from Beijing, the European Union seems to be consistently unable to respond to China in a meaningful manner and one which sends a clear message on how the EU views China. Unfortunately, most of the messages emanating from Berlaymont building lacks clarity and consistency.

Is it beyond the capacity of the existing system and institutions in the EU to meaningfully tackle Chinese threat? It is time that EU crafts a new China policy where engagements with China should be as minimum as possible and as precise as necessary, at least until the moment that China mends its ways and joins the global community as a member, not an authoritarian leader as it has been seeking to do.

Though EU and its institutions have taken some encouraging steps, a lot more needs to be done. We hope EU is now mature enough to bring forth a new China policy in the changed strategic compulsions in the global context.

Does China deserve to be a trusted trading partner of the EU? Has China ever addressed EU's concern on human rights in the country? China's predatory economic policies and "Wolf warrior" diplomacy is in direct conflict with European values and principles. You will agree that if China wasn't one of the largest trading partners of the West, the country would probably have labelled a pariah state by the EU. China's manoeuvring of the international trading system and its deeply held belief that it is not beholden to the same rules as other nations do, only comes at the expense of EU's own economy and trade with the country.


We hope you will not mind if we say that EU's current China policy is confusing, narrow in objectives, and reflects the fundamental lack of a strong position in the context of global power shift and the challenges China poses to the EU in the long run. We hope the EU realises that China's ambition stems from EU's past policy of appeasement, and illusion that EU can leverage its economic power to maximise its advantage over China.

The tables have nearly turned as of late China has been flexing its own economic muscle in Europe and its backyard. As the ratification of the EU's Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with China comes nearer, EU must not get carried away by narrow objectives. The disparity between China promises and deliveries are so wide that EU's hopes of China honouring it are unfounded and will come undone soon. Fortunately, there seems to be a growing consensus in Brussels and in the capitals of member states that in the changed global order, the CAI should die a natural death with EU boldly telling China that values, principles, and democracy matters for EU more than trade and economics. Every investment that European Union makes in China is a comprehensive confidence in China's inconsistent, controversial and contradictory trade policies.

We hope you will take a qualified stand on the views expressed above and consider the issues we have raised with a rational approach.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Secretary General