



EUROPE INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

69, Boulevard Louis Mettewie (bte.18)

1080 Brussels (Belgium)

Tel & Fax: 0032 2 469 2677, 02-840 2800 GSM: 0472 207 338

E-mail: info@europeindia.eu; sunil.prasad@telenet.be Website: www.europeindia.eu

Chairman: Ravi K Mehrotra, CBE Secretary General: Sunil Prasad

EICC-2022

Brussels, 21 January 2022

Ms. Roberta Metsola
President
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear President, Ms. Metsola,

Re: European Parliament and defining new paradigms of EU-China relations

On behalf of Europe India Chamber of Commerce, I am most privileged to convey our heartiest congratulation for your election as the President of the European Parliament. EICC is the Apex Chamber of Europe which promotes trade and economic relations between European Union and India. You are known as a fearless leader who always endeavoured for greater good, irrespective of the challenges. As a Parliamentarian, you ensured equality and inclusivity of all and championed significant issues, including human rights. And we can't thank you enough for being a powerful voice against the human rights violations and injustices, around the world, including in China.

This is historic time for the European Union as two women are heading the two most important institutions of the European Union. In the seventy years of European Parliament's history, it's glass ceiling only three women have ever cracked, and you are the youngest person elected to head the institution. Your being elected the President of the EP will send a message to young girls and women across the EU, and across the globe, that anything is possible for them, that women can achieve power, wield power, and breathe the air at that altitude.

Over the course of your tenure at the summit of this powerful body, I hope to see the imprints of your actions on tackling the nagging issues of gender equity and equal rights for all in the European Union and the resurgence of the far-right voices in many countries across the EU, which poses a serious threat to the democracy that has been built up and thrived here in the EU over the course of last seven decades.

But the dangers to the EU and its democratic principles come not just from within or from its neighborhood, they also come from distant lands, notably China, which seems to have charted a course of confrontation and subterfuge against democracies not just in Asia Pacific, but across the world, undermining the crucial foundations on which most countries in the world stand today. Over the past few years, China has been doing all it can to take this battle with democracies ahead, using all means, legal and illegal alike to carry out its attacks on institutions that are pillars of our democracies. Espionage is one of the most widely used tool by the

Chinese State against not just other governments, but also all their key institutions as well as companies.

Unfortunately, the European Parliament is also highly vulnerable to this threat of espionage from China. You are aware of an unprecedented security warning circulated to British MPs and peers early this month from the British Intelligence Agency the MI5 how China is engaged in improperly influencing British parliamentarians on behalf of China's ruling Communist Party. These revelations could just be the tip of the iceberg and even European Parliament has no idea how deep the espionage runs inside it. This is a serious matter, and the European Parliament should take note of the rising espionage by Chinese government in Europe.

China seems determined to make Belgium as hub for its espionage activities in EU and it is important to inquire into the influence of China and its agents within Europe's public institutions, strategically important businesses, and politics. The China Belgium Technology Center (CBTC) is not a two-way gateway for European-Chinese innovation and cooperation in the field of High Tech, but in fact One Way hub of Chinese espionage machinery through technology collaboration. China is using its investment including research campuses as part of its sustained interference activities in the EU. The greatest long-term threat to EU's information and intellectual property, and to its economic vitality, is the economic espionage threat from China. It is a threat to EU's economic security—and by extension, to EU's internal security.

It is no secret that China continues to be a threat to the EU values and principles and is engaged in weakening the foundation of democracy in Europe. Over the years, China's domestic and foreign policies have become more autocratic at home and confrontational abroad, with espionage becoming a powerful tool to influence its policies. The resulting challenges to the EU and European Parliament posed by China are therefore rapidly evolving.

The defining challenge facing the European Parliament today is understanding how China is infiltrating in the European institutions especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. With intensifying its crackdown not just on opposition and dissent, but also on perceived disloyalty, disaffection, policy disagreements and ideological nonconformity, the Chinese government is bent upon influencing the institutions and its members to serve Chinese interest. China is also taking advantage of an incoherent and inconsistent EU policy towards China. You will agree that European Parliament cannot afford to misread or misinterpret what China is up to and cannot overestimate or underestimate the threat China poses to the EU institutions.

We would like to reiterate and underscore the danger of pernicious effects of unchecked Chinese influence in the democratic institutions across EU states and their internal discourse on China. Beijing's manipulation of the information space neuters institutions such as independent media and civil society that in robust democracies would otherwise expose the risks of China's opaque economic deals and corrupt practices.

Despite growing recognition of the risks of engagement with China, there has been little in-depth research in the EU and European Parliament on China's means of influence and the response to such efforts in Europe. In an effort to address this gap and inform to bolster

resilience to counter espionage, the Europe India Chamber of Commerce is writing to you to study the nature of Chinese influence which may affect independent decision-making process of the European Parliament and the determinants of democratic resilience to Chinese tactics.

As you begin your tenure as the head of this robust institution, it would indeed be crucial to initiate an in-depth study on the Chinese threat and how it can be countered or at least minimised from not just within the European Parliament, but also rooted out from all other EU institutions. I need not impress upon you the priority that should be accorded to understanding the Chinese threat and I sincerely hope that you will initiate steps to not just understanding but also effectively countering Chinese espionage in the Parliament.

We at the EICC shall of course be delighted to be of any assistance, if we can, in not just modulating the new relationship that EU should have with China, but also how to further enhance EU ties with India which is a bulwark against all threats to democracy and unilateralism around the world. I do hope to interact with you more on this issue in order to take this thought ahead.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Sharma', written in a cursive style.

Secretary General

Cc. Mr. Josep Borrell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission