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WORKING PAPER SERIES ON EUROPEAN STUDIES

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# **European Elites' Opinions on the Belt and Road Initiative —— An Analysis Based on the Survey (2017)**

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Working Paper Series on European Studies of IES, CASS can be found at:

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# **European Elites' Perception of the Belt and Road Initiative:**

## **An Analysis Based on the Survey(2017)**

**Abstract:** This article elaborates a questionnaire survey of European elites on their opinions towards the Belt and Road Initiative which is the first thematic and authoritative research on the China-EU cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative both domestically and internationally. The questionnaire survey was conducted since the early January of 2017 and ended on 20 April 2017. The questionnaire was once conducted in 2015, and in order to keep the continuity of the survey, the author kept most of the original questions, and set new questions according to the new situations. The key conclusions are as follows: Firstly, the European elites' understanding of the purpose of the initiative is more accurate and less vague. However, as the industry capacity begins to going out gradually, they have negative views on it; Secondly, the high recognition of European elites shows it is a necessity to construct a specialized coordination mechanisms including the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation; Thirdly, the elites believe that "cultural and academic exchange" is the most primary gripper for "people-to-people bond"; Fourthly, policy coordination is essential to the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation between China and Europe, whether there are smooth policy coordination mechanisms decides whether the goal can be realized timely and efficiently; Fifthly, in the issue of promoting infrastructure construction cooperation, European elites believe that the most difficult thing is the synergy of infrastructure construction between China and Europe, and whether China's infrastructure construction can meet EU's regulation is another problem; Sixthly, the problem of trade structure between China and Europe is prominent, trade deficit still persists, and investment and trade barriers have also hindered the further development of trade relationship. To solve these problems, the European elites consider the elimination of trade and investment barrier as preoccupation of the moment; Last but not least, the European elites still have high expectations on Chinese financial institutions, and multilateral financial institutions which play an important role in infrastructure construction cooperation between China and Europe such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank are obviously underestimated by them.

**Keywords:** the Belt and Road Initiative; the European Union; Questionnaire Survey

## I. About the Survey

This survey was conducted since the early January of 2017 and ended on 20 April 2017. The author and his team collected 141 pieces of questionnaires in total among which there are 118 valid pieces of questionnaires after removing invalid ones. The survey was based on the platform of China—CEEC Think Tanks Exchange and Cooperation Network, in addition, with the help of the Institute of European Studies of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences which has rich connections with the European think tanks, the author collected several pieces of questionnaires from some European institutions. When attending some important international conferences on the Belt and Road Initiative, the author met European scholars, and also collected questionnaires from them.

It's the first time to conduct such a topical and continuous survey related to the China-EU cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative both domestically and internationally. Before the survey, the author sorted out more than 70 questions systematically according to the suggestions from experts in related fields, then added them into the survey and designed the questions and options scientifically in hope of reaching better results. The target groups of this survey are European elites, including decision-makers, entrepreneurs, media, scholars and other people.

The questionnaire was once conducted in 2015, and in order to keep the continuity of the survey, the author kept most of the original questions, and set new questions according to the new situations. It helps not only to find out the changed trends of the European elites' views on the Belt and Road Initiative through comparison, but also investigate their views on the new questions.

**The basic information of the questionnaires is as follows:**

**Table 1: Gender**

Gender \Year	2017		2015
	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Male	90	76.3	61.8
Female	28	23.7	38.2

In this year's survey, the proportion of male is higher, up to 76.3% and the proportion of female is 23.7%. Although the author and his team were inclined to balance the gender ratio, it is obvious that the males are more interested in the topic than the

females, which causes gender imbalance of statistical results. Compared with the survey in 2015, the imbalance between male and female is worsened.

**Table 2: Age**

Age\Year	2017		2015
	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Under 30	16	13.6	21.8
30 -40	47	39.8	56.4
41 -50	27	22.9	13.6
51 - 60	23	19.5	3.6
Above 60	5	4.2	4.5

Concerning the age, the proportion of participants under 30 is 13.6%, followed by 39.8% of those between 31 and 40, 22.9% of those between 41 and 50, 19.5% of respondents are between 51 and 60, and participants above 60 are 4.2%. The target groups are mainly young and middle-aged, and the age structure of the survey is relatively reasonable and the gradient is clear. In the survey of 2015, more than half of respondents are from 31-40, who account for overwhelming majority. The survey in 2017 partly changes this situation, and is more reasonable in the distribution of different age groups.

**Table 3: Nationality**

Nationality\Year	2017		2015	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	2	1.7	1	0.9
Austria	4	3.4	0	0
Belgium	2	1.7	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	1.7	1	0.9
Bulgaria	3	2.5	7	6.4
Croatia	3	2.5	1	0.9
Cyprus	0	0	1	0.9
Czech	3	2.5	7	6.4
Denmark	2	1.7	0	0

Estonia	2	1.7	2	1.8
Finland	3	2.5	0	0
France	4	3.4	3	2.7
Germany	4	3.4	5	4.5
Greece	3	2.5	0	0
Hungary	10	8.5	6	5.5
Italy	3	2.5	1	0.9
Latvia	3	2.5	1	0.9
Lithuania	2	1.7	1	0.9
Macedonia	5	4.2	4	3.6
Malta	0	0	1	0.9
Montenegro	2	1.7	1	0.9
Netherlands	3	2.5	3	2.7
Norway	1	0.8	0	0
Poland	8	6.8	29	26.4
Portugal	1	0.8	0	0
Romania	8	6.8	14	12.7
Serbia	17	14.4	7	6.4
Slovakia	3	2.5	5	4.5
Slovenia	6	5.1	2	1.8
Spain	3	2.5	1	0.9
Sweden	1	0.8	4	3.6
Switzerland	2	1.7	0	0
UK	3	2.5	2	1.8
Total	118	100	110	100

With regard to the nationality, there are 31 countries and 118 pieces of questionnaires in total basically including most of major states in Europe, which means the result of survey is authoritative and representative. The total number of questionnaires, 118, is also in line with the actual situation of the elite questionnaire which ensures representativeness of analysis results.

Compared with the survey in 2015, this survey in 2017 covers more European countries, 31 countries in total, and the number is 25 in 2015. Both surveys consider 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe as the main targets of investigation, so the proportion of respondents from Central and Eastern European countries is also

slightly higher. Some countries also get relatively high proportion, for example there are 29 Polish respondents in the survey of 2015 and 17 Serbian respondents in the survey of 2017, thus these two countries occupy much more than other target countries. This kind of situation will be gradually optimized in the future, so that the target countries and regions will be more balanced. But considering the actual national strategic layout, the survey should still adopt the principle of taking Central and Eastern European countries as the main target.

**Table 4: Occupation**

Occupation \Year	2017		2015	
	Amount	Proportion	Amount	Proportion
Government officials	20	16.9	39	35.5
Scholars of think tanks	31	26.3	26	23.6
Journalists	8	6.8	1	0.9
University Lectures and Professors	32	27.1	16	14.5
Others	27	22.9	28	25.5

As for the occupation, the survey in 2017 has four representative groups, and they are government officials (16.9%), scholars of think tanks (26.3%), journalists (6.8%) and university lectures and professors (27.1%). In the “Others” option, there are NGO representatives, PhD Candidates, as well as counselors in consulting firms, engineers, private business owners, business staffs and so on. The occupation structure of respondents is relatively balanced. In the survey of 2015, the officials took up a higher proportion while journalists took up a lower one. In this year, the survey further optimizes the occupation proportion.

## **II. European Elites’ Views on the objectives and features of the Belt and Road Initiative**

According to the results, the European elites’ understanding of the Belt and Road Initiative is basically accurate and objective, but misjudgment still remains in some

important issues.

After two years' observation and comparison, we can say that the European elites' understanding of the Belt and Road Initiative is more accurate, and they can objectively understand the fundamental spirits of the Belt and Road Initiative, especially for some important issues such as fundamental purpose, basic features and so on, in spite of some misjudgments. For the fundamental purpose of the Belt and Road Initiative, the elites acknowledge "the promotion of the trade and investment cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road" and "the promotion of the connectivity and regional cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road". And the option "the promotion of Chinese global strategic layout orienting towards the energy and resources" and the option "the promotion of Chinese advantageous products 'Going Global'" also enjoy a high rate of selection. From the very beginning, the elites think that the Belt and Road Initiative should not just be led by China though it was proposed by China, it should be a chorus and jointly built by all the countries along the Belt and Road. Though we have done a lot of jobs to explain the role of the Belt and Road Initiative in promoting the globalization, the specific contents of the initiative are comparatively vague, and it also lacks the influential discourse which can be understood and accepted easily by the European elites, thus most of them can't agree with the view that the Belt and Road Initiative is a global resolution. European elites are less aware of the domestic dimension of the Belt and Road Initiative, and still consider the initiative as an international-oriented proposal.

From the result, the European elites' views on the Belt and Road Initiative come not only from the publicity by China but also from their own observation and experience, which in fact examine the dual effects of the Belt and Road Initiative's role of promoting the international cooperation. First, it will check the efficiency of China's publicity and Second, it will check the degree of acceptance of European to the landing cooperation projects. From these two aspects, we get a lot positive responses. However, objectively speaking, in the field of industry capacity cooperation, we have made various and positive promotions, the elites still think that China is transferring their over-capacity products to Europe.

Here are some specific analyses on the answers given by the respondents:

- 1. From your own opinion, what are the fundamental objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative?**



Content/ Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
The promotion of trade and investment cooperation with the countries along the Belt and Road	72.9	76.4
The promotion of connectivity and regional cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road	68.6	71.8
The promotion of Chinese global strategic layout orienting towards the energy and resources	41.5	40.9
The promotion of Chinese advantageous products' "Going Global"	34.7	34.5
The promotion of transfer of Chinese over-capacity products	38.1	27.3
Unclear	0.1	7.3
Others	5.9	10.0

It has been four years for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Whether the European elites obviously change their views on the initiative or they have a more accurate grasp of the purpose of the Belt and Road Initiative, the two surveys in 2015 and 2017 will tell us the answer.

European elites' understanding of the fundamental purpose of the Belt and Road Initiative is basically accurate. From their perspective, the initiative mainly aims at promoting trade and investment cooperation between countries along the Belt and Road and promoting connectivity and regional cooperation. In two surveys, these two options all get highest proportion. Then following options are "the promotion of Chinese global strategic layout orienting towards the energy and resources" and "the promotion of Chinese advantageous products 'Going Global'". Comparing with the survey in 2015, there are two obvious differences: the proportion of people who consider the purpose "unclear" drops from 7.3% to 0.1% while the proportion of people in favor of "the promotion of transfer of Chinese over-capacity products" increases a lot, from 27.3% to 38.1%. On one hand, the European elites' understanding of the purpose of the initiative is more accurate and less vague. On the other hand, as the industry capacity begins to going out gradually, they have a lot negative views on it.

**2.From your own opinion, which one properly describes the features of the Belt and Road Initiative?**

Content\ Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
A strategic plan led by China	41.5	50.9
A strategic plan initiated by China, which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all	52.5	41.8
An ambitious project designed by China as a new pattern of global governance	27.1	23.6
A reflection of China's active participation in global cooperation and development	46.6	45.5
A practical requirement for China to deepen reform and broaden openness	24.6	28.2
A strategic to expand Chinese influence in its neighbors/ Eurasian areas and seek regional hegemony	28.8	27.3
A response to the Asia Pacific Re-balance Strategy of USA	26.3	21.8
Others	5.9	5.5

In the understanding of the basic features of the Belt and Road Initiative, the European elites' views have changed in the past two years. In the survey of 2015, more than half of people (50.9%) believed that the initiative is a China-led plan, while in 2017, the proportion drops by 10%. The European elites are tending to consider that this initiative is raised by China, but not a Chinese-led one, it should be a chorus and jointly built by all countries along the Belt and Road. As a result, the proportion of the second option "a strategic plan initiated by China, which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all" also increases from about 40% in 2015 to 52.5% in 2017. It shows that the European elites have a more accurate understanding of the purpose of the Belt and Road Initiative. The European elites' awareness on "an ambitious project designed by China as a new pattern of global governance" is not very high. Although we have done a lot to explain the role of "the Belt and Road Initiation" to promote globalization, due to the lack of a discourse system that can be accepted by the European elites, they don't think that the initiative is a global resolution. Meanwhile, different ways of explanation will lead to different results. For example, there are more elites agreeing with the option that the Belt and Road Initiative is a reflection of China's active participation in global cooperation and

development. 45.5% of respondents in 2015 and 46.6% in 2017 of the European elites choose this option. It has to be noted that, the European elites still lack of the awareness of the domestic dimension of Belt and Road Initiative, considering the initiative as an international-oriented proposal. For example, when talking about whether the Belt and Road Initiative meets the requirement for China to deepen reform and broaden openness, 28.2% of respondents in 2015 and 24.6% in 2017 choose this answer, and there is a downward trend in cognition of this domestic dimension besides the low proportion. The promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative should not ignore its domestic dimension. Few elites consider the Belt and Road Initiative as China's strategy to expand Chinese influence in its neighbors/Eurasian areas and seek regional hegemony. There are still few European elites considering that the initiative is "a response to the Asia Pacific Re-balance Strategy of USA".

### **III. The European elites argue that it is necessary to build a specialized international coordination mechanism of the Belt and Road Initiative**

The European elites pay more attention to various cooperation mechanisms between China and Europe, when cooperating with China under the Belt and Road Initiative framework. The elites do not attach importance to the ASEM. They always expect to establish a specialized coordination and international exchange mechanism for the Belt and Road Initiative, 22% of the participants in 2015 hope to set up such a mechanism while in 2017, the proportion is 25.4%. 58.4% of the participants consider that it's necessary to set up a specialized international mechanism for the Belt and Road Initiative.

Here are some specific analyses:

#### **1. Which mechanism is proper for the cooperation between China and EU during the construction of the Belt and Road?**

Content\ Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
A cooperative mechanism under the framework of the China-EU cooperation	47.5	47.3
A mechanism of strategic cooperation between China and European countries	44.1	38.2
A mechanism of regional cooperation between China and European countries, such China—CEEC cooperation	47.5	42.7

Intergovernmental forums such as the Asia-Europe Meeting	28.8	28.2
Various professional cooperative forums	38.1	41.8
Informal meetings	23.7	20.0
Off-meeting communication on the sideline of major international conferences	8.5	10.0
A new and specialized mechanism of cooperation and exchanges established for “the Belt and Road ”Initiative	25.4	22.7
Others	5.1	14.5

When it comes to which mechanism is suitable for the cooperation between China and Europe under the Belt and Road Initiative framework, the European elites care more about various mechanisms established between China and Europe but care less about those representative regional cooperation mechanisms. This partly reflects the view that direct negotiation at China-Europe level is more appropriate for the Belt and Road Initiative. The European elites pay less attention to intergovernmental cooperation forums such as ASEM. Though both Chinese and foreign intellectuals have some expectations of ASEM at the very beginning, they find more and more limitations of this intergovernmental forum, it's hard for China's Belt and Road Initiative to have its own voice, and soon weaken by other issues in public opinion field within the framework of ASEM. In May, 2015, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation be held in Beijing shows us that China cares more about promoting effects of its professional, self-designed platforms and mechanisms, but not relying on those loose international cooperation platforms. To sum up, The European elites are expecting to establish a specialized exchange and coordination platform for the Belt and Road Initiative, 22.7% of participants in 2015 show their willingness, and in 2017, the proportion is 25.4%.

## **2. It is necessary to establish a specialized coordination mechanism for the connectivity and infrastructure construction between China and Europe?**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Necessary	69	58.4
Unnecessary	8	6.8
Remain to be seen	24	22.9
Unclear	17	14.4

As for this question, 58.4% of the European elites agree to establish an international

coordination mechanism for the Belt and Road Initiative which holds a good footnote for the opening of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Objectively speaking, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation is just a carrier, China should not satisfy with the convening of just one international conference but should contribute more to construct a real coordination mechanism. The high recognition of European elites shows it is a necessity to construct a specialized coordination mechanisms including the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

#### **IV. European elites pay attention to the role of “people-to-people bond” in promoting the Belt and Road Initiative**

In this survey, the roles of “people-to-people bond” in the Belt and Road Initiative draw the European elites’ attentions. Most of elites mainly care about three aspects which include “policy coordination”, “facilities connectivity” and “people-to-people bond”. And the option “people-to-people bond” takes up 52.5%--the third rank, which draws more attention than “unimpeded trade” and “financial integration”. Meanwhile, more than 71% of respondents consider that “people-to-people bond” performs “relatively well” and “very well”. The elites also believe that “cultural and academic exchange” is the most primary gripper for “people-to-people bond”. Quite a few elites reach a consensus that it's a long standing problem for people-to-people exchange which cannot be fruitful in short term. We should be more patient with people-to-people and cultural exchange, and the ideology difference cannot be ignored.

Here are some specific analyses:

#### **3. For your perspective, which area of the Belt and Road do you think deserves priority attention?**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Policy Coordination	68	57.6
Facilities Connectivity	70	59.3
Unimpeded Trade	48	40.7
Financial Integration	40	33.9
People-To-People Bond	62	52.5
Others	10	8.5

Most of the European elites concern about “Policy Coordination” (57.6%), “Facilities

Connectivity” (59.3%) and “People-To-People Bond” (52.5%). In this survey, “People-to-people Bond” gets 52.5% proportion--the third rank, which draws more attention than “Unimpeded trade” and “Financial integration”.

On this issue, the understandings of China and Europe are asymmetric. From China’s perspective, “Unimpeded Trade” is the most important thing, but only 40.7% of participants choose it, much lower than “Policy Coordination” (57.6%), “Facilities Connectivity” (59.3%) and “People-to-people Bond” (52.5%). Besides, China also highly concerns about financing problem, but only 33.9% of elites pay attention to it, the lowest in the five-pronged approach.

**4. How do you think the people-to-people and cultural exchange between Chinese government and your government so far?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Very good	26	22.0
Fairly good	58	49.2
Not so good	25	21.2
No progress	4	3.4
Unclear	5	4.2

As for this question, more than 71% of people consider the progress of people-to-people and cultural exchange between China and related countries as “Fairly good” and “very good”, only 21.2% of them choose “Not so good”. The progress of people-to-people and cultural exchange is widely recognized by the European elites.

**5. Which kind of people-to-people and cultural exchanges should be widely promoted in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Culture and academic exchanges	103	87.3
Travel and sport exchanges	48	40.7
Media cooperation	39	33.1
Youth exchanges and volunteer services	56	47.5
Others	16	13.6

When talking about which kind of people-to-people and cultural exchanges should be widely promoted, “Cultural and academic exchanges” gets the highest rate, up to

87.3%, followed by “Youth exchanges and volunteer services”, the proportion is 47.5%, then 40.7% of participants choose “Travel and sport exchanges”.

#### **6. What kind of issues are and will be faced by the China-EU people-to-people exchange and cooperation?**

Content\Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
Ideology is the biggest issue	20.3	25.5
The current exchanges and cooperation are not effective	11.9	6.4
Both sides are in lack of willingness to exchange and cooperate with each other	13.6	5.5
People-to-people exchange is a long-term project that can't be fruitful in short term	54.2	54.5
The government of two sides attach no importance to it	13.6	10.9
Others	19.5	23.6

When asked about which kind of problems are and will be faced by China-EU people-to-people and cultural exchanges, the survey in 2015 and the survey in 2017 reach the same result, 54% of participants consider the people-to-people and cultural exchange as a long-term project that can't be fruitful in short term. In addition, about 20% of European elites consider the ideological difference as the biggest obstacle, the proportion in 2015 is 25.5%, in 2017, the proportion drops a little, is 20.3%.

#### **V. Policy coordination between China and European countries is relatively smooth**

Policy coordination is essential to the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation between China and Europe, whether there are smooth policy coordination mechanisms decides whether the goal can be realized timely and efficiently. The European elites make their own comment on this issue. 65% of elites consider the policy coordination as “smooth”, and they stress that it's necessary to realize policy coordination through promoting governmental cooperation and enhancing political mutual trust. “To promote the mutual recognition of regulations”, which China cares more about, gains low awareness in the European elites.

**1. It's very important to enhance the connectivity of policy for promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, do you think the coordination between the government of both sides is smooth?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Very smooth	37	31.4
Relatively smooth	40	33.9
Not too smooth	39	33.1
Not smooth	2	1.7

In terms of this issue, the answer is relatively positive. Up to 65% of participants choose “Smooth” (“Very Smooth” plus “Relatively smooth”), much higher than that of “Not smooth” (“Not too smooth” plus “Not smooth”), 34.85%. Meanwhile, up to 33.1% of participants think that the coordination between China and Europe is not smooth, there remains some problems. Basically, there are more positive comments than negative comments.

**2. How can China enhance the policy coordination between countries along the Belt and Road?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Enhance political mutual trust through promoting intergovernmental cooperation	69	58.5
China should provide policy support for the implementation of practical cooperation and large-scale projects	48	40.7
Properly solve problems in cooperation and push forward the mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistant in law enforcement	38	32.2
Coordinate its own economic development strategies and constantly reach new cooperation consensus with countries along the Belt and Road	42	35.6
Others	9	7.6

When asked how China can enhance the policy coordination between countries along the Belt and Road, the European elites believe that it's necessary to “Enhance political mutual trust through promoting intergovernmental cooperation”, up to 58.5% of



participants choose this option. The European elites also concern about large-scale project cooperation, and they think “China should provide policy support for the implementation of practical cooperation and large-scale projects” (40.7%). The option “coordinate its own economic development strategies and constantly reach new cooperation consensus with countries along the Belt and Road” (35.6%) gets the third rank. “Push forward the mutual recognition of regulations”, which China concerns more about, gains low awareness from European elites which may be in connection with the difficulty of mutual recognition of regulations and poor maneuverability.

## **VI. Problems and challenges are and will be faced by the cooperation of infrastructure construction between China and Europe**

In the issue of promoting infrastructure construction cooperation, European elites believe that the most difficult thing is the synergy of infrastructure construction between China and Europe, and whether China’s infrastructure construction can meet EU’s regulation is another problem. In addition, there exists a barrier on standards and market accession. When investigating the potential of synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Juncker Investment Plan, more people in 2017 than those in 2015 choose “So-so”. They also think that to promote the infrastructure construction cooperation, it's very important to establish integrated coordination mechanisms.

Here are some specific analyses:

### **1. Which issues are and will be faced by the cooperation of infrastructure construction between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

Content\ Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
Whether the requirement of China’s infrastructure construction can be compatible with Pan-Europe Network Framework	50.0	44.5
Whether Chinese infrastructure construction can reach EU’s standard	44.1	49.1
Whether the procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction can be transparent	41.5	46.4
The investment risks of Chinese large-infrastructure projects in Europe	30.5	21.8

Others	14.4	19.1
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As for these problems, most of the European elites have an accurate and objective understanding, and they concern more about “whether the requirement of China’s infrastructure construction can be compatible with Pan-Europe Network Framework”, “whether Chinese infrastructure construction can reach EU’s standard” and “whether the procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction can be transparent”. To analyze carefully, the results in 2015 and 2017 are quite different. In 2015, the problems of infrastructure construction were ranked by European elites as follows: “Whether Chinese infrastructure construction can reach EU’s standard” (49.1%), “whether the procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction can be transparent” (46.4%), and “whether the requirement of China’s infrastructure construction can be compatible with Pan-Europe Network Framework” (44.5%). In 2017, the problems of infrastructure construction are ranked by the European elites as follows: “whether the requirement of China’s infrastructure construction can be compatible with Pan-Europe Network Framework” (50%), “whether Chinese infrastructure construction can reach EU’s standard” (44.1%) and “whether the procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction can be transparent” (41.5%).

Why there are differences between these two surveys in 2015 and 2017? This reflects the result-driven observation of European elites. The most difficult thing for the Belt and Road Initiative is synergy between China and Europe, and if the synergy fails, then more and more problems will appear. Besides, China and Europe have different understandings on the concept of synergy. China stresses on strategic synergy, while Europe emphasizes to synergize practical projects. Such asymmetrical requirements of synergy make it difficult to promote the Belt and Road Initiative. If they consider the view of synergy in 2015 as initial impression, this impression has been deepened in 2017, with no protection of mutual recognition of rules, market access has been a problem and it’s even harder for project cooperation.

## **2.How much is the cooperative potential between Juncker’s Investment Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative?**

<b>Content/ Year</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2015</b>
	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Very much	16.9	15.5
So-so	33.1	19.1
No potential	5.1	2.7
Unclear	29.7	40.9

Wait and see	15.3	21.8
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When considering synergy of specific projects, the results become more obvious. For this issue, there are more people in 2015 than in 2017 choosing “so-so”, increasing from 19.1% to 33.1%. In general, the number of the European elites who believe there exist the cooperative potential between China and Europe increases from 15.5% in 2015 to 16.9% in 2017, and the increasing range is not huge and the overall proportion of these people is relatively low. In 2015, 40% of participants choose “Unclear” and “Wait and see”, while in 2017, the proportion decreases to 40%. It shows that the number of the European elites who still have a vague understanding of the Belt and Road Initiative decreases.

### **3. In your point of view, what efforts should be made to promote the infrastructure construction among countries along the Belt and Road?**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
On the basis of respecting each other's sovereignty and security concerns, countries along the Belt and Road should improve the connectivity of their infrastructure construction plans and technical standard systems to jointly push forward the construction of international trunk passageways.	58	49.2
Countries along the Belt and Road should promote green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management, taking into full account the impact of climate change on the construction.	55	46.6
Countries along the Belt and Road should build a unified coordination mechanism for whole-course transportation, increase connectivity of customs clearance, reloading and multi-model transport between countries, and gradually formulate compatible and standard transport rules, so as to realize international transport facilitation.	63	53.4

Countries along the Belt and Road should jointly advance the construction of energy infrastructure to build cross-border power supply networks and improve international communications connectivity, and create an Information Silk Road.	35	29.7
Others	6	5.1

How to solve the problems of infrastructure construction along the Belt and Road? The European elites give their solutions in perspective of China-EU cooperation. The establishment of an integrated coordination mechanism is the primary choice among all solutions. Up to 53.4% of participants deem that “the countries along the ‘Belt and Road’ should establish an integrated coordination mechanism throughout the transport, enhance communication on customs clearance, cargo and multi-model transport, then gradually develop compatible and standardized principles to achieve international transport facilitation”. Besides, 49.2% and 46.6% of participants choose “on the basis of respecting each other’s sovereignty and security concerns, countries along the Belt and Road should improve the connectivity of their infrastructure construction plans and technical standard systems to jointly push forward the construction of international trunk passageways” and “countries along the Belt and Road should promote green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management, taking into full account the impact of climate change on the construction”.

## **VII. Trade and investment cooperation performs relatively well, but several problems remain to be solved**

According to the survey, more than half of the European elites consider that the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road has been relatively effectively and fruitful so far. The main problems China and European faced with are “limited areas of trade and imbalanced trade structure” and “certain investment and trade barriers”. More than half of the European elites believe that both sides should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment. Meanwhile, countries along the Belt and Road should improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information. Both sides should also push forward cooperation in emerging industries such as new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials, etc.

Overall, the problem of trade structure between China and Europe is prominent, trade deficit still persists, and investment and trade barriers have also hindered the further development of trade relationship. To solve these problems, the European elites consider the elimination of trade and investment barrier as preoccupation of the moment.

Here are some specific analyses:

**1. Do you think the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road has been effective or fruitful so far?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Very much	8	6.8
Fairly good	64	54.2
Not so good	43	36.4
Definitely not	3	2.5

When talking about the effects of investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road, the European elites' views are generally positive, but there are still 36.4% of them choose "not so good", 54.2% of elites consider the cooperation "fairly good", only 6.8% of elites believe that the cooperation is very effective.

**2. What kind of issues are and will be faced by the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

Content	Number	Proportion
Certain investment and trade barriers	62	52.5
Limited areas of trade and imbalanced trade structure	63	53.4
Lack of mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistance in law enforcement	45	38.1
In need of entrepreneurial and investment cooperation mechanisms	33	28.0
Others	13	11.0

When asked what kind of issues are and will be faced by the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road, "limited areas of trade and imbalanced trade structure" occupies the highest proportion, up to 53.4%.

Then 52.5% of participants choose “certain investment and trade barriers”. The third one is “lack of mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistance in law enforcement”, the proportion is 38.1%.

### **3. What efforts need to be done to enhance the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Both sides should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment.	69	58.5
Countries along the Belt and Road should improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information.	53	44.9
A service trade support system should be set up to consolidate and expand conventional trade, and efforts to develop modern service trade should be strengthened.	31	26.3
Both sides should push forward cooperation in emerging industries such as new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials, etc.	36	30.5
Others	5	4.2

When talking about how to solve problems above, 58.5% of participants believe that “both sides should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment.”, then “countries along the Belt and Road should improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information.”(44.9%), and then “both sides should push forward cooperation in emerging industries such as new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials, etc.”(30.5%).

**VIII. There exists potential in China—EU financial cooperation during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, but Europe has relatively**

## higher expectations on China

Through a relatively long efforts to promote China-EU financial cooperation, both sides have made great progress. The financial instruments which can be cooperated by both sides are relatively rich and have great potential for cooperation. According to the survey, feedback from the European elites are both positive and negative. The European elites still have too high expectations on Chinese financial institutions, and multilateral financial institutions which play an important role in infrastructure construction cooperation between China and Europe such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank are obviously underestimated by them. They also underestimate the role of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The main problems of financial cooperation between China and Europe are “imperfect financial cooperation mechanism” and “Euro turbulence”. To provide solution, they think “both sides should strive to build a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system.”, “both sides should improve the system of risk response and crisis management, build a regional financial risk early-warning system and create an exchange and cooperation mechanism of addressing cross-border risks and crisis.”.

Here are some specific analyses:

### 1. Which tools can be used by China and EU in the financial cooperation during the construction of the Belt and Road?

Content\ Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
The Belt and Road Strategy Fund	66.9	67.3
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	52.5	67.3
BRICS New Development Bank	32.2	24.5
EU Structural Funds	40.7	39.1
The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	50.0	49.1
World Bank	27.1	28.2
Asian Development Bank	26.3	26.4
European Investment Bank	41.5	36.4
Others	5.9	21.8

Financial cooperation can objectively reflect the strategic importance, the level and the scale of the practical cooperation between the two sides. The China-Europe

cooperation will be essentially enhanced through the coordination and mutual utilization between the financial institutions of China and those of Europe. Based on the survey results, the European elites' responses are both positive and negative, which mainly show as follows:

Firstly, the European elites still hold high expectations on financial institutions of China and the expectations on the European instruments increase to some extent as well. 66.9% and 52.5% of the participants consider that financial tools of Belt and Road Strategic Fund and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank can be fully utilized. Obviously they expect China to take more responsibilities of financing. As for the financial tools that Europe has, this year more than 50% of participants regard the funds provided by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 40.7% of participants consider the funds provided by EU Structural Funds and 41.5% of participants think that funds provided by European Investment Bank can be fully utilized, which to some extent increase comparing with the data in 2015. The European elites have better understandings of the roles of the European financial institutions comparing to the past.

Secondly, the elites obviously underestimate the role of the multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, only 27.1% and 26.3% of participants consider that funds provided by these two institutions can be fully utilized, which declined as compared with the data in 2015.

Thirdly, the roles of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the building of the Belt and Road Initiative were considered to be lower than 2015 survey by the European elites. 67.3% of participants in 2015 think that the Belt and Road Strategic Fund and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank can be used as financial instruments. Comparing with data in 2017, the Belt and Road Strategic Fund is always appreciated by the European elites, but their attention to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to some extent decreases, from 67.3% to 52.5%. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is famous for its many countries' participation, high standards of market operation. Its function is to, but not limited to, serve the projects of Belt and Road Initiative, and the European elites do have some understandings about it.

To make a conclusion, the European elites believe that there exists potential in financial cooperation between China and Europe, but they expect China to contribute more, and the role of multilateral financial institutions is considered less important than before.



## 2.What kind of issues are and will be faced by the China-EU financial cooperation during the construction of the Belt and Road?

Content\Year	2017	2015
	Proportion	Proportion
Euro turbulence	44.9	38.2
The low level of RMB internationalization	28.0	30.0
Dollar as a major trading currency between two sides	25.4	15.5
Imperfect financial cooperation mechanism	50.8	48.2
Others	16.1	21.8

When investigating what kind of problems are and will be faced by the China-EU financial cooperation, the first option is “imperfect financial cooperation mechanism” in two surveys, and the proportion is 48.2% in 2015 and 50.8% in 2017, which increases a little. The second option is “Euro turbulence”, the proportion is 38.2% in 2015 and 44.9% in 2017, which obviously increases. 30% of participants in 2017 and 28% of participants in 2015 choose “the low level of RMB internationalization”, which decreases a little.

## 3.What efforts need to be done to enhance financial cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?

Content	Number	Proportion
Both sides should strive to building a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system.	50	42.4
China should increase the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement with other countries along the Belt and Road to facilitate China-Europe financial cooperation.	32	27.1
Both sides should improve the system of risk response and crisis management, build a regional financial risk early-warning system and create an exchange and cooperation mechanism of addressing cross-border risks and crisis.	42	35.6
Both sides should strengthen financial regulation cooperation and establish an efficient regulation coordination mechanism in the region.	45	38.1

Others	7	5.9
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When asked what efforts need to be done to enhance financial cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road, the first option is “both sides should strive to building a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system”, followed by “both sides should strengthen financial regulation cooperation and establish an efficient regulation coordination mechanism in the region.”, then “both sides should improve the system of risk response and crisis management, build a regional financial risk early-warning system and create an exchange and cooperation mechanism of addressing cross-border risks and crisis.”.

## **IX. Development trend of the European elites’ views on the Belt and Road Initiative**

First, comparing with survey in 2015, the European elites have a more accurate and objective understanding of the essential spirit of the Belt and Road Initiative. Though some misjudgment remain, European elites’ understanding is basically accurate.

Second, the European elites pay more attention to various cooperation mechanisms between China and Europe, when cooperating with China under the Belt and Road Initiative framework. They do not attach importance to the ASEM. More than 50% elites expect to establish a specialized coordination and international exchange mechanism for the Belt and Road Initiative

Third, the European elites attach high importance to the role of “people-to-people bond” in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative. Most of them pay attention to “policy coordination”, “facilities connectivity”, “people-to-people bond”, and they are satisfied with the progress of current people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Quite a few elites believe that the people to people bond is a long standing problem which cannot be fruitful in short term. The ideology difference can’t be ignored between China and Europe.

Fourth, policy coordination is essential to the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation between China and Europe, up to 65% of elites consider the policy coordination as “smooth”, and they stress that it’s necessary to realize policy coordination through promoting governmental cooperation and enhancing political mutual trust. “To promote the mutual recognition of regulations”, which China concerns about, gains low cognition in European elites.

Fifth, regarding the issue of promoting infrastructure construction cooperation, the European elites pay attention to three main problems, they are “whether the requirement of China’s infrastructure construction can be compatible with Pan-Europe Network Framework”, “whether Chinese infrastructure construction can reach EU’s standard”, “whether the procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction can be transparent”. In addition, comparing with the survey in 2015, when asked the potential of the synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Juncker Investment Plan, the European elites hold a low comment on this kind of synergy.

Sixth, more than half of the European elites consider the promotion of investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road has been relatively effectively and fruitful so far. The main problems China and European faced with are “limited areas of trade and imbalanced trade structure” and “certain investment and trade barriers”.

Seventh, the European elites still have too high expectations on Chinese financial institutions, and multilateral financial institutions which play an important role in infrastructure construction cooperation between China and Europe such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank are obviously underestimated by them. The main problems of financial cooperation between China and Europe are “imperfect financial cooperation mechanism” and “Euro turbulence”.

## **X. Issues and policy suggestions raised by the elites**

Questionnaire 20: More clear and direct ideas regarding improvement in production and service areas are needed.

Questionnaire 23: The Belt and Road Initiative actively move on changing the China image in the world.

Questionnaire 28: I think that process must be continued because it is very good.

Questionnaire 29: I suggest that maybe we can publish successful achievements through cooperation.

Questionnaire 31: China is one of the cooperation partners for the EU. The EU has a strong and high level of rules and standards. It is expected that rather China has to adjust, not vice versa.

Questionnaire 32: Create a China-Europe Silk Road Management Program for business schools advanced students and entrepreneurs focusing on innovation-driven sectors.

Questionnaire 33: Strengthen intra-regional cooperation between CEECs,

formulate and establish a clear strategy and coordination mechanism within CEECs.

Questionnaire 34: Create information centers, organize joint events regularly exchange students and scholars aimed to promote the Belt and Road Strategy.

Questionnaire 37: The both sides should build stronger mechanisms for cooperation on an institutional basis, with a clearly defined plan of conduct of certain stages of the process, as well as ways of overcoming the possible inconsistencies in the implementation of ongoing projects. In implementing the above, I suggest the establishment of Special scientific institution and a separate legal entity which would be established by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the basis of national legislation and which would be financed from the budget of the relevant ministries of China and Serbia and from donations from interested partners, in order to improve cooperation and to exchange in the framework of the mechanism 16+1 between CEEC and China.

Questionnaire 38: It should continue to work and improve our connectivity. In particular, we must improve cooperation in the field of science and research.

Questionnaire 41: We need detailed and transparent development plan with group of experts from both sides.

Questionnaire 42: The Initiative improves China's image in the countries alongside the OBOR and stimulates the correct understanding of China.

Questionnaire 44: A lot of trust needs to be built as well as all the other things mentioned in this questionnaire. It is simply going to take a lot of time and communication. The Belt and Road is a very, very ambitious project, and China has to understand that it is not going to be plain sailing because of the many interests and differences among the countries along the route. China needs to express its goals as clearly as possible and also be more specific about what the Belt and Road means for each individual country in practical terms. The biggest issue in CEE at the moment (at least the Czech Rep. and Poland) is that people are unclear what the Belt and Road precisely means for their country. China needs to come up with specifics, and communicate them clearly while aiming to work within the limits of what the individual countries can realistically be expected to achieve.

Questionnaire 45: From my academic and researcher's perspectives, the Belt and Road Initiative should quickly move on somehow beyond the stage in which the main preoccupations have been clarification and conceptual development. These questions should be very quickly finalized and it should be established explicitly what the Chinese initiative offers – but also what it does not offer. If this kind of step ahead does not occur, I suspect that the attention towards the initiative will soon start fading.

Questionnaire 54: The concept of the Belt and Road Initiative is still a bit vague, complicated, hard to understand and does not communicate well the benefits of the project to participating countries. Political elites (with a personal financial interests) in

participating countries may be enthusiastic about the projects, but the people have not heard about the Belt and Road Initiative at all. This issue has to be addressed.

Questionnaire 55: I believe it would be of merit for the Belt and Road Initiative to be promoted in a way that would emphasize the role of other countries not only in relation to China, but also among one another. Supporting such type of cooperation could also bring a global positive recognition for the Belt and Road Initiative and address some of uncertainties about power dynamics of the project.

Questionnaire 56: My point of view as researcher: Academic exchange, incl. joint research and publications, joint think tanks/research institutes, joint master and PhD programs – for instance “International business (trade, finance, logistics) and politics”, “History and Culture” (very important!), scientific events – conferences, round table debates etc.

Questionnaire 57: More focus should be placed on the balance between transfer of production capacity from China and the environment protection in CEEC countries.

Questionnaire 58: People-to-people and trade-invest connections should be the main form of cooperation among the Belt and Road countries. And effective measures to ensure the sustainability are of vital importance.

Questionnaire 59: Maybe they should solve their territorial disputes and other political problems first.

Questionnaire 60: People to people exchange is the most important and active one which should be paid more attention to.

Questionnaire 62: More people-to-people exchanges in academics, sports, youth programs, as well as cooperation projects between regions.

Questionnaire 64: a. Enhance the people-to-people exchanges. b. Establish opportunities for teaching about China in other countries (tailor-made courses for different target-groups). c. Offer Chinese media in Macedonian language (like CCTV program in Macedonian). d. Publish the most popular Chinese books in Macedonian, both fiction and non-fiction

Questionnaire 65: It is recommended China to pay more attention to public diplomacy and better explain their own interests and goals you want to achieve through the Belt and Road Initiative as well as 16+1 mechanism.

Questionnaire 66: Even though we primary talk about the economic initiative, we need to be aware of potential political and security risks that may destabilize B&R project. Religious and ethnic tensions and different types of extremism along the “Belt” route, can be used internally or externally (by countries that do not belong to the initiative) to destabilize the entire project. Some segments of the routes are particularly vulnerable to destabilization and fanning ethnic and religious tensions (for example, countries of Central Asia, some Balkan countries and provinces such as Xinjiang or Kosovo). Therefore, parallel with a strategy for infrastructure development,

strategy of cooperation on strengthening security and national stability must be developed.

Questionnaire 68: In my opinion this initiative is something that could have beneficial effects for all countries involved, not only in terms of economy, but also in other areas, such as cultural and academic cooperation. Differences between nations should be perceived as an advantage, not an obstacle.

Questionnaire 70: I see a big potential in undertaking large infrastructural projects, like the two highways in Macedonia, fast speed railroads like Athens - Skopje-Belgrade – Budapest, large hydro, wind and solar power projects (in Macedonia could be the hydro project - Chebren and Galiste on the river Crna Reka). In addition, the possibility of engaging a private sector on a bilateral and a multilateral level should be fully examined (for instance, due to a limited size of private sector in Macedonia), a combination of private sector and a private-public partnership could be also employed.

Questionnaire 72: China should try to avoid creating competition for Chinese investments and funding among the neighboring countries along OBOR, should avoid generating races to the bottom among them, should avoid inflaming regional rivalry and should not turn hegemonic.

Questionnaire 73: What is the goal of the Belt and Road Initiative? It ought to be a philosophical question. And now the Belt and Road Initiative has become an utility and its aim is to give out China's strong voice in the progress of formulating orders to increase regional and global influence, and develop good neighborly and friendly relations.

Questionnaire 74: To advance academic and investment communities exchange including media cooperation. Promote existing trade cooperation and evaluate the economic benefits of local and regional cooperation.

Questionnaire 75: All sides should be more transparent about their short-, medium-, and long-term expectations and obligations.

Questionnaire 76: My main suggestion would cover my own country's example, and by extrapolation, of most CEE countries that are not OECD members. At this point, since the level of Chinese investment and interest is relatively low (compared with Western EU members), an increased level of cooperation would be necessary, especially since for most of these countries connectivity projects are mostly financed by EU funds, EBRD/EIB funding. Recognizing the tender procedures that all EU members must go through for public investments, Chinese companies should receive proper advice for local embassies regarding conditions for investment and the fact that all companies must observe those EU rules. On the other hand, there are opportunities for smaller scale investments at regional level, where small cities/communities lacking in infrastructure (transport, health, etc.) also lack the necessary funding and

were Chinese funds could be very appreciated – there are examples as in the construction of housing for low-income families. Such a program that would not necessarily fund big projects and be focused on profitable and feasible projects developed together with those local authorities can provide a huge number of smaller projects in a relatively short time that would add up to significant investment and presence for Chinese companies, as well as renewed infrastructure for local and national authorities.

Questionnaire 78: China should do most of the job by itself. I do not expect EU, or other parties to be dedicated to this project.

Questionnaire 79: Give EU a stake in OBOR and make it a joint initiative, China-EU, working together, from opposite sides of Eurasia, to connect Europe and Asia.

Questionnaire 80: Many governments seem convinced of the relevance and support that the Belt and Road Initiative can bring in terms of connectivity. However, to create a true lasting impact it is quintessential to convince the populace of the relevance of Chinese investments. Public opinion is a powerful tool and can easily backfire on any policy initiative. An honest, transparent public information campaign from the Chinese government in collaboration with relevant ministries in host countries is to target the trust deficit that now prevails in many countries. Only then can the Belt and Road become a true success.

Questionnaire 81: China should formulate a clear strategy and implement concrete projects.

Questionnaire 89: China should start a structured exchange between China and EU in addition to existing “16+1 Cooperation” framework.

Questionnaire 90: In order to avoid the project to be seen just as a Chinese initiative, more people-to-people and cultural exchanges should be carried out to create a ‘common narrative’ for the Belt and Road Initiative, and let the initiative belong to all the countries involved. We should also enhance the transparency of the Belt and Road Initiative and communication on the project.

Questionnaire 95: We should cooperate in protection of intellectual property rights. And emphasize practical business projects (and pay less attention on the political aspects and concerns).

Questionnaire 99: If it is seen as a Chinese project, it will generate a level of mistrust in some areas. The key is to get it to be seen as a cooperative project – but I think that's going to be very hard. It is perceived as something done BY china TO others. And that's a problem.

Questionnaire 100: Personally thinking, I hold the opinion that China encounters a very unattainable chance for cooperation because of the 2008 financial crisis and the global economic situation currently. The countries along the Belt and Road need

China's support. However, many challenges still occurred, such as trade protectionism, political and IR with USA, and the basic domestic economic strength and problems of many small countries. I think China could seek cooperation with large and strong countries such as Germany, France, Russia at first. Once these large countries agree to cooperate with China, many other small countries or countries close to them would also attend the Initiative as well.

Questionnaire 102: The Belt and Road Initiative proclaimed from President Xi in 2013, is a strategy developed by the Chinese government, it has a Chinese content on it, it is very important to China but it should not be confined to China. In order for it to be successful it needs to be embraced by the countries on the terrestrial and maritime route indicated in the plan. The Xi-Li administration has been extremely proactive since it was established in 2012; from that year on, the Chinese behavior in international affairs has gained an ever-growing role as a forger of economic and diplomatic ties between countries. The Belt and Road Initiative makes China the only country in the world today with a clear long term plan for the rise of global economy. In my modest opinion, if the three pillars of the Belt and Road will properly be implemented into reality: first, spreading economic development around the world through infrastructure investment and new trade routes; second, creating interdependence between China and other countries and regions via global partnership networks; and third, focusing on Asia as part of a new “neighborhood diplomacy.” This plan will never be a “Zero Sum Game” for any actor involved, which is what plenty of government officials and at a lesser extent, academics, fear of.

Questionnaire 115: China should create a network with several working groups, related to the different common areas of cooperation (e.g. financial regulations & investments, transportation & energy, trade, institutional cooperation, education & youth, culture & media, tourism & sport etc.)

Questionnaire 116: Go forwards permanently and follow the exactly structured plan.

Questionnaire 117: From my viewpoint, I would like to suggest stronger exchange of students on all levels as well as a support for scientific meetings - not only in “hard sciences” but also in the areas of humanities. Finally, I would suggest more artistic exchanges, especially in the areas of modern art and multi-media.



## Questionnaire

Survey No. □□□□□□

### Survey on Views of European Countries about the Belt and Road Initiative

Dear Friends,

This survey is conducted by the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It is specifically aimed for European government officials, experts and scholars. Its purpose has nothing to do with politics or profit. We hold the privacy of your personal information in the highest regard. Please feel comfortable to fill in at your own convenience. Thank you for your support and cooperation!

#### I. Basic Information

##### 1. Gender

- a. Male      b. Female

##### 2. Age

- a. below 30      b. 31-40      c. 41-50      d. 51-60      e. above 60

##### 3. Nationality (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 4. Occupation

- a. Official    b. Think Tanks Researcher    c. Journalist    d. Staff of University  
e. Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 5. Do you have overseas study/work experience (At least 3 months) ?

- a. Yes      b. No

#### II. Views about China's the Belt and Road Initiative

##### 6. From your own opinion, what are the fundamental objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative (multiple choice)?

- a. The promotion of trade and investment cooperation with the countries inside the Belt and Road Initiative  
b. The promotion of connectivity and regional cooperation with the countries inside the Belt and Road Initiative  
c. The promotion of Chinese global strategic layout oriented energy and resources

- d. The promotion of Chinese advantageous products' "Going Global"
- e. The promotion of transfer of Chinese over-capacity products
- f. Unclear
- g. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**7. From your own opinion, which one properly describes the features of the Belt and Road Initiative (multiple choice) ?**

- a. A strategic plan led by China
- b. A strategic plan proposed by China, adhering to the principle of co-discussion, co-construction and co-sharing
- c. An ambitious project designed by China as a new pattern of global governance
- d. A reflection of China's active participation in global cooperation and development
- e. A practical requirement for China to deepen reform and broaden openness
- f. A strategy to expand Chinese influences in its neighbors/Eurasian areas and seek regional hegemony
- g. A response to Asia Pacific Re-balance Strategy of USA
- h. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Which mechanism is proper for the cooperation between China and EU during the construction of the Belt and Road (multiple choice)?**

- a. A cooperative mechanism under the framework of China-EU cooperation
- b. A cooperative strategic mechanism between China and European countries
- c. A regional cooperative framework between China and European countries, such as China—CEEC cooperation
- d. Intergovernmental forums such as the Asia-Europe Meeting
- e. Various professional cooperative forums
- f. Informal meetings
- g. Off-meeting communication on the sideline of major international conferences
- h. A new, specific cooperative exchange mechanism for the Belt and Road Initiative
- i. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Countries along the Belt and Road have their own resource advantages and their economies are mutually complementary. Therefore, there is a great potential and space for cooperation. From your perspective, which of the following key areas deserve priority attention? (multiple choice)**

- a. Policy Coordination
- b. Facilities Connectivity
- c. Unimpeded Trade
- d. Financial Integration

e. People-to-People Bond

f. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Enhancing policy coordination is an important guarantee for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. Do you think the the policy exchange between Chinese government and your government has been going smoothly so far?**

a. Yes, definitely

b. Fairly well

c. Not so good.

d. Absolutely not

(Please specify reasons for every choice)

**11. Based on your understanding, how should China better coordinate its policies with countries along the Belt and Road? (multiple choice)**

a. China should promote intergovernmental cooperation by build a multilevel intergovernmental macro policy exchange and communication mechanism to enhance mutual political trust.

b. China should provide policy support for the implementation of practical cooperation and large-scale projects.

c. China should actively negotiate to solve cooperation-related issues and push forward the mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistant in law enforcement.

d. China should fully coordinate its economic development strategies and constantly reach new cooperation consensus with countries along the Belt and Road.

e. Others (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Facility connectivity is a key area for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. Is there a necessity to build a specific coordinated mechanism for the construction of infrastructure between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

a. Very demanding    b. No need    c. Wait and see    d. Unclear

**13. Which issues are and will be faced by the cooperation of infrastructure construction between China and countries along the Belt and Road (multiple choice)?**

a. The compatibility of Chinese infrastructure scheme and Pan European Transport Corridors

b. The possibility of reaching EU's standard for Chinese infrastructure construction

c. The transparency of procedure of Chinese infrastructure construction

- d. The investment risks of Chinese large infrastructure projects in Europe
- e. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**14. In your point of view, what efforts should be made to promote the infrastructure construction among countries along the Belt and Road? (multiple choice)**

- a. On the basis of respecting each other's sovereignty and security concerns, countries along the Belt and Road should improve the connectivity of their infrastructure construction plans and technical standard systems to jointly push forward the construction of international trunk passageways.
- b. Countries along the Belt and Road should promote green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management, taking into full account the impact of climate change on the construction.
- c. Countries along the Belt and Road should build a unified coordination mechanism for whole-course transportation, increase connectivity of customs clearance, reloading and multi-model transport between countries, and gradually formulate compatible and standard transport rules, so as to realize international transport facilitation.
- d. Countries along the Belt and Road should jointly advance the construction of energy infrastructure to build cross-border power supply networks and improve international communications connectivity, and create an Information Silk Road.
- e. Others (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Investment and trade cooperation is a major task in building the Belt and Road. Do you think the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road has been effective or fruitful so far?**

- a. Very much
- b. Fairly well
- c. Not so good
- d. Definitely not

(Please specify reasons for every choice)

**16. Will Chinese active promotion of unimpeded trade between China and EU have counter-balance on the TTIP (multiple choice)?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unclear
- d. Wait and see
- e. Other (Specify )

\_\_\_\_\_

**17. What kind of issues are and will be faced by the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

- a. Certain investment and trade barriers

- b. Limited areas of trade and unbalanced trade structure
- c. Lack of mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistance in law enforcement
- d. In need of entrepreneurial and investment cooperation mechanisms
- e. Others (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**18. In your point of view, what efforts need to be done to enhance the investment and trade cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

- a. Both sides should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment.
- b. Countries along the Belt and Road should improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information.
- c. A service trade support system should be set up to consolidate and expand conventional trade, and efforts to develop modern service trade should be strengthened.
- d. Both sides should push forward cooperation in emerging industries such as new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials, etc.
- e. Others (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**19. How much is the cooperative potential between Juncker's Investment Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative?**

- a. Very much   b. So-so   c. No potential   d. Unclear   e. Wait and see

**20. Financial integration is an important underpinning for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. Which tools can be used by China and EU in the financial integration during the construction of the Belt and Road (multiple choice)?**

- a. The Belt and Road Strategy Fund
- b. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- c. BRICS New Development Bank
- d. EU Structural Funds
- e. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- f. World Bank
- g. Asian Development Bank
- h. European Investment Bank
- i. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**21. What kind of issues are and will be faced by the China-EU financial cooperation during the construction of the Belt and Road (multiple choice)?**

- a. Euro turbulence
- b. The low level of RMB internationalization
- c. Dollar as a major trading currency between two sides
- d. Imperfect financial cooperation mechanism
- e. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**22. In your point of view, what efforts need to be done to enhance financial cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

- a. Both sides should strive to building a a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system.
- b. China should increase the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement with other countries along the Belt and Road to facilitate China-Europe financial cooperation.
- c. Both sides should improve the system of risk response and crisis management, build a regional financial risk early-warning system and create an exchange and cooperation mechanism of addressing cross-border risks and crisis.
- d. Both sides should strengthen financial regulation cooperation and establish an efficient regulation coordination mechanism in the region.
- e. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**23. People-to-people bond provides the public support for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. To your knowledge, how is the people-to-people exchange and cooperation between China and your country progressing?**

- a. Great
- b. Fairly well
- c. Not so good
- d. No progress
- e. Unclear

(Please specify reasons for every choice)

**24. What kind of issues are and will be faced by the China -EU people-to-people exchange and cooperation (multiple choice)?**

- a. Ideology is the biggest issue
- b. The existed exchange and cooperation can't play a role
- c. Both sides are short of willingness to exchange and cooperate
- d. People-to-people exchange is a long-term issue, so can't be fruitful in short-term
- e. The government of two sides attach no importance to it

f. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**25. From your perspective, which kinds of people-to-people exchanges should be carried out extensively between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

- a. Cultural and Academic Exchanges
- b. Tourism and Sports Exchanges
- c. Media Cooperation
- d. Youth Exchanges and Volunteer Services
- e. Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**26. What are your suggestions on strengthening the connectivity between China and countries along the Belt and Road?**

**Thank you again for your cooperation and support!**