

Beehive Bonanza PF Clinic

AFF Case 2019

Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative



# AFF CASE

Because the European Union has yet to present a cohesive strategy in response to the Belt Road Initiative and its member states are already joining, my partner and I proudly affirm that Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative.

The European Union, as defined by

Gabel, M. J. (n.d.). European Union. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union/-AV>

As an [international organization](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-organization) [comprising](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comprising) 28 European countries and governing common economic, social, and security policies. Originally confined to western [Europe](https://www.britannica.com/place/Europe), the EU undertook a [robust](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/robust) expansion into central and eastern Europe in the early 21st century. The EU’s members are [Austria](https://www.britannica.com/place/Austria), [Belgium](https://www.britannica.com/place/Belgium), [Bulgaria](https://www.britannica.com/place/Bulgaria), [Croatia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Croatia), [Cyprus](https://www.britannica.com/place/Cyprus), the [Czech Republic](https://www.britannica.com/place/Czech-Republic), [Denmark](https://www.britannica.com/place/Denmark), [Estonia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Estonia), [Finland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Finland), [France](https://www.britannica.com/place/France), [Germany](https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany), [Greece](https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece), [Hungary](https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary), [Ireland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Ireland), [Italy](https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy), [Latvia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia), [Lithuania](https://www.britannica.com/place/Lithuania), [Luxembourg](https://www.britannica.com/place/Luxembourg), [Malta](https://www.britannica.com/place/Malta), [the Netherlands](https://www.britannica.com/place/Netherlands), [Poland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Poland), [Portugal](https://www.britannica.com/place/Portugal), [Romania](https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania), [Slovakia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Slovakia), [Slovenia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Slovenia), [Spain](https://www.britannica.com/place/Spain), [Sweden](https://www.britannica.com/place/Sweden), and the [United Kingdom](https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI or OBOR) is defined by

Seth, S. (2019, September 2). Understanding One Belt One Road (OBOR). Retrieved from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/one-belt-one-road-obor.asp/-AV

The One Belt One Road (OBOR), the brainchild of Chinese President Xi Jinping, is an ambitious project that focuses on improving connectivity and cooperation among multiple countries spread across the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Dubbed as the “Project of the Century” by the Chinese authorities, OBOR spans about 78 countries.

We believe the framing for today’s round ought to be net-benefits. Meaning that if the affirmative team can prove joining the BRI would do more good than harm, we ought to win today’s round. We believe that proving good can be done by showing the positive effects on the globe as well as the EU specifically.

### Contention One: Global Welfare

#### Subpoint A: Trade exchanges will boost the global economy

Freund, C., & Ruta, M. (2018, March 29). Belt and Road Initiative. The World Bank BRIEF. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative/-BFI

In our research we have focused on 71 economies geographically located along BRI transport corridors, including China. In 2017, these economies received 35% of global foreign direct investments and accounted for 40% of global merchandise exports. For the 70 BRI “corridor economies” (excluding China), projects in all sectors that are already executed, in implementation, or planned are estimated to amount to US$575 billion. What potential opportunities does the BRI present? If completed, BRI transport projects could reduce travel times along economic corridors by 12%, increase trade between 2.7% and 9.7%, increase income by up to 3.4% and lift 7.6 million people from extreme poverty.

The Straits Times. (2019, April 22). Belt and Road Initiative will benefit world economy: China Daily. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/belt-and-road-initiative-will-benefit-world-economy-china-daily>/-BFI

An increasing number of developing countries that used to be excluded from the globalization process are participating in the initiative and their participation will positively impact the development of the world economy. On the one hand, they will provide a new area for investment from both developed countries and emerging economies, and their development in return will provide a huge market for the world economy. The rapidly increased trade between China and those countries along the Belt and Road routes is a case in point. On the other hand, only with more and more countries becoming involved will economic globalization be able to make the economic cake bigger, from which more countries will benefit.

#### Subpoint B: The BRI serves as a check against poverty

Ruta, M. (2018, May 4). Three Opportunities and Three Risks of the Belt and Road Initiative. Retrieved from https://blogs.worldbank.org/trade/three-opportunities-and-three-risks-belt-and-road-initiative/-BFI

BRI economies account for one-third of global GDP and trade, and close to two-thirds of world population. For some BRI countries, poverty ratios, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line ($1.90 a day), are still high - 25 percent in Kenya, 23 percent in Uzbekistan and Djibouti, and 21 percent in Laos. If BRI projects are successful, they stand to benefit a large number of poor people and huge swaths of the world’s economies, with large positive spillover effects on global welfare.

#### Subpoint C: The BRI promotes global cooperation and unity

Saki, M. A. (2018, November 11). Belt and Road Initiative: Contribution by all, benefits for all. Retrieved from https://en.mehrnews.com/news/139514/Belt-and-Road-Initiative-Contribution-by-all-benefits-for-all/-AV

On the relevance of the initiative to the AU’s Agenda 2063, James Wakiaga, economic advisor at the UN Development Program (UNDP), noted that the BRI is vital to address the infrastructure deficit in Africa. "The Belt and Road Initiative is very important particularly in terms of closing the infrastructure gap… so we need to look for the different sources of financing to Africa's infrastructure to be able to accelerate structural transformation and diversification," Wakiaga told Xinhua. Professor Kassahun Berhanu from Political Science Department of Addis Ababa University said the initiative is envisioned towards increased understanding, enhanced recognition of multiculturalism and diversity, and peaceful collaboration for achieving mutually rewarding goals and objectives. In May 2017, Kenya launched its first Chinese built high-speed railway. It connects Nairobi to the major port city of Mombasa. The 290-mile railway was built by the China Road and Bridge Corporation. It was financed almost completely by the China Eximbank. The railway is planned to extend to Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Huang Kunming, head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said on Nov. 2 that the BRI has turned from a vision into a reality and yielded fruitful results. Huang made the remarks in a meeting with a 256 representatives from 205 media outlets and institutions from 90 countries and international organizations who had attended at the 2018 Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road. In the rapidly changing world, China’s offer to Japan to be involved in the BRI projects can be highly promising. It is highly important in view of Japan’s high technology and experience in overseas projects. In meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who visited Beijing on Oct. 25, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said his country would welcome Japan’s involvement in China’s overseas infrastructure projects. “China welcomes Japan to take part in the Belt and Road Initiative,” Li said, according to the South China Morning Post. Abe also pledged to lift Tokyo’s often-tense relations with Beijing into a “new dimension” in a “new era” of cooperation. Also, during Abe’s meeting with President Xi, China and Japan announced 50 joint infrastructure projects through the Belt and Road Initiative.

It is clear that the BRI has the ability to increase global welfare, alleviate the effects of poverty, and promote global unity. We believe that the EU world greatly benefit from such global connectivity and opportunity for the reasons we shall detail now.

### Contention Two: EU Benefits

#### Subpoint A: Joining the BRI creates a cohesive EU

Telesur News (2019, April 27)., German Minister: EU Nations Should Join Silk Road as Bloc. Retrieved from https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/German-Minister-EU-Nations-Should-Join-Silk-Road-as-Bloc--20190427-0011.html/-AV

Germany says EU nations shouldn't join Belt and Road alone, but as a united trade bloc. More than US$64 billion in deals signed during the Belt and Road summit. Germany's [Economy Minister Peter Altmaier](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/UK-Demands-Brexit-Deal-Change-Irelands-Peace-at-Stake-20190130-0024.html) says that the major countries of the European Union (EU) should sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China to participate in [the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/One-Belt-One-Road-Chinas-Grand-Take-on-Economic-Globalization-20190425-0031.html) as a bloc, rather than individually. During this week's New Silk Road Forum held in Beijing, Altmaier urged EU countries to sign onto the China project as a trade bloc. Currently, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal have individual agreements with China to be a part of the country's international New Silk Road project. During the last EU-China summit held in Brussels April 9, EU leaders did not make it clear that Europe may be willing to participate in the massive infrastructural program.. According to the high-ranking German, Europe is now, "in its great majority" united in its belief that "we can only implement our positions together." Altmaier added: "The big European countries have agreed that we will not sign MoUs individually but rather between the EU and China," adding he had asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to commit himself to the promotion of multilateralism and sustainable development.

Nawaz Gilani , S. A. (2019, April 9). Europe needs to unite with China's Belt & Road Initiative. Retrieved from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/09/WS5cac5f99a3104842260b53b0.html/-AV

A powerful EU-China relationship could have deep advantages for all involved. It is to Europe's benefit to work with China to open up its economy and improve its trade. Development toward a European – China investment agreement by 2020 would be an optimistic sign. Such an accord could open up more economic sectors in China to European firms by eliminating obstacles to market access and lessening separation against foreign direct investors. Europe needs a general approach to safeguard its vital infrastructure. The European Union has been very sluggish to awaken the problems faced by more and more ambitious China. Europe can all the same construct a Sino-European partnership that will deliver all its benefits better in the future. The Belt and Road Initiative makes China an active player in Europe. However, few consider it a plan to challenge the flexible world order, a new Marshall Plan, or a plot to subjugate developing nations; others see the world's biggest development endeavor and the New Silk Road. China has grown its economy for the past many years by constructing infrastructure, like roads, high-speed rail and ports. The Belt and Road Initiative boosts China's infrastructure, which further paves the way for the Chinese people to grow stronger and get their due share in the world, as well. Accordingly, the Gezhouba Group, the China Railway Group and the China Communications Construction Company, for example, have become big names in the Belt and Road, using government capital and projects overseas to increase business growth. The Belt and Road is way out for very large investment capital and Chinese firms serious to keep the economic machinery of China boosted up. Consequently, major investments of the Belt and Road expand ports and terminals mainly for Chinese goods. China's infrastructure projects largely concentrate on bringing raw materials to Chinese industry and introducing Chinese goods to emerging markets in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe. The primary focus of infrastructure in South and Southeast Asia will give China routes through Myanmar and Pakistan, including pipelines for oil supplies and railways for goods, and finally tourists. Xi paid a three-day visit to Italy beginning March 22. The visit came at a time when Italy was facing a complicated set of economic and political problems. These resulted, in part, from the country accepting of Xi's Belt and Road Initiative. Italy became the first member of the 'Group of Seven' rich nations to take that step. China's huge economic initiatives drive a split in the economic alliance that once ruled the globe. It is a big blow to the Trump administration, which has been very harsh regarding the Belt and Road Initiative. Thoughtful on the Chinese move into Italy, John Bolton, the hawkish national security adviser in the White House, issued a strong criticism. China began with a huge effort by building a new dock at the deep water Trieste port built by the China Communications Construction Company that would make the landmark port the Chinese gateway into Europe. President Xi's visit coincided with the observance of the 300th anniversary of Emperor Charles VI of Austria declaring Trieste to be a free port. Italy went ahead and signed an agreement that would make it officially a part of the BRI investment program. Zeno D'Auguston, the president of the Trieste Port Authority, said it was only natural that Italians were looking at China because the Trump administration had withdrawn from the world. China is gearing up for EU-China Summit, set to take place on Tuesday in Brussels. It weakens the position of the United States in its battle with China over trade and global leadership. Both Italian and French businesses benefited from deals with China. Through its new MoU with Beijing, Italy seeks more market access in China for Italian companies and "Made in Italy" products, as well as more Chinese investments in Italy under the new structure. Italian Deputy Premier Luigi Di Maio said the potential value of those business accords with the Chinese is as much as €20 billion, giving the economy a much-needed boost. The business deals involve several firms, including energy giant Eni SpA, gas pipeline operator Snam SpA, engineering company Ansaldo Energia SpA, and bank Intesa Sanpaolo SpA. They also include an agreement between the ports of Trieste and Genoa and the China Communications Construction Co. Likewise, during President Xi's visit to Paris, he and French President Emmanuel Macron announced a number of deals between their respective countries totaling about €40 billion, including deals to buy 300 Airbus aircraft for a reported €30 billion, while French energy company EDF signed a €1 billion-contract with the China Energy Investment Corporation to develop an offshore wind farm. Energy equipment manufacturer Schneider Electric, banking giant BNP Paribas and shipbuilder CMA CGM also signed deals with Chinese companies worth some €8 billion collectively. EU leaders are stronger together and aware of the importance of bringing the EU into the picture. Macron invited German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to Paris to meet with Xi Jinping. A strong EU-China relationship could have deep advantages for all involved. It is in Europe's fascination to strengthen the rules-based international order, by working with China to open up its economy. If there is something EU leaders can agree upon, it is that cooperation with China must prevail over confrontation.

#### Subpoint B: The BRI is good for EU politics

Romei, V. (2018, January 22). What will the EU look like after Brexit? . Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/dec6968c-f6ca-11e7-8715-e94187b3017e/-BFI

According to the findings, the UK’s scheduled 2019 departure is likely to translate into higher growth figures for the bloc as well as stronger export figures and savings rates. But Brexit would also leave the EU poorer and more afflicted by joblessness and low productivity than before. Such figures are not the result of conjecture about the future. They are the statistical effect of removing Britain from aggregate EU data in a status quo scenario. Losing such a big economy — the second biggest in the bloc after Germany and accounting for 12 percent of EU gross domestic product — will inevitably have a significant impact on the bloc as a whole.

Thus, it is up to the EU to make very careful decisions about how it unifies its member states going forward.

Rose, M. (2018, January 8). China's new 'Silk Road' cannot be one-way, France's Macron says. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-

france/chinas-new-silk-road-cannot-be-one-way-frances-macron-says-idUSKBN1EX0FU/-AV

British Finance Minister Philip Hammond said in December Britain, which is quitting the European Union, wanted closer cooperation with China over the Belt and Road scheme. Macron, 40, has said Europe should not be “naive” in its trade relations, pushing in Brussels for more stringent anti-dumping rules against imports of cheap Chinese steel. In June, he urged the European Commission to build a system for screening investments in strategic sectors from outside the bloc, which drew criticism from Beijing. In Xian, Macron said he hoped EU-Chinese relations could have a new start, based on “balanced rules”, after acknowledging there had been mistrust and “legitimate questions” in China as well as fears amongst Europeans. Europe was now united and ready to cooperate with China after years of crisis-management and economic stagnation, Macron said. “What I came to tell you, is that Europe is back,” he added. The French president, who is travelling with a delegation of 50 businessmen, is hoping to gain more access for French companies to Chinese

### Contention Three: Diseases

#### Subpoint A: Connectivity

Chen J, Bergquist R, Zhou X-N, Xue J-B, Qian M-B (2019) Combating infectious disease epidemics through China’s Belt and Road Initiative. PLoS Negl Trop Dis 13(4): e0007107. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107/-AV

Although the BRI is primarily economic, it also includes important health dimensions. The Healthy China 2030 plan, promulgated in 2016, considers health as one of the national policy priorities, and the Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization (WHO), signed in 2017, which promotes global health security and development along the terms of the initiative [[5](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref005), [6](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref006)]. Based on these agreements, the building of a Health Silk Road has become a core task leading to an extensive engagement in global health development [[7](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref007), [8](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref008)]. During the Belt and Road High-Level Meeting for Health Cooperation: Towards a Health Silk Road, held in August 2017 in Beijing, the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, positively commented on the initiative, saying that it may become the stimulus needed to drive our united activities towards universal health coverage (UHC) and that it contains the necessary fundamentals, such as infrastructure building, access to medicines, and human resources, needed to build a platform for sharing experience and promoting best practices [[5](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref005)]. The Health Silk Road concept establishes the importance of promoting cooperation among the related countries in the prevention and control of communicable diseases, medical system and policies, healthcare capacity building, staff training and exchange, traditional medicine, and health education as well as disaster relief, aid, and poverty reduction for health [[1](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref001)]. In this way, building the contextual Health Silk Road would advance political commitment to mobilise all resources for better health in the world.

#### Subpoint B: Increasing Epidemics

Chen J, Bergquist R, Zhou X-N, Xue J-B, Qian M-B (2019) Combating infectious disease epidemics through China’s Belt and Road Initiative. PLoS Negl Trop Dis 13(4): e0007107. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107/-AV

The world is currently witnessing increasingly complex epidemics as well as natural disasters with a rising impact on both human health and the economy [[1](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref001)]. Growing commercial trade and more frequent personal exchange following the implementation of the BRI may amplify infectious disease transmission or inadvertently introduce emerging infectious diseases, leading to an increased burden for local medical systems. Moreover, infectious diseases resulting from poverty disproportionately affect poor and marginalised communities, which remains a more serious hurdle to achieving the SDGs and UHC [[9](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref009), [10](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref010)]. This is the reason why the initiative has made the need to combat infectious diseases a priority for social and economic development. The implementation of the BRI is expected to facilitate progress in eliminating infectious diseases such as the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and 17 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), which make up SDG 3.3. It has also gained the support of WHO, which has proposed a strategic cooperation with the BRI [[5](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref005), [6](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref006), [11](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref011)]. Taking the opportunities provided by this initiative, action for combating the diseases will be conducted through the sharing of information and experience and cooperative disease control programmes, including interventions and research innovation [[5](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref005)]. It will also mediate resources including the building of medical infrastructures, funding support, training of staff, and delivery of emergency healthcare [[1](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref001), [10](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref010), [12](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref012)]. The initiative provides guidance for stronger health collaboration, which should hopefully break the vicious cycle of poverty and infectious disease [[13](https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007107#pntd.0007107.ref013)].

# Additional AFF Cards

### A2: Poverty

Maliszewska, Maryla and van der Mensbrugghe, Dominique, The Belt and Road Initiative: Economic, Poverty and Environmental Impacts (April 10, 2019). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 8814. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3369989>/-AV

China's Belt and Road Initiative aims to improve connectivity between China and more than 70 countries through infrastructure investment and regional cooperation. The initiative has the potential to accelerate significantly the rate of economic integration and development in the region, as trade costs decline. The goals of this paper are to (i) study the impacts of infrastructure improvements on Belt and Road Initiative and non? Belt and Road Initiative countries' trade flows, growth, and poverty; and (ii) suggest policies that would help maximize gains from the Belt and Road Initiative? Induced trade cost declines. The analysis captures the trade costs reductions as a result of infrastructure improvements. The findings indicate that the Belt and Road Initiative would be largely beneficial. First, global income increases by 0.7 percent (in 2030 relative to the baseline). This translates into almost half a trillion dollars in 2014 prices and market exchange rates. The Belt and Road Initiative area captures 82 percent of the gain, with the largest percent gains in East Asia. Second, globally, the Belt and Road Initiative could contribute to lifting 7.6 million people from extreme poverty and 32 million from moderate poverty. Third, the initiative would lead to a modest increase in global carbon dioxide emissions, with a complex set of positive and negative outcomes at the national level for other types of emissions.

### A2: China Doesn’t Need EU Money

Horia Curtin, 2017, A PIVOT TO EUROPE: CHINA’S BELT-AND-ROAD BALANCING ACT, <http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/publicatii/Final_Policy-Brief-5_Horia-Ciurtin-A-Pivot-to-Europe_web.pdf>, Mr Horia Ciurtin is a legal adviser in the field of international investment law and international arbitration; Managing Editor of the EFILA Blog which appears under the auspices of the European Federation for Investment Law and Arbitration (Brussels). He is also an Expert for New Strategy Center (Bucharest), a prominent Romanian think-tank in the field of strategy and international relations. In 2017, he co-founded DAVA | Strategic Analysis, a think-tank providing indepth strategic, cultural and geo-economic analyses. -DebateUs.org

However impressive the sums might appear at a first glance, they fall short of the needed amount. The first stages of developing the Belt-and-Road require no less than $3 trillion (according to some accounts, even more). And this is a task that China – despite its constant growth and increasing economic power – cannot accomplish alone.36 It really needs co-interested parties. And that is where the European Union (with its unbearable economic force) comes into the spotlight: it is not supposed to be just a “passive” destination at the end of the road, but also a co-owner in this joint venture. Without European cash – from public and private sources – it is highly improbable that other actors could feasibly join China in funding the initiative. Russia, Iran, Turkey or Kazakhstan (or even Japan and India37) are in an entirely different economic league than what is needed for such a massive project. For a path to Europe to emerge, Europe itself is needed along the way. In reality, EU-based institutions already are the largest lenders in the region (see Figure 3 below). And Europe is highly interested in developing infrastructure and connectivity with its marginal areas…. However, as shown before, China cannot financially and logistically manage such an ambitious project on its own. And, this time, prominent regional actors such as Russia, Iran and Turkey (who are unable) or India and Japan (who are unwilling) cannot be counted upon to build the Belt and Road. The only possible – and the truly necessary – partner is the European Union. The path to Europe can open up only with Europe’s support and financial participation

### Europe Determines the Success of the BRI

Enrico Fardella, Tenured Associate Professor and Executive Director, Centre for Mediterranean Area Studies, History Department, Peking University, China. Email: enricofardella@gmail.com; Giorgio Prodi, Associate, Professor. Department of Economics and Management, Ferrara University, Italy, 2017, China and the World Economy, <http://en.iwep.org.cn/papers/papers_papers/201711/W020171109393879132046.pdf>, The Belt and Road Initiative Impact on Europe: An Italian Perspective/- DebateUs.org

Although Europe and the Mediterranean seem like the terminal point of the BRI, they will certainly be a key factor for the success of the project. Europe is China’s largest trading partner (bilateral trade reached €515bn in 2016 [source: Eurostat EU28 data]) and this makes the investments in infrastructure along the Belt and Road, especially those in the Mediterranean, economically viable and complementary with the investments made in Asia.

### A2: European Econ

Horia Curtin, 2017, A PIVOT TO EUROPE: CHINA’S BELT-AND-ROAD BALANCING ACT, <http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/publicatii/Final_Policy-Brief-5_Horia-Ciurtin-A-Pivot-to-Europe_web.pdf>, Mr Horia Ciurtin is a legal adviser in the field of international investment law and international arbitration; Managing Editor of the EFILA Blog which appears under the auspices of the European Federation for Investment Law and Arbitration (Brussels). He is also an Expert for New Strategy Center (Bucharest), a prominent Romanian think-tank in the field of strategy and international relations. In 2017, he co-founded DAVA | Strategic Analysis, a think-tank providing indepth strategic, cultural and geo-economic analyses./-DebateUs.org

On the other hand, the European Union seeks to refashion itself as a global economic power, but not lacking in traditional foreign affairs influence. For this purpose, it needs other players to recognize it as such and not simply demise it as a larger-than-life “special purpose vehicle” of its **(influent)** Member States. **And** the collaboration with China is very well suited in this regard. While the United States and Russia look at Europe from a more traditional – state-to-state – perspective, China is prepared to give full credit to European Union institutions**. As the two parties themselves acknowledged in the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation,** both of them are “important actors in a multipolar world, **[…]** shar[ing] responsibility for promoting peace, prosperity and sustainable development for the benefit of all”.**41 Thus, with the advent of the Trump administration and doubts of a renewed American trade protectionism, the European Union reached out even further to the Chinese partner. While TTIP negotiations over the Atlantic reached a stalemate, and were temporarily put on halt, the EU did not stop working with China on a comprehensive Investment Agreement, reaching a 14th Round this summer.42**