

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001983/24
to the Commission
Mathilde Androuët (Pfe)
(8 October 2024)**

Subject: Are our future trade relations with China dependent on its ties to Russia?

Beijing has lodged a complaint with the World Trade Organisation against the EU's customs duties for Chinese car manufacturers following an anti-subsidy investigation.

By way of appeasement, the Commission announced on 20 August 2024 that the duties could be lowered ⁽¹⁾. The Commission is also concerned about the threat of countermeasures on EU brandy ⁽²⁾, and China's anti-dumping investigations into EU pork and dairy exports, which it 'will challenge vigorously in all available venues' ⁽³⁾.

On 13 September 2024, Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, explained that 'the Union is determined to continue to trade with China' and to 'avoid a trade war', but that 'future relations with China will also depend on how it behaves with regard to the Ukrainian conflict', as 'our greatest concern and geopolitical threat is Russia' ⁽⁴⁾.

In the Commission's view, will the scope and volume of our trade with China, and the activation of mechanisms to protect our industries, depend in future on Beijing hypothetically distancing itself from Moscow?

Submitted: 8.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(6 January 2025)**

China remains a vital trading partner: the third largest after the United States and the United Kingdom, trading EUR 740 billion in goods in 2023, and EUR 100 billion in services.

However, EU-China relations have become increasingly complex. Russia's war against Ukraine is an existential threat to Europe and China's support to Russia negatively impacts EU-China relations.

Since 2019, the EU has maintained its 'multifaceted approach' to China. However, its trajectory over the last years, and in particular its support to Russia and economic imbalances, have shifted the balance towards competition and rivalry.

China's support to Russia — both economic and diplomatic — impacts EU security and, thus, has its bearing on the overall EU relationship with China.

The EU has repeatedly raised its concerns about China's relation with Russia, including with China directly, and will continue to do so. Unfortunately, the EU has not seen any changes in China's approach towards Russia.

The EU seeks constructive engagement with China and wants to address and mitigate risks in a complex political environment. This includes Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, but also addressing EU's critically unbalanced trade relationship, as well as China's industrial overcapacity.

This has led the President to develop the de-risking concept — aiming at addressing, in a targeted way, those areas where Chinese practices put EU's competitiveness, economy, technological autonomy or security of supply at risk.

¹ 'EU lowers tariffs on China-made EVs, signals softening trade stance', Thomas Moller-Nielsen, *Euractiv*, 21 August 2024.

² 'China holds off on EU brandy tariffs but alleges dumping and damage', Sofia Sanchez Manzanaro, *Euractiv*, 29 August 2024.

³ 'L'UE saisit l'OMC contre une enquête chinoise visant ses produits laitiers' (*L'Opinion* with AFP), 23 September 2024.

⁴ 'Borrell: riformare l'Unione è difficile ma inevitabile', *Euractiv Italia*, 13 September 2024, <https://euractiv.it/section/mondo/interview/borrell-riformare-lunione-e-difficile-ma-inevitabile/>.