RELAȚIILE UE CU CHINA ÎN DOMENIILE POLITIC, ECONOMIC ȘI PROTECȚIEI DREPTURILOR OMULUI

THE EU RELATIONS WITH CHINA IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION FIELDS

Laurențiu SUHOLITCO
student, Facultatea Drept
Universitatea de Stat din Moldova
e-mail: suholitcolaurentiu@gmail.com

Rezumat: *Relația dintre Uniunea Europeană (UE) și China este o dinamică complexă, caracterizată de atât de cooperare, cât și de competiție. Acest articol explorează trei domenii cheie de implicare: politic, economic și protecția drepturilor omului. În sfera politică, UE și China colaborează în privința preocupărilor comune precum schimbările climatice, securitatea regională și multilateralismul, menținând un dialog constructiv în ciuda abordărilor diferite. Cu toate acestea, UE exprimă rezerve cu privire la politicile interne ale Chinei, în special cu privire la problemele de drepturile omului, pledând pentru îmbunătățirea tratamentului minorităților și respectarea principiilor democratice. China a devenit partenerul comercial predominant al UE, schimbul bilateral de bunuri totalizând 696 miliarde de euro în 2021, reprezentând 16% din totalul comerțului UE. Relațiile economice au cunoscut tensiuni, în special în ceea ce privește accesul pe piață, drepturile de proprietate intelectuală și subvențiile de stat, reflectând apelurile pentru o concurență echitabilă. Preocupările privind drepturile omului, inclusiv tratamentul uigurilor, tibetanilor și al altora, rămân puncte de dezbatere. Articolul subliniază interacțiunea complexă dintre cooperare și competiție, îndemnând UE să apere drepturile omului, să asigure o concurență economică corectă și să-și diversifice lanțurile de aprovizionare în timp ce interacționează cu China.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *Relații UE-China, Implicare Politică, Relații Economice, Protecția Drepturilor Omului, Comerț, Competiție, Cooperare, Multilateralism.*

Abstract: *The relationship between the European Union (EU) and China is a multifaceted dynamic characterized by both cooperation and competition. This article delves into three key areas of engagement: political, economic, and human rights protection. In the political realm, the EU and China collaborate on shared concerns like climate change, regional security, and multilateralism, maintaining constructive dialogue despite differing approaches. However, the EU voices reservations about China's domestic policies, particularly human rights issues, advocating for improved treatment of minorities and adherence to democratic principles. China has emerged as the EU's predominant trading partner, with bilateral goods exchange totalling €696 billion in*

2021, constituting 16% of the EU's total trade. Economic relations have seen tensions, notably in market access, intellectual property rights, and state subsidies, reflecting calls for equitable competition. Human rights concerns, including the treatment of Uighurs, Tibetans, and others, remain contentious points. The article underscores the nuanced interplay of cooperation and competition, urging the EU to uphold human rights, ensure fair economic competition, and diversify supply chains while engaging with China.

Keywords: *EU-China Relations, Political Engagement, Economic Relations, Human Rights Protection, Trade, Competition, Cooperation, Multilateralism.*

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and China is complex, multifaceted, and can be characterized by cooperation and competition. The EU's engagement with China takes place across a wide range of areas, including political, economic, and human rights protection fields. In this article, we will explore these three areas and assess the current state of EU-China relations. In the political sphere, the EU has been engaging with China on various issues of mutual concern, such as climate change, regional security, and multilateralism. Despite some differences in their approaches and interests, the two sides have managed to maintain a constructive dialogue and work together on certain issues. However, the EU has been critical of China's domestic policies, particularly its human rights record, and has urged China to improve its treatment of minorities, such as Uighurs in Xinjiang, and to respect civil liberties and democratic principles. Since the 17th century, China has been an important power for European countries to cooperate with and trade with. Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU, said on Monday 15 Feb that China became the EU's main trading partner last year, overtaking the United States in 2020. In 2022, China was the third largest partner for EU exports of goods (9.0 %) and the largest partner for EU imports of goods (20.8 %) [1].

China is the most important trading partner of the European Union: In 2021, the EU and China traded goods worth € 696 bn (imports and exports). This represents 16% of all EU trade in goods. The share of the United States amounted to approximately 15%. Compared to 2000, the proportion of trade with the United States has decreased significantly, whereas China's share of EU trade has nearly tripled from 4.4% to 16.2% [2]. However, there have been some tensions in their economic relations, particularly in areas such as market access, intellectual property rights, and state subsidies. The EU has been advocating for a level playing field and fair competition, while China has been pushing for greater recognition of its market economy status and more access to EU markets.

The EU has also expressed concerns over China's state subsidies, particularly in strategic sectors such as steel and aluminum, which it argues distort global

markets and harm EU industry. In response, the EU has imposed tariffs on Chinese goods. Human rights protection has been a key point of contention between the EU and China, with the EU being a vocal advocate of human rights and democratic principles. The EU has expressed concerns over China's treatment of minorities, such as the Uighurs, Tibetans, and Mongolians, and has called for an end to the repression of civil society, freedom of expression, and media freedom. The EU has also been vocal in its condemnation of China's crackdown on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement and has imposed sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for human rights violations. China, on the other hand, has accused the EU of interfering in its internal affairs and has denied allegations of human rights abuses [3].

Conclusions. In recent years, EU-China relations have been strained by several factors, including China's increasingly assertive foreign policy, its crackdown on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, and its treatment of minorities in Xinjiang. In response, the EU has taken a more assertive approach to its relations with China, The EU has also sought to strengthen its strategic autonomy, diversify its supply chains, and reduce its reliance on Chinese technology. At the same time, the EU has continued to engage with China in areas of mutual concern, such as climate change and regional security. EU-China relations are characterized by a mix of cooperation and competition, with significant differences and tensions in their relations across the political, economic, and human rights protection fields. As the two sides continue to engage with each other, it is important for the EU to maintain its commitment to human rights and democratic principles, and to promote a level playing field and fair competition in their economic relations. It is also crucial for the EU to diversify its supply chains and reduce its reliance on Chinese technology while continuing to engage with China in areas of mutual concern.

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