

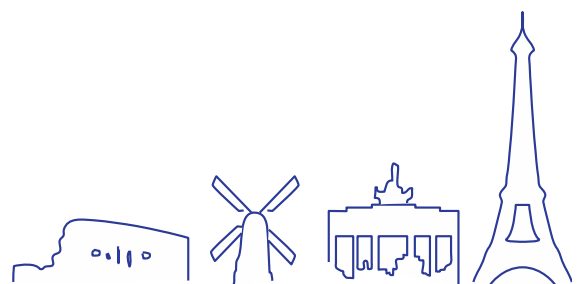
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# 2018 EU-China Tourism Year

## Press Toolkit

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AUGUST 2017



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# 1. General Information

China is the world's largest travel market in terms of expenditure and the second largest in terms of outbound travel. European destinations are strengthening their position in this market.

On 12 July 2016, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Keqiang, [announced](#) that 2018 will be the EU-China Tourism Year (ECTY). This initiative provides "a unique opportunity to increase visitors' flows and investments on both sides" (Elżbieta Bieńkowska, the European Commissioner responsible for tourism, at the European Tourism Forum in Bratislava on 11 October 2016). It is also "the occasion for European and Chinese citizens to better know and appreciate each other, contributing to the objectives of the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue". (Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner responsible for education and culture, at the 'European Tourism Day' in Brussels on 29 November 2016).

The European Commission is preparing the ECTY in close cooperation with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Its main priorities are to:

- show what the EU has to offer to Chinese visitors by supporting various cooperative marketing campaigns;
- facilitate business summits;
- organise business-to-business (B2B) matchmaking meetings for tourism operators at the most important fairs.

Key European associations representing the travel and tourism industry have warmly welcomed this announcement. Many of them will contribute to the key events, together with partners that will be selected among leading European, Chinese and international companies.

Partners are recruited by the [European Travel Commission \(ETC\)](#), mandated by the European Commission to play a central role in cooperative marketing campaigns in particular.

The EU is preparing a programme of major events with a proposed release date in mid-September 2017. It will include more EU China B2B matchmaking events, EU-China Business Summits on various topics, high level conferences, events linked to cultural tourism, etc. All confirmed events can be looked up on the official [2018 EU - China Tourism Year Website](#).

More information:

- ▲ [The European Travel Commission welcomes the designation of 2018 as the EU-China Year for Tourism](#)

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▲ [European Tourism industry welcomes the designation of 2018 as EU-China Year of Tourism](#)

## 2. EU-China Relations, Visa Facilitation and Approved Destination Status Policy

As two of the three biggest economies and leading traders in the world, the EU and China have a deep and comprehensive partnership. Having established official diplomatic ties in 1975, the EU and China can now build on a broad-based framework of bilateral relations. Under the umbrella of the annual EU-China Summit, [EU-China relations](#) today encompass over sixty substantive and sectoral dialogues. The [EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation](#), adopted in 2013, is the highest-level joint document in EU-China relations, setting out cooperation in the areas of peace, prosperity, sustainable development and people-to-people exchanges. More information [here](#).

The European Union and China are committed to making progress on visa facilitation. The negotiations were [formally launched in Beijing](#) on 4th May 2017 by Commissioner Avramopoulos and his Chinese counterpart.

An agreement on cooperation in combating illegal migration is being negotiated in parallel. This point is also on the agenda of the EU China Summit.

All EU countries are included in the [Approved Destination Status \(ADS\) Agreement](#), concluded in 2004.

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### 3. Air Connectivity and Flights

China is the 10th largest extra-EU market, with more than 8 million passengers having travelled between the EU and China in 2015 (Eurostat; 2016 figures expected in September). There are currently about 150 different routes between airports in the EU and in China and approximately 2500 scheduled flights every month. More than 80% of the seats offered link either Beijing or Shanghai with destinations in Europe. In the EU, Frankfurt and Paris are the two biggest destinations, together accounting for 40% of the seats. Good connections are also available from China to London, Amsterdam, Rome, Helsinki, Munich and Madrid.

The EU and China are working together to ensure that every EU airline can benefit from the opportunities of the existing bilateral air transport agreements between individual EU MS and China (EU designation). This flexibility would allow, for instance, an Italian airline to offer flights from Germany to China, which in turn could further enhance connectivity. More information [here](#).

In March 2016, the European Commission was authorised to [open negotiations with China](#) in view of concluding [Bilateral Air Safety Agreement](#) (BASA). Such agreements enhance air safety worldwide and contribute to the global competitiveness of the European aviation industry by reducing red tape and facilitating exports.

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## 4. Private Partners for the ECTY

On the European Union side, the European Commission is supporting the marketing role of the [European Travel Commission](#) (ETC). ETC is preparing cooperative marketing campaigns advertising trans-European itineraries and EU destinations specifically for the Chinese market. These initiatives will be achieved together with major EU and Chinese private partners that ETC is recruiting. Please refer to the Partners section of the 2018 EU-China Tourism Year website for more information.