Agreed in 2016 by the Chinese Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission, the 2018 EU-China Tourism Year (ECTY) was a unique opportunity to attract more Chinese travellers off the beaten path, stimulate European investment in China, and give extra impetus to EU-China visa facilitation (negotiation launched in May 2017) and air connectivity (Horizontal Agreement initialled in Dec 2017).

The Year was implemented by the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry for Culture and Tourism.

What follows illustrate more than 270 actions and events (co)initiated and/or (co)funded by the EU.

**ENGAGING WITH CHINESE AUTHORITIES**

15 high level events where EU authorities held bilateral discussions on ways to develop EU-China tourism cooperation in a sustainable and balanced way.

In the context of multisectoral events (EU-China Annual Summit, Strategic Dialogue, High Level Economic Dialogue, People-to-People Dialogue ... ) and dedicated events (ECTY Official Opening event in Venice, ECTY Closing event in Xi’an, global events where the EU was the guest of honor such as the Global Tourism Economic Forum in Macao or China International Travel Mart in Shanghai, ...).

**LEARNING HOW TO ATTRACT AND WELCOME CHINESE**

- **Webinars**: 55
- **Reports, publications & videos**: 28
- **Educational conferences**: 10
- **Sets of infographics**: 6

50,000 users for ECTY website specially designed to mobilize EU tourism actors (companies, museums, destination marketing organisations ...) and train them.

"Ready for China" section on ECTY website with 100 items available for free including Chinese Travel Market Studies & Statistics, recommendations on how to do business with Chinese partners and welcome Chinese travellers, promotional materials, ...

**FINDING NEW BUSINESS PARTNERS**

- **1030** EU operators + **770** Chinese operators
- **21,000** one to one meetings
- **66%** declaring positive impact on their work in China
- **+27%** increase in business anticipated by EU operators
- **+36%** increase in European products listed by Chinese operators

Extra visibility for European participants at dedicated EU booths during major Trade Fairs (CITM, COTTM, GTEF, ITB, WTM, etc).

10 large Business-to-Business Matchmaking Events between European and Chinese operators in 2017 and 2018 (Beijing, Berlin, Chengdu, London, Macao, Shanghai, Venice, Xi’an).

https://eutravelpartnerships.org/events/
The EU co-funded workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses dedicated to the development of off-track and off-season products. The (trans-European) niches selected include:

- **Tourism in European Heritage Cities** with the Sorbonne, Bologna and Leuven universities
- Trans-European itineraries around **European Spas, European Route of Ceramics, Destination Napoleon, European carnivals** (100 millions television viewers & 7,500 media reports for joint parade), ...
- **Youth Tourism** with the EU Federation of Youth Hostels Associations, **Rural Tourism** with the European Congress on Rural Tourism

### DEVELOPING NEW TOURISM NICHES

**Priority was given to Online Tools preferred by Chinese Free Independent Travellers**, the main target of the EU campaign. Set up by the European Travel Commission, the Joint Promotion Platform alone funded 62 marketing actions thanks to the financial support of the EU, with more than 25% of its contents dedicated to coastal and maritime tourism.

**Covered by Chinese national media, the main Offline Actions** included Shanghai’s Tourism Parade, European Christmas Market in Chengdu, exhibition on EU Hidden Gems and 3D show using World Heritage site as a giant screen in Xian.

- **Europe Pavillons on the main Chinese Online Travelling Platforms** (Ctrip, Tuniu & Tongcheng), **custom-made digital travel guides** (MaFengWo) and **360° videos** of each Member State [http://visiteurope.com.cn/media/video.html](http://visiteurope.com.cn/media/video.html)
- **1st EU-China Virtual Travel Fair on Cultural Tourism** through a fully immersive 3D platform. 900 participants, including 600 Chinese businesses interacting with exhibitors representing 22 trans-European itineraries, 150 Eden destinations and the 2019 European Capitals of Smart Tourism. [https://www.ecvtf.org/en/](https://www.ecvtf.org/en/)
- **Wechat Mini-Programme** (Tencent) providing information on travelling through Europe & advanced functionalities including visa application information, on-line vat refund, automatic translator and emergency call.

| 450 millions views of EU marketing materials on top Chinese Online Platforms | 23 EU countries represented among co-exhibitors of "Europe" booths at top Fairs |
| 85% Satisfaction rate of co-exhibitors |
| 15 Trans-European Familiarisation Trips covering 18 European countries |
| 12 Key Opinion Leaders and ECTY Ambassadors (singers & actors) hosted |
| 8 Trans-European campaigns in China |

### PROMOTING LESSER-KNOWN EUROPEAN ITINERARIES

Grass-roots and festive initiatives included the **EU-China Light Bridge with more than 100 landmarks** illuminated in red in Europe to celebrate the Chinese Lantern Festival and in blue in China on the occasion of Europe Day.

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Thanks to the joint efforts of European Institutions, Member States and the European tourism industry, the EU managed to attract more Chinese travellers off season and off the beaten path.

Building on the Tourism Year’s good results, the EU intends to deepen the EU-China Dialogue on Sustainable Tourism launched in 2016 and support more EU-China B2B matchmaking events and promotion campaigns in 2019-20.

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE CHINESE MARKET

The number of Chinese going overseas has increased dramatically since 2000. China is now the world’s largest outbound market in terms of travellers and expenditure (UNWTO), yet only 9.3% of Chinese hold a passport.

**Main destinations**
- Regional: Japan, South Korea & Thailand
- Long-haul: Europe, the United States and Australia

China is the 3rd largest source of international visitors for the EU after the US & Russia (ETC). This market grows faster that global international trips, projected to increase on average by 3.3% a year (UNWTO).

**10 billion euros**
Chinese expenditure on travel services in the EU in 2017 (Eurostat)

**2.3 million visas**
issued to Chinese travellers in 2017 giving access to the Schengen area, a third of which allowing for Multiple Entries over 12 months (European Commission)

**28 million nights**
spent by Chinese at tourist accommodation establishments in the EU in 2017 (Eurostat)

**9% of nights**
share of Chinese among travellers from long-haul markets at tourist accommodation establishments in the EU in 2017 (Eurostat)

Chinese travellers' profile

© European Commission (reproduction is authorised, provided that the source is acknowledged)
Joint efforts during the **EU-China Tourism Year** contributed to increase Chinese arrivals by **7.9%** for September-December 2018 as compared to the previous year. The top three fastest growing destinations were Croatia (+59.0%), Sweden (+40.9%), and Malta (+36.3%).

**Bookings from China to the EU for January-April 2019 are up by 16.9%** as compared to last year’s situation, which is well ahead of the increase (9.3%) in Chinese bookings to worldwide destinations (ForwardKeys ©).

The growth in Chinese arrivals and bookings was **strong in the four corners of the EU**. Unsurprisingly, the top 3 performers in volume are the largest countries with the largest tourism sector in the region (ForwardKeys ©). For growth figures per country, see https://ecty2018.org/ready-for-china/.

The EU managed to **attract more Chinese travellers from new source markets** like Chengdu, Shenzen or Xi’an (Tier-2 cities), while still **progressing on well-established markets** like Beijing, Shanghai or Hong-Kong (Tier-1 cities) ForwardKeys ©. Chinese travellers from Tier-2 cities often went to lesser-known destinations, their cities benefiting from direct flights with EU regional airports.