

E.U, China Trade Agreement Opposes Trump's America First Agenda



French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker welcome Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France, March 26, 2019. (Photo: Reuters)

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang assured the European Union that China will stop forcing foreign companies to share sensitive data while operating in China. China also announced that they are ready to discuss new global trading rules on industrial subsidies.

The announcement of the Chinese premier was made at the annual European Union-China leader's meeting. It marked a significant change in China's policy since it now follows similar offers to the United States. The assurance given by China gives hope for European companies planning to operate in the largest market in the world.

Mr. Li said during a news conference that follows the three-hour summit in Brussels that European companies will enjoy the same treatment. He said that they are planning to set a dispute mechanism that will handle the complaints of the companies.

The chair of the Summit Donald Tusk discussed a breakthrough in the relationship between the European Union and China. The two sides agreed to stop forcing the transfer of technologies in exchange for additional investments.

Critics of China, especially the western nations, complained that their companies were being pressured into handing over important technical information to their Chinese joint-venture partners, officials or regulators as a price of operating in the country.

China revised its foreign investment laws last month. The changes allow foreign

companies to work in China with equal rights to local firms. The revision took place after the Chinese President Xi Jinping went back from Europe where Italy joined China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative and France made trade deals.

The joint statement of the two trade giants said that they are recognizing the responsibility of each side to lead by example for an open global economy which is based on multilateral rules. According to Premier Li's statement on his post-summit news conference, the joint statement is not just a general declaratory statement. He added that not only will it be conducive to China's reform and opening up, but also Europe's unity and prosperity.

The agreement between contradicts the United States President Donald Trump's "America First" agenda. It also opposes the attempt of the United States to disrupt the World Trade Organization and its trade war with China.

In the past, European Union members were frustrated with China as they claim that the Asian country failed to keep its promise of opening up its market. In his trip to the continent, the Chinese president answered all the criticisms against them through negotiations with the leaders. French President Emmanuel Macron called for an end to naivety about Chinese power after his meeting with the Chinese president.

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