

The Council

SIGNING

OF

THE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EEC AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

(Brussels, 3 April 1978)

Speech by Mr K.B. ANDERSEN

President in Office of the Council

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark

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Sir,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first of all, Sir, wish you and all members of your delegation a warm welcome to the Council of the European Communities. Your presence in person among us is an event of very special significance. It is in fact the first occasion that the Community institutions have had the honour of receiving a member of the Government of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, the trade agreement which we are to sign in a few moments marks a decisive stage in the positive development which has characterized our relations, two other important milestones of which were the visit to Peking by Sir Christopher SOAMES in 1975 and the accreditation of a Chinese Ambassador to the Community in the same year.

It is our belief that the agreement is going to open up a new era in our trade relations. We have created the framework that is necessary for this purpose: we have undertaken precise mutual commitments to further our trade; a permanent forum has been set up to deal with problems that arise. In trade between the People's Republic of China and the Community there are considerable possibilities as yet unexploited. It will be up to our representatives on the Joint Committee and the economic operators to make the most of the possibilities thus offered to them. We are convinced that, with the support of the government authorities, they will do so.

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I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have contributed to the success of these negotiations. First of all I should like to thank you, Sir, who as we know, have personally taken great interest in the negotiations. I should also like to thank Vice-President HAFERKAMP, our Heads of delegation at official level, Director SUN CHOU-CHANG, and Sir Roy DENMAN and their respective assistants, as well as the representatives of the Member States.

Sir,

Each one of us is aware that today's ceremony has more than merely commercial significance.

As early as 1973 the Heads of State and of Government of the Nine, meeting in Copenhagen, expressed the will to strengthen relations with the Chinese Government. The same will was expressed by the Chinese authorities, and they have for several years followed sympathetically and with interest the development in common within the European Communities. The Nine are pursuing this development in accordance with their traditional friendships, in the awareness that future European society must meet the deepest aspirations of the people, and in the hope that the Community will constitute a factor making for balance and be the focal point for co-operation with all nations regardless of size, culture and social and economic system. We therefore particularly welcome the development of ever closer and more friendly relations with the People's Republic of China and the interest each of us shows in the individual paths along which we have chosen to direct our futures.

As heir to a civilization going back several thousands of years, China has made an invaluable contribution to mankind. This contribution, which has had a considerable effect on the course of world history, has been of very positive significance

for both our spiritual and material wellbeing. Today China plays a major role in international relations.

Through you, Sir, I should like to convey to the Chinese people the esteem and friendship of the people of the Community and the wishes of the citizens of the Community for the good fortune and future of the Chinese people.

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