



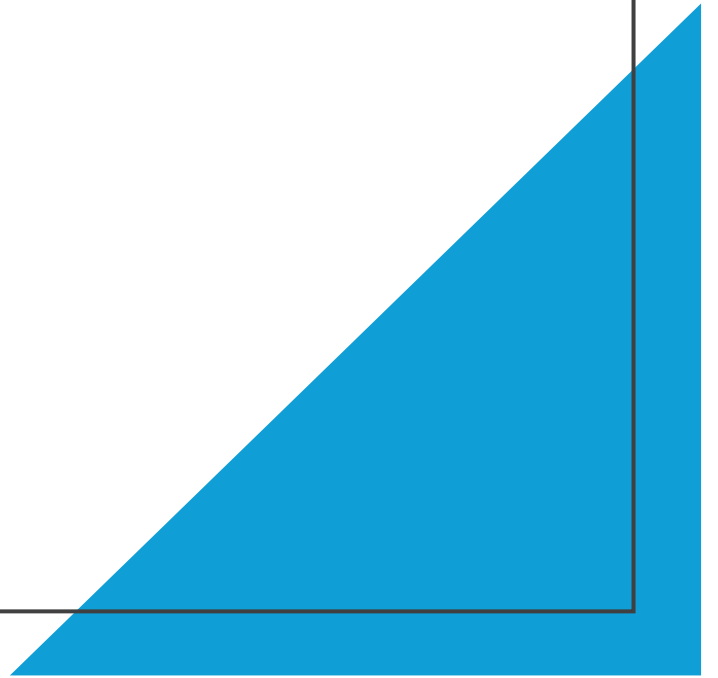
EU and China

Between Rivalry and Competition

By Jona Oelsner, Jose Pedro de la Torre, Tereza Zofiaková

Outline

- Economic sphere and human rights sphere
- Compliance with EU legislation sphere
- Understanding the relationship between the two spheres



Economic co-operation

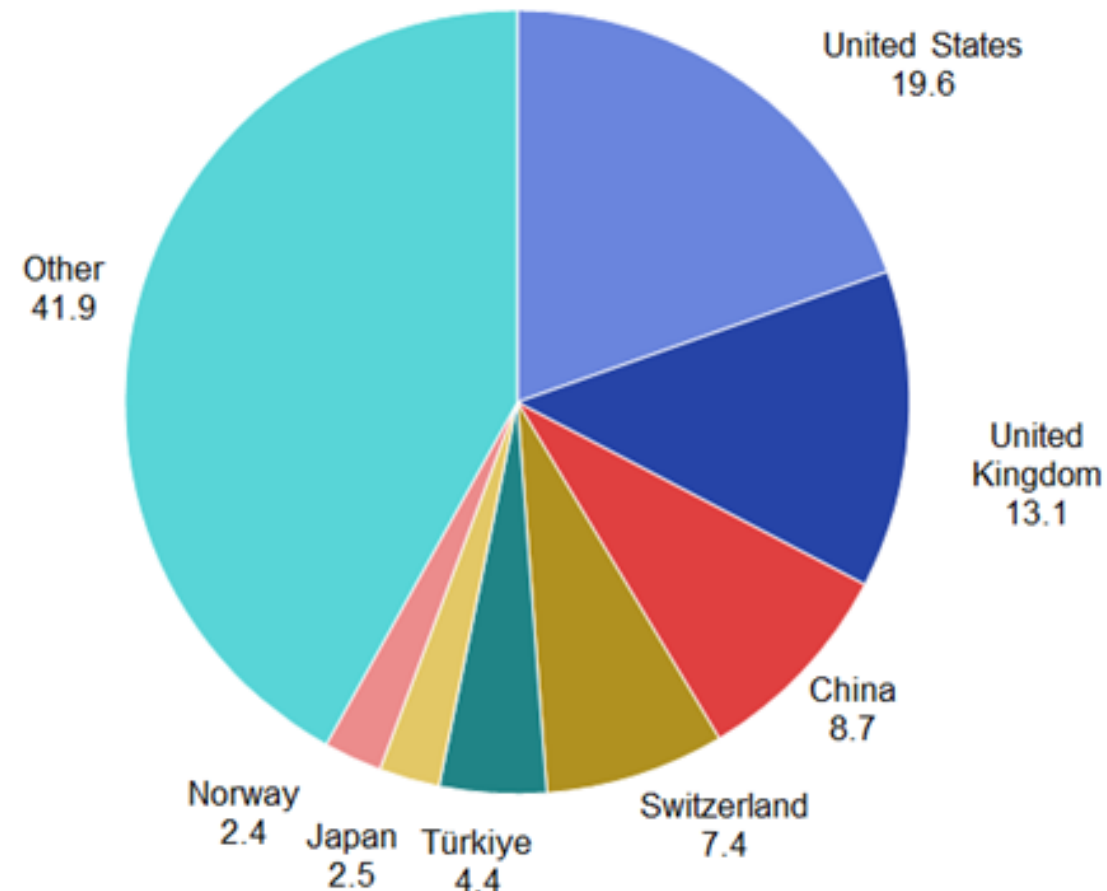
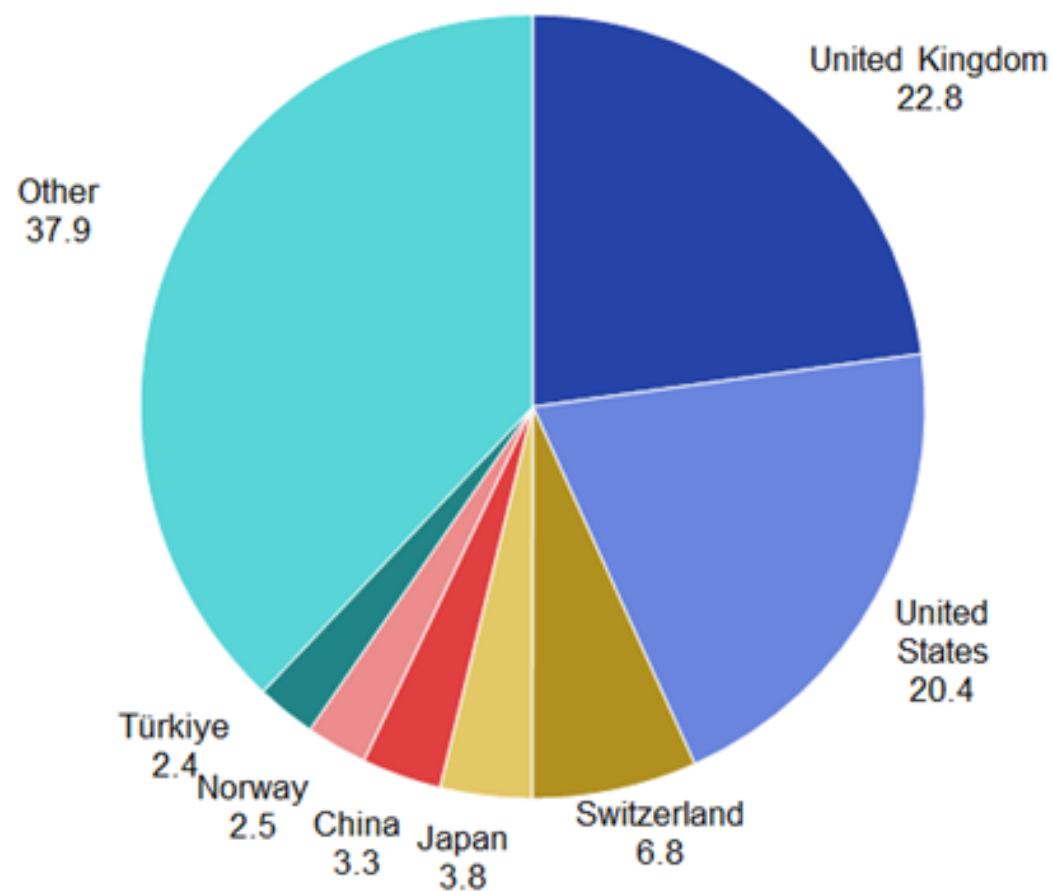
- The EU imported goods worth 519 billion Euros from China in 2023
- EU goods exports to China accounted for 223 billion Euros in 2023
- The EU had a trade deficit of 292 billion Euros with China in 2023
- Bilateral trade has increased significantly in recent decades
- The EU imports Chinese products such as telecommunications equipment, electrical machinery and apparatus, and automatic data-processing machines.
- China imports EU goods like motor cars and vehicles, medicaments, and other machinery.

EU exports of goods, 2002 and 2023

(%)

2002

2023

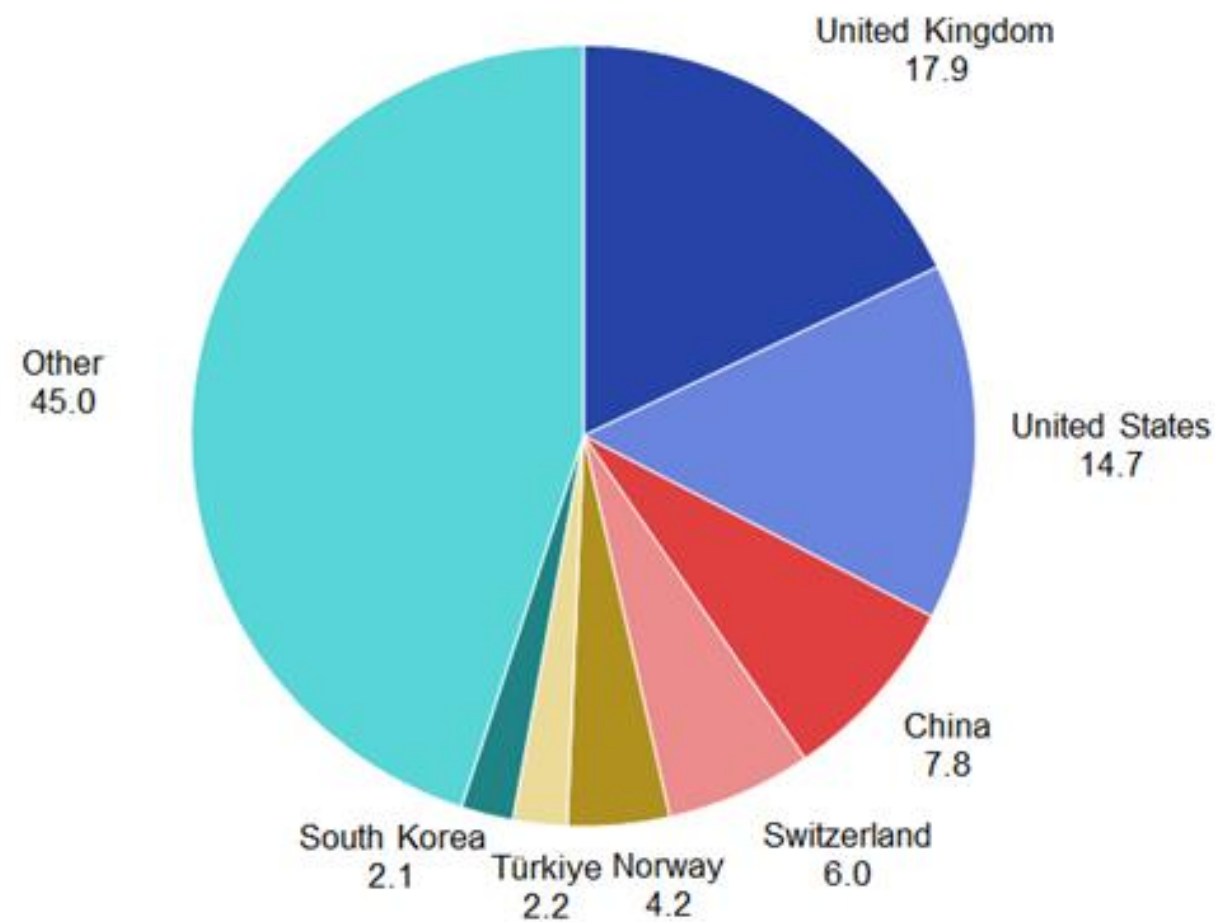


Note: the figure shows the top seven partners with the highest value of exports in 2023

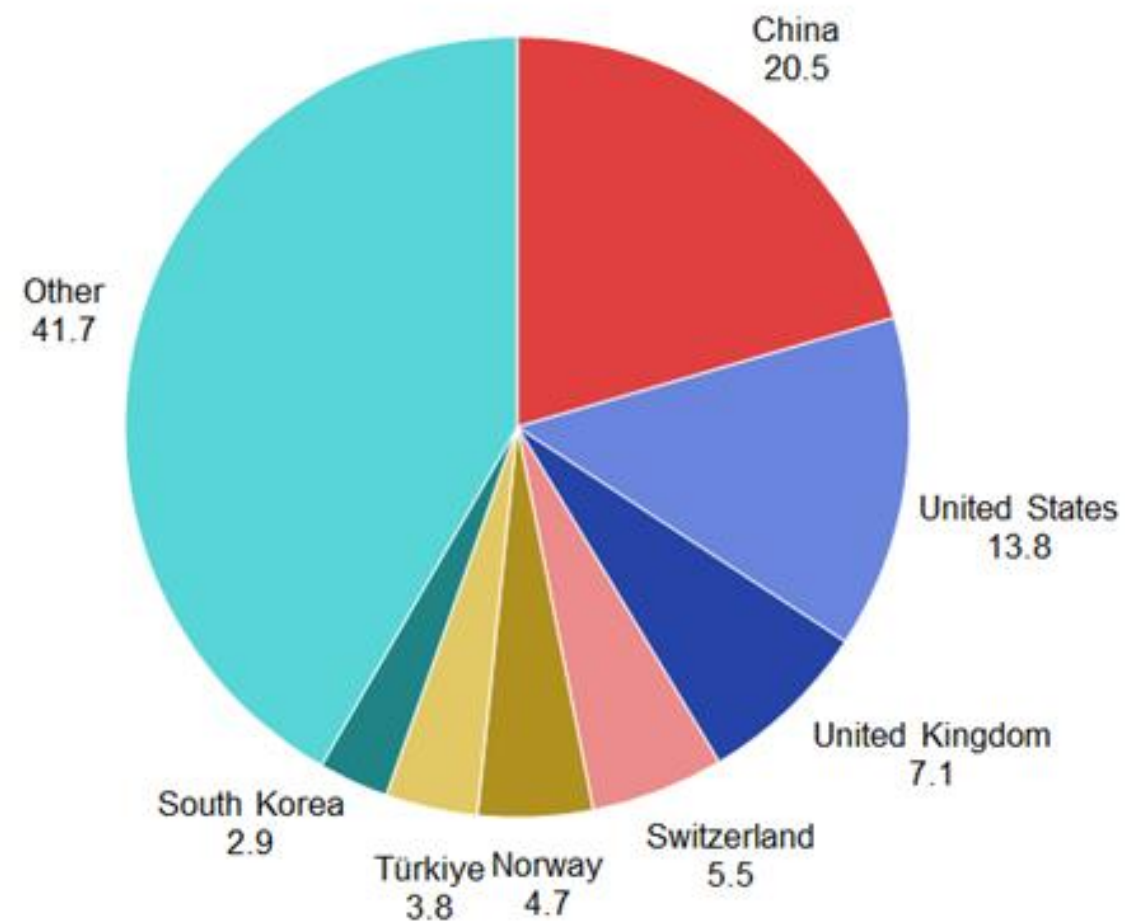
EU imports of goods, 2002 and 2023

(%)

2002

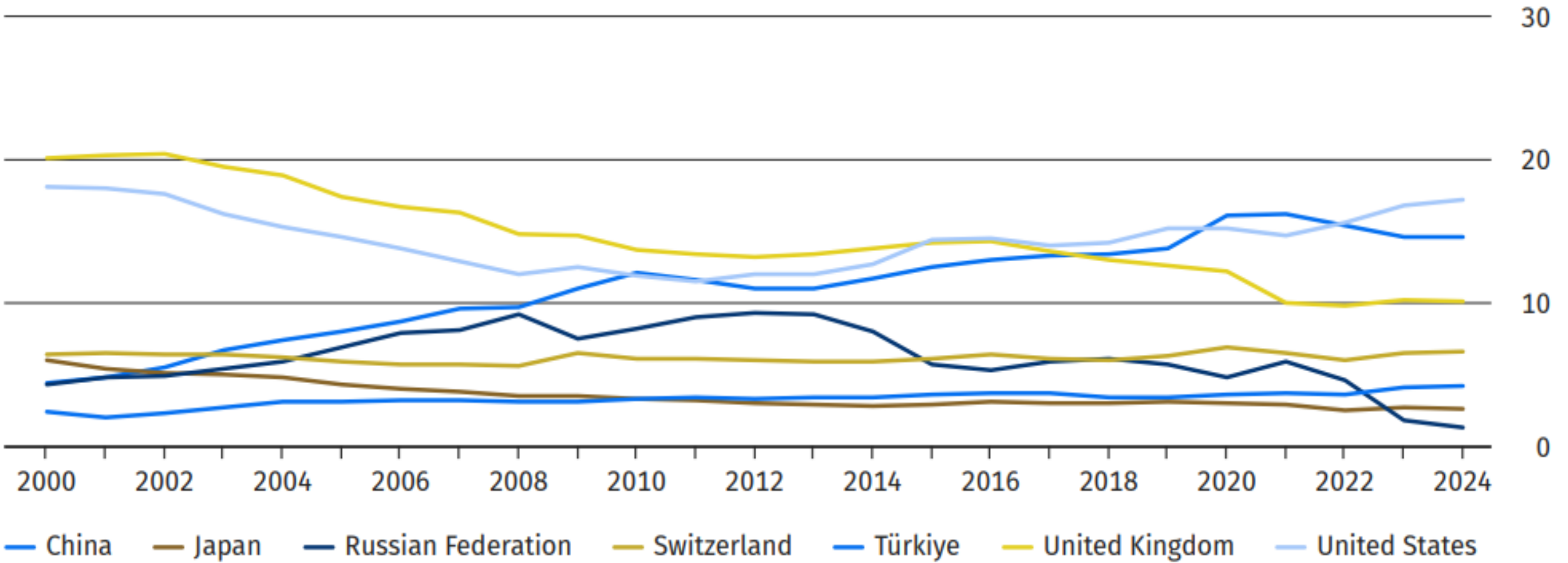


2023



Note: the figure shows the top seven partners with the highest value of imports in 2023

Top trading partners of the EU
in % of extra EU trade turnover



Turnover: imports of goods plus exports of goods
Source: Eurostat

Tariffs and free trade

The average tariff on Chinese goods levied by the EU is about 5%

The average tariff on EU goods levied by China is about 10%

The EU has also imposed tariffs on Chinese Electric Vehicles since the 30th October 2024. The tariffs range from 17%-35.3%.

The reason for these tariffs are unfair subsidies by the Chinese government which violate WTO guidelines.


De-risking or de-coupling?

With rising geopolitical tensions, the EU has tried to reduced its reliance on China

De-risking aims to “manage risks coming from economic and technological engagement with China.” (European Parliament, p. viii)

De-coupling means the severing of economic ties

The EU has adopted a de-risking strategy in recent years, but if the US pursue their tariff policy against China and the EU, both will likely intensify trade



Compliance with EU legislation in the realm of EU-China relations

What is compliance in this context?



how well can China align with EU's legal standards, norms and policies



EU values-based framework

Key areas of EU relations relevant to China

Trade and Competition Law

Human Rights and Values-based
foreign policy

Digital and Data regulation

Environmental Standards & Carbon
Border Adjustment Mechanism

Ongoing Challenges

market openness

enforcement issues

retaliation

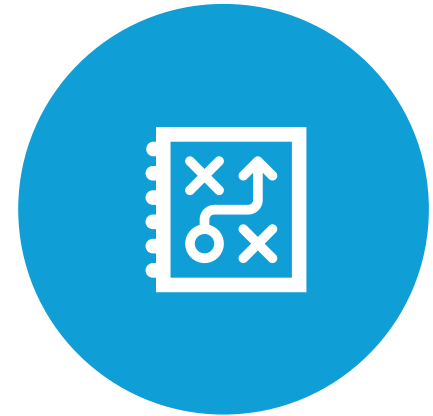
EU's tools for promoting compliance



TRADE DEFENSE
INSTRUMENTS



CONDITIONAL TRADE
AGREEMENTS



DE-RISKING STRATEGY

Human rights a constraint to EU-China relations

Attempts to balance economic agreements with political values

Formalism over action

Hong Kong National Security Law 2020, escalation of criticism

Human rights clauses in trade agreements

Economic interests vs political values



ABSENCE OF BINDING
COMMITMENT IN CLAUSES



COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT
ON INVESTMENT BLOCKED BY
EU PARLIAMENT



LABOR RIGHTS IN COMPLIANCE
WITH THE ILO

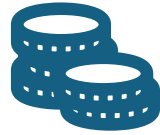


CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSES

Reasons for the double standard



Civil and political rights
vs economic and social
rights



Primacy of economic
interests



Lack of unity among
members states



Cautious economic
engagement



Limited support for
open political criticism



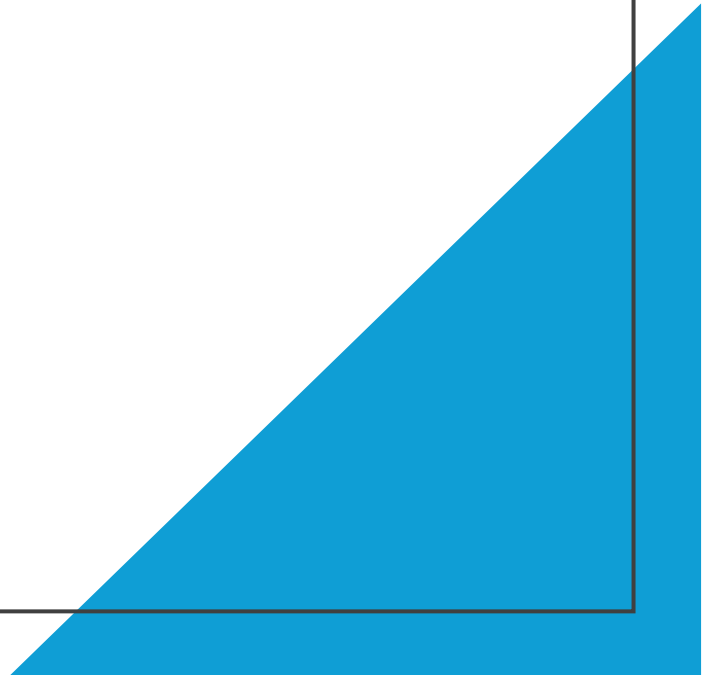
CHINA

President VON DER LEYEN

Panasonic

Climate change mitigation

- Economic sphere guiding the political sphere
- Uncomfortable partner when it comes to political values
- Necessity to leave aside political differences
- New spheres for cooperation



sources

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