

Historic Meeting at the Élysée Palace: Xi Jinping and Emmanuel Macron Strengthen China-France Relations



On May 6th, 2024, President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron addressed the press together following their talks at the Élysée Palace in Paris. During this state visit, Xi Jinping emphasized the significance of this meeting, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France.

Xi Jinping expressed his pleasure at visiting France again at the invitation of Emmanuel Macron. Both leaders highlighted that the relationship between China and France not only has a rich history but also unique values and an important mission. They emphasized the need to carry forward the historical legacy and enrich it with new elements, marking the beginning of a new era of cooperation for the next 60 years.

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Key Areas of Cooperation

The two heads of state outlined several key areas to strengthen bilateral cooperation:

- **Strategic Stability:** Both countries agreed to maintain effective political communication and coordination, utilizing multi-level exchange channels. Xi Jinping invited Macron to visit China again, reiterating mutual respect for each other's core interests.
- **Mutually Beneficial Cooperation:** The two sides will work towards achieving a balanced and growing bilateral trade relationship, expanding cooperation in areas such as agriculture and finance. They will promote joint research and development (R&D) and innovation in fields like space navigation, aviation, and civil nuclear energy. Additionally, they plan to strengthen the alignment of development strategies and expand cooperation in emerging fields such as green energy, smart manufacturing, biomedicine, artificial intelligence (AI), and third-party markets. China has fully opened its manufacturing sector and will further open its services market, including telecommunications and medical services. Both parties encourage greater two-way investment and are committed to providing a favorable business environment for each other's enterprises. During this visit, 18 cooperation agreements were signed between government departments, covering areas such as aviation, agriculture, cultural exchanges, green development, and cooperation among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:** The two sides will leverage the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism as an opportunity to promote cooperation in education, sports, film and television, youth exchanges, and subnational interactions. China supports France in organizing a successful Paris 2024 Olympics, welcomes more French friends to visit China, and has decided to extend visa-free policies for citizens of 12 countries, including France, for short visits to China until the end of 2025. They also support the opening of direct flights between Shanghai and Marseille. China and France have historic ties in education, with notable examples such as the Fujian Naval Academy established with French assistance 150 years ago. China welcomes France as the guest of honor at this year's China International Education Conference and Expo. In the next three years, China aims to increase the total number of French students in China to over 10,000 and double the number of European youths in exchange programs to China.

- **Global Cooperation:** The two sides will deepen cooperation in areas such as climate change and biodiversity and strengthen dialogue on global AI governance and international financial system reform. China supports France in making the UN Ocean Conference a success and encourages partnerships between national parks and nature reserves of both countries. Xi Jinping noted the world's current instability and stressed China's readiness to work with France to advocate for a global ceasefire during the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Commitment to Peace and Development

Xi Jinping noted that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Despite the transformative changes over 75 years, China remains committed to its peaceful, inclusive nature and its pursuit of fairness and justice. This is deeply rooted in China's 5,000-year culture and the spirit of the Chinese people. China is willing to develop friendly and cooperative relations with France and other countries based on mutual respect, to face common challenges together, and to build a better future jointly.