Excluding China from 'Horizon Europe' Backfires

Clear Voice

By ZHONG Jianli & HU Dingkun

The European Union (EU) has barred Chinese research institutions from participating in most projects under its Horizon Europe program starting this year, according to recent reports in *Nature* and some other media. Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding program for research and innovation.

Chinese entities are now limited to applying for projects in specific areas such as climate change, biodiversity, and food and agriculture. They are explicitly excluded from fields deemed "sensitive" by Brussels, including AI, telecommunications (such as 5G), healthcare, semiconductors, biotechnology and quantum technologies.

The EU justifies the restrictions by citing concerns that sharing advanced technologies with China could compromise regional security. However, this rationale appears contradictory. The European Commission's own website reports that Horizon Europe is focused on civilian applications, and does not involve technologies that could threaten security. Critics believe the ban effectively creates a barrier inside one of the world's largest research initiatives, excluding Chinese partners from areas where Europe itself needs guidance.

A worker showcases a pair of AI glasses at an AI demonstration street in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Launched in 2021 with a seven-year budget of 95.5 billion euros, one of Horizon Europe's core objectives is to enhance Europe's competitiveness and economic growth by addressing major scientific challenges and global issues. However, by limiting collaboration with Chinese scientists, who are increasingly leading many of these fields, the EU risks undermining its own goals and missing out on critical opportunities for joint breakthroughs.

China has rapidly emerged as a global powerhouse in science and technology. In AI, Chinese models such as DeepSeek and Seedance enjoy international acclaim. By 2025, China became the world's largest holder of AI patents, accounting for 60 percent of the global total. In telecommunications, companies like Huawei and ZTE continue to lead global 5G deployment, while China holds over 40 percent of all 6G-related patents. In January 2026, a report by the U.S.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies confirmed that China leads the world in both scientific output and patent filings in quantum computing, communication and sensing.

In recent years, Sino-European scientific cooperation has flourished yielding mutual benefits. By the end of 2025, Chinese institutions were involved in approximately 107 Horizon Europe projects.

A December 2025 report by Clarivate, a leading global provider of transformative intelligence, titled "Research Collaboration in a Changing World," noted a steady rise in collaborative papers between Chinese and EU researchers, which may possibly surpass those between the U.S. and China. Furthermore, the citation impact of China-EU co-authored papers now equals that of U.S.-EU collaborations.

However, the EU's new restrictions contradict this positive trend and ignore the reality that global scientific challenges require inclusive, borderless cooperation. As two of the world's major scientific forces, China and the EU share a responsibility to advance human civilization through science.

Rather than yielding to geopolitical anxieties and securitizing research, the EU should adopt a balanced perspective of China's technological progress, dismantle these unwarranted barriers, and reopen the door to equal, open and high-level scientific partnership. Only through joint efforts can both sides collectively solve shared challenges and deliver scientific achievements that benefit not just Europe and China, but the entire world.

Voice of the World

International Observers Laud Rural Revitalization

Edited by QI Liming

China's agricultural modernization has progressed steadily, fueling the expanding achievements of poverty alleviation. International observers have seen that in recent years, China's rural industries have flourished, leading to improved living conditions in rural areas and increases in villagers' incomes. China's practical experience in promoting comprehensive rural revitalization and building livable and prosperous rural areas provides valuable lessons for developing countries.

Currently, China's 5G coverage in local administrative villages is over 90 percent, while basic public services such as education, healthcare and elderly care continue to improve. The coverage rate of sanitary toilets in China's villages has reached approximately 77 percent, while the sewage treatment rate is 55 percent. Meanwhile, total mileage of rural roads exceeds 4.64 million kilometers.

Vansay Tavinyan, editor-in-chief of *Pasaxon* newspaper in Laos, has visited China's villages many times. "I remember in September 2024, I visited the villages and towns in Deyang and Guangyuan of Sichuan province in southwest China. The local houses are beautiful and comfortable, the roads are smooth and wide, with public facilities such as convenience service centers, cultural halls and health clinics." Tavinyan added that China is promoting the modernization of rural areas, allowing villagers to enjoy high-quality services.

Vladimir Milton Pomar, an agriculture expert at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil, said, "After two decades, I revisited the rural areas in China that I had previously visited. The changes are earth-shattering: the villagers live in neat and beautiful buildings, the transportation network is well-connected, and digital services such as online medical care have been integrated into their daily lives." Progress has also been made in the governance of rural ecological environment in China, he noted.

Sudheendra Kulkarni, founder of the Forum for a New South Asia in India, said, during the progress of modernizing agriculture and villages, the Chinese government showed an extremely strong political determination and policy execution capability. From eradicating poverty to achieving comprehensive revitalization of rural areas, the Chinese government formulates policy and focuses on implementation. Other developing countries can emulate China's practices and take action to eradicate poverty and enable rural areas to develop and become prosperous.

After conducting research in Shibadong Village, Xiangxi, Hunan province in central China, Antonio Segura, vice president of Spanish non-profit association Fundación Cátedra China, expressed his admiration. A village that was once deeply mired in poverty has undergone a transformation under the guidance of the targeted poverty alleviation strategy. Industries such as specialty farming, rural tourism and Miao embroidery are booming, providing substantial income for villagers. China's poverty reduction has always been people-centered, adhering to the scientific concept of targeted measures, and working together to win the battle against poverty. "This remarkable achievement serves and benefits the people," Segura said.

In 2025, during his first visit to rural areas in China, Muhammad Asif Noor Farooqi, director of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in Pakistan, was impressed by the high level of modernization and the living standards of villagers. "When I conducted an investigation in a rural area near Urumqi in Xinjiang autonomous region, northwest China, a villager told me that thanks to local government policies and technical support, he has grown fruits such as grapes and strawberries. Now, his products are sold throughout the country," Noor said.

Omumbedha Esther Mirembe, a public relation specialist of the Busoga Consortium for Development in Uganda, observed villagers in Yunnan province in the southwestern border region of China, to experience techniques such as rubber tapping, beekeeping and winter vegetable cultivation. "Here, the villagers are not passive beneficiaries but active participants," said Mirembe.

From developing tropical agricultural bases to creating tourism platforms, local governments across China have implemented precise policies and used innovation to stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit of locals, creating a favorable environment for people returning to their villages from cities to start their own businesses and improve their lifestyles.

Chinese Power Equipment Gains Global Traction

Opinion

By LIANG Yilian & LI Jun

As global computing-power infrastructure expands and major energy projects increase, demand for power equipment is surging worldwide. Keeping pace with this surge, China's power-equipment manufacturing industry has established a competitive landscape, thanks to breakthroughs in core technologies and a fully integrated industrial chain.

A fully integrated industrial chain

China has built the world's most complete and efficient transformer industrial chain. This includes upstream copper and silicon-steel smelting, electromagnetic wire processing, core manufacturing and insulation-board production, and further downstream to finished-product assembly, customized design and scenario-based deployment. This deep integration has fostered tightly coordinated industrial clusters with strong economies of scale.

Industry data show that China houses approximately 3,000 transformer manufacturers, accounting for about 60 percent of global production capacity. Furthermore, in 2025, China's transformer exports reached 64.6 billion RMB, up nearly 36 percent year on year. Consequently, China has emerged as the world's largest transformer producer, with independently controllable capabilities across the entire value chain.

'Made in China' gains trust through reliable delivery

Industry insiders say that amid persistent supply-chain constraints in Europe and the United States, China's ability to deliver reliably has become a "lifeline" for international buyers, creating sustained growth opportunities for Chinese manufacturers.

At Jiangsu Yawei Transformer Co., Ltd. in the Yangtze River Delta, China's first domestically produced 345-kilovolt fully insulated ultra-high-voltage, large-capacity transformer rolled off the production line recently, and was shipped off to the United States. The company secured the order in an international tender last April, due to its technical solution, rigorous quality control, and strong delivery capabilities.

To meet rising global demand, companies are also accelerating overseas capacity deployment. Leading transformer manufacturer Eaglerise Electric & Electronic (China) Co., Ltd. has established production facilities in Thailand, the United States and Mexico.

The Mexico plant is expected to reach full capacity by mid-2027, when monthly output of new-energy transformers could exceed 500 units. "Once the Thailand plant reaches full capacity, monthly output of new-energy transformers could reach around 700 units," said a representative of the company.

Technology upgrades driven by computing demand

New demands for power equipment are on the rise, as construction of computing-power centers, data centers and supercomputing clusters accelerate nationwide, alongside the continued rollout of the "East Data, West Computing" initiative.

However, these supercomputing clusters place extremely high requirements on power stability, precision and efficiency. Chen Jianwei, a senior engineer at Shanghai Huadian Minhang Energy Co., Ltd., said that voltage fluctuations exceeding three percent could lead to computing losses, reduced energy efficiency, shortened hardware lifespans, and in extreme cases, the scrapping of chip clusters worth tens of billions of RMB. Meanwhile, large-scale national projects such as UHV transmission and nuclear power are raising the bar for equipment adaptability and reliability.

In response to the simultaneous demands of computing-power and major energy projects, Chinese power-equipment manufacturers are pursuing targeted technological breakthroughs, according to Chen.

6G Quadruped Robots Debut at MWC 2026

Hi-Tech

By QI Liming

At the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026 in Barcelona, Spain, Shanghai-based AgiBot and China Telecom showcased their joint innovation, "6G plus Quadruped Robots," for the first time.

Using the integrated communication, sensing capabilities and extensive connectivity of 6G networks, the operational radius of the intelligent robots has been expanded from the ground to underground areas, uninhabited regions and other extremely complex environments.

Currently, quadruped robots are widely applied in various fields such as industry, security, emergency rescue, entertainment and commerce. Combined with 6G, they will have even more extensive application scenarios, especially in areas unsuitable for human access.

The 6G mobile communication technology supports higher transmission rates and extremely low latency. Unlike previous generations of communication upgrades, 6G is deeply integrated with artificial intelligence. The embodied intelligent agents can operate in areas that are difficult for humans to reach or where it is impossible for them to stay for prolonged periods, such as nuclear facilities, deep-sea oil platforms and lunar surface bases.

AgiBot's "6G plus Quadruped Robots" series is expected to accelerate its first wave of commercialization in 2029 or 2030. By that time, the intelligence of the robots will be significantly improved and the price will drop significantly.

The 6G plus quadruped robot. (PHOTO: AgiBot)

Robots Handle Tough Workplaces With Ease

From page 1

With the same power of five kilowatts, the driver has a volume that is one third smaller than traditional products, thus it can be integrated inside the robot body. This greatly enhances market competitiveness, Chen said.

The transformation of controllers also matters. Feyoo developed a controller named "Y-River 2," which integrates motion control, interface display and teach pendant operation. More importantly, the controller operates at extremely low energy levels and will not ignite explosions even in extreme dust or gas environments.

With this hardcore technology, Feyoo acquired explosion-proof verification from national institutions, and now plays a crucial role in dangerous scenarios like specialized manufacturing, petroleum refining and chemical processing, and fireworks production.

Hardware helps build strong bodies for robots and software injects "soul" into them.

In the spraying industry, the shape of machine parts is complicated, and traditional robots can only be taught by manual dragging, but the workshop is flammable, explosive and pungent.

Feyoo designed an AI-driven, intelligent and teaching-free spraying solution. An extremely precise point cloud 3D module will be generated for a part using 3D visual sensors. The robot can recognize the part regardless of the irregular shape or position.

The AI "brain" then starts functioning automatically: calculating the distance and overlapping ratio of the spraying gun based on the coating type and requirement for film thickness, planning for an optimal trajectory where collision will never happen in a complex six-axis space.

Winning the market

In the first two years of operation, Feyoo earned no revenue, and spent many millions of RMB in the development of robots, aiming to generate refined principled sample machines.

But as in all businesses, the market is the ultimate test. In 2024, Feyoo managed to generate sales of five to six million RMB when the company began testing the waters with its sample machine. In 2025, with construction of their self-owned factory complete and the production capacity improved, sales surged to between 40 and 50 million RMB.

Some cautious clients bought one or two robots for trial purposes at first, but then ordered 10 to 15 more after usage. It is estimated that orders will double or triple in 2026.

Besides the significant gap in the market for robots operating in harsh working environments, another reason for Feyoo's success is that their products are robust.

The company's dual-engine architecture has opened up an atomic instruction set based on the underlying layer, enabling downstream clients to introduce the technical "skills" of their industry into the robot. This made Feyoo's products spread rapidly across spraying and coating, laser cutting, explosion prevention and vacuum welding sectors.

In the next step, the company plans to deeply integrate robots with visual sensing and large model learning, "[With just] one glimpse of the new part, the robot can generate its own working path to meet new production demand," Chen said.