Monthly Roundup: U.K.-China announcements by government, partners, and other stakeholders

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Highlights

- Barbara Woodward pays first visit to Chongqing as British Ambassador to China
- British Ambassador to China delivers speech at Alibaba Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurship
- British Consul General’s speech at Queen’s Birthday Party in Hong Kong
- China National Peking Opera Company returning to U.K. in November
- Chinese Ambassador to U.K. pens article on China’s new Silk Road initiative
- E.U. Chamber of Commerce in China confirms incumbent leadership
- E.U.-China Friendship Garden inaugurated at Beijing Foreign Studies University
- U.K. simplifies visitor visa categories

Barbara Woodward pays first visit to Chongqing as British Ambassador to China

In late April, Barbara Woodward paid her first visit to Chongqing as the British Ambassador to China. During her visit, she met Mayor Huang Qifan and exchanged views on U.K.-Chongqing bilateral relations. In the meeting, the Ambassador said that 2015 was a golden year for U.K.-China relations—the Duke of Cambridge already visited China in March, and later this year the U.K. will welcome President Xi for a state visit. 2015 is also a Year of Cultural Exchange and marks the 15th anniversary of the Consulate-General in Chongqing. The Ambassador said she looks forward to further cooperation in training, education, and trade and investment between the U.K. and Chongqing. She also met with the staff of the Consulate-General in Chongqing and exchanged views with business and education contacts to better understand the ongoing collaboration in trade and investment, training, and education. She hoped for more educational and business exchanges that would benefit both Chongqing and the U.K. The Ambassador also delivered a speech on Employability in the 21st Century to hundreds of students at Chongqing University and shared the U.K.’s
experience in increasing employability for graduates. Over 30 British companies have a presence in Chongqing, and there is great potential for even more business collaboration in the fields of urban planning, architectural design, environmental protection, and energy, especially shale gas. (April) Read more here.

**British Ambassador speaks at Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurship**

British Ambassador to China Barbara Woodward delivered a speech at the Alibaba Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurship on 20 May, where she announced that she has become the patron of a new initiative called “Inspiring Women”.

Commenting on the initiative, Ambassador Woodward said, “It’s been going in the U.K. for a while. It’s translation to China is the brainchild of Carma Elliot—an inspiring woman herself. The Head of our Cultural and Education network in China, a former Consul General in Chongqing and Shanghai and indeed our first ever female Consul General in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And the mother of two girls. That’s genuine trailblazing!

“The concept is quite simple: with our partner organisations, we will encourage women at all levels to volunteer some of their time to visit schools and universities and to talk to students about their career, their education path, and their life choices.

“This is a small opportunity for everyone to get involved and make a big difference. So many of the women I work with may not even realise the extent to which they too are role models to others.

“I very much hope that, in the future, other organisations across China might see the opportunity to adopt this scheme, so that together with the sum of all our efforts and ideas we can finally step over the threshold and make the 21st century the century of women.”

Read the full text of the Ambassador’s speech here.

**British Consul General’s speech at Queen’s Birthday Party in Hong Kong**

British Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao Caroline Wilson gave a speech at the Queen’s Birthday Party—Her Majesty’s 89th—in Hong Kong and unveiled, for the first time in the city, a new portrait of The
Queen, commissioned last year by British photographer David Bailey. (April) Read more [here](#).

**China National Peking Opera Company returning to U.K. in November**

A decade after its last visit to the U.K. in 2005, the China National Peking Opera Company is returning to the U.K. later this year, where it will perform two masterpieces: Warrior Women of Yang and the full-length European premiere of Farewell My Concubine. The China National Peking Opera Company will perform at the Liverpool Echo Arena Auditorium (13-15 November) and London’s Sadler’s Wells (19-22 November). Tickets are now on sale. Ming Ming Dong and Kevin Zhang, Directors, Sinolink Productions, said, “With respect and honour, we are taking the opportunity of the 2015 U.K. and China Cultural Exchange Year to present this fine, traditional art form of Peking Opera to the world to demonstrate that China is not just about what they can manufacture, but also about what they can perform. We sincerely hope the British audience will appreciate and be inspired by the masterpieces that the National Peking Opera Company are to bring to the U.K.” Read more [here](#).

**Chinese Ambassador to U.K. pens article on China’s new Silk Road initiative**

Chinese Ambassador to the U.K. Liu Xiaoming wrote an article in the Financial Times titled “New Silk Road is an opportunity not a threat” in which he stated that, “the initiative of ‘One Belt, One Road’, short for the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, is an offer of a ride on China’s economic express train. It is a public product for the good of the whole world. As President Xi Jinping has said, China will co-operate with countries along the route so that everyone will benefit from its development.” (May) Read the full article [here](#).

**European Chamber confirms incumbent leadership**

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China announced that member company representatives had confirmed Jörg Wuttke as President during the European Chamber’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 23 April. At the AGM, the three incumbent Vice Presidents were in turn confirmed, while a new Treasurer was also confirmed to sit on the Chamber’s Executive Committee. (April) Read more [here](#).
E.U.-China Friendship Garden inaugurated at Beijing Foreign Studies University

As part of the official celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the E.U. and the People’s Republic of China, the E.U. Delegation to China, in cooperation with Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and all 28 E.U. Member States, officially inaugurated the E.U.-China Friendship Garden in a ceremony on BFSU campus. For this occasion, a total of 29 trees were planted: 28 ginkgo trees, representing 28 E.U. Member States, as well as one oak tree, representing the E.U.-China partnership. The opening ceremony of the E.U.-China Friendship Garden was accompanied by the E.U. Languages and Cultures Festival, organised by students and teachers from BFSU, which included a photo exhibition depicting key moments in E.U.-China relations over the past 40 years as well as an E.U. Food and Culture Street exhibition. The design of the garden was created by BudCud, a design studio from Cracow, and Chinese Rouor Design Company. The project was funded by the E.U. Delegation to China and BFSU. (May) Read more here.

U.K. simplifies visitor visa categories

The U.K. announced that the number of visitor routes for Chinese nationals planning to visit the U.K. has been reduced from 15 to four, while student visitor routes have been rebranded and shortened. The Immigration Rules and accompanying guidance will also be shorter and written in plain English to help customers understand them better. The U.K. government is also reducing the number of documents that it recommends Chinese applicants provide. (May) Read more here.

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