

High-level EU-China meeting sees initial progress

On Monday September 14, China's President Xi Jinping, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, and the EU's chief executive and its chairman held a meeting via video in place of the three-day EU-China summit that was canceled because of Covid-19. The meeting focused on negotiations over the investment treaty, yet also addressed human rights disagreements and cooperation over climate change, digital governance, and COVID-19.

Over trade and investment issues, the EU demanded substantive concessions in the investment treaty to secure a sounder deal and a more level playing field for European enterprises operating in China. Chancellor Merkel said there is political will on both sides to complete the deal, while Chinese media said leaders agreed to expedite negotiations and ratify the treaty by year's end. The two sides took a step in the right direction by signing a bilateral agreement to protect 100 European Geographical Indications (GIs) in China and 100 Chinese GIs in the European Union against usurpation and imitation. Still, EU leaders stressed

greater progress has yet to be made over market access and sustainable development.