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Oct 12, 2022 | 2 min read

## Who is the CCP? China's Communist Party in infographics

The largest political party in the world with a membership of more than 96 million, the Communist Party of China will host its National Congress on October 16. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is the most important political event in China's political calendar as it decides on who will lead the party, and by extension the government, for the next five years.

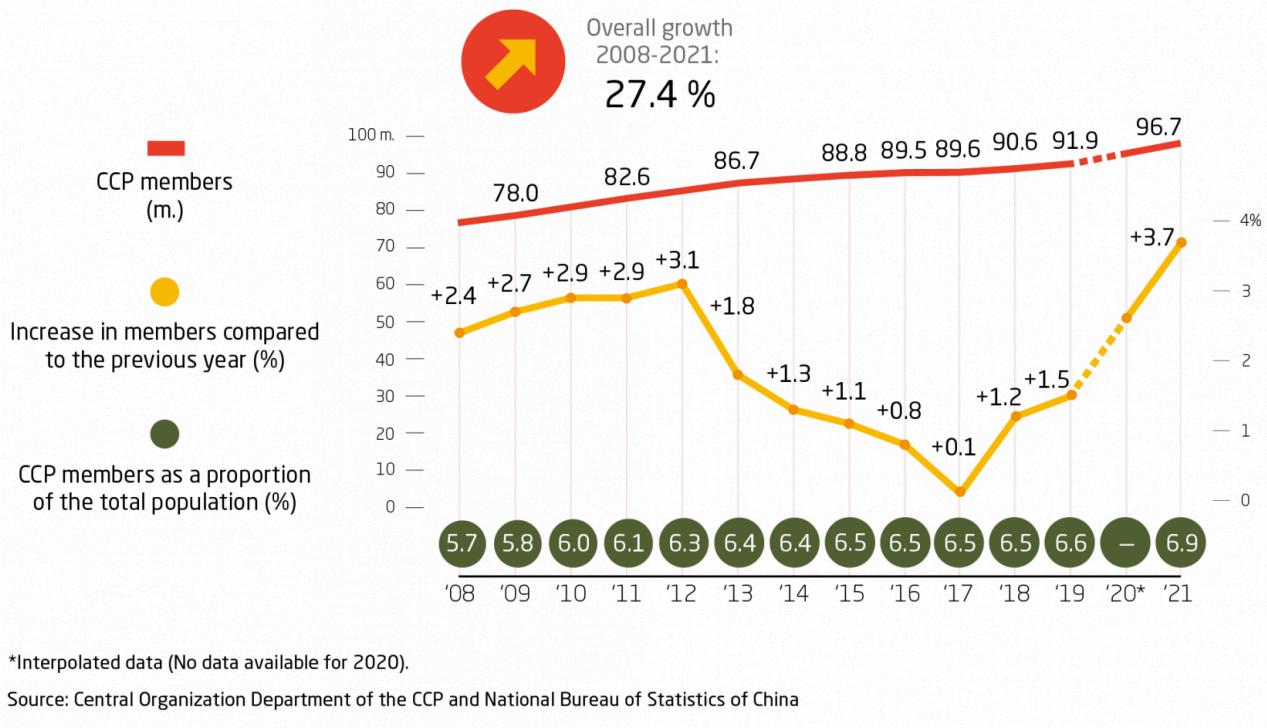
The congress runs for one week until October 22, during which the selection of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China will be made, revealing China's new supreme leaders to the world. Everyone is watching whether Xi Jinping seeks a third term as general secretary of the party, breaking a norm established by his two predecessors that general secretaries serve only two terms before stepping down.

**The CCP has grown steadily** and now comprises around 6.9% of the Chinese population. In an attempt to increase the “quality” of its members, the CCP raised membership requirements. This led to a decrease in the annual number of new members admitted after 2012, a trend now reversed.



## The CCP continues to grow steadily

Membership development since 2008



Millions of Chinese are still applying for party membership every year.



## The party is growing fast

Applications for membership and admittance of new members (2014-2021)

■ Applications for membership (m.) ■ Admitted new members (m.)



\*No data available for applications for membership.

Source: Central Organization Department of the CCP

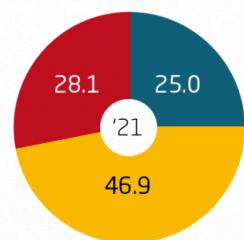
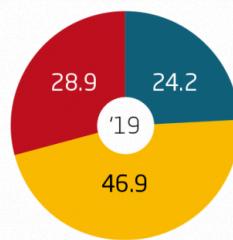
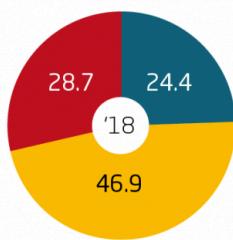
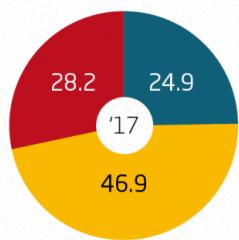
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Although the overall age profile of the party is **only changing slowly**.

## The CCP is a party for grown-ups

Age distribution remains stable

■ Younger than 35 years (%) ■ Between 35 to 60 years (%) ■ Older than 60 years (%)



\*No data available for 2020.

Source: Central Organization Department of the CCP

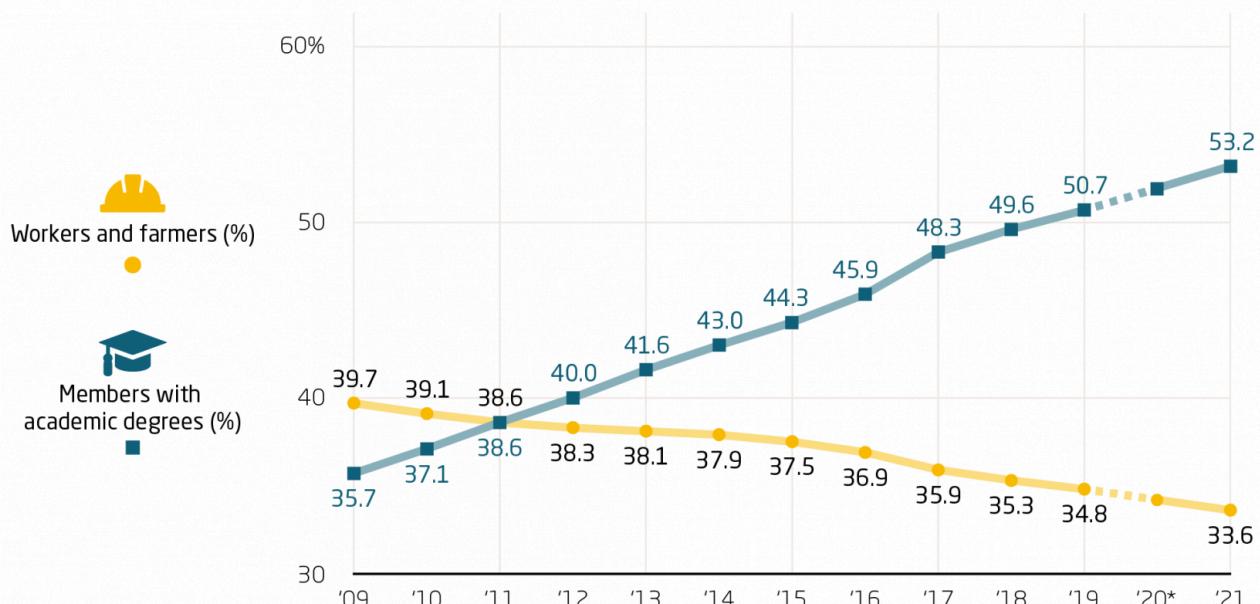
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The drive to increase member “quality” is showing results. **Applications by younger academics are favored**, while workers and farmers, once the CCP’s backbone, are decreasing in numbers.



## The CCP is becoming more elitist

Share of different professional groups



\*Interpolated data (No data available for 2020).

Source: Central Organization Department of the CCP

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**Women remain underrepresented.** Although the number of female members is rising, there are almost no women in the party elite. Currently only one woman, Sun Chunlan, holds a position in China's central party administration.



## Chances for promotion are slim for women

Gender distribution in top positions in party and state bodies

### Male/female ratio in the CCP



### Leading CCP bodies

|  |   |  |    |
|--|---|--|----|
| Politburo Standing Committee               | 0 |  | 7  |
| Politburo                                  | 1 |  | 25 |
| Secretaries of provincial party committees | 1 |  | 31 |

### Government authorities

|                                   |   |  |    |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|----|
| State Council<br>(inner cabinet)* | 1 |  | 9  |
| Ministers                         | 0 |  | 26 |
| Provincial-level governors        | 2 |  | 29 |

\* The inner cabinet is made up of the Premier, four Vice-Premiers and five State Councilors.  
Information on membership ratio: 2021 data, leading bodies: February 2021.

Source: MERICS

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**The path to CCP membership is not easy.** Application has become a multi-year vetting process and most applicants make several attempts before they are accepted. Xi Jinping himself is said to have applied 10 times.



## The path to CCP membership

Five main application steps have to be taken



### 1) Written application

Candidates place a request with the local party cell explaining their interest and motivation. Within one month, the party cell sends a contact person to the candidate to outline the rest of the process.



### 2) Acceptance as a candidate

The candidate must provide a CV and information on their family, social connections and the political background of their parents. The party cell appoints two party members as mentors and supervisors.



### 3) One-year preparation period

The candidate must, at a minimum, complete a three-day course (e.g., at the party school). They must present a reflective report on Marxism-Leninism, the guidelines of the CCP, and current political developments every three months. The party cell verifies the candidate's information and political commitment by interviewing at least eight colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances.



### 4) Official acceptance process

Candidates can officially apply for party membership. They must name two guarantors (usually the two mentors). A superior party organization reviews the application in three to six months and interviews the candidate.



### 5) One-year trial membership

If the organization accepts the admission, the candidate is registered, sworn in, and begins a trial membership. Depending on income, members must pay between 0.5 and 2 percent of their net income annually as a membership fee.



### 6) Official membership

If there is no breach of party discipline or law, official membership is granted after one year.

Source: MERICS

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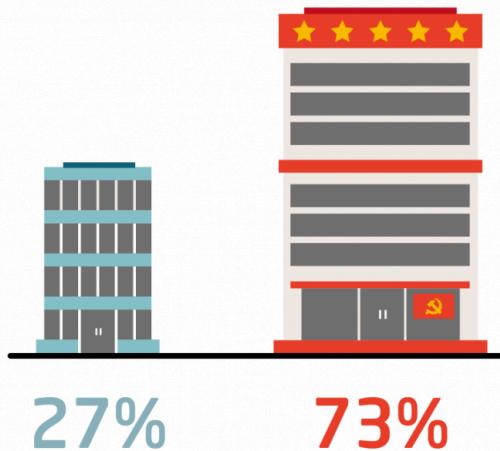
**The CCP is pushing its organization deeper into the economy.** Any organization with three or more CCP members has to establish a party group – and most companies have done so by now. CCP representation and mobilization at grass-roots level and in private companies is likely to grow even more under Xi Jinping.



## The party enters into businesses

Share of private companies with party cells

Out of the  
**2.57 million**  
private companies in China,  
**73% percent**  
have a party cell installed.



Source: Organization department of the CCP (2018)

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