



CGTN: Beyond differences: Why the British PM calls long-awaited China trip a huge opportunity

Descrizione

COMUNICATO STAMPA - CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

CGTN published an article on UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to China, highlighting that amid rising global uncertainty, Beijing and London are placing greater emphasis on long-term stability, pragmatic cooperation and shared interests in global governance and economic growth.

BEIJING, Jan. 29, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) - Chinese President Xi Jinping met British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Beijing on Thursday, marking the first visit by a UK prime minister to China in eight years. Both leaders emphasized the need to build a long-term consistent comprehensive strategic partnership.

Emphasizing the need to see history from a broader perspective, Xi called on the two countries to transcend differences and maintain mutual respect, so that the promising potential of cooperation could be translated into remarkable accomplishments, benefiting both peoples and the world.

Starmer opened the meeting by acknowledging the long gap in high-level exchanges. It had been "too long" since a British prime minister last visited China, he said. Upon arriving in Beijing, he framed the trip in pragmatic terms. "It is in our national interest to engage with China," Starmer told reporters. "There are huge opportunities to be had."

As permanent members of the UN Security Council and major global economies, China and the UK share vital interests in promoting economic growth, supporting social development and contributing to global stability.

Seeking cooperation in an uncertain world

Analysts say Starmer's visit reflects a broader European trend, where countries are increasingly seeking pragmatic engagement with China amid rising global uncertainty.

Recent months have seen high-level visits to China by leaders from France, Ireland and Finland. A CGTN poll showed that 85.2 percent of respondents believe such frequent visits reflect a broad consensus on achieving equal and orderly multipolarity, as well as inclusive and beneficial globalization.

Wang Zhanpeng, director of the UK Studies Center at Beijing Foreign Studies University, noted that the unpredictable policies, unilateralism and assertive actions of the Trump administration had posed challenges for Europe. He said European leaders's visits reflect a recognition that China's development is neither a challenge nor a threat to Europe. "Starmer's visit could further encourage others to move beyond the dilemma of choosing sides and support a more balanced, multipolar global order," he added.

Vince Cable, former UK secretary of State for Business and Trade, offered a similar perspective. "The erratic behavior of the Trump administration is causing many Western countries, not just the UK, to balance their relationships in a different way," he told CGTN.

Xi also pointed out that the international order has for some time been severely impacted. He emphasized that international law can only be truly effective when all countries, especially major powers, abide by it. "China and the UK, as supporters of multilateralism and free trade, should jointly advocate and practice genuine multilateralism, fostering a fairer and more equitable global governance system, building an orderly multipolar world and promoting inclusive globalization."

Starmer added that China plays a key role in international affairs and said the UK is willing to cooperate on challenges such as climate change to help maintain global stability.

Turning stability into economic benefits

During the meeting, Xi described the essence of China-UK economic and trade cooperation as mutually beneficial and win-win.

He said both sides should expand collaboration in education, healthcare, finance and services, as well as joint research and industrial applications in artificial intelligence (AI), biosciences, renewable energy and low-carbon technologies. He also called on the UK to provide a fair and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese enterprises.

Economic ties remain a central pillar of the bilateral relationship as China has long been one of the UK's top five trading partners, with annual trade consistently at the hundred-billion-dollar level. According to China's Ministry of Commerce, goods trade reached \$103.7 billion in 2025, while services trade is expected to surpass \$30 billion, and two-way investment stock stands at nearly \$68 billion. UK government figures also show that China is now the UK's third-largest trading partner, supporting around 370,000 jobs. The CGTN poll also showed that 85.8 percent of respondents believe China's vast market represents a significant opportunity for British businesses.

Starmer led a delegation of more than 60 representatives from the UK's business and cultural sectors, highlighting the practical economic stakes. Speaking during the meeting, he said the UK is ready to maintain high-level exchanges and deepen cooperation in trade, investment, finance and environmental protection, aiming to support growth and deliver tangible benefits to people in both

countries.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2026-01-29/Why-British-PM-Keir-Starmer-calls-China-trip-huge-opportunityâ??1KklvhLU6pa/p.html>

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