

# White Paper on the future of Europe (sic- they mean EU)

The EU this week issued a White Paper on its future. As many of us argued before the referendum, and as the EU's 5 Presidents Report argued, the Commission sees the future of the EU as one of far more integration. This new White Paper complements the 5 Presidents Report which I explained at the time of its first publication, and goes beyond it. The Paper starts by reciting favourably the Spinelli/Rossi vision of a united Europe in their "Il Manifesto di Ventotene" published at the end of the 2nd World War.

As the authors of the White Paper say, "The Lisbon Treaty and the decade long debate that preceded it, has opened a new chapter of European integration that still holds unfulfilled potential."

It is true that this latest White Paper does contain five possible pathways forward for the EU, including one which envisages less integration than they currently enjoy. The Paper also makes clear that the Commission thinks that a bad option. They seem to strongly favour the fifth option, the one that entails "doing more together across all policy areas". The President of the Commission in his foreword urges the EU to be radical and to opt for much more integration.

Option 2 is the only option that allows less EU control. It is based on doing nothing but the single market, fairly widely defined. The Paper raises the possibility of more border controls and some limitations on freedom of movement under this scenario which they dislike.

Option 1, the carrying on option, envisages slower and piecemeal progress to more integration, highlighting possible advances on more integrated border and asylum policies, more EU defence and some stronger controls over the Euro and economic policy. Again, this is not a favoured proposal.

Option 3, coalitions of the willing to drive ahead much more integration in various areas, and Option 4, doing less more efficiently by targeting areas like counter terrorism for more common action, are also not preferred. Option 4 does not seem to involve scrapping areas of competence in any meaningful way and still entails more integration in selected areas.

The proposal the EU wants its members to sign up to is Option 5, "Doing more together across all policy areas". They envisage the EU having just one seat on each international body, with a common foreign policy on all main issues. They will make defence a priority for more integration. They will lead the global fight against climate change, and have the largest world overseas aid budget. They will turn the European Stability Mechanism into the European Monetary Fund and get it to raise money to finance investment programmes. The Euro area will need more controls and a fiscal stability function, entailing more EU involvement in taxation and doubtless more "own resource" EU tax revenue.

I welcome their launch of this important debate. The 60th birthday of the EU is a fitting moment for its remaining members to take stock and ask themselves what next. The document reminds us just how central the Euro is to the whole project, and how much more they need to do to back their currency and tackle the high unemployment they have in many parts of its area. The UK being out will make it easier for them to use their institution in the way many of them wish to. A successful single currency needs a powerful central government with tax raising powers to stand behind it. As the 5 Presidents Report made clear, a single currency needs a Euro Treasury.

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## [Illegally parked rental bikes seized](#)



Bicycles, mostly from the bike-sharing company Mobike, were parked at a parking lot on Wednesday. [Photo/China Daily]

Authorities in Shanghai's Huangpu district have seized more than 4,000 rental

bikes, most of them improperly parked, highlighting the poor management of bicycles rented over the internet and the shortage of parking areas, especially in downtown areas.

There are also concerns that the problems faced by Shanghai may quickly spread to other cities as competition intensifies.

At a parking lot on Zhizaoju Road, thousands of rental bikes were laid out in rows with their wheels connected by iron chains. Some web users described the venue as a graveyard of bikes.

Zhou Lan, deputy director of the urban management department of Huangpu, said the seizure serves as a countermeasure to fight illegally parked bicycles, instead of merely revenge on bike-sharing companies.

Zhou said that the regional government authorized two independent institutions to help with the proper parking of nonmotor vehicles, and to tow away those outside designated areas on sidewalks.

A small number of properly parked rental bicycles were seized to make way for other nonmotor vehicles.

It's estimated that in Huangpu, there are about 150,000 nonmotor vehicles – more than half of them electric bikes. But there are less than 1,500 nonmotor vehicle parking lots in the district, while the number of rental bikes has surged to more than 20,000.

Citywide, it's estimated that more than 280,000 rental bikes have been put on the streets. Guo Jianrong, secretary-general of the Shanghai Bicycle Association, said that by June, the city is expected to have 500,000 rental bicycles.

"The association is busy drafting three new sets of standards: the management standard for shared bicycles, for shared electric bikes and for their service providers," Guo said.

But for the time being, the struggle between bike-sharing startups and the regional government is continuing as business leaders in the sector said they won't reduce the number of bicycles in big cities.

"We will continue to put more bikes in operation in Shanghai, depending on user demand," said a spokeswoman for Mobike, the pioneer and now dominant player in the bike-sharing sector.

She said that Mobike has a management team of about 100 in Shanghai, plus 400 front-line operators.

In a news release on Thursday, the company said that it is collaborating with Baidu by taking advantage of its cloud computing service to fix the accuracy of the position of its parked bikes, which will help with management of the bikes.

A reward plan is also in the pipeline to encourage users to park bikes

properly, the company said. Regarding the seized bikes, Mobike said that it will communicate with the urban management department and is willing to cover some of the department's management costs.

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## [China outlines its positive sea role](#)



Wang Guoqing, spokesman for the fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the comment at a press conference. [Photo/Xinhua]

China values freedom and safety of navigation in the South China Sea more than any other country, a spokesman for the top political advisory body said yesterday.

Wang Guoqing, spokesman for the fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the comment at a press conference, citing the fact that China was a major trading nation as well as the largest littoral country of the South China Sea.

Certain countries outside the region alleged China threatens freedom of navigation, an entirely "pseudo proposition," he said.

Since China had recovered the South China Sea islands at the end of World War II, there had never been a problem with navigational freedom in the region.

The South China Sea islands are an integral part of China's territory, Wang said, adding that it was "perfectly normal" for China to build facilities, including those for necessary defense purposes, on its own territory. International law entitled sovereign states to do so.

China, Wang reiterated, resolutely defended the freedom of navigation that

every country enjoys in the South China Sea according to international law.

“We have set up cooperation mechanisms with many other countries to ensure safe navigation,” he said. The civilian facilities China has built on the South China Sea islands, such as lighthouses, had played a positive role in guaranteeing navigation safety and humanitarian rescue, Wang added.

He also said the Belt and Road Initiative was advancing steadily, bringing investment and jobs to participating countries.

More than 100 countries and international organizations had joined the initiative and over 40 of them had cooperation agreements with China, he said.

Chinese businesses had helped to build 56 economic and trade cooperation zones in 20 countries along the Belt and Road, with total investment exceeding US\$18 billion, helping to generate over US\$1 billion in tax revenue and more than 160,000 jobs.

Wang said the CPPCC National Committee would do more work in 2017 to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges with countries along the Belt and Road. The initiative was proposed by China in 2013 and aims to become a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes.

In the spirit of regional connectivity, China is working in aviation, power, rail, road and telecommunications projects with participating countries.

The CPPCC will open its annual session at 3pm today in Beijing, he said.

More than 2,000 members from different sectors across the country will discuss major political, economic and social issues concerning the country's development during this year's session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 13.

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## [China to take first step for manned space outpost](#)

China will launch a space station core module next year as the first step in completing the country's first space outpost, a senior engineer with China Aerospace Science and Technology Corpsaid yesterday.

The core module of the space station, named “Tianhe-1,” will be launched on board a new-generation Long March-5 heavyweight carrier rocket, said Bao Weimin, director with CASC.

It will be followed by a series of launches for other components of the space

station, including two space labs, which will dock with the core module in space, in the next four years or so, he said, adding that the space station will be completed around 2022.

Assembly of the core module has already been completed and tests are under way, said Bao.

Earlier reports said the new Chinese space station will initially be much smaller than the current International Space Station, which weighs 420 tons, but could be expanded for future scientific research and international cooperation.

With the ISS set to retire in 2024, the Chinese space station will offer a promising alternative, and China will be the only country with a permanent space station.

Bao said the Chinese outpost will function in orbit for “dozens of years,” and that it had been specially designed to be able to handle space debris.

“For the big pieces (of space debris), we could conduct evasive maneuvers, and for those measuring less than 10 cm in size, we just take the hit,” Bao said, adding that all key parts of the space station will be serviceable and replaceable.

He went on to say that the next five years will see some exciting advances in China’s space program.

In particular, the Long March-5 launch missions have been scheduled this year, including one that will take the Chang’e-5 lunar probe to the Moon in November and return with lunar samples.

Long March-5 is a large, two-stage rocket with a payload capacity of 25 tons to low-Earth orbit and 14 tons to geostationary transfer orbit, the largest of China’s carrier rockets. Its carrying capacity is about 2.5 times that of the current main model Long March carrier rockets.

The rocket will also be used in China’s planned Mars probes, and possibly future missions to Jupiter and other planets within the solar system, Bao said.

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## **10 dead, 38 injured in China bus, truck collision**

Ten people died and 38 others were injured when a cement tanker crashed into a bus Thursday night in southwest China’s Yunnan Province, the local government said.

The accident happened at 11:33 p.m. on a highway in Yunxian County of Lancang City, the city government's press office said in a statement Friday.

The cement tanker, with a license plate from the neighboring Sichuan Province, veered off the road after colliding into a coach bus that was carrying 47 people, including two drivers, it said.

The bus, en route from Gengma County to the provincial capital Kunming, overturned on the road, the document said.

It said nine people were confirmed dead at the scene and another one died later in hospital, but did not identify the victims.

The government had launched an investigation and the injured people had been landed in hospitals, the document said.