

26 October 2026

The Silver Economy in China

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EU SME Centre

EUSME Centre



We help European SMEs **explore the Chinese market**

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Funded by the European Union

ABOUT THE EU SME CENTRE

- Funded under the Single Market Programme managed by the European Commission.
- Building on its achievements and experience since its creation in 2010, the Centre is currently in Phase V (2025–2028).
- Supporting European small and medium-sized companies, entrepreneurs, and start-ups entering or expanding their activities in or with China.
- Implemented by a consortium of six partners and associated partners in Europe and in China:

Consortium partners

CAMERA DI COMMERCIO ITALIANA IN CINA
中国意大利商会 CCIC dal 1903
CAMERE DI COMMERCIO ITALIANE ALL'ESTERO

European Union Chamber of Commerce in China
中 国 欧 盟 商 会

Fondazione Italia Cina
意 中 基 金 会

Associated partners

spi
Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação

TRADE PROMOTION EUROPE
One voice for European trade promotion

EU-China Business Association
欧盟中国贸易协会

MAIN ACTIVITIES



SELF-DIAGNOSIS TOOL

Online tool that measures your readiness toward the Chinese market



KNOWLEDGE

Comprehensive market reports, guidelines and case studies



ADVICE

Practical and confidential advice on China-related matters



TRAINING

Face-to-face and online training programs to raise awareness



ADVOCACY

Providing a coherent, consistent and consolidated voice for EU SMEs

What is the silver economy

Often confusion with retirement age

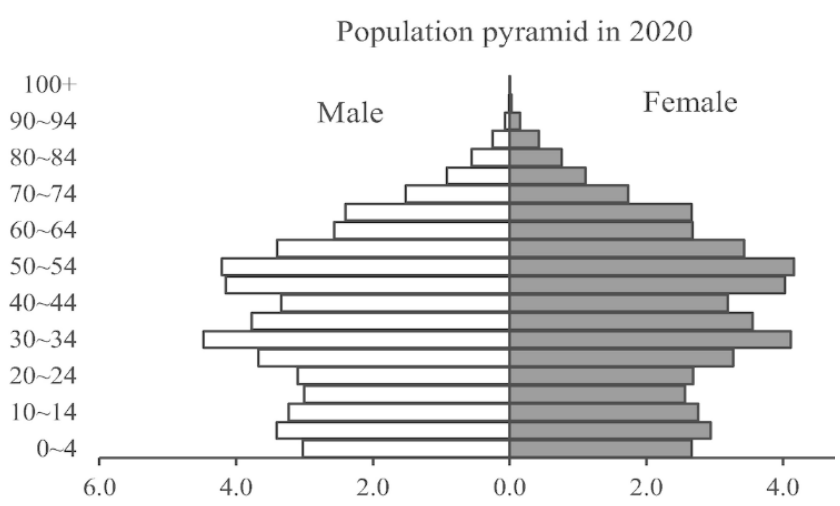
In the Czech Republic: senior citizens are aged 65 and over. At the end of 2025 it represented one fifth, while in 1993 it was 13%.

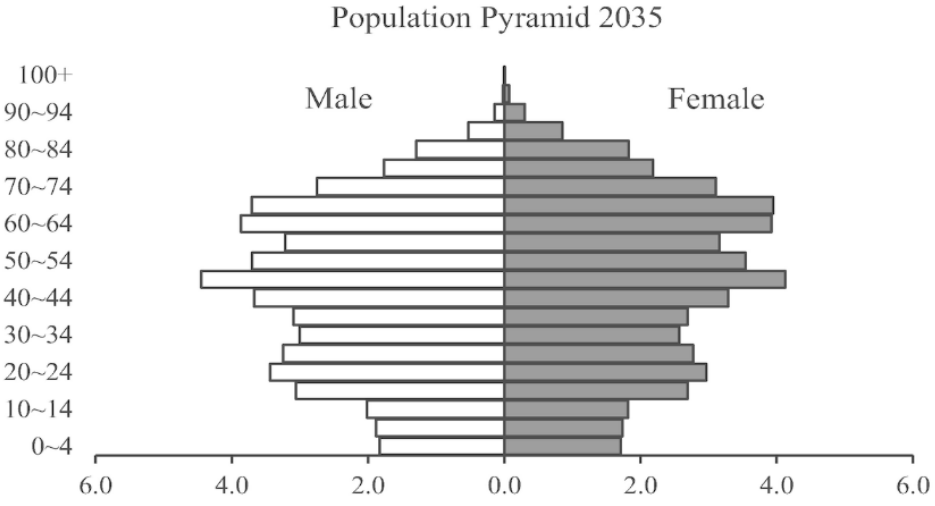
In China, the >65 years old make 15.4% of the total population in 2024

China’s population aged 60 and above will exceed 400 million around 2035

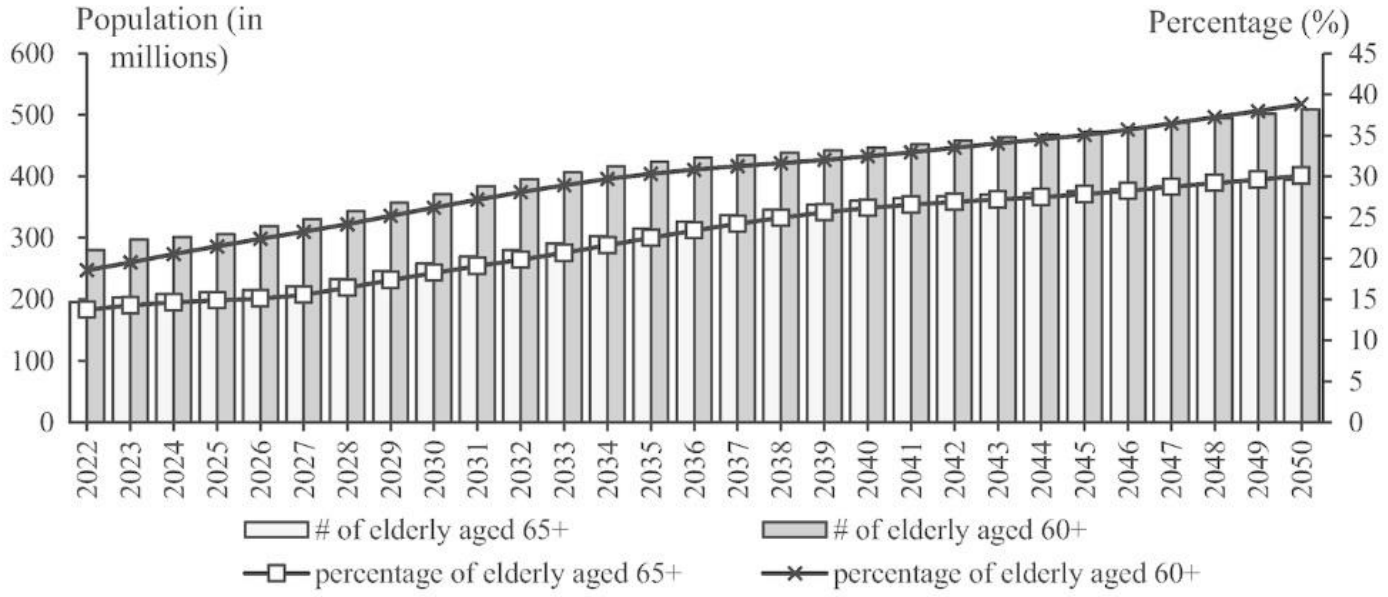
Retirement age: could be 50 for some women in China, 55 for men. Changing in the coming years

Demographics





Demographics



Results of China's future older adults projections.

Demographics

National statistics could be misleading

- The top four provinces in China in terms of the number of older adults are Shandong Province (total pop 102 M), Sichuan Province (84 M), Henan Province (99 M) and Jiangsu Province
- Regionally, older population is mainly concentrated in East China and South China
- The real potential customers are far less numerous

Consequences of a rapidly aging society

Infrastructure

- Healthcare infrastructure: hospitals (geriatrics)
- Retirement homes, nursing homes (“living communities”)

Personal equipment

- Home improvement/adaptation
- Mobility devices

What is the real potential market?

For consumer goods

- Senior between 50 and 70
- Senior living in (big) cities: the consumption level of older adults in rural areas is only about 45% of that in urban areas
- Mostly (former) white collars: owner of their residence, good pension, educated

What are the seniors buying?

Healthcare

- Health supplements, medical checkups
- Devices: hearing aids, mobility, diagnostic
- geriatric clothing and apparel
- Services: telemedicine, insurance, home medical/nursing care

Geriatric products (rehabilitation aids): 40,000 kinds are available in Japan, only 2,000 kinds in China



What are the seniors buying?

Tourism

- End of era of retirees' groups going abroad
- Individual/small groups; linked to hobbies/culture

Hobbies, entertainment and leisure

- Watching TV, reading (news), dancing, sports (‘hiking’, cycling), modeling, learning, fishing, creative activities (calligraphy/painting/craft), boardgames, photo/video…
- Ones for which they have now more time / New ones

Beauty/fashion

- Mostly women
- Clothing (related to hobbies)
- Anti-aging, but not only



What are the seniors buying?

Food and beverage

- No dramatic change in consumption pattern because you retire
- Increasing focus on the quality of F&B products (Organic, natural, low-glycemic index, and functional foods)
- Prestige (wine)

Pets

- Growing pet ownership, often considered as family member (dog, cat)
- 73 million cats and 53 million dogs.
- In 2024, the cat food market grew 10.7%, while the dog food market grew 4.6%

How to reach the seniors

Communities

- Social clubs
- Events
- Prescribers

Online

- Heavy consumers of internet, in particular social networks APP
- Kuaishou, Wechat, Douyin
- Most of newspapers/magazines in print have disappeared: “everything” is online
- E-commerce APP

How to reach the seniors

Messaging

- Some products are very specific to a certain population (healthcare): basically, same approach as elsewhere
- Some products are not specific, but communication could emphasize on aspects that resonate more for the seniors (but careful about the regulation!)
- For more and more people, the seniors are the others

Best practices / Tips

Protect your intellectual property

Do your homework: market research!

Visit a specialized trade fair

Design a strategy and select the right partners

Use all the help available: local Chamber of commerce, CzechTrade, EU SME Centre etc.

Protecting your Intellectual property

China IP SME Helpdesk

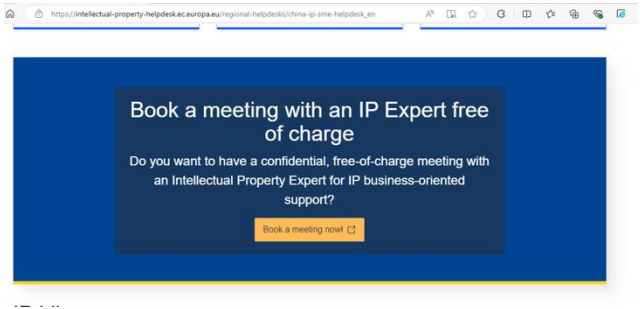
Book the time slot via the QR code

via Helpdesk website

https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/

->China->"Book a meeting Now"

or



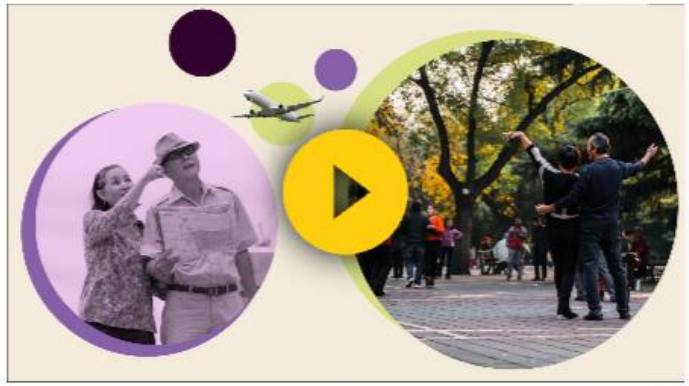
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Consumer Series: China's Active Retirees

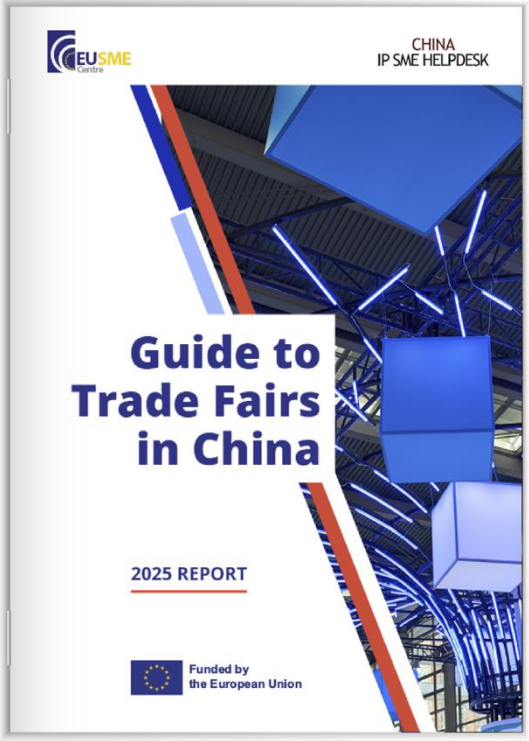
TAGS E-Commerce | Consumer Goods | Marketing

WEBINAR | 31 March 2026



With the Consumer Webinar Series, the EU SME Centre and European Union Chamber of Commerce in China invite you to look into four major groups of urban consumers in China.

For the first event of the series, organised in March 2026, we focused on urban active retirees, a 120-million-strong group born between 1950 and 1964. In this video, Professor Dou Wenyu, Academic Dean for China at SKEMA Business School, presents the demographics, main spending categories, preferred purchasing platforms of this group, with targeted marketing advice for European SMEs.



EUSME Centre

Services + Knowledge Centre +

Risk Mitigation: Commercial Background Checks and Due Diligence in China

TAGS: Due Diligence | Risk Mitigation

WEBINAR | 2 March 2026



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How to Get Paid When Doing Business in China

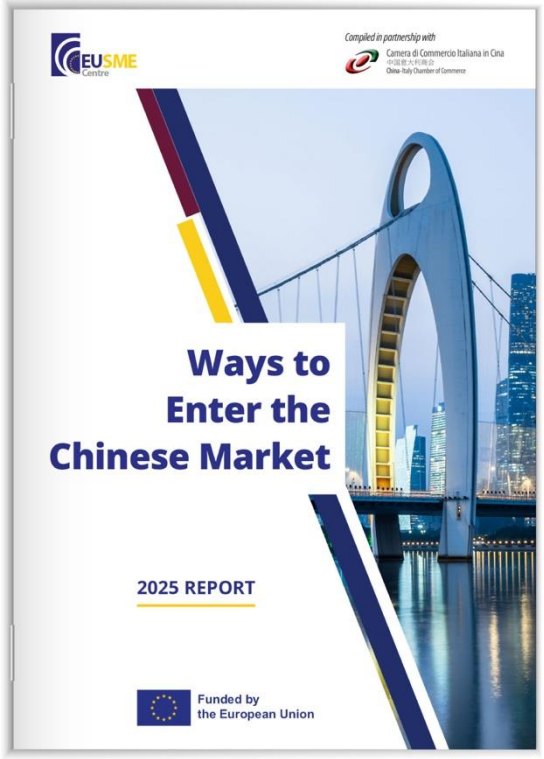
TAGS: Contract | Payment | Risk Mitigation

Date	11 September 2026	**Location**	Online
Beijing Time	16:00 - 17:15	**Venue**	Zoom
Brussels Time	10:00 - 11:15	**Open to**	All European SMEs



European SMEs often face challenges of late payments or unpaid invoices and are more vulnerable to cashflow risks than larger companies. When doing business in China, if a dispute arises, the language barrier, unfamiliarity with China's court system, and the complexity of evidence requirements often lead to write-offs that could have been avoided with proper risk management. A well-drafted contract with clear payment terms is one of the key tools of business protection that SMEs need to have.

Our next webinar, How to Get Paid When Doing Business in China, will explore the practical legal and commercial strategies that help businesses secure payment on time and minimise financial risk. Expert Jan Holthuis, senior partner and lawyer at BUREN, will explain how to negotiate strong and applicable contracts. This webinar will provide a practical guide, from prevention measures to litigation procedures, from evidence collection to enforcement of court orders. It will also address common misconceptions around jurisdiction and arbitration clauses and offer actionable tips for businesses who may not have dedicated legal teams.


Compiled in partnership with
Camera di Commercio Italiana in Cina
China-Italy Chamber of Commerce
Ways to Enter the Chinese Market
2025 REPORT
Funded by the European Union

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Services
Knowledge Centre
Digital Marketing for Food & Beverage in China
TAGS
Food & Beverage
E-Commerce
Marketing
WEBINAR | 30 June 2026
With this video, get a detailed overview of the tools available to European SMEs for carrying out impactful online marketing campaigns for the Chinese market. Experts explain how brands specialised in food and drinks can make the best use of China's online platforms within their broader marketing strategy and how they can combine traditional promotional activities on the ground with online visibility. Legal aspects relating to online advertising, as well as intellectual property issues, are also covered.

OUR NEXT EVENTS



In Beijing & Online

30

October

The Organic Food Market in China



In Brussels & Online

18

November

Understanding China Conference 2026



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6

November

Livestreaming in China

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