

《China and Poland eye major deals》

China and Poland agreed on Monday to launch major projects as soon as possible as part of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative to boost interconnectivity.

Agreements on the joint action were signed during President Xi Jinping's state visit to Poland.

Witnessed by Xi and his Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda, the two countries signed 13 documents to boost cooperation in areas including logistics, industrial parks, customs and aviation.

Xi said after the signing ceremony that China welcomes Poland's active participation in the Belt and Road Initiative, which is aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road trading routes.

According to the agreements, the two countries will work together to map out their development plans, jointly establish an online Silk Road, boost information links, facilitate customs procedures and improve cooperation on infrastructure investment in logistics.

Xi said Poland, situated at the heart of Europe, has a unique geographical advantage.

Stating that the country is a founding member of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, Xi encouraged Poland to use the bank to finance infrastructure construction.

He suggested that both countries should encourage their companies to cooperate, especially on large projects that could benefit their people.

According to a joint declaration signed by the two presidents, China and Poland agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Poland is China's largest trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe, while China is Poland's third-largest supplier of imports. Trade between the two countries reached \$17.09 billion last year.

Duda said Poland is willing to actively take part in the Belt and Road Initiative, and to deepen cooperation with China in fields such as infrastructure, railroads and logistics.

The agreements signed on Monday will boost bilateral cooperation and send a positive signal to the world, he said, adding that he believes Chinese companies will be interested in investing in Polish projects.

Wu Enyuan, a political adviser and former director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said traditional friendship, Poland's strategic position and

mutual benefits resulted in the upgrading of the bilateral relationship.

China saw its first joint-venture enterprise in history with Poland in 1951, Wu said, adding that the European country's important location and its need for infrastructure investment meant it was only natural to upgrade ties.

Krzysztof Gawlikowski, an expert on East Asian civilization at Warsaw University of Social Sciences and Humanities, said Poland is being increasingly attracted by China because of its economic prosperity and intention to cooperate with nations in Central and Eastern Europe.

For now, Poland hopes to increase exports of farm produce to China to ease a trade deficit, Gawlikowski said, adding, "I believe these high-quality products will be welcomed by Chinese consumers."

