

# Hosting the China-CEEC Expo: Ningbo's Great Mission

By Gou Wen

On June 8, the 2nd China-CEEC Expo, China's one and only national-level convention that revolves around the country's partnership with Central and Eastern European countries, will be held in Ningbo. Compared with the first Expo, this year's event will be grander, more impactful, and expected to generate even more positive outcomes.

As a new engine of Ningbo's open economy, the Expo is a testament to the city and China's ever-increasing level of openness towards the outside world. Thousands of Chinese and Central and Eastern European businesses are counting on the Expo to bring about new opportunities.

## Conferences and Trade Shows

The China-CEEC Expo is the only national expo in China centered around China-CEEC cooperation. It will be held from June 8 to 11, 2021 in Ningbo, the permanent host city, with the theme "New Vision, Shared Opportunities".

Twenty conferences and seminars will take place at the Expo, facilitating partnership and business matchmaking between China and CEECs in areas such as technology, healthcare, and commerce chamber cooperation.

The Expo's trade shows are grouped under three categories: the CEEC Exhibition; the International Consumer Goods Exhibition; and the Permanent Exhibition of Imported Commodities. The total floor area of the exhibition is 200,000 m<sup>2</sup>. More than 2,000 exhibitors and 6,000 buyers are expected to participate.

A series of new reports and institutions will be released and launched. At the "Silk Road E-Commerce" Development Summit, the report *E-Commerce in China 2020* will be released and the China-CEEC E-Commerce Cooperation Dialogue Mechanism will be launched. At the High-Level Think Tank Forum for High-Quality Development of China-CEEC Local Cooperation, the report *Transportation in the CEECs: Country Reports* will be released. At the GHICC 2021, the China-CEEC Cooperation in Public Health Industry will be inaugurated.

## Highlights of the Expo

This year's Expo is notable for the anticipated attendance of many high-profile officials at events such as the High-Level Think Tank Forum for High-Quality



Products being presented by international exhibitors.

[Photo by Shui Guixian]

Development of China-CEEC Local Cooperation, the 2021 China-CEEC Mayors Forum, and more.

This year's trade shows will feature an even wider array of goods than previous years. Already, an unprecedented number of buyers have signed up. Many successful CEE companies will showcase their star products. Leading European home appliance brand Gorenje, top-quality Czech kitchen supplies, viral Polish skincare products, and Bulgarian rose-oil skincare products are just some of the countless highlights to look out for. Many trade deals are expected to be concluded this year.

## Closer Ties and Improved Event Organization

In the first quarter of this year, Ningbo's import and export volume with the seventeen Central and Eastern European Countries reached 8.85 billion yuan, up by 57.7% year-on-year. Imports stood at 2.12 billion yuan, up by 269.1%. Notably, Ningbo has imported 2,773 cars from Slovakia, worth over 1.14 billion

yuan and accounting for 53.9% of Ningbo's total imports from CEECs.

As the host city of the Expo, Ningbo has made remarkable achievements in furthering China-CEEC cooperation. The Ningbo-Zhoushan Port has developed container shipping routes with five CEE ports (in Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Croatia). In 2020, the shipping volume between Ningbo-Zhoushan Port and these five ports reached 600,000 TEUs. Ningbo has established sister city ties with twenty-two cities in all seventeen CEE countries. In 2017, the Sofia China Cultural Center was founded in Bulgaria. Thanks to a successful tourism campaign, thousands of Ningbo citizens have visited CEE countries over the last few years. In 2018, the Southeastern Zhejiang-CEEC Bilateral Tourism Promotion Association was founded to increase two-way tourism. Universities and colleges in Ningbo have set up Polish, Slovakian, Latvian and Czech language & cultural centers.

Five hundred CEE exhibitors have confirmed their attendance at this year's Expo, with 30% of them being represented by their general agencies in China. More

targeted policies to facilitate trade deals at the Expo are being rolled out. Roadshows promoting the Expo to buyers in eleven key Chinese cities have been held, in addition to twenty online matchmaking sessions. These efforts will ensure the maximum number of successful trade deals at the Expo.

To help CEE goods increase their market reputation in Ningbo and across China, 56 categories of consumer goods have been shortlisted for the 2021 Ningbo's Top Ten Favorite CEE Consumer Goods, including wine, food, beverage, beauty personal care and more. All seventeen CEECs are represented.

Ningbo is working hard to meet national-level convention organizing standards. In spring, a new round of public sanitation improvement work in the central city area began. As of late April, more than 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of public lawns have been mowed, and 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of pavement surface has undergone deep cleansing.

Ningbo is ready to welcome international and Chinese guests to the Expo with the warmest hospitality and the best city environment.

## SPOTLIGHT

# Robotics Competition Sparks Joy in Young Creators

By Jin Lu

On May 9, 2021 the Ningbo Youth Robotics Competition was held at the Ningbo Science Exploration Center. 378 students from 180 teams across the city participated.

With categories such as the RIC Robot Innovation Challenge, the VEX IQ Challenge, and the City Love Relay, this competition is an opportunity for young robot enthusiasts to showcase their ingenious creations.

This year, the City Love Relay's theme is "Fighting COVID with Technology", which is closely relevant to the trials that Ningbo went through during the epidemic. The premise of the Relay is that during the epidemic, in-person contact had to be reduced to a minimum. Contestants had to create robots capable of performing tasks previously done by humans, such as virus testing, quarantine management,

medication administering, supplies transporting, vaccine research, and more. They must demonstrate how their robots would operate in hypothetical epidemic control scenarios.

"In my opinion, the theme of this year's City Love Relay is easy to understand. It is for us all to work together to complete epidemic control tasks," said a contestant from Ciji Experimental School.

The theme of this year's RIC Challenge is "Smart City". Each team must design and build robots within the specified time to complete tasks such as autonomous driving, online teaching, and target tracking. Through the competition, the students gained a deeper understanding of next-generation technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, green energy, and high-speed rail transportation. They were able to appreciate the strength of China's science and technology more profoundly.



A contestant is testing his robot.

[Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

"I hope that through the competition, more young people could enhance their understanding of science and technology, learn to be more innovative and cooperative,

and become well-rounded individuals," said a representative of the Ningbo Municipal Science and Technology Association, which organized the event.

## INFO&TIPS

### Central and Eastern European Dairy Products: Ningbo Consumers' New Favorites

By Dong Na

The 2nd China-CEEC Expo will soon be held in Ningbo. In recent years, a large amount of high-quality imported products from Central and Eastern Europe have flooded into the Chinese market, captivating the hearts of consumers. Now, Ningbo shoppers can buy even more Central and Eastern European agro-goods close to home.

At the Ningbo International Convention and Exhibition Center, the Central and Eastern European products pavilion are stocked with countless types of imported products: food, beverages, cosmetics, household goods, personal care products, and more. Among them, the most popular are undoubtedly dairy products.

"CEE dairy products are not only of good quality, but also affordable. In the past few years, items such as Polish UTH milk have gradually penetrated the Ningbo market and are well-loved by consumers. The dairy sales volume of Q1 2021 has reached 50% of 2020's total import volume. It's going up very fast," said a manager of an importer based in the Ningbo Free Trade Zone.

Statistics from January to March this year indicate that the cumulative volume and value of imported CEE dairy products at Ningbo Port grew rapidly, reaching 4,183 tons and 22.7 million yuan respectively, an increase of 73.76% and 48.88% year-on-year.

This year, Ningbo Customs has implemented a series of new policies to facilitate the entry of more high-quality CEE dairy products. These measures include speeding up the inspection of imports, shortening the customs clearance time, reducing fees for Chinese importers, and improving the track-and-trace system to guarantee the highest level of food safety for Chinese consumers.

The Customs has actively developed online and offline platforms for importers to access information, organized workshops for companies of all sizes, and provided clear interpretations of policies, regulations, and national standards on CEE dairy goods, paving the way for such imports to grow even more in the future.

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