

More than a year later, Canada-China 'track two' talks yet to begin (1.13) —Liu Na

Summary

- The government of Canada has yet to act on 2014 promise to establish a panel of business and non-government groups to hold talks with Chinese counterparts on closer trade.
- Canada's government announced it would establish a joint panel with China, to "actively explore the way to deepen bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade and economic relations."
- The two sides also agreed to establish a "track two dialogue to study new approaches to enhance energy trade, including potentially an environmentally safe maritime energy corridor."
- Natural Resources Canada did not respond when asked whether the study on a maritime energy corridor had been begun.
- The new Liberal government has signaled a more open approach to trade talks with China.

Opinions from China

- Luo Zhaohui, Chinese Ambassador
 - Progress on establishing the talks had been "quite slow."
 - The embassy affirmed its support for advancing the dialogue in a Jan. 8 emailed statement.
- Yang Yundong, spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Canada
 - China still supports track two talks on free trade
 - China hopes to launch free trade negotiations soon

Opinions from Canada

- Sarah Kutulakos, executive director of the Canada China Business Council, and Colin Robertson, a vice president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and former Canadian diplomat
 - The Liberal government may choose to rebrand the track two talks under a new name as part of its effort to reinvigorate Canada-China relations and put its own stamp on foreign policy
 - Canada's government should establish a track two panel as part of its preparations to negotiate closer trade ties with China
 - Canada has options besides full-fledged free trade negotiations, smaller agreements can help to boost trade over the shorter term