KREAB

Weekly China Insight

Beijing, 30 October 2026

Fifth Plenum concludes with renewed emphasis on Party governance

The Communist Party of China (CPC) concluded its Fifth Plenum in Beijing on October 29, adopting a resolution on advancing full and rigorous Party self-governance.

The meeting reviewed disciplinary decisions involving 33 senior officials and approved the promotion of ten alternate members to full membership of the Central Committee. It also confirmed that the CPC's 21st National Congress will be held in Beijing in the second half of 2027.

At a 30 October press conference, officials reported that disciplinary authorities had handled 8.105 million cases and imposed disciplinary sanctions on 7.922 million people since 2012, including 963 centrally managed officials.

The plenum reaffirmed the importance of Party discipline, organizational development, and internal oversight. The newly adopted resolution provides a framework for further strengthening governance mechanisms and implementing the Party's policy priorities.

General Zhang Shengmin was elected to the CPC Politburo

The Fifth Plenum elected Zhang Shengmin, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), as a member of the CPC Politburo. The meeting also reviewed and confirmed disciplinary decisions involving senior military personnel, including former CMC vice chairman Zhang Youxia and former CMC member Liu Zhenli.

Zhang Shengmin has extensive experience in military political work and disciplinary supervision. His appointment adds a military representative to the Politburo.

Fifth Plenum outlines priorities for strengthening administrative effectiveness

The Fifth Plenum adopted a resolution outlining priorities for strengthening Party governance, including organizational development, cadre management, disciplinary oversight, and anti-corruption.

At the 30 October press conference, Central Policy Research Office Director Tang Fangyu outlined the resolution's structure and policy objectives. Organization Department official Huang Jianfa highlighted measures to improve cadre performance evaluations, encourage officials to take initiative, and strengthen mechanisms to support those fulfilling their responsibilities. Officials also emphasized improving Party organizations in emerging economic sectors and among workers in new forms of employment.
These measures reflect continued efforts to strengthen administrative effectiveness, improve policy implementation, and develop the Party's organizational capacity. Further implementation

guidelines will provide greater clarity on their practical implications for local governance and businesses.

CPC announces preparations for 2027 National Party Congress

The Fifth Plenum confirmed that the CPC's 21st National Congress will be convened in Beijing in the second half of 2027. The meeting emphasized strengthening the selection, training, and management of Party officials, including developing younger cadres and improving performance assessment mechanisms.

At the 30 October press conference, officials highlighted the importance of developing a professional and capable cadre workforce to support China's long-term development objectives.

The announcements establish key organizational priorities ahead of the 2027 Party Congress. Personnel appointments, institutional capacity, and effective implementation of national policies will remain important areas to monitor over the coming year.

Xi meets German and Swiss presidents in Beijing, emphasizing free trade and multilateral cooperation

On 30 October, Chinese President Xi Jinping met separately with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Swiss President Guy Parmelin in Beijing, calling for closer economic cooperation, free trade, and a stronger multilateral international order amid rising protectionism and geopolitical uncertainty.

During talks with German President Steinmeier, Xi highlighted the responsibilities of China and Germany as the world's second- and third-largest economies, urging Berlin to pursue a "rational, pragmatic, and friendly" China policy and provide a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory environment for Chinese businesses. Both sides expressed interest in expanding cooperation in artificial intelligence, green technologies, digital economy, and trade. Steinmeier emphasized resolving trade disputes through dialogue and upholding WTO rules.

In his meeting with Swiss President Parmelin, Xi welcomed the upgrading of the China-Switzerland free trade agreement, with both leaders witnessing the signing of the relevant protocol alongside cooperation documents covering scientific research, employment, and media. The agreement, which will expand Swiss businesses' access to the Chinese market, comes amid increasing trade barriers imposed by the US and EU, with Xi presenting it as a demonstration of both countries' commitment to economic openness.

The back-to-back diplomatic meetings underscore Beijing's efforts to position itself as a defender of free trade and multilateralism while strengthening ties with key European partners. Beijing hopes to use tangible trade concessions to Switzerland and broader cooperation proposals with Germany to encourage a more pragmatic European approach to China.