

Press release: Chinese New Year 2017: Theresa May's message

I want to send my best wishes to everyone in Britain, China and around the world celebrating Chinese New Year.

From the fairs in Beijing, to the fireworks in Hong Kong and the parades here in London, families and communities will come together and look to the year ahead – the Year of the Rooster.

And what a year it is set to be – particularly for the relationship between Britain and China.

Our starting point is stronger than ever before. We had the [historic state visit of President Xi](#) just 15 months ago. We receive more Chinese investment than any other major European country. We've got around 150,000 Chinese students studying here and the number of Chinese tourists visiting has doubled in 5 years.

Meanwhile, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, our countries are working together on the most pressing global issues.

This year also marks some important anniversaries: 20 years since the handover of Hong Kong to China; and 45 years of ambassadorial relations between our countries.

I want us to take this chance to build on all the ties we share – in business, diplomacy, education, tourism and culture – as we forge a new role for Britain, as the most outward-looking, free-trading nation in the world.

Indeed, I look forward to making another visit to China, following my trip to Hangzhou last year, which was my first visit outside Europe as Prime Minister and my first meeting with President Xi.

And it is an auspicious time. The Rooster – the Fire Rooster – represents so many of the characteristics we need to employ in that endeavour: openness, confidence, hard work and leadership.

These aren't alien concepts to any of us. Indeed, they are characteristics demonstrated day in, day out by the British Chinese community.

For this is a community that makes an enormous contribution to our society – proving that the strength and success of this country rests on dedication, diversity and a deep spirit of citizenship among our people.

So as the lanterns are lit and the dumplings are served, let me wish you and your family, wherever you are, a very happy and healthy New Year.

Xin Nian Kuai Le.