

Belt and Road: ICP warns of sovereignty risks and denounces lack of transparency in agreement

- *The agreement with China was signed without activating institutional channels or ensuring citizen oversight, and it compromises the country's strategic decisions.*
- *Though not legally binding, these instruments have led to economic and political dependence in key sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and cybersecurity in other countries.*

Colombia's adherence to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) cannot be understood as merely an economic or infrastructure cooperation agreement. [As the Instituto de Ciencia Política \(ICP\) has warned on several occasions](#), the BRI is a geopolitical instrument of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to expand **its strategic, economic, and political influence at the expense of national sovereignty, autonomy, and institutional stability.**

What is at stake is not just trade or diplomacy, but the Colombian State's ability to make independent decisions in the national interest, particularly in critical areas such as infrastructure, technology, cybersecurity, and foreign policy.

Although the government has presented the "Colombia-China Cooperation Plan" as a non-binding instrument with no formal legal obligations, there is growing concern about the normalization of strategic projects with an authoritarian actor, with no institutional control or public deliberation. Even declarative commitments can open the door to strategic alignments, access to sensitive sectors, and the projection of foreign influence.

The alleged flexibility of the instrument is not a safeguard; rather, it creates a gray area which, without democratic oversight or public access to its contents, prevents civil society and public institutions from exercising control, assessing implications, or raising objections to provisions that may harm the country. **This pattern, common in BRI accession processes**, reinforces concerns about the cumulative effects and the progressive weakening of national sovereignty.

Based on international experience and expert warnings, the very least that should be expected is that the government activates the institutional channels for consultation and deliberation. Specifically, the Advisory Commission on Foreign Relations and the Second Committees of the Senate and House. Although an extraordinary session was announced to discuss the matter, it was cancelled without explanation, further feeding the perception of opacity and limiting political oversight.

Economic freedom and sustainable development require strong democratic institutions capable of making decisions transparently and under public scrutiny. This is not about opposing trade, foreign investment, or diplomatic relations with China. **It is about safeguarding Colombia from international agreements that may compromise its sovereignty and independence.**

In numerous countries, the BRI has served as a strategic expansion platform for the Chinese Communist Party, which takes advantage of the opacity of its agreements to finance infrastructure projects **under non-competitive conditions**, insert technology with surveillance potential and influence key sectors such as transportation, energy and telecommunications.

Several countries are already facing the consequences: **Ecuador** fell into a debt trap, accumulating the highest level of indebtedness in its history with a single creditor, under non-transparent contracts and harmful payment formulas. **Peru** handed over control of a port for three decades due to abusive clauses and diplomatic pressure that forced Congress to amend its legislation. **Italy**, after being the only G7 country to join, ultimately withdrew due to the high institutional cost. These are not isolated incidents, they are part of a systematic practice that serves as a warning.

At the ICP, we consider it urgent to suspend any decision on this agreement until it is subjected to public oversight and institutional participation, and until clear mechanisms are established to monitor investments, loans, and strategic infrastructure projects, following examples set by countries such as [Australia](#) and the **United Kingdom**.

It is essential to publish the full agreement, activate the mechanisms for legislative deliberation, and ensure that all international cooperation aligns with democratic principles, with transparency and oversight. **The Belt and Road Initiative may appear to be a path for cooperation, but without clear rules, it becomes a road to losing sovereignty and independence.**

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