

# Business Travel Security: China

When travelling abroad on a business trip, you are running the risk of becoming a target of foreign intelligence services. Especially on trips to China, you need to be particularly watchful, since there are, as you will be aware of, increased authoritarian tendencies in this Asian country. This fact is also reflected by the extensive – investigatory and sometimes law-enforcement – powers of the Chinese security services.

Systematic preparation and subsequent evaluation can identify and minimise possible risks before they materialize. Such measures may also involve the support of the security agencies. BfV is in charge of countering espionage activities carried out by foreign intelligence services. Therefore, we are available as a confidential point of contact.



## Checkliste

### BEFORE THE TRIP

- ✓ Inform yourself about the **threat situation, security situation and legislation in your country of destination**, especially when travelling to ➔ **states posing particular security risks** according to section 13, subsection 1, number 17 of the Security Vetting Act (Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz – SÜG). For example, refer to the travel and security advice provided by the Federal Foreign Office.
- ✓ Inquire about **experience of other travellers and advice from individuals responsible for security** and take advantage of training opportunities.
- ✓ Make a list of **emergency contact addresses** (corporate security, embassies/consulates, medical care etc.). Enter your name on the **crisis preparedness list of the Federal Foreign Office (ELEFAND)**.
- ✓ **Caution with regard to IT:** Do not bring any personal devices. Use a **special (unencrypted) laptop** without access to your company's network and/or a **special (unencrypted) mobile phone** with only the most important telephone numbers / data stored.
- ✓ **Caution with regard to documents:** Only bring the documents that are absolutely necessary for the trip. Make copies and leave them at home / in the office.
- ✓ Be careful **not to produce too many data** (such as location and mobility data). When filling out entry and registration forms, provide truthful information, but keep it as general as possible (e.g. on employment).
- ✓ When filling out entry and registration forms, provide **truthful information, but keep it as generic as possible** (e.g. regarding your employment).
- ✓ Refrain from carrying your mobile phone even during **visits to Chinese diplomatic institutions** in Germany that might be required.

➔ **States involving special security risks**  
States involving special security risks are states that are likely to hold threats to individuals who are or are to be entrusted with tasks of a sensitive nature:  
[www.bmi.bund.de](http://www.bmi.bund.de)

### Application for a visa

- ➔ When applying for a visa, you have to make comprehensive statements to fill out the online form, such as on current job/position, salary, previous employments, educational background etc.
- ➔ This information makes it easier for the Chinese security services to keep an eye on you – including through surveillance or telecommunications interception – or to start recruitment approaches.
- ➔ Please note: Incorrect or incomplete statements in the visa application may be used as leverage against you by the Chinese security authorities; you might be pressurized, for example, into cooperating with the Chinese intelligence services by the threat of immediate expulsion.

### Safety recommendations

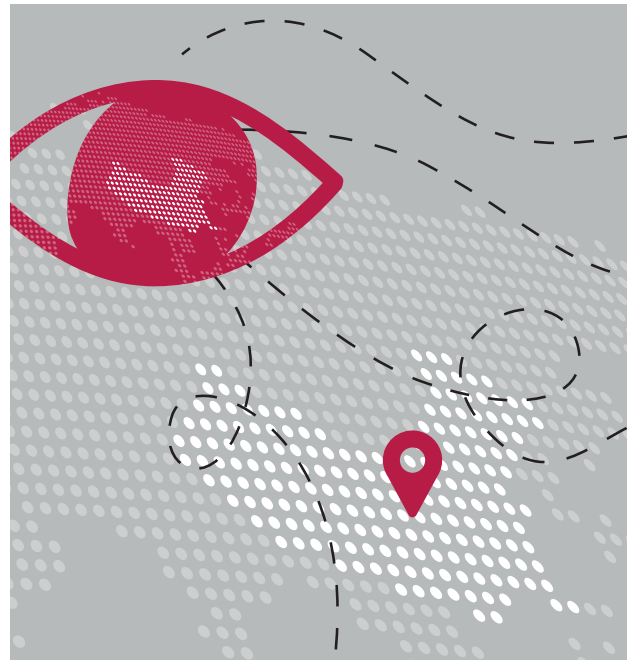
- ➔ Do not give wrong answers to the questions, but keep them as non-specific as possible, i.e. do not provide many details (e.g. stating just the ministry your office reports to; only stating the current employer).

## Checklist



### IN THE COUNTRY

- ✓ Brace yourself for **intensive security checks** and luggage inspections when entering the country or on internal flights
  - ✓ Be cautious when **individuals you do not know approach you and when you receive gifts** in order to avoid compromising situations. If possible, do not travel unaccompanied.
  - ✓ Plan your **means of transportation and your itineraries** in advance.
  - ✓ Keep away from potentially **dangerous situations** (e.g. protests).
  - ✓ Keep **conversations about confidential matters** to a minimum.
  - ✓ Never leave sensitive information and data carriers behind. Rooms and safes in hotels are not secure.
  - ✓ If you have to give **devices containing sensitive data to third parties**, use a **safety bag** with a manipulation-proof self-adhesive seal and a unique barcode.
  - ✓ Be cautious vis-à-vis **service providers / service personnel**.
  - ✓ Avoid open **WIFI and Bluetooth connections**, especially if they are explicitly offered by the Chinese side.
  - ✓ Only use **your own chargers** – equipment of third parties might be tampered with and allow access to your data.
  - ✓ In case of **long-term or permanent residence**: There is also the possibility that private living quarters and vehicles may be searched, which involves the risk of eavesdropping technology being installed.
  - ✓ Reckon with the possibility of being **tailed in an obvious form** or being **checked as a road user**.
  - ✓ Do not make any **calls to your own office**, or only in very exceptional cases, and always adhere to a strict **code of conduct when talking**.
- ➔ **In general**, treat approaches and favours from people you do not know with a healthy degree of scepticism.



### Travelling as part of a delegation

➔ Be prepared, when travelling as part of a delegation, that Chinese officials arrange the transport of luggage and that you will not be able to access your baggage for a long time. As a general rule, it is common practice that German delegations travelling to or within China are always accompanied by members of the Chinese security authorities.



### Electronic surveillance via apps

Chinese security services also make use of applications for the smartphone to monitor travellers. Such applications, for example, scan the phones in search of special catchwords. In addition, also widespread apps such as WeChat or Alipay may be used for information gathering because the companies are obliged by law to cooperate with the authorities.



### AFTER YOUR RETURN

- ✓ Talk over your trip with your **fellow travellers and the individuals responsible for security**.
- ✓ Arrange for the **equipment you have carried with you** to be checked for malware or even get rid of it. Change any **login data** used en route.
- ✓ Write down any **conspicuous events and irregularities you have observed** and inform the competent institutions (corporate security, security authorities).

## Notes



DID YOU MAKE ANY **NEW CONTACTS**?

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DID YOU RECEIVE ANY **GIFTS**?

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WERE YOU PUT **UNDER PRESSURE**?

.....



DID YOU HAVE THE **DEVICES YOU TOOK WITH YOU** CHECKED?

.....



DID YOU NOTICE ANYTHING ELSE THAT WAS **UNUSUAL**?

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Wirtschaft & Wissenschaft.  
Zukunftssicher.  
Verfassungsschutzverbund des Bundes und der Länder

BfV (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz) and the 16 domestic intelligence services of the federal states are the domestic intelligence community. They cooperate closely in the field of preventive economic security. Thus a strong network is formed that extends to where your company is based. Please visit [www.verfassungsschutz.de](http://www.verfassungsschutz.de) to find a list of contacts at the federal state authorities.



Gemeinsam. Werte. Schützen.

The Economic Security Initiative (Initiative Wirtschaftsschutz) is an initiative by BfV, BKA, BND and BSI. On their information platform [www.wirtschaftsschutz.info](http://www.wirtschaftsschutz.info) they offer their expertise in the field of economic security together with various partners. This includes the issue of cyber crime as well as economic and scientific espionage or IT security.

Your direct contact to economic security