

EU-CHINA OBSERVER

DEPARTMENT OF EU INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY STUDIES



"EXCHANGING IDEAS
ON EU-CHINA RELATIONS:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY
APPROACH"

College of Europe
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Baillet-Latour Chair of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHINA'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY STRATEGY: LESSONS FOR THE EU 04

Falk HARTIG

CHINESE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: BETWEEN SOPHISTICATION AND LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE 09

Alessandra CAPPELLETTI

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE EU 14

Elli B. TZATZANIS-STEPANOVIC

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CHINA'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY STRATEGY: LESSONS FOR THE EU

FALK HARTIG

Introduction

In June 2016, the EU adopted its 'Strategy for international cultural relations' which aims at encouraging cultural cooperation between the EU and its partner countries and promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values. The strategy highlights that 'many of the EU's strategic partners have strong cultural diplomacy strategies' and it explicitly refers to China in this regard.¹ This paper introduces China's strategy and points out the lessons that can be learnt from China's cultural diplomacy. For instance, while China may serve as an example regarding the strategic importance of culture, it also exemplifies the necessity of a thought-out strategy for cultural diplomacy and highlights the need for credibility in cultural diplomacy.

The importance of Culture for China's image management

Public diplomacy is a country's engagement and communication with foreign publics to communicate specific images and narratives of that country; it consists of different components, including international exchanges, international broadcasting and cultural diplomacy. China has embraced public diplomacy with an enthusiasm rarely seen in other parts of the world.² Public diplomacy is regarded as an important instrument to tell China's story to the world, to correct the country's negative global image and to explain the 'real China' (zhenshi de Zhongguo). Culture plays an important role in China's public diplomacy as a variety of cultural activities and programmes indicate.

In late October, the Chinese Ministry of Culture and the Shandong provincial government signed an agreement to build a Chinese culture centre in Belgrade, Serbia. The project is expected to be completed by June 2018 and the Shandong provincial government will be responsible for the management and operation of the centre.³ In early September 2016 the Stockholm China Cultural Center opened its doors to the public and during the opening ceremony the Chinese Ambassador to Sweden, Chen Yuming, emphasised that the China Cultural Center would bring Chinese culture, language and art to Sweden, boosting the exchanges and strengthening bilateral ties. As Chen Yuming explained, the hope is that it will provide opportunities for Swedish people to better understand China, thereby further improving and developing China-Sweden relations.⁴

These two seemingly small news items illustrate the importance that culture plays in China's efforts to communicate with the world. Culture has been seen as an important component by the most senior leadership in recent years. In late 2011, then-president Hu Jintao gave a speech at a meeting of the CCP Central Committee in which he outlined how China should become a 'socialist cultural great power' (shehui zhuyi wenhua qiangguo). He discussed the international cultural competition and stated that 'he who takes the dominant position in the cultural development has a strong cultural soft power and thus can be the winner in the intense international competition.' Hu also warned that 'international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernising and dividing China, and

ideological and cultural fields are the focal areas of their long-term infiltration.⁵

Hu's speech highlights two interrelated aspects that are still valid in the Xi Jinping era. First, China should engage in international cultural competition, just as it should engage in the international communication competition. Second, the international cultural arena is, just as the international information space, characterised as potentially hostile toward China as western powers, in the Chinese view, aim to influence, and eventually destabilise, China by means of communication and pop culture. In this regard the role and importance of culture for China's overall diplomacy was affirmed and reinforced in late 2013 when the Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress (under Xi Jinping) pointed out that it was crucial for China's overall development to develop China into a nation with a strong socialist culture and to improve its cultural soft power.⁶

In the Chinese understanding, culture is an important part of 'comprehensive national power' (zonghe guoli) and a means to defend strategic interests against 'fierce international competition'.⁷ It then becomes an important tool in the struggle of power and interests between nations, because the country whose culture is the 'mainstream and leading culture' is 'the winner in the international power struggle'.⁸

China's Cultural Diplomacy at work – Confucius Institutes, Cultural Centres and China Cultural Years

The Ministry of Education (Jiaoyu bu) is regarded as the most important player in China's cultural diplomacy. It organises international educational exchanges and cooperation and designs and oversees programmes for Chinese students studying abroad and foreign students studying in China, as well as joint educational programmes by Chinese and foreign educational institutions.⁹ The ministry is also in charge of four affiliated organisations conducting international cooperation and exchanges. These are the Chinese Education Association for International Exchange

(CEAIE), the Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE), the China Scholarship Council (CSC), and the Office of Chinese Language Council International, known by as Hanban. Hanban is mostly notable for running the Confucius Institutes and is now so closely related to the Confucius Institutes that its official name is Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban/Kongzi Xueyuan Zongbu).

The Confucius Institutes (CIs) are 'non-profit educational organizations promoting the teaching of Chinese language outside China, training language instructors and strengthening cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries'.¹⁰ By the end of 2015, a total of 502 Confucius Institutes and 1,013 smaller Confucius Classrooms (mainly established at high schools and associated to a Confucius Institute) have been established in 137 countries.¹¹ Normally CIs are organised as joint ventures between Chinese and international partners. Usually the Chinese supply teaching materials and send over language instructors, while local partners provide accommodation, facilities and local staff. All CIs are under the supervision of Hanban which is responsible for the administration of the institutes, the supply of teachers, and the development and distribution of teaching materials. Hanban also provides start-up funding of US\$100,000–150,000 per annum for a period of three to five years¹² and normally about 50 per cent of the operational costs.¹³ In 2015, international partners invested US\$ 476 million and the expenditures by the Chinese side was US\$ 319 million.¹⁴

Confucius Institutes address a mainstream public audience that does not normally have specialist knowledge of China. The programmes consist mainly of language courses at various levels and a wide range of cultural events such as exhibitions, film screenings and talks. Schedules differ from institute to institute, but generally they offer broadly similar content while trying to develop some individuality or more unusual programmes¹⁵. While those in charge of the Institutes would normally say that there is no interference from the Chinese side or attempts to push topics in a certain direction, one has to note that certain subjects are off limits and these are not dealt with in CIs. These topics are regarded as sensitive for the Chinese authorities, such as Tiananmen (referring to the crackdown of the protest movement in 1989), Taiwan (referring to the legal status of the island), Tibet (referring to China's role there), the Dalai Lama or Falun Gong.¹⁶

The second ministry involved in China's cultural diplomacy is the Ministry of Culture (Wenhua bu). It organises a

CULTURE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF 'COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL POWER' AND A MEANS TO DEFEND STRATEGIC INTERESTS AGAINST 'FIERCE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

number of large-scale cultural projects, most notably the China Culture Years abroad. The Culture Year project is a series of cultural exchange programmes between China and foreign countries and includes art exhibitions, sports activities, fashion shows, concerts and similar events. China Culture Years have been held in France, England, Greece, Russia, South Korea, Australia and Germany.

The China Culture Years in France (2004), Italy (2010), and Germany (2012) all held 'core events' including traditional Chinese opera, ballet and national orchestra concerts, as well as events related to higher education and contemporary art exhibitions. Furthermore, the programme was tailored according to the respective host country: the French Culture Year presented events related to fashion, the Italian programme included a great emphasis on cultural and economic cooperation, and the German case focused heavily on contemporary music as well as architecture and design.¹⁷

Furthermore the Ministry of Culture operates Chinese Culture Centres Abroad. The first Culture Centres were set up in Mauritius and Benin in 1988 and there are currently more than 20 Centres promoting Chinese language and culture to audiences around the world. In addition to the above-mentioned Stockholm China Cultural Center, China opened an 11-storey China Cultural Centre, costing more than 200 million yuan, in Singapore in 2015 and in September 2015, Chinese Vice-Premier Liu Yandong and Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Didier Reynders jointly inaugurated the China Cultural Center in Brussels. In addition to Brussels, in Europe such centres can be found in Berlin, Madrid, Paris, Malta, Moscow and Copenhagen.

In February 2015, the Ministry of Culture announced that the Chinese government had invested about 1.33 billion yuan (US\$214 million) by the end of 2014 to build overseas China Cultural Centres and that it is expected to provide a further 360 million yuan for developing and running the Centres in 2015, which was an increase of 181 per cent from the previous year. The Ministry also announced that it would hasten the process of building cultural centres in countries along the ancient Silk Road as part of an expansion plan for such institutes as the Chinese government aims to have at least 50 such China Culture Centres by 2020.¹⁸

The China Culture Centres 'provide information services and training programmes and organize various educational and cultural activities such as lectures on China.'¹⁹ The China Culture Centre in Brussels, for example, focuses on

CHINA ILLUSTRATES TWO CLOSELY RELATED ISSUES OF PUBLIC AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY EXEMPLARILY, NAMELY THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE AND CREDIBILITY.

the promotion of Chinese culture as it introduces language, arts, gastronomy and traditional customs to its visitors. It encourages exchanges in terms of politics, economy, society and ideas and aims to host a variety of activities, including performances, art exhibitions, seminars, cultural workshops, film screenings, master classes, Chinese language training courses and many other services.²⁰

What lessons can be learnt from China's 'strong' Cultural Diplomacy strategy?

As mentioned in the introduction, the new EU strategy emphasises culture as a valuable component of the external action of the European Union, and the case of China illustrates a number of aspects to consider in order to make such a strategy work.

What can be learnt from China is the way culture is used in foreign affairs. While non-Chinese debates see culture in international affairs mainly as a tool of mutuality, exchange, and reciprocal communication, China uses culture in a strategic manner to fulfil functional purposes. This can be described as a 'realist view of culture' as an instrument to pursue competitive self-interest by enhancing the strategic strength of a nation by means of culture and language. This view may appear somewhat uncomfortable for some Western observers, especially where culture is officially seen as a benign instrument used to conduct apolitical cultural exchange either for its own sake or in the more idealistic context of equal exchange and engagement.²¹ This understanding was already described back in 1964 by Philip Coombs, the first Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Culture, who noted that cultural activities occupy the 'quiet, calm and sunny side of foreign relations, not the dramatic, stormy side.'²² Quite the contrary, China applies a more functional, and thus pragmatic, approach, which can be explained by China's view of a sceptical global public opinion.²³

This, of course, does not mean that culture should be 'weaponised', as Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Pol-

icy pointed out earlier this year.²⁴ But at the same time, and this is what the case of China clearly shows, there is also no need to relativise culture as the 'hidden gem of foreign policy', as European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, noted in his statement on the occasion of the release of the new EU-Strategy.²⁵ Thus, a slightly more 'realistic' view of culture would do no harm to Europe's external actions.

This strategic importance of culture for China is not only reflected in the funding it has made available, but also – and more symbolically – in what is described as the 'concerns and support from state leaders' (*guojia lingdaoren guanxin kongzi xueyuan jianshe*). This approach refers to the fact that the most senior political leadership cares about China's cultural diplomacy which is reflected, for example, in the frequent visits to Confucius Institutes around the world by senior leaders. Similar visits by high ranking EU officials to the 37 EU Centres worldwide would clearly have similar effects – as those seemingly minor visits would show audiences inside and outside the EU that its leaders take culture seriously.

The case of China also exemplifies that a thought-out strategy for cultural diplomacy is crucial. Contrary to the

assessment of the above-mentioned EU strategy after which China has had a 'strong' strategy, a closer look reveals a certain degree of confusion and mismanagement as there is a puzzling overlap in activities and the content presented to audiences around the world. The prime example is the striking similarity between what the Confucius Institutes do and what the China Culture Centres offer to their audiences. The biggest difference between the Confucius Institutes and Chinese Culture Centres, it seems, concerns the ministry in charge and the organisational structure. This problem is even greater for the EU's cultural diplomacy which aims to promote the Union and at the same time the diverse cultures of EU Member States who themselves conduct their national cultural diplomacies. In this regard China may serve as a 'cautionary tale' that a proper strategy is essential.

China furthermore illustrates two closely related issues of public and cultural diplomacy exemplarily, namely the issue of political interference and credibility. In the case of China one has to state that there are (still) rather strong official overtones (*nonghou de guanfang secai*) in China's cultural diplomacy and that the political character (*zhengzhixing*) is (still) too obvious.²⁶ The China Culture Years, for example, are mainly 'officially orchestrated' by the Chinese



government and thus proof of its authoritarian character.²⁷ The official character is also recognisable with regards to China's cultural outposts around the world and is reflected in their selected presentation of China, as neither China's Cultural Centres abroad nor the more prominent Confucius Institutes introduce the 'real' China, but tend to present 'a politically correct version of China.'²⁸

The political character of China's public diplomacy is closely related to the lack of 'legitimacy and credibility' due to the country's authoritarian political system.²⁹ Against this background China is a prime example of the 'golden rule' of public diplomacy – that actions speak louder than words, meaning that it does not matter how much an actor engages in cultural activities abroad as long as the political behaviour does not match those positive encounters. And this is clearly the most critical lesson the EU can learn from China: it is one thing to adopt a strategy which

sees culture as a means to promote a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values; but it is a completely different matter actually to achieve those self-defined goals as, for example, the struggle with the enormous challenge of the current refugee crisis exemplifies. Cultural diplomacy only works if the values it seeks to convey are matched by concrete action. ©

¹ European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, JOIN (2016) 29 final, Brussels, 8 June 2016. ² G. Rawnsley, 'Approaches to soft power and public diplomacy in China and Taiwan', *Journal of International Communication*, vol.18, no.2, 2012, pp. 121-135. ³ 'China culture center to be built in Serbia', *Xinhua*, 31 October 2016. ⁴ J. Persson, 'Stockholm China Cultural Center opens', *ScandAsia.com*, 16 September 2016, online at: <http://scandasia.com/stockholm-china-cultural-center-opens/>. ⁵ Hu Jintao, 'Jiandingbuyi zou Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi wenhua fazhan daolu nuli jianshe shehui zhuyi wenhua qiangguo' [Unswerving Progress on the Development Road of Socialist Culture with Chinese Characteristics to Build a Socialist Cultural Great Power], *Qiushi Online*, 1 January 2012. http://www.qstheory.cn/zywz/201201/t20120101_133218.htm. ⁶ Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. ⁷ Jia Wenyan, 'Zhongguo wenhua wajiao "xin" silu' [A 'New' Line of Thought Regarding China's Cultural Diplomacy], *Jingjiyanjiu Daokan* vol.155, no.9, 2012, pp. 216–17, p.216. ⁸ Li Zhi, *Wenhua wajiao. Yi zhong chuanboxue de jiedu* [Cultural Diplomacy—An Interpretative Model of Communication], Beijing, Peking University Press, 2005, p.2. ⁹ F. Hartig, *Chinese Public Diplomacy: The Rise of the Confucius Institute*, New York, Routledge. ¹⁰ Tang Yuankai, 'Education: Confucius Teaching Chinese Abroad', *Beijing Review*, 7 January 2010. Available from: http://www.bjreview.com.cn/life/txt/2010-01/04/content_237885.htm. ¹¹ Xu Lin, 'Xinchun heci' [New Year Greetings], *Hanban Online*, 6 February 2016. http://www.hanban.org/article/2016-02/06/content_631215.htm. ¹² D. Starr, 'Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes', *European Journal of Education*, vol.44, no.1, 2009, pp.65-82. ¹³ Hartig, op. cit. (Confucius Institute). ¹⁴ Hanban (2015) *Confucius Institute Annual Development Report*. Beijing: Hanban. ¹⁵ Yang Rui, 'Soft power and Higher Education: An Examination of China's Confucius Institutes', *Globalization, Societies, and Education*, vol.8, no.1, 2010, pp. 235–245. ¹⁶ Hartig, op. cit. (Confucius Institute). ¹⁷ C. Maags, 'Enhancing China's National Image Through Culture Festivals: A Case Study of China Culture Years in Europe', *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2014, vol.7, no.1, pp: 33–55. ¹⁸ Deng Zhangyu, 'More Chinese cultural centers along Silk Road by 2020', *China Daily USA*, 17 February 2015, p.8. ¹⁹ Han Zhaoying, op. cit. pp.302-303. ²⁰ China Cultural Center in Brussels, For information see: <http://www.cccbrussels.be/about>. ²¹ F. Hartig, 'How China Understands Public Diplomacy: The Importance of National Image for National Interests', *International Studies Review*, 2016, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw007>. ²² Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs*, New York, Harper & Row, 1964. ²³ Hartig, op. cit. ²⁴ F. Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, speech, Culture Forum Brussels, 20 April 2016. ²⁵ A new strategy to put culture at the heart of EU international relations. ²⁶ Zhang Dianjun, 'Gaige kaifang hou de zhongguo wenhua wajiao qianxi' [A Short Analysis of China's Cultural Diplomacy since the Reform and Opening up Policy], *Heilongjiang Shehui Kexue*, vol.130, no.1, 2012, pp: 35–38. ²⁷ Maags, op. cit. p.50. ²⁸ Hartig, op. cit. (Confucius Institute), p.9. ²⁹ I. d'Hooghe, 'The Expansion of China's Public Diplomacy System', in Wang Jian (ed.), *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp.19-36, p.28.



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CHINESE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: BETWEEN SOPHISTICATION AND LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

NOTES ON CHINESE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES AMONG THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE ¹

ALESSANDRA CAPPELLETTI

Introduction

Chinese public and cultural diplomacy (CD) implemented by State and non-State actors in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the European context appears as a patchwork of tentative policy actions lacking a real systematic framework, though in some cases reaching a high degree of sophistication and effectiveness. The Belt and Road Initiative in itself is not yet defined and structured, also due to its much-heralded reliance on a high degree of flexibility and inclusiveness (at this stage, whether it will actually evolve to fulfil the criteria of a grand strategy remains to be seen). Nonetheless, by reviewing a selection of BRI-related CD projects in Europe, in this paper I will argue that Chinese government officials are gradually understanding that CD is especially effective among foreign audiences in two cases: when it is not identified as directly connected to Chinese state actors, and when the latter are only one of the players in a synergistic inclusive framework which sees both Chinese and foreign state and non-state actors working together. The higher the number of actors involved in a CD project, as well as the degree of differentiation among them, the more reliable and effective CD is. This is true both in terms of confidence building as well as of overall impact on foreign audiences.

Following this assumption, Chinese CD actions are increasingly involving a rather vast network of players interacting among each other in different ways. At the same time Chinese actors have realised how important it is to focus on cultural and intercultural concepts when dealing with a European audience, as these concepts have a strong symbolic power. The increased effectiveness of Chinese CD is also due to the large budgets allocated by the Chinese central government specifically for BRI-related communication and inter-cultural activities. Simultaneously, Chinese CD projects in Europe still present a fragmented picture, not responding to a systematic design, and in a certain sense lacking the necessary self-confidence that would be expected. The cultural aspects which are currently being promoted correspond to a simplified and standardised version of the vast and multi-faceted Chinese cultural sphere, as if Chinese actors do not feel ready yet (with a few exceptions) to go beyond the folkloric side of China and to show the multiple identities – often idiosyncratic – of China's culture and peoples.

The importance of Cultural Diplomacy

CD has always been important in the context of international relations. The concept of 'culture' is a slippery one, and defining 'culture' is considered a challenge. Drawing

from the anthropological literature on the issue, we can say that 'culture' as a concept has its own ontological status, but it is the collective behaviour, taken as empirical evidence, which is the object of analysis. Shifting from the anthropological to the political sciences perspective, 'culture' can be understood as the sum of those artefacts and symbolic concepts adopted in some diplomatic practices and aimed at inspiring and attracting the interest of a foreign country and population. The empirical evidence in this case is the cultural concepts and messages adopted and transmitted by State and non-State actors. What then is 'cultural diplomacy'? In my understanding, CD is one of the main elements of a country's soft power, and differs from public diplomacy, soft power and propaganda. CD is the sum of those diplomatic practices adopting cultural concepts and artefacts for foreign policy goals, and it is aimed at captivating the attention of a foreign audience as well as at stirring curiosity for a foreign country's culture, society and peoples.

Actors and projects of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy in Europe

CD has always been an essential part of the Chinese soft power. It is an issue often discussed and developed within the Chinese leadership and intellectuals. The centrality of culture in Chinese foreign policy can also be brought back to the traditional but still very important concept of *mianzi*. It is at least since the 2000s that a debate on how to reformulate CD on the basis of the new global conditions has been developed in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as well as the media and the academic circles are increasingly engaged in working out a systematic and effective agenda for promoting an appealing image of China abroad. From science to humanitarian diplomacy, from economic to cultural diplomacy, China is currently engaging in relevant actions of public policy and soft power. Many misunderstandings and conflicts are still hindering the relations between China and Europe. While some of these issues will be settled by negotiation rounds at different levels, CD projects are considered central for conveying a non-aggressive and benevolent image of China, as well as to support traditional diplomatic strategies. In this context,

the foreign policy agenda which the Chinese government is pursuing via CD can be summarised in a few concepts: projecting a peaceful and business-oriented image of China; expanding Beijing's political influence globally by attaining a major role in global governance and in old and new international institutions; shifting its status from a rule-taker to a rule-setter; increasing business ties and implementing free trade agreements to export Chinese products and to import natural resources and raw materials; and, re-establishing Beijing's power in Asia. Chinese CD in Europe is proving to be successful especially in projecting a peaceful and reassuring image of China abroad.

The main Chinese actors implementing CD projects in Europe, in different ways and at different levels are: 1) Confucius Institutes; 2) Chinese Embassies; 3) business and cultural associations; 4) Chinese media; 5) social media editors; 6) artists and influential individuals; and, 7) Chinese and foreign companies.

ITALY IS LINKED TO CHINA BY POWERFUL HISTORICAL FIGURES SUCH AS MARCO POLO AND THE JESUIT MATTEO RICCI, SOME OF THEM DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE HISTORY OF EXCHANGES AND TO THE TERRITORIES ALONG THE SILK ROAD.

In Italy the mere concept of the 'Silk Road' is filled with symbolic meanings and has a strong grip on the collective imaginary. This is due to historical as well as cultural factors: Italy is linked to China by powerful historical figures such as Marco Polo and the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, some of them directly connected to the history of exchanges and to the territories along the Silk Road. In July 2016 in the town of Tivoli, where UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Villa Adriana are located, a festival called 'Tivoli on the Silk Road' offered a whole programme of events dedicated to Chinese culture and the ancient and contemporary Silk Road. Open to the general public and offering a wide variety of performances, it enjoyed the active participation of the local authorities and the Chinese embassy, with the Ambassador Li Ruiyu and the Cultural attaché Zhang Jianda giving speeches. The network of actors promoting the festival as well as the various cultural offerings (including documentaries, films, exhibitions by Chinese and Italian artists and movie directors) in such a beautiful location as Tivoli made the goal of improving cultural exchanges and mutual knowledge easier. The first Berlin Chinese Film Festival, held in February 2016, was dedicated to the Silk Road

(the festival is called 'Die Seidenstraße in Deutschland', the subtitle being 'Ein klassischer Fall von Win-Win' – 'a classic case of win-win'), and was organised following the Silk Road discourse. In the event literature we read: 'The Silk Road of the 21st Century has also arrived in Germany'. Among the organisers were Ouzhou Shibao, a UK-based Chinese newspaper which can be read all over Europe. The German capital is presented as the terminal stop of the Silk Road.

In September 2016, a group of ten Italian high school and university students were selected by a local cultural association to participate in a visit to the Chinese Silk Road, travelling from Xian to Turpan through Lanzhou and Dunhuang, an initiative partially sponsored by the Chinese Embassy in Rome. The students paid the cost of their plane tickets, Visas and insurance, while an Italian private company covered the cost of two plane tickets. As a result, a hybrid network of actors contributed to the success of this enterprise, with the Embassy proactively engaging with local actors. The pictures and texts created by the young participants were presented in an exhibition in a literary café in Rome in December 2016, thanks to the sponsorship of the Chinese Embassy. The outcome of the initiative has been outstanding: these young students, from being very sceptical and even suspicious about China, returned to Italy full of enthusiasm for the country and its culture. This initiative was a particularly courageous move from the side of the Chinese Embassy since the group travelled through one of the most sensitive areas in China, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, visiting part of the Chinese multi-ethnic and multi-religious North-Western provinces without passing Beijing or travelling via Shanghai. In a similar concept, the Italian art school 'Istituto Garuzzo per le Arti Visive' was selected to present its students' artworks at a cultural Expo in Dunhuang. More than 200 artists coming from 80 countries and regions in the world, together with artists from 13 Chinese provinces and cities, were invited to exhibit their works in local theatres, while the project 'cultural exhibition along the Wall' was launched on the same occasion. Poetry, performances and different forms of artistic expression have all been presented.

A two-day conference, 'Cultural exchanges on the Silk Road', was organised by the Confucius Institute at The Catholic University in Milan and was well received among

academic circles thanks to the plethora of professors involved. A similar academic conference was organised by the Confucius Institute at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, 'One Belt and One Road – China and the World', through a regular academic call for papers. On the same

line but more as a think tank-like event, the International Forum of China and Central and Eastern European Countries has been organised by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs as one of the side events of the 5th Meeting of China – Central and Eastern European Countries Heads of Governments,

in cooperation with a large variety of actors, among which the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Air Baltic. One of the main topics of the conference was the BRI, analysed in terms of economic but also cultural aspects. The Confucius Institute of the NEOMA Business School in Rouen organised a similar conference with the title 'Le Nord-Ouest de la Chine s'invite à Rouen. Bienvenue sur la nouvelle route de la soie!', while the Confucius Institute at the University of Valencia organised a drawing prize for images of 'Confucio llega a Valencia por la Ruta de la Seda' with a broad network of actors including the local UNESCO branch. The Italian think tank Centro Studi sulla Cina Contemporanea, headed by the former Ambassador in China Alberto Bradanini, recently organised a symposium at the Italian Parliament with professors, diplomats, businesses and politicians, and one of the main speeches by the China historian Guido Samarani was about the new Silk Road and Beijing's global politics.

Discourses, exchange programmes and online narratives about the Silk Road are becoming more and more common. While social media like Facebook are blocked in China, almost every Chinese embassy in Europe has a Facebook account where news and articles are posted on a regular basis. The most posted content relates to Chinese culture, and the history and splendours of the Silk Road are presented in a didactic format geared to a broad public. In Greece the Chinese Embassy in Athens organises joint meetings and events on the topic together with local associations like the Greece-China Association headed by Mr Potamianos, and the Greece-China Friendship Gate, an online platform founded and run by a Greek journalist which posts news and comments about contemporary China and China-Greece business. Another online platform, China and

DISCOURSES, EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES AND ONLINE NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SILK ROAD ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE COMMON.

Greece (www.chinaandgreece.com), is an interesting multilingual (Chinese, Greek and English) initiative promoted and sponsored by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Hellenic Republic and the Greek service of China Radio International. It is aimed at encouraging dialogue and exchanges between Chinese and Greek scholars and analysts on topics related to current international affairs, business and cultural cooperation. Among the recent subjects discussed was an exclusive interview with Professor

CHINESE CD IN EUROPE EMERGES AS MORE POWERFUL WHEN A NETWORK OF DIFFERENTIATED ACTORS IS INVOLVED AS PROMOTERS AND SPONSORS.

Christopher Beckwith at the University of Indiana about his book *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton University Press 2009). An outstanding ability to create and curate online content, as well as to have them indexed by Google and well indexed in the World Wide Web, and a commitment to the most recent strategies of online communication are increasingly typical characteristics of these online ventures. The founder of China and Greece is George N. Tzogopoulos, PhD in Media and Communication Studies at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom.

The fact that Chinese CD actors are launching online ventures by entrusting the managerial and conceptual work to local experts is a sign of increasing self-confidence as well as awareness of how modern content creation, communication and marketing strategies shall be conceived and implemented. Silk Road-themed art festivals and cultural forums are the best way to help a foreign audience to become acquainted with the origins and basis of the BRI, and to dispel at least part of the doubts whenever a business or cultural exchange agreement needs to be discussed, negotiated and finalised. Another new aspect which is emerging in Chinese CD in Europe is the direct personal involvement of key cultural figures in the debate and local affairs. As an example we can consider the Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute at Georg-August University in Goettingen, Li Qikeng, who is Professor in the School of English & International Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University. While he is very supportive of local community initiatives such as marathons and cultural events, and he himself

usually participates, he is also very involved in the debate about the role of Confucius Institutes in Chinese CD.

Conclusions

The validity of Chinese CD projects often depends on a number of factors, namely the degree of openness and enlightenment of the officials involved, the knowledge of Chinese culture by the local counterpart, the relationship of Beijing with the recipient country and its strategic implications, the budget available as well as the *guanxi* on the ground, which means the relationship between the officials and the local actors involved.

Chinese CD in Europe could be understood through two different approaches: the realist and the idealist perspective. Among Western scholars and analysts of international relations, the first perspective is the most common one. According to this approach, culture is conceived as a mere instrument of power in a fundamentally anarchist international system.

A limited number of scholars and analysts considers cultural diplomacy to be driven by ideological factors, namely by the affection towards a country's culture and the willingness to promote it abroad for the sake of knowledge, culture and, consequently, of improved bilateral relations. A balanced combination of realism and idealism can be considered as the best perspective for understanding Chinese CD in Europe.

Moreover, Chinese CD in Europe emerges as more powerful when a network of differentiated actors is involved as promoters and sponsors; when cultural concepts are presented under critical lenses; when the most diverse and creative sides of a country's culture are emphasised; when key Chinese figures are involved in cultural events and community matters locally; and when the actors are self-confident enough to go beyond the canonical aspects of their own culture.

The increasing interest in studying the Chinese language and culture among European students, and in travelling to China, the involvement and participation of local universities, associations, and institutions – as well as of local politicians, diplomats and academics, and the increasing interest in Chinese culture and issues by local media and the general public can already be considered a success for the Chinese foreign policy agenda, especially when we consider the goal of projecting a peaceful and positive image of China abroad. ☺

1 I would like to thank the Centre for East Asian Studies (IN-EAST) and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research of the University of Duisburg Essen for generously supporting my work. **2** The original name of the initiative was 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR), a translation of the Chinese yidaiyilu. Because of the excessive emphasis on the word 'one' and of the risk for partnering countries to infer that there is only one maritime route and a single land belt, the Central Translation and Compilation Bureau of the People's Republic of China recently set the official English translation of yidaiyilu as 'Belt and Road Initiative'. The word 'initiative' has been admitted into the official acronym in order to stress the openness of the strategy, and to avoid criticisms over 'China-centered institution building' which have been recently appearing in different media and analysis.

3 The literature on the topic is extensive, for this paper I will mainly refer to Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (eds), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2013, 2nd edition; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998; Ingrid d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy*, Leiden, Brill/Nijhoff, 2015; Amitav Acharya, Barry Buzan (eds), *Non-Western International Relations Theory*, London and New York, Routledge, 2010; Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State – Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999. **4** I mainly refer to Aram A. Yengoyan, "Theory in Anthropology: On the Demise of the Concept of Culture", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 28, no. 2 (April 1986), pp. 368-374. **5** Mianzi means 'face', it is the Chinese expression to indicate the way a person presents himself or herself to others and it is a sort of formal identity which resembles the concept of 'honour' in some Mediterranean countries. It is associated with values such as respectability, authoritativeness, dignity and reputation. When the Chinese speak about their country they usually associate all these values with China, and they are concerned about China's mianzi in front of the 'foreign' counterpart. **6** Here I mainly refer to Zhang Lihua, Shi Anbin, Wen Honghua, Zhang Qingmin, Li Zhi, Liang Bin, "Zhongguo wenhua waijiao: zhanlue, zhengce he shishe" ["Chinese Cultural Diplomacy: Strategies, Policies and Practice"], Qinghua - Kaneiji Quanjie Zhengce Zhongxin – Carnegie-Qinghua Centre for Global Policy, Beijing 17.4.2015; Zhang Zhizhou, "Wenhua waijiao yu Zhongguo Wenhua 'Zouchuqu' de dongyin, wenti yu duice" ["Motivations, Problems and Countermeasures of Cultural Diplomacy and of the 'Going Out' of Chinese Culture"], *Dangdai shijie yu shehuizhuyi*, 13.8.2012; Wang Liang, "Oumeng dui Zhongguo wenhua waijiao de tedian, lai yuan", ["Characteristics and Causes of the European Approach towards Chinese Cultural Diplomacy"], *Zhongguo kexue bao*, 20.8.2012; Luo Qi, "Wenhua waijiao: suzao guojia lianghao xingxiang" ["Cultural Diplomacy: the Shaping of a Positive National Image"], *Zhongguo wang*, 10.9.2009. **7** Roland Vogt, *Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?* Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2012. **8** Confucius Institutes in Europe are considered hybrid actors due to the fact that they are usually established thanks to a partnership between a Chinese and a foreign university. Nevertheless, the situation on the ground can vary substantially depending on the host country's economic, social and political factors. Ref: Falk Hartig, *China Public Diplomacy: The Rise of the Confucius Institute*, London, Routledge, 2015. **9** "Dal 13 al 19 luglio 'Tivoli sulla via della seta'" ["From the 13th to the 19th of July 'Tivoli along the Silk Road'"], *artemagazine*, 13 July 2016, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://www.artemagazine.it/attualita/item/1856-tivoli-sulla-via-della-seta>. **10** "Die Seidenstraße in Deutschland: Premiere für das Berlin Chinese Film Festival" ["The Silk Road in Germany: opening at the Berlin Chinese Film Festival"], *sinonerds*, 2 March 2016, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://www.sinonerds.com/die-seidenstrasse-in-deutschland-premiere-fuer-das-berlin-chinese-film-festival/>. **11** "Progetti e visioni, in Italia e all'estero – Dipingere il Presente" ["Projects and Visions, in Italy and abroad – Painting the Present"], Istituto Garuzzo per le Arti Visive, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://www.igav-art.org/exhibition?id=71>. **12** "Cultural Exchanges along the Silk Road – International Conference", Confucius Institute at the Catholic University of Sacro Cuore in Milan, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://istitutoconfucio.unicatt.it/confucius-tutti-le-conferenze-cultural-exchanges-on-the-silk-road-international-conference>. **13** "18 – 19.11.2016: International Conference One Belt and One Road – China and the World", Confucius Institute at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://www.konfuzius-institut-frankfurt.de/18-19-11-2016-international-conference-one-belt-and-one-road/>. **14** "November 4: Think Tank International Forum of China and Central and Eastern European Countries", Latvian Institute of International Affairs, retrieved 17 December 2016, <http://www.liia.lv/en/news/november-4-think-tank-international-forum-of-china-and-central-and-eastern-european-countries-550>. **15** "Le Nord-Ouest de la Chine s'invite à Rouen. 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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE EU

ELLI B. TZATZANIS-STEPANOVIC

Introduction

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in the 1970s, China and the EU have developed their trade and economic cooperation into a broader and more forward-looking relationship. The China–EU 2020 strategic agenda for cooperation, adopted in 2013, gave significant attention to future joint priorities, including peace and security, prosperity, people-to-people exchanges, as well as science, technology and innovation (STI). These priorities also include progressive and global scientific goals such as sustainable urbanisation, climate change and environmental protection.¹

China and the EU are both strong innovators, with the EU still enjoying a performance lead over China but with China catching up rapidly thanks to a performance growth rate five times that of the EU.² Joint research and innovation initiatives have been fostered between China and the EU, and joint funding programmes and projects have been launched. All these aim to support and coordinate a long-term cooperation strategy for Science and Technology between China and the EU and to promote and enhance collaboration between Chinese and EU researchers and innovation actors.³

This article aims to delve into the process of cooperation and to highlight a number of initiatives and endeavours that have been undertaken from both sides to reach a common understanding as far as collaboration in Science and Technology is concerned. It will look at the main steps taken by the European Union and China to establish policies that support S&T collaboration, focusing on the European Commission's

improving regulations towards the enhancement of Sino-European ties within its current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020. It will also look at the guidelines for international scientific programmes and projects set by the Chinese government in its current Thirteenth Five Year Plan on Scientific and Technological Innovation. The article also examines the joint initiatives funded within Horizon 2020 supporting S&T collaboration between the EU and China and its impact.

Chinese participation in the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

Cooperation between the EU and China in Science and Technology (S&T) dates back to the early 1980s under the first European research and development programmes. In the following years, S&T cooperation intensified, resulting in 214 research projects involving Chinese teams, supported under the 6th Framework Programme (FP6) between 2002 and 2006. Later on, in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), between 2007 and 2013, overall openness to international cooperation and targeted actions with Chinese participation were introduced by the EU, with China being the third most important international partner country (after Russia and the USA) with the participation of about 400 Chinese organisations in collaborative research projects receiving a total EU contribution of 35.24 million euros.⁴

China ranks among the top three key international partners for the EU in terms of participation to Horizon 2020 – the European Union's current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (running between 2014 and 2020).

The European Union and China recognise each other as equal STI cooperation partners. Consequently – and since tackling challenges of global interest such as climate change, increasing urbanisation or food security requires resource-pooling and joint solutions– the EU’s STI cooperation with China has taken a more targeted and strategic direction during Horizon 2020. Common thematic priority areas for STI cooperation which have been jointly negotiated and agreed are: biotechnologies for food and agriculture, sustainable urbanisation, aviation and aeronautics, environment and climate action, non-nuclear energy, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, information and communication technologies, and space sciences.⁵

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IS NOT ONLY FUNDING JOINT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS, TARGETING GLOBAL CHALLENGES OF MUTUAL INTEREST, BUT ALSO PROJECTS WHICH ARE COORDINATING AND ACCELERATING SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL ENDEAVOURS ON THE EU LEVEL.

Successful international agreements require a minimum of shared values and interests, which in turn can often only be achieved via intensive trust building processes. However, establishing a single EU strategy that respects the interests of all EU member states, either for thematic STI alignment or policy goal setting outside the EU is a challenging process. Therefore, a main hurdle to effective EU-China S&T cooperation is the challenge for the EU to speak with one, understandable and focused voice.⁶ Policymakers in China repeatedly argue that it is difficult to see the EU as one negotiation partner and as a unified, strong STI player.

Decision-making processes at the policy level in China take a long time, but once decisions have been made the implementation of goals is, generally, quick, straightforward and effective. In Europe one could say that the opposite is the case. Agreements and decisions at the member state level can go through quickly, and even the EU can be quite decisive. However, when it comes to implementation at the member state level, the processes can be very lengthy. Hence, aligning STI policies and reflecting global problems between the EU and China is a challenging endeavour.

In order to tackle these challenges, the European Commission is not only funding joint research and innovation projects, targeting global challenges of mutual interest, but also projects which are coordinating and accelerating specific international endeavours on the EU level. One example is the so-called ‘bilateral coordination and support action’ targeting a specific country outside Europe. These actions shall support the STI alignment process for setting common goals and joint priorities. The main goal is to support and stimulate STI policy dialogues, foster communication and exchange of information while involving relevant stakeholders, policy-makers and STI actors on both sides.⁷

Dragon-Star and Dragon-Star-Plus (2012-2018)

In 2012, under FP7, the European Commission launched its first bilateral coordination and support action targeting China, called Dragon-Star, engaging partners from both China and Europe. Its project goals were to support reciprocity and bilateral cooperation in research and innovation and, hence, to foster Chinese participation in FP7 as well as to enhance the policy and scientific cooperation dialogue.⁸

Within this framework, it was important to study in more depth the research and innovation situation in China as well as future trends and challenges in order to be better prepared for future joint STI collaboration. Hence, an important project result was a report on four plausible scenarios for the future of the Chinese research and innovation environment in China in 2025, elaborated as a powerful learning tool to identify possible futures.

Yin & Yang, the best case scenario, would be characterised as strong, successful central governance combined with greater openness and a flourishing economy determining a cutting-edge research community in 2025. According to the report, ‘Research integrity has been improved through a novel evaluation and auditing system promotes ethics and focuses on quality, rather on quantity. At the same time greater openness is now playing a key role in collaboration, publication, peer review, criticism, replication, and evaluation of government projects and industry activities’.⁹

Blue Jasmine would lead to strong and open governance fighting to revive a national economy that has been hit by a global crisis and the relocation of foreign manufacturing industries in 2025. The report suggests that ‘the research reform that had been announced in 2014, and began implementation in 2016, has rapidly transformed the Chinese research environment towards, greater transparency in the management of funds, greater flexibility, better strategic focus and stronger international links’.¹⁰

Dungeons & Dragons would combine less open governance and an insufficient court system. Accordingly, 'Research Framework conditions have been restructured towards global models; however authorities still favour specific groups and interests. Communication hurdles and cronyism have further hampered collaboration with international R&D partners, and decreased national outputs of disruptive technologies.'¹¹

The Breathless Queen, as the worst case scenario for China, would be characterised by a collapsed national economy and a dismantled society, as the greatest global disappointment in 2025. The scenario foresees that the research environment has been 'equally affected by the crisis, due to the reduced public and private R&D funding, the old-fashioned research framework, global isolation, and the absence of a realistic long-term strategy. Instead of openness and meritocracy, we see the return of bureaucracy and nepotism.'¹²

The report includes results of a trend evaluation, analysing sixteen trends that will most likely shape the Chinese research and innovation landscape by 2025. Among them was the possibility that the Chinese Government would provide sufficient financial support implementing an efficient regulatory framework for research; that the private sector in China would increase investment in research; or that new communication technologies would allow for more intensive interaction and cooperation between Chinese researchers and their global counterparts by 2025.¹³ The analysis of said potential trends facilitates the understanding of where joint STI collaboration should ideally lead in the future, namely towards increased openness and joint innovative solutions taking advantage of a balanced STI framework in China.

In 2015 the Dragon-Star consortium received its approval to continue its activities for another three years, forming the Dragon-Star-Plus project. Among the main activities, such as improving STI framework conditions for joint cooperation or promoting Horizon 2020 participation possibilities in China, the project consortium is establishing a policy cooperation platform aiming to involve Chinese and European policymakers and stakeholders in discussions on current issues and trends on sustainable urbanisation, climate change as well as food, agriculture and biotechnology.¹⁴

Between June 2015 and June 2016, Dragon-Star-Plus supported the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe (JPI UE), a partnership initiative promoting strategic cooperation between EU member states and associated countries on common visions and major societal challenges in sustainable urbanisation. After a first JPI Urban Europe 'fact-finding' mission to China in June 2015, Dragon-Star-Plus initiated a

second JPI Urban Europe 'trust-building' mission in October 2015. During this mission, a workshop was organised in Beijing on 28 October 2015 together with JPI UE on 'Cooperation on Sustainable Urbanisation between China and Europe'. About 70 policymakers, experts and funding agencies from China and Europe met to talk about future trends in sustainable urbanisation and to discuss efficient forms of collaboration with respect to the current rapid urbanisation developments in China which will have to adopt intelligent and sustainable solutions to global environmental problems. The workshop also included discussion on the possibilities of future joint calls for research projects and systematic exchange of experiences and future joint aspects in sustainable urbanisation.

A third JPI Urban Europe 'delegation mission' in June 2016 during the 18th EU-China Summit in Beijing finally led to an agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, between JPI UE and the China Centre for Urban Development (CCUD).

The Dragon-Star and Dragon-Star-Plus network built in China over the years had fruitful multiplying and networking effects resulting in different initiatives and platforms funded within Horizon 2020.

One initiative resulted in 2016 between twelve project partners including five universities and urban planning and development centres from China. This Horizon 2020 project was approved and will start its operation in early 2017, building up an online EU-China innovation platform on sustainable urbanisation. Involving all relevant stakeholders across the sustainable urbanisation value chain, such as policy makers, national authorities, industries, cities, academia and civil societies on both sides, it will support existing EU-China endeavours in sustainable urbanisation towards China, such as the prominent partnership on sustainable urbanisation, the so-called 'Better City, Better Life' initiative. This partnership shall enhance STI cooperation and exchanges through, among others, joint research projects, city networking, joint policy roundtables and civil society dialogues.¹⁵

Another follow-up networking result of Dragon-Star and Dragon-Star-Plus is the formation of a Sino-European consortium which shall establish a European research and innovation centre of excellence in China by 2020. This is based on results of an online survey¹⁶ conducted jointly by several bilateral coordination and support projects, including Dragon-Star. Thirteen project partners, among them five Chinese organisations and universities, will start their cooperation at the beginning of 2017, implementing the centre in China within four phases, i.e. setting up the centre, introducing the services

in a pilot phase, implementing the full operation of the centre and assuring its self-sustainable functioning.

The main goal of this Horizon 2020 project will be to foster joint collaboration and promote European Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) excellence and interests by providing support services to European researchers and entrepreneurs in their outreach to China.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the agreement launched at the end of 2015 between the Chinese government and the EU to set up co-funding on research and innovation to support joint research projects between European and Chinese universities, research institutions and companies was an important joint step forward for supporting future China-EU STI collaboration under Horizon 2020. This co-funding mechanism was a necessary step to remedy the lack of funding available to Chinese participants in Horizon 2020 research projects.

28 million euros are made available annually by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) on the Chinese side for the benefit of China-based entities participating in joint research and innovation projects with European partners under Horizon 2020. About 100 million euros are made available per year for the benefit of Europe-based entities in joint research projects under H2020 with Chinese participants.¹⁷

China's 'Thirteenth Five' National Science and Technology Innovation Plan

The Thirteenth Five Year Plan, launched in March 2016, and the Thirteenth Five Year Plan on Scientific and Technological Innovation, released in August 2016, can be seen as important strategies responding to a number of important issues concerning international S&T cooperation. The EU STI community engaged in international cooperation with China regards the planned S&T policies and reforms as important indications on potential future STI activities which may have an impact on the EU.

The Chinese government introduced an ambitious list of guidelines and targets for China's S&T development for the period 2016-2020. Among the various goals for 2020, China is dedicated to increasing the prosperity of the country's population, improving environmental protection, as well as deepening reform of science and technology.

With steadily increasing STI investment, China has set up numerous science and technology (S&T) programmes, which have played a significant role in enhancing the country's

scientific and technological strength, improving its competitiveness, and supporting economic and social development in the last years. The numerous innovative and concrete actions that are planned by 2020 include, among others, the development of eco-friendly technologies, the research of next-generation Internet solutions, the implementation of intelligent green manufacturing techniques, and the introduction of sustainable urbanisation standards.

In April 2015, China launched a national strategy for mass entrepreneurship and innovation, aiming to enable the start of more businesses, since the enterprise sector has been seen as main innovation driver.¹⁸ Acknowledging the necessity to further strengthen national capacity-building in S&T and stimulate innovation, China is planning, on the one hand, to support and develop public interaction between the scientific communities and the public. Open fora, exhibitions, and other scientific events tend to create more opportunities for the scientific communities to communicate with the public. On the other hand, the formation of a scientific culture shall encourage innovation and entrepreneurship by enhancing innovation confidence and actively promoting the integration of knowledge of different cultural backgrounds.

China is in the process of monitoring and assessing the results of STI evaluation exercises to improve S&T management and enhance the design of its national innovation policy. By having established an open and unified national S&T management platform, using a new evaluation mechanism and new set of indicators, research and technology centres are being evaluated.

Understandably, major scientific and technological projects are reflecting national and regional strategic goals based on an efficient coordination of the national innovation system. Nevertheless, there are enough prospects for international S&T collaboration through the organisation and implementation of international scientific programmes and projects in order for China to be able to increasingly contribute to the development of world science. Consequently, there are numerous science related initiatives foreseen for international cooperation where China intends to foster its international competitiveness, among others:

- The international exchanges and training of scientists and other talents are supported in order to attract international organisations to settle in China and to encourage the establishment of new international organisations,
- International observation networks are formed in order to explore the establishment of large scientific research programmes, e.g. for polar research,

- International compliance negotiations in scientific issues are introduced in order to enhance the ability to fulfil international environmental agreements,
- International development trends and standardisation processes are followed in order to meet health standards.¹⁹


Conclusion

The EU and China's opening up of S&T programmes in the past accompanied by negotiations and agreements on joint scientific priorities as well as on funds for joint S&T collaboration, resulting in the co-funding mechanism within Horizon 2020, show the willingness and preparedness from both sides to work together on joint STI topics.

STI collaboration under Horizon 2020 shows clearly that the EU and China have strong ties and joint future prospects with China being the third most important key international partner for the EU in terms of numbers of participating Chinese researchers.

Global challenges and the necessity to tackle them jointly in order to achieve more effective results make international S&T collaboration inevitable. Dragon-Star and Dragon-Star-Plus are only two small pieces in the puzzle of the joint EU-China endeavours to tackling global challenges, but they are important forerunners for shaping relevant new networks and identifying future STI priorities.

New joint initiatives in Horizon 2020 are to start in 2017 which shall foster the Triple Helix relations between university, industry and government from both sides and provide sustainable outputs and results.

The ground is prepared for a long-term cooperation in Science and Technology between China & the EU, to jointly work to fulfil common interests and to assist the improvement of S&T on a global scale. And with lessons from past experience and efforts being made to foresee trends, the time is better than ever to strengthen existing S&T collaboration. 

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BIO

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Experienced in project proposal writing, project coordination and project management (FP6, FP7 and Horizon 2020) targeting the Western Balkans, the USA and China she gained profound knowledge in international Science Technology and Innovation cooperation. She is currently project manager of the EU funded project Dragon-Star-plus, responsible for setting up a policy cooperation platform for engaging Chinese and European policymakers and stakeholders to exchange in sustainable urbanisation, climate change as well as food, agriculture and biotechnology.

<http://www.dragon-star.eu/cooperation-platform-between-policy-stakeholders/>