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DEPARTMENT OF **EU INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY STUDIES**

InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of
European Union-China Relations



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European Union-China Relations**



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**InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of
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Views expressed in the *EU-China Observer* are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect positions of either the editors or the College of Europe.



INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “MASS COMMUNICATION AND EU-CHINA RELATIONS”

On 3-4 April 2014, the InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of European Union-China Relations at the College of Europe organised its sixth annual international conference on EU-China relations that carried the theme “Mass Communication and EU-China relations”. During the two-day international conference, organised with the financial support of the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Jean Monnet Programme (LLP) (Education, Audiovisual & Culture Agency), and the support of the EU Committee of the Regions for the conference venue, leading scholars, journalists, Ph.D. students, government officials and representatives of NGOs from the EU and China gathered to examine issues of common interest ranging from politics and norms to economic and social issues. The conference offered the opportunity for a fruitful debate in the spirit of enhanced people-to-people contacts.

Six panels were organised to discuss, in detail, the following topics: The impact of mass communication on EU-China relations; the EU in the eyes of Chinese public; China in the eyes of European public; the multimedia era: challenges and opportunities for China and the EU; China in the European media; the EU in Chinese media. The discussions at the conference highlighted both divergent and convergent interests between the EU and China and raised many unanswered questions for future consideration.

For the purpose of sharing with our readers the topics of discussion at the conference, we have edited this special issue of the *EU-China Observer*. The summaries of speeches are arranged according to the order of the panels presented at the conference. The summaries not only offer a glimpse of the issues discussed to those who could not attend the event, but also allow our readers to gain a better idea of the themes discussed.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MASS COMMUNICATION AND EU-CHINA RELATIONS

Thursday, 3 April & Friday, 4 April 2014

EU Committee of the Regions, 99-101 Rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels



**MASS COMMUNICATION
AND EU-CHINA RELATIONS**

3-4 APRIL 2014 · EU COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Thursday, 3 April 2014

08:30 – 09:00 REGISTRATION

09:00 – 10:00 WELCOME SPEECH (ROOM JDE 52):

Prof Jing MEN, Chair holder, InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of EU-China Relations, College of Europe

KEYNOTE SPEECHES (ROOM JDE 52):

H.E. Mr Viorel ISTICIOAIA-BUDURA, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific, European External Action Service

Mr ZHANG Lirong, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission, Chinese Mission to the EU

Mr Gerhard STAHL, Secretary General, EU Committee of the Regions

10:00 – 10:15 PHOTO & COFFEE BREAK

10:15 – 12:30 PANEL ONE: THE IMPACT OF MASS COMMUNICATION ON EU-CHINA RELATIONS (ROOM JDE 52)

Chair: Mr William FINGLETON, Head of Press & Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to China

Speakers: Dr Cristian NITOIU, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, European Neighbourhood Policy Chair, College of Europe Natolin, Poland:

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“China and its Relations with the EU in Transnational Media: An Analysis of Transnational Media Reporting in the Second Half of 2013”;

Ms Margaretha Hendrika Maria VAN PINXTEREN, Senior Visiting Fellow, Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’:

“European Journalists in China: Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place”;

Ms MAO Xi, Research Assistant, Center for Journalism Studies, Ghent University, Belgium:

“Al Jazeera and Xinhua, the Emerging Voices? – Brussels’ International Journalists’ Credibility towards International News Source Organisations”;

Prof LI Zhuyu, Executive Deputy Director & Academic Coordinator, Centre for European Studies, Sichuan University, China & Prof SHI Jian, Dean, Institute of International Relation Studies, Sichuan University, China:

“How to Deepen Awareness of the EU: Uncertainty of EU and China-EU Relations”.

12:30 – 13:30 BREAK¹

13:30 – 16:00 PANEL TWO : THE EU IN THE EYES OF THE CHINESE PUBLIC (ROOM JDE 52)

Chair: Mr Vito BORRELLI, Head of Sector, Jean Monnet and China Desk, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission

Speakers: Prof Martin HOLLAND, Director, National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, Dr Natalia CHABAN, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, & Dr LAI Suetyi, Tsinghua University, China:

“Evolution of EU Perceptions in China: Views from Decision-Makers, Media and General Public”;

Dr ZHANG Li, School of Political, Social and International Studies, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom:

“State of the Play: Research on Chinese Perceptions of the EU”;

Prof DING Chun, Jean Monnet Chair, Fudan University, China:

“European Sovereign Debt Crisis in the Eyes of Chinese Scholars”;

* **SPEAKER LUNCH**

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16:00 – 16:15 COFFEE BREAK

**16:15 – 17:30 PANEL THREE: CHINA IN THE EYES OF THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC
(ROOM JDE 52)**

Chair: Prof Jan MELISSEN, Senior Research Fellow and Professor, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' and University of Antwerp, Belgium

Speakers: Ms TAN Xuan, Former Intern Journalist at *China Daily* & Ms CHENG Shican, Former Intern Journalist at *China Daily*:
"Changing European Perceptions of the 'China Story' and China's Awareness of its Global Image"

Dr Byung-Cheol KIM, Assistant Professor, Renmin University of China:
"'China Dream' in the Eyes of Europeans Living in Beijing"

Mr Dorian MALOVIC, Asia Editor, *La Croix (French National Daily)*:
"Covering China: How Exciting A Headache!"

Friday, 4 April 2014

08:30 – 09:00 REGISTRATION

09:00 – 10:00 PANEL FOUR: THE MULTIMEDIA ERA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHINA AND THE EU (ROOM JDE 52)

Chair: Prof Sieglinde GSTÖHL, Director of Studies, EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, College of Europe, Belgium

Speakers: Ms Mireia PAULO-NOGUERA, PhD Fellow, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany & Fudan University Shanghai, China:
"The Role of E-Governance in Europe's Image of the Chinese Communist Party"

Ms Hélène PFEIL, Programme Associate, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, United Kingdom:
"When the Media Meet: Problems and Promises of EU-China Dialogue in the Journalistic Sphere".

10:00 – 10:15 COFFEE BREAK

10:15 – 12:30 PANEL FIVE: CHINA IN THE EUROPEAN MEDIA (ROOM JDE 52)

Chair: Prof Michael REITERER, Senior Adviser, Asia and the Pacific Directorate, European External Action Service

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Speakers: Mr William FINGLETON, Head of Press & Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to China:
"The Quest for Balanced Reporting on China in the EU Media: Forces and Influences";

Dr Lutgard LAMS, Associate Professor, Brussels Centre for Chinese Discourse Studies, KU Leuven Campus Brussels (HU Brussels), Belgium:

"China: Economic Magnet or Rival? Framing of China in the Dutch- and French-Language Quality Press in Belgium and the Netherlands";

Dr Jeanne BODEN, China Conduct:

"Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism in Media Reporting on China in the West";

Mr Dirk NIMMEGEERS, Editor, Chinasquare:

"China in Online West European Media: More Fairness and Accuracy Required".

12:30 – 14:00 BREAK*

14:00 – 15:00 PANEL SIX: THE EU IN CHINESE MEDIA (ROOM JDE 52)

Chair: Ms Cristina GALLACH, Head of Public Relations, Council of the European Union

Speakers: Prof SONG Lilei, Institute of Central and Eastern Europe Studies, Tongji University, China & Dr BIAN Qing, College of Communication and Art, Tongji University, China:
"The EU through the Eyes of Chinese Social Media - a Case Study of the Official Microblogging of China's Foreign Ministry for European Affairs";

Ms MA Xinru, PhD Fellow, Political Science and International Relations Programme, University of Southern California, United States of America:

"Beyond the Economic Ties: the EU in Chinese Media".

15:00 – 15:15 CLOSING SPEECH

Prof Jing MEN, Chair holder, InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of European Union-China Relations, College of Europe

* **SPEAKER LUNCH**

**InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of
European Union-China Relations****WELCOME AND KEYNOTE SPEECHES**

Prof. MEN Jing welcomed the participants to the sixth annual international conference organised by the InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of the College of Europe. She announced that on 1 April, just after the visit of President Xi to the Bruges and his speech to the students and staff of the College of Europe, the EU-China Research Centre was inaugurated at the College of Europe. She stressed that after years of bilateral cooperation, both sides have come to realise that without people-to-people contact and right understanding from both sides, it is not easy to establish a solid relationship. For this reason the InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of EU-China relations at the College of Europe decided to organise a conference on mass communication and EU-China relations.

The first keynote speech was given by H.E. Mr. Viorel Isticioaia-Budura, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific at the European External Action Service. Mr. Isticioaia-Budura stressed that the conference is very timely as it follows the visit of President Xi to Belgium, the first time the Head of the Chinese state visited the European institutions, showing commitment and personal involvement in and support of EU-China relations. Mr. Isticioaia-Budura spoke of President's Xi's speech in Bruges as a good exercise in mass communication during which he called upon Europeans to engage more with China and to adjust and upgrade policies and views. After giving an overview of the recent developments and achievements in EU-China relations, Mr. Isticioaia-Budura stressed that mass communication has a very important role to play in providing comprehensive views and opinions while addressing and dispelling stereotypes and prejudice. He invited the panellists and the public to take into account what the EU and China agreed upon and at the end of his speech he addressed the recently published China Policy Paper on the EU, an update to the 2003 Policy Paper.

In his speech, Mr. ZHANG Lirong, Minister and Deputy Head of the Chinese Mission to the European Union, started by emphasising the need to enhance mutual understanding and create bridges of cooperation between the EU and China. Mass media plays a primordial role in the way in which the EU and China perceive each other and for many people mass media is the only source of information. According to Mr. Zhang, Chinese media are inclined to approach EU relations positively, while European media tend to see China in a negative light and portray it as a hostile country. He further stressed that both European and Chinese media have limitations that should be addressed: European media tend to focus too much on individual cases and ignore some other important issues such as the small per capita GDP in China, while Chinese media need to become more active in producing reports on significant issues. He finally expressed hope that mass media would be more objective and present what the EU and China are really like, which is why deepened information exchange and cooperation are crucial.

Mr. Gerhard STAHL, Secretary General of the EU Committee of the Regions, delivered the third and final keynote speech. He underlined that in



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the multipolar world the EU and China are confronted with the reality that media reports influence the perception of citizens. Media has changed not only the way policy is developed, but also the way economic and social actors behave and has become an actor that influences national and international decisions. Mr. Stahl reminded the participants about the vivid discussions in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s among philosophers and sociologists about the influence media had on society. Mr. Stahl clarified that now the focus has changed and the discussion is about the message media actors are presenting to the public. He said that media is perceived as one of the key actors in the competition over soft power where accuracy of reporting, media credibility and independence play a crucial role. In this respect, certain business models of media become serious challenge to the independence of media. Mr. Stahl finished his opening speech by asking whether the existing system of media is able to help the EU and China in the process of reform and adaptation to the future by an accurate reporting and proper understanding of reality.



PANEL ONE: THE IMPACT OF MASS COMMUNICATION ON EU-CHINA RELATIONS

The chair Mr. William Fingleton welcomed the participants to the first panel of the two-day conference on “Mass Communication and EU-China Relations”.

Dr. Cristian Nitoiu used frame analysis² to examine the representation of China and its relations with the EU in European media in the second half of 2013. For his analysis, Dr. Nitoiu focused on three media that, according to him, can be considered as ‘transnational media’ since their discourse transcends the boundaries of nation states and are not concerned with covering the domestic politics of a single Member State: *The Financial Times*, *The European Voice* and *The EUObserver*. For this purpose Dr. Nitoiu used two indexes – a Frame Salience Index (indicating the importance of an idea throughout the period studied) and a Reporting Salience Index (indicating the importance journalists put on an idea in comparison to other ideas included in the article). Dr. Nitoiu stressed that these three media tend to follow the views of the European Union and focus on key events and developments, such as the solar panel dispute, the EU-China Summit, the talks on the Investment Treaty. Moreover, Dr. Nitoiu underlined that one of the most important ideas present in the three media was that China is a competitor. He further stressed that EU-China relations were often seen as a marginal issue. Dr. Nitoiu explained that China is, indeed, being criticised, but that criticisms are as well being addressed to the EU, which makes the overall analysis rather neutral. The EU is considered as not having a strategy towards China and not being able to cope with the fact that China is trying to modify the rules of the global market which is why the need to develop the strategic partnership with China is seen as crucial.

Ms. Margaretha Van Pinxteren discussed the difficulties European journalists encounter in China. Firstly, Ms. Van Pinxteren noted that foreign journalists perceive the Chinese authorities as being hostile towards them, idea which is confirmed by a number of cases of journalists who had difficulties accessing China and by the feeling of a growing threat to their safety while exercising their profession in China. Among journalists there is a feeling that after the riots in 2008, they have become less welcome in China. Moreover, due to the economic crisis in Europe, the position of European media in general was weakened. Many European journalists have reported that they are being victims of hacker attacks and harassment. Ms. Van Pinxteren put forward the hypothesis that European journalists have probably not lived up to the hopes of the Chinese government and Chinese people who expected that when given the opportunity to get to know China better, European journalists would most probably project a more positive image of China to the world. Ms. Van Pinxteren underlined that China and Europe have a different understanding of what the central role of media should be. In

² Framing is used by media to make selected issues more salient in a communication text and thus pass on a message to the public.

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relation to this, she clarified that it is important to understand that, since European media is not part of a governmental structure, it is critical towards all institutions of power and governments – and not only toward China. Chinese media, on the other hand, have a different role to play as they are seen as having the task to provide an alternative to European media by promoting more positive views of China and acceptance of Chinese positions on different issues. Indeed, China has been investing a lot in constructing a better image of the country. However, the increase of the presence of Chinese journalists in Europe is seen by the majority of Europeans as a government supported initiative closer to public relations than to journalism as seen in Europe. For Ms. Van Pinxteren, the above-mentioned characteristics of China's approach to journalism could be a consequence of China's growing assertiveness on the international scene. The EU should listen to what Chinese journalists and Chinese media say as it is crucial for understanding China, but should also bear in mind that Chinese State media are sent out with a mission – strengthen the image and position of China in Europe. Lastly, Ms. Van Pinxteren called upon EU policy-makers to put more effort in protecting the independent position of media in the EU and of correspondents in China.

Ms. MAO Xi looked at the credibility of international news source organisations from the perspective of international journalists working in Brussels and examined the extent to which Al Jazeera and Xinhua are challenging the dominance of the Western news organisations, Ms. Mao conducted more than 35 semi-constructed interviews with international journalists working in Brussels. She analysed the use and credibility of nine news source organisations: three dominant news agencies – AFP (Agence France Presse), AP (Associated Press) and Reuters, 24-hour news organisations that generate their own news – BBC, CNN, FoxNews, Bloomberg, and the 'upcoming regional players' – Al Jazeera and Xinhua. She argued that the notion of 'media credibility' has three components: 'source credibility' (general credibility), 'medium credibility' (credibility of the vehicle to deliver the message) and 'message credibility'. She explained that journalists consider a source credible if the content it produces is accurate, well-researched, the analysis is in-depth and objective, the reporting fast, and the credibility – stable. She further noted that credibility varies from one topic to another. Ms. Mao's research showed that AFP, AP and Reuters were considered as very credible, Bloomberg and BBC were ranked very high, while CNN and Fox News were regarded as too American. Al Jazeera was reportedly consulted with some caution, but is believed to excel in news on Middle-Eastern and Arab countries. Ms. Mao remarked that Xinhua has been trying to compete with the other news source organisations but is still seen as not very credible as it is perceived as being biased and propagandistic as a state agency. Ms. Mao clarified that Xinhua reports of international news (especially concerning North Korea) were seen as more credible than reports on China. She underlined the fact that some of Al Jazeera's and Xinhua's exclusive footages and interviews from Asia and the Middle East are being broadcast in European countries through Western media.



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Prof. LI Zhuyu and Prof. SHI Jian presented the research project they conducted together with YI Dan on the knowledge Chinese and European students have of the EU and China respectively and of EU-China relations and their attitudes concerning key socio-economic issues. For this purpose, they used a questionnaire of 20 items which was filled in by students from 5 universities in Chengdu, China and four universities in Belgium and the Netherlands. Before presenting the findings of the research project, Prof. Li clarified that most Chinese people do not know much about the EU and its roles and that the general understanding of the EU Chinese people have is based on reports by mass media. She, then, stressed that 93 percent of the Chinese students who filled in the questionnaire had no experience in Europe, and 97 percent of the European students who filled in the questionnaire had no experience in China. The survey conducted by the speakers showed that Chinese and European students tend to agree on some topics such as the need for the EU and China to enhance their strategic partnership, the need to strengthen their mutual support in tackling major global issues. Nevertheless, on a number of issues opinions diverged. Prof. Li observed, for instance, that while the majority of Chinese students believe that the EU and China do not have major conflicting strategic interests, the majority of European students disagree with this statement. Prof. Li highlighted that the differences in the responses of university students and city residents are due to the increased use of internet, among others. In her opinion, Chinese students got gradually more positive toward the EU, while European students seem to manifest more uncertainty concerning the development of EU-China relations. Finally, Prof. Li stressed that only by building mutual understanding and mutual trust could the EU and China develop a truly strategic partnership.



PANEL TWO: THE EU IN THE EYES OF CHINESE PUBLIC

The chair of the panel, Mr. Vito Borrelli, welcomed the participants to the afternoon session of the first day of the conference focusing on the perceptions Chinese have of the EU.

Prof. Martin Holland presented the research on the evolution of Chinese perceptions of the EU for the period 2006-2012 that he conducted jointly with Prof. Natalia Chaban and Dr. LAI Suetyi. The research is based on data collected through media analysis, study of public opinion panels and interviews with decision-makers and media. Prof. Holland stressed that the EU is not covered very much in general in the media in Asia, but that compared to that in other Asian countries, the visibility of the EU in China is high. Prof. Holland further mentioned the increase of the use of foreign sources for articles (*Reuters, AFP, AP, Bloomberg and New York Times*). He explained that there has been a significant shift in the coverage and the perception of the EU: in 2006 only 18 percent of the stories concerning the EU were about EU internal methods, whereas in 2011 those were 32 percent. Although the number of stories featuring the EU as a major topic increased, in over half of the stories was mentioned as a minor issue. Prof. Holland remarked that in 2011 more strong opinions (and, in particular, negative opinions concerning the state of the economy) were expressed towards the EU. Furthermore, Prof. Holland underlined that in 2006 almost half of the stories about the EU were tackling political issues, while economic issues were at the forefront for 2011. Prof. Holland explained that, for public opinion, the Euro, even though still an incomplete project, has become a reference point for the EU, as has the idea of integration. According to the survey, the EU is seen as a less important partner in 2011 than in 2007 both for the present and for the future. Prof. Holland further remarked that elites (political, business, civil society and media) see the EU as less important than the US or the Asian neighbours. Moreover, the interviews seem to indicate a decreasing certainty that the EU is something that might be recognised as a great power and even less a leader in international politics.

Dr. ZHANG Li gave an overview of the research on Chinese perceptions of the EU. She emphasised the need to distinguish between the image of the EU (the general impression presented to the public) and the perception of the EU (the way in which the EU is understood). Prof. Zhang defined studies on Chinese perception of the EU as research investigating into the understanding and interpretation of the EU in Chinese society and Chinese media. She stated that such a review study is important for the development of EU-China relations as it looks into the attitude formation of a foreign nation and examines the influence public opinion has on the governmental policy and the foreign relations. She mentioned the first ever study of EU perceptions in China in 2005 which looked at focus groups in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. Like this first study, most studies on perceptions of the EU were funded by the European Commission as part of the communication strategy of the EU. Dr. Zhang noted that only 5 percent of

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the academic articles on EU-China relations dealt with perceptions. She singled out 10 relevant publications and projects which focused on the Chinese perception of the EU and which were published or undertaken between 2005 and March 2014 either in English or in Chinese. Dr. Zhang explained that these projects used five different methodologies to conduct analysis: focus groups, media content analysis, surveys, textual analysis and semi-structured interviews, and analysed the perception of different entities (general public, elites, academia and mass media). She further argued that the inconsistency, discrepancy and lack of connection between the above-mentioned projects make comparison difficult and underlined the need to conduct more systematic and scientific studies and to have a follow-up to the research projects.

Prof. DING Chun for his part examined the perspectives of Chinese scholars on the European sovereign debt crisis, focusing on the causes of the crisis, its negative and positive impacts, the lessons learnt and the impact of the crisis on EU-China relations. For his research, Prof. Ding used the database of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) to screen research papers published in Chinese journals from 2010 to 2013. He noted that the majority of the articles were published in 2012 in journals focusing on economics such as *China Finance*, *International Economic Cooperation* or *Review of Economic Research*. Prof. Ding further clarified that the articles were mainly interested in the causes of the sovereign debt crisis and the impacts of the sovereign debt crisis. Prof. Ding's findings illustrate that Chinese scholars consider the main internal causes of the sovereign debt crisis to be the conflicts between a unified monetary policy and relatively independent financial policies, the high welfare policies and the imbalanced development among EU Member States. The prime external causes in the eyes of Chinese scholars were the shock of the international financial crisis and the international credit rate downgrading combined with the hedge fund operations. Most of the articles considered that the crisis had mostly a negative impact both for the EU and for China. The crisis, however, was described in these articles as an opportunity to promote EU integration and a chance for Chinese investors in Europe. Prof. Ding voiced the following recommendations of Chinese scholars toward the EU: promote fiscal integration, strengthen the reform process of the welfare system, establish a bank union and turn toward fiscal austerity, and toward China: tackle the trade shock, improve overall economic competitiveness and prevent local debt risks. Moreover, Prof. Ding's research showed that in their majority Chinese scholars considered the Eurozone as sustainable and thought that China should participate in the bail out of the EU by increasing the direct investment to the EU, strengthening cooperation in different areas and purchasing Eurobonds.



PANEL THREE: CHINA IN THE EYES OF EUROPEAN PUBLIC

The Chair Prof. Jan Melissen began the session by stressing that in the EU opinions about China have always been critical, with some studies even showing that more than 50 percent of the Europeans see China in a negative way. He, nevertheless, emphasised that opinions in Europe have not only been affected by events, but also by the views of political leaders and elites concerning China, which is why a discussion about European opinion toward China is very timely, after the visit of President Xi. Yet, a distinction, should be made between mature and young audiences, people who have been to China and those who have not.

Ms. TAN Xuan and Ms. CHENG Shican examined the changing European perceptions of China, as well as China's awareness of its global image. Firstly, Ms. Cheng stressed that even though attention paid to China has been increasing, European views of China's influence tend to be unfavourable. She presented the different sources of information on China available to the European public. Firstly, Ms. Cheng emphasised the importance of the direct contact with: the Chinese communities living in EU countries who tend to be more traditional than the Chinese people living in China; the Chinese students and scholars coming to European universities, whose number increases every year; or the dynamic group of Chinese tourists. Secondly, she stressed that traditional and social media play a non-negligible role too and that they are easily accessible to everyone. Ms Tan further examined European perceptions of Chinese investment and Chinese investors. She explained that China is referred to as a non-democratic regime while Chinese companies are often seen to be lacking commercial ethics and social responsibility. Ms. Tan argued that these negative perceptions related to Chinese investment tend to persist and to impact real life. She further argued that perceptions about China are very different from one Member State to another reflecting the existing division among Member States in their China policies.

Dr. Byung-Cheol KIM then took the floor to discuss the way Europeans living in Beijing perceive the 'Chinese dream'. In November 2012, after the conclusion of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping put forward the idea of the 'Chinese Dream' that he said was "the great renewal of the Chinese nation". In order to examine the way in which the 'Chinese Dream' is perceived, Dr. Kim conducted a study among 50 Europeans and 50 Chinese citizens. He evaluated the meaningfulness, the creativity, the necessity, the practicality of and the feelings toward the 'Chinese Dream' according to the inhabitants of the Haidian district in Beijing. Dr. Kim's research showed that less than half of the foreigners surveyed knew about the 'Chinese Dream'. Dr. Kim argued that Europeans staying in Beijing are more likely to be positive toward the 'Chinese Dream'. He further noted that his findings showed no big differences between the opinion on the 'Chinese Dream' of Europeans who have lived in China for more than six



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months and those who have not and that, in general, Chinese are more positive toward the 'Chinese Dream' than Europeans.

Mr. Dorian Malovic imparted his reflections to the public on the more than 30 years of experience as a journalist covering China. He emphasised that throughout his professional life he has endeavoured to explain China to the European public. Mr. Malovic noted that both China and Europe are perceived as two ego-centric powers. He further explained that a journalist reporting on China has to face the sceptical and rather suspicious public opinion in France or other EU Member States which is why writing positive articles about China is a challenge. Nevertheless, people in Europe are eager to know better China and understand how the country works. He further explained that Europeans link China with diverse images and concepts such as panda, Shaolin Temple, Communist Party, human rights, kung-fu. Mr. Malovic further shared with the public his recent visits to China and his experience in three different settings: a trip to a small village in China, a visit to China of readers of the French journal *La Croix*, for which Mr. Malovic is currently working, and a trip to China together with other European journalists organised by the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation. Through these experiences, Mr. Malovic emphasised the importance and the power of the personal story and the human element both for journalists and for the readership. Such personal stories transmitted by journalists help Europeans realise that reality in China is much more nuanced than people might have thought. When discussing the differences between journalism in China and in Europe, Mr. Malovic explained that Chinese journalists are very good in reading between the lines and deciphering messages coming from authorities. According to him, even though there has been improvement, the Chinese will benefit from more transparent media in the near future only if the recently announced reforms are fully implemented.



PANEL FOUR: THE MULTIMEDIA ERA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHINA AND THE EU

The Chair, Prof. Sieglinde Gstohl, welcomed the participants to the morning session of the second day of the Conference on "Mass Communication and EU-China Relations". She stressed that the issue of trust seems to be central when discussing the challenges and opportunities in the multimedia era.

Ms. Mireia Paulo-Noguera presented her research on the role played by E-governance in the way in which Europe understands the Chinese Communist Party. Ms. Paulo-Noguera defined e-governance as "the performance of governance via the electronic media in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process for performing government administration activities". She, then, explained that e-governance has two major components – e-services and information, and two main variables that characterise it – access and quality of information. She, however, mentioned that other variables such as stereotypes, expectations, or transparency influence perceptions. According to Ms. Paulo-Noguera's research, there is a decline in the image of the Chinese Communist Party among Europeans. The empirical part of her research consisted of a detailed analysis of an online survey conducted among European citizens from 13 countries who had studied, worked or travelled in China or whose family is in one way or another linked to China. She noted that the majority of the respondents were young, well-educated and male. Ms. Paulo-Noguera stressed that, generally speaking, the respondents did not consult very often the Chinese official websites. Most of the respondents emphasised the bad translation into English of Chinese official websites (or the lack of translation thereof). Moreover, the overall quality of the websites (both content and visualisation of the information) was considered to be poor because the information in English was not updated and many Communist symbols attempting to recreate an ideal world were present on the websites. Ms. Paulo-Noguera further noted that few of the respondents reported use of online services and that although access to the latter is rather easy, the language barrier does remain. When it comes to trust in the information, Ms. Paulo-Noguera underlined that most people prefer to consult Western media since they do not trust the information provided on official websites. Ms. Paulo-Noguera concluded by pointing out that the development of e-governance strategies by the Chinese government brings a lot of opportunities, but that many challenges such as language issues or issues related to image-building need to be faced.

Ms. Hélène Pfeil gave valuable insight into the problems and promises of the EU-China dialogue in the journalistic sphere. Ms. Pfeil stressed that media has a huge potential to influence public perceptions and public policy, which is still underutilised. She analysed the "EU-China Media Exchange" project, launched in 2011, the idea being to bring together European and Chinese journalists and organise visits to both Europe and China. The aim of the project was to increase the face-to-face dialogue



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between European and Chinese journalists and explore topics that readers from both sides do not necessarily read about on a daily basis, such as health issues, urbanisation or cultural preservation. In the framework of the project, considered to be a success, Chinese journalists were sent to European media organisation where they witnessed programme-making and observed editorial meetings. Ms. Pfeil further identified a number of difficulties encountered while implementing the above-mentioned project, namely institutional and regulatory barriers, information and communication barriers, cultural and behavioural barriers, problems linked to the political boundaries. She added that because of supervision during the visit, a number of journalists did not necessarily want to speak up. In order to overcome this difficulty, Ms. Pfeil explained, alternative spaces for dialogue outside of the official meetings were created. Furthermore, she focused on the stories of Chinese journalists, one of whom had the opportunity to visit European media such as *the London Evening Standard* and discuss the difficulties encountered by media when it comes to declining advertisement revenue, competition or new media. She noted that another Chinese journalist was impressed by the BBC Parliamentary channel he had watched during his visit in the United Kingdom which had helped him understand the critical attitude of European journalists toward politicians in Europe. Ms. Pfeil explained that such stories have a “double snowball effect” since journalists not only publish articles, thus reaching a large readership, but also share information on a more personal level (including through blogs). Ms. Pfeil ended her presentation by highlighting the importance of interpersonal interaction for overcoming misunderstanding and misperceptions between Europe and China. She argued that the best way to move from dialogue to real collaboration is by finding creative ways to work around challenges and create trust while enhancing mutual knowledge, for instance by co-authoring articles.



PANEL FIVE: CHINA IN THE EUROPEAN MEDIA

The Chair Prof. Michael Reiterer welcomed the participants to a panel on China in European media, a sort of “mirror” to previous discussions. He pointed out that European media were often criticised for reporting only negative news on China. Prof. Reiterer further argued that one of the basic rules of communication is not to step on your message. In this sense, if one is to project an image of an open society, making it difficult for journalists to work in the country is not of any help.

By drawing on his personal experience as the Head of the Press and Information Section of the Delegation of the EU to China, Mr. William Fingleton examined the quest for balanced reporting on China in the EU media. Mr. Fingleton stated that in his daily work he faces complaints from both sides: on the one hand, European journalists express dissatisfaction about their treatment in China, while on the other hand, Chinese authorities are concerned about the imbalanced and unfair reporting on China of European journalists. Mr. Fingleton examined China's attitude toward European journalism and noted that China considers it has achieved a lot and does not understand why European journalists tend to report only negative news on China or to put China in negative context. Mr. Fingleton emphasised that conditions of journalists in China have significantly improved in the past 20 years but that a downturn occurred after the 2008 Olympic Games. According to him, there is friction between Chinese authorities and foreign journalists. Mr. Fingleton identified the lack of transparency and lack of information to journalists coming from Chinese authorities as one of the main reasons for this friction. He explained that journalists want more access to the Chinese point of view, but that when seeking official information so as to create a balanced point of view, foreign journalists often do not receive replies. This pushes them to look for information elsewhere, i.e. either from dissidents or from the party line (which is not fully trusted by Europeans). Mr. Fingleton, then discussed the ideological differences between the role of journalism in a Chinese and in a European context. He explained that in the eyes of Europeans every journalist is biased but that by verifying the facts from as many sources as possible, one is able to mitigate this pitfall in an attempt to present a credible story and, thus, independent and supervisory. Chinese journalists are expected to be loyal to the party. In this respect, he further observed that in order for China's soft power to be credible, Chinese authorities need to make better use of media and in particular increase the access to information for foreign journalists. Mr. Fingleton concluded by stressing that China is the big story of the XXI century, which entails that it will be facing more criticism in the future and needs to be prepared for both the good and bad things attention leads to.

Dr. Lutgard Lams analysed the framing of China in the Dutch- and French-language quality press in Belgium and the Netherlands (*De Morgen*, *De Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Le Soir*, *La Libre Belgique*, *De Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*) in an attempt to see whether China is perceived as an

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economic magnet or a rival. Dr. Lams explained that processes of meaning-making influence social and political practice. She studied the meaning-making in the press from November 2012 to October 2013 by conducting both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Dr. Lams first examined the content of the articles featuring in the above-mentioned press for the period of study and identified political and economic issues as the most prominent themes, followed by social issues (such as health and environmental issues, human rights issues or judicial themes). She noted that cultural themes were rarely central in articles coming from the selected sample (6 percent to 10 percent), except for the *De Morgen* and *Le Soir*. Dr. Lams further described the tone of the articles by looking at the positive and negative connotations of the words used. Her study showed that 58.7 percent of the articles provided a negative assessment of China, while 16 percent provided a positive assessment of China. She added that the sample observed testifies to a 'heteroglossic media environment' where different lines of argumentation are presented. She, however, underlined that there is no diversification of voices: elite actors are privileged to the detriment of local officials and the same dissidents are solicited. Dr. Lams further studied the process of creation of frames characterised by the selection of themes, and the use of a specific type of discourse. She explained that both positive and negative frames concerning China exist and that often times journalists take over discourse from other papers and articles and stop questioning the assumptions and statements made. In order to conduct qualitative analysis of the articles chosen, Dr. Lams looked at the use of lexis (structure of the sentence, semantic fields, headlines, argumentation – often a problem since journalists do not have space to paint the larger picture), the syntax (use of different modes and adjectives), and the rhetorical strategies (contrasts, rhetorical questions, irony or sarcasm, comparisons with Maoist or Soviet times). Dr. Lams observed that the newspapers she is studying tend to publish pieces written by the same journalists, which steers the framing process. There is more attention than previously given to China in newspapers in Belgium and the Netherlands, but that it is still less than in other countries. In conclusion, she stressed that there is no negative-driven agenda when writing about China, but that the events and the context determine the framing which is why it is important to deconstruct through textual analysis.

Dr. Jeanne Boden looked at post-colonial Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism in media reporting on China in the West. She showed concern over the insufficient knowledge Europeans and Chinese have of each other. According to her, it is very important for both sides to give each other information about the ways the systems on each side work so as to deconstruct the stereotypes that exist on both sides. As Dr. Boden pointed out, in Europe multiple centres of authority have to come to a consensus and historical developments in Europe favoured debate, while in China the power is rather centralised, a configuration which is still visible nowadays in the figure of the President of the People's Republic of China who is also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Dr. Boden examined the different political and cultural contexts in Europe and China and argued that Europeans are strongly

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influenced by the Western frame of mind and look at China from a European point of view, which leads them to make assumptions about the development of China into a Western-type of society. She further argued that, even if journalists strive to overcome this Eurocentrism, it is still quite present in mass media. Dr. Boden explained that China, as well, tends to perceive the world through a Sinocentric frame of mind set up in a meritocratic centralised system governed through a dominant, centralist discourse. She further explained that Europeans and Chinese have different approaches to information, the former preferring to use explicit language when resolving problems, while the latter – implicit. She further clarified that in China several well-distinguished levels of communication ranging from public to private information-sharing, exist. Dr. Boden further analysed both the positive and the negative stereotyping of Europe and of China since the XIXth century. Negative stereotyping of China includes expressions such as 'Yellow danger' or 'the Dragon awakes', while Europe is negatively referred to as 'the Old Ghost', 'the Foreign devil' or 'the Outsider'. Positive stereotypes include perceptions of Europe as the cradle of science and democracy and of China as the land of endless opportunities. She also presented the schools of Orientalism in Europe and Occidentalism in China by insisting that in both cases images and discourse are created to serve the political and economic agendas of respectively Europe and China. Dr. Boden noted the danger of relying too often on people who do not speak Chinese to inform Europeans about China. In the same line of analysis, she explained that the information Europeans get about China through the press is also selected according to their specific agenda. What makes it difficult to overcome stereotypes of China is China's attempt to "expand censorship" to Europe. Dr. Boden stated that part of the miscommunication is due to the clash of discourse and the lack of information Europeans and Chinese have about each-other.

Mr. Dirk Nimmegeers tackled the issue of China in online West European media. Mr. Nimmegeers began his presentation by confirming the observation frequently made by Chinese people that Western media reports on China are not very accurate, use rather negative wording and contain prejudice. He put an emphasis on the efforts Western media could make to improve mutual understanding between the EU and China. He referred to several cases where trusted media gave inaccurate information about China which was then reproduced by a number of other media before being corrected. Mr. Nimmegeers underlined that the choice of wording in articles about China in Western media creates misunderstanding and leads to misperceptions since it is not rare that predictions and allegations are presented as facts for the sake of sensationalism. In this respect, he noted that there is in the West a standard disbelief in the sincerity of Chinese officials. For instance, the sincerity of the people leading the campaign against corruption in China is never presupposed in Western media. Mr. Nimmegeers added that Western media often uses deprecating terms when referring to Chinese official media, politicians and institutions. According to him, notwithstanding China's achievements both domestically and at the international level through contributions to the peace and stability in the world, Western media frequently presents China as a "greedy, self-centred, militaristic nation". Next,



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Mr Nimmegeers argued that a recent study by the Harvard University social scientist Gary King showed that while it is true that the Chinese government suppresses attempts to organise groups for collective action, allegations that official censors stop all criticism against Chinese politicians and policies are false. Indeed, Chinese leaders want to gather information on the opinions and desires of people which is why a form of criticism is allowed in the Chinese social media space. According to Mr. Nimmegeers, European journalists need to dissociate themselves from the financial and political constraints that hinder them and move beyond the ideological framework within which they are working and which had led to uncritical copying of assumptions and allegations.



PANEL SIX: THE EU IN CHINESE MEDIA

The Chair Ms. Cristina Gallach welcomed the participants to the last panel of the two-day conference, and shared her personal experience and impressions about the strong interest of Chinese media in European reality. In one of her visits to Beijing, when watching TV, she ran into an informative programme on Chinese television reporting the reactions of young Europeans to the youth unemployment in European countries.

Prof. SONG Lilei opened the panel with an analysis of one of the official microblogs of China's Foreign Ministry for European Affairs that she conducted together with Prof. BIAN Qing. By looking at this microblog launched in 2012, Prof. Song and Prof. Bian examined the perceptions of the EU in Chinese social media and the cognitive gap between the EU and China. Firstly, Prof. Song introduced the Chinese equivalent of Twitter – Weibo, founded in 2007 and used by over 300 million Chinese internet users, most of whom are highly educated. As Prof. Song explained, the Chinese government uses Weibo to re-establish its authority. Indeed, the most used operator on Weibo – Sina Weibo, hosts over 20,000 microblogs on behalf of the Chinese government, including 9000 microblogs of Chinese officials and 10,000 of government departments. The majority of the users of these microblogs belong to the generations born after 1990. Prof. Song further presented one of the Weibo of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – “Sino-European Messenger”, which has around 2 million followers and over 48,000 posts. The aim of the “Sino-European Messenger” is to increase the knowledge on Europe and Sino-European relations of Chinese citizens, to make the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs more transparent and in this way to bring Chinese diplomats closer to the ordinary Chinese citizen. The content analysis Prof. Song and Prof. Bian employed to study the use of this microblog for the period April 2012-April 2013 showed that the majority of the posts featured both text and picture and gave information either on Sino-European relations or on Chinese perceptions of Europe. The majority of the messages that were reposted in the sample examined dealt with the EU and with Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on economic and technology exchange between Europe and China, with the theme of culture and sports ranking second. Prof. Song remarked that the “Sino-European Messenger” features, among others, posts on more sensitive topics such as Tibet but that those posts tend to have few comments. She ended her presentation by explaining that Chinese Weibo users tend to pay attention to topics that are more directly related to daily life and are much more concerned with domestic issues such as food safety, environmental issues, issues related to welfare.

Ms. MA Xinru closed the afternoon session with her analysis of the way the EU is portrayed in Chinese media, especially in relation to social and political issues. She, in particular examined the most popular images used to depict the EU, as well as the importance of the EU as a political economic and social actor, compared to both its Member States and to other states. Ms. Ma explained that she chose to look at news items issued by *Xinhua news*



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agency, because it remains the only credible source in China when it comes to sensitive topics, and *China Daily*, the English newspaper with the widest print in China, from January to July 2011. Ms. Ma further drew attention to the image of itself the EU would like to project in China and stressed that the EU is focusing on trade and business exchanges as well as social and economic development. Moreover, as noted by Ms. Ma, significant funds are devoted to the promotion of human rights and democracy in China. She emphasised that the two media mentioned above represent the Chinese official position toward the EU. Although these media convey a rather positive image of the EU often in connection to EU-China relations, only 10 percent of the world news items in *Xinhua* and *China Daily* are related to the EU. Ms. Ma clarified that *China Daily*, which features an important number of opinion pieces, dedicated the majority of its articles on the EU to China's readiness to help the EU emerge from the economic crisis and to the untapped potential of EU-China cooperation on international security matters such as the Iranian nuclear issue or counter-terrorism. Ms. Ma further stressed that articles giving a comprehensive overview of the EU are quite rare thus creating a simplified image of the EU. Furthermore, the studied sample showed that themes related to culture, sport and entertainment are very rarely covered. Ms. Ma further stated that the EU is perceived through its Member States: EU-China economic relations are defined through bilateral relations with individual Member States. In addition, the EU and EU-China relations are overshadowed by the United States of America (US) and US-China relations, as well as by the relations between China and its neighbours. Ms. Ma closed the last panel of the conference by pointing out that the EU should not rely on Chinese media to construct EU's image, since it is unlikely that it would correspond to the image the EU wants to project of itself. This is why the EU should rather engage specialists and diplomats who could help promote the achievements of the EU.



CLOSING SPEECH

MEN Jing *

Prof. MEN Jing thanked all the speakers, chairs and participants for the two intensive and rich-in-ideas days of the conference on “Mass communication and EU-China relations”. She expressed her gratitude toward the European Commission which funded the organisation of the conference through the LLP Jean Monnet Programme and the Committee of the Region. She confirmed that given that both the European and the Chinese side are interested in the topic of mass communication, a book volume of selected papers will be published both in Chinese and in English.

* Prof. MEN Jing is Chairholder of the InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of European Union-China Relations at the College of Europe.

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GROUP PHOTO OF CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

