



4th Workshop on  
Europe-China Relations in  
Global Politics

## Cities as Actors in EU-Asia Cooperation

Sichuan University,  
Chengdu, PR China

19–21 March 2015

**Hosting institutions:**



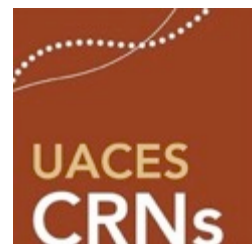
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## Workshop Report: Cities as Actors in EU-Asia Cooperation

The Fourth Workshop on EU-China Relations in Global Politics took place in Chengdu, Sichuan, PR China, in the days of March 19-21. Taking place in one of the most rapidly developing and globally significant Chinese cities, Chengdu, the theme of the workshop was “Cities as Actors in EU-Asia Cooperation.” It welcomed 50 participants of 14 countries that presented their work in four thematic panels. As in the previous years, the EU-China Collaborative Research Network was generously supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

On the first day, the Workshop kicked off with the speeches by Yan Shijing, the Vice-President of the Sichuan University and Peter Hefele, Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Shanghai. They were followed by an introductory session which welcomed Adrian Cavey, the Deputy Consul General of the Consulate-General of France in Chengdu; as well as the three founders of the EU-China Collaborative Research Network. Professor Men Jing of the College of Europe discussed the



New Silk Road Initiative and its impact on Sino-European Relations. While emphasising the comprehensiveness, far-sightedness and ambition behind the project, Prof. Men warned of the challenges ahead that might stem from a number of reasons, including the different perceptions of Europeans and Chinese. Dr. Frauke Austermann of the International School of Management in Cologne discussed the role of cities as actors and venues of international relations throughout history. She pointed out the challenge that cities face in the global arena in which the main actors remain the nation-states. Professor SHEN Wei of the Confucius Institute at Lancaster University highlighted the increase in clustering of economic activities in polycentric urban regions, a process in which cities have a growingly important role.

The first day concluded with a dinner over which Jens Kraus-Masse, the Deputy Consul General of the Consulate-General of Germany in Chengdu gave an address to the participants.



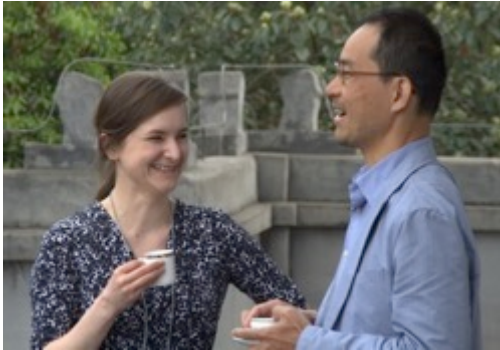
The second day was off to an early start with four thematic sessions. The first session discussed cities as actors in international relations with particular focus on EU-China relations, from both normative and empirical perspectives.

In Panel 1.1. Tomasz Jurczyk of the University of Lodz presented a case study on the cooperation of Lodz with Chinese partners, Chengdu and Guangzhou. He discussed several questions that define city-level diplomacy including the causes, legal grounds, motivations, institutionalization, and attitude by central governments as well as implications of city-level paradiplomacy. Unlike other city to city partnerships, the Lodz-Chengdu relationship itself is dominated by economic interests, stimulated by bottom-up initiatives. In this case municipal policy is complementary to central government policy, and its success correlates with the development of Poland-China bilateral relations.

Assja Wischnewskaja of the Graduate School of Global Politics discussed the urbanization of Xinjiang and the case of the city of Kashgar from the perspective of regional security. Xinjiang has recently experienced an economic boom (10% annual economic growth), but disparities in income distribution remain, with the Han Chinese being better off on average. The government now tries to promote a shift away from exclusively focusing on development towards “ethnic mingling” through urbanization. However, various challenges remain, like *Hukou* status, unemployment, and urban radical forces. The

Q&A session raised the question of theoretical framing, and the contrast between the important nodes and endpoints of the New Silk Road on one hand, and “everything in between” on the other.

In panel 1.2. Shintaro Hamanaka of the Asian Development Bank discussed the notion of subregionalism in international relations. Overcoming the traditional international relations theory that focuses on state actors, he discussed “public non-state actors” such as provincial governments and cities. One such



example is the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) that has served as an initiative complimentary to the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); a similar one has been the Greater Tumen Initiative, a standalone organization. Comparing the two subregional projects, Hamanaka discussed the core defining aspects of subregional organizations. Evidence shows that each subregionalism project is unique; but that as a perspective subregionalism helps highlighting aspects that tend to be overlooked by a typical study on regionalism.

Deng Jinhua contemplated the lessons that Beijing can learn from Amsterdam’s Schipol in terms of the governance and developing of its economy around its international airports – so-called aerotropolises. Given their complexity, the biggest issue for aerotropolises is governance and coordination. One challenge for Beijing would be to upgrade the aerotropolis strategy beyond the municipal- toward the national level; but it also needs better coordination of different administrative units below the municipal level. Amsterdam’s experience has been very successful and has the potential to guide the future development of the new international airport that will also help further economic integration of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei. The Q&A session looked at the characteristics of sub-state actors (i.e. aren’t they just a vehicle to promote national policy?); the hierarchies of interests and decision-making; and some of the conceptual considerations regarding aerotropolises.

The second session discussed the role of cities as creative cradles, and the potential of innovative business solutions to enhance urban quality of life. Having a bottom-up understanding of cities, Non Arkaraprasertkul of New York University, the first speaker of panel 2.1., contemplated whether Shanghai, as a global city, is able to develop a sustainable creative industry that is attractive to local residents and



artists alike. The development of the most famous creative areas in Shanghai, Moganshan and Tianzifang were led by commercialization and gentrification. As a more sustainable solution, Arkaraprasertkul suggested a “growth coalition” from within neighbourhoods. Only if residents, entrepreneurs and local governments work together and establish a shared understanding of their needs, a sustainable creative industry can emerge.

Gabriela Radu of the Aspen Institute in Bucharest highlighted the ongoing development of the “New Silk Road”, linking Europe and China, and the chances and challenges it brings for the cities laying on its path. Focusing on the three main existing land routes (Chongqing-Duisburg, Zhengzhou-Hamburg, Yiwu-Madrid), Radu concluded that these cities and other municipalities on the respective routes play a fundamental role in shaping the future of trade between East and West. However, geopolitical risks such as terrorist threats, paramilitary attacks, and the economic crisis in Europe are crucial challenges to the New Silk Road’s success.

Marko Ljubicic and Nikola Zivlak of Donghua University presented their empirical research examining whether there is a positive correlation between the city brand of Shanghai and Shanghainese companies' equity. Given Shanghai's high reputation in living standards, life quality, economic potential, and international status, it seems natural for Shanghainese companies to try to utilize their city's brand. The data gathered through a survey on a sample of 458 respondents confirms this hypothesis. The discussion of the panel revolved around notions such as the Shanghainese identity as well as the participatory urban culture (or lack thereof), within the framework of the concept of the city as a community of citizens.

Session 2.2. reflected upon three different forms of cooperation when analyzing cities' potential as creative cradles. Discussing the cooperation on the state-to-state level, against the background of increasing urbanization, Wang Yamei of Sichuan University, reflected upon the characteristics of China's new-type urbanization strategy. China's urbanization is expected to have a significant socio-economic effect and pose a number of challenges for the government; therefore China can and needs to learn from the European experience. Participants noted, that in order to improve Sino-European cooperation on urbanization, actions between various Chinese ministries needed to be harmonized – an important call that the State Council would have to make.



Annika Linck of the College of Europe discussed the sub-state perspective, analysing the foreign policy of the city of Duisburg as an important case of paradiplomacy along the novel international railroad connection. Her presentation triggered important questions concerning the respective benefits for cities at both ends as well as along the New Silk Road. Discussing the “non-state” level, Zhang Peng of the Shanghai International Studies University entertained the question why the German Chamber of Commerce acted as private actor in China, while being registered as an association in many other places around the world. The answer was closely connected to the freedom which China grants private compared to civic actors.

The Workshop also featured a policymakers plenary session with William Tompson, a senior official at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), providing an exclusive sneak preview of the OECD's “National Urban Policy Review of China.” Tompson pointed out the dual challenge when it comes to the social aspects of city-led growth with first, a deepening urban-rural gap; and secondly, growth being driven by cheap labour and export-oriented production.



Ignacio Asenjo, Second Secretary in charge of Urbanisation at the European Union Delegation, Beijing discussed the EU-China Partnership on Urbanisation and the challenges ahead. Divergent interests, understandings and institutional designs pose many challenges; however, Asenjo believes that the Urbanisation partnership can yield positive results.

In the afternoon part of the workshop, the third session looked at the challenge of sustainable urbanization, and the cooperation in science and technology as a way to build smarter and greener cities. In Panel 3.1. Maria Francesch Huidobro of the City University of Hong Kong discussed the urban governance challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters. These challenges are threefold as they concern spatial development policy, the management of flooding, and the governance



structure. While spatial development and flood risk management are important tools in adapting to climate change, the steering and coordinating capacity of institutions is the most essential aspect for improving the resilience of river delta cities.

Dirk Rommeney of Germanwatch discussed the potential of the low carbon city partnerships within the Sino-European Partnership on Low Carbon and Sustainable Urban Development as a chance for



advancing China-EU relations. New scientific and technological innovations give cities the chance to be part of the solution instead of the cause for global warming. The Bonn-Chengdu partnership has achieved notable milestones since 2013. The next phase of the cooperation will be the actual implementation. Its success will depend on a number of factors, such as political will, mutual trust, matching of interests, external support, intercultural competence, financial support and broad engagement of the

various stakeholders.

Zhang Xingxing of the University of Nottingham in Ningbo, analysed the effectiveness of smart meters. A quantitative analysis of data gathered from an effective sample of 131 respondents shows that these devices could lead to around 9.1% (11.0%) in reduction of monthly electricity consumption. The paper also provided a comparative perspective with the UK, and discussed future prospects and opportunities of advancing the energy-economic approach. The Q&A session highlighted the problem of long amortization phases related to electricity subsidies, as well as the possible effect of the change of electricity prices to realistic levels so that the potential costs savings from smart meters can actually become substantive.



During Panel 3.2. Yang Yao of Sichuan University discussed the concept of eco cities. While several cities around the world wear the label of eco city, the exact criteria, the purpose of the label, and the question how to build one are still disputed. As a concept and an urban planning approach, eco city initiatives have been present in China and beyond for more than four decades. Aside from the normative definitions and discussions, actual practices differ and depend highly on the local circumstances. The presentation concluded with the perspectives for the future and the emphasis on the reality that at the end of the day, cities are primarily platforms, and citizens are actors; how they act will determine the future.

Han Luo of Sichuan University of Sichuan University discussed how Chengdu can learn to develop sustainable transport infrastructure from European cities. Chengdu, a densely populated and centralized city, faces serious transportation issues, in particular related to air pollution. A comparison with Paris and Berlin reveals room for improvement. In the future, Chengdu needs to develop infrastructure that will help reduce the metal contents in road dusts that have detrimental effects, and in general lower the emissions. The Q&A session focused on the discussion of the differences between top-down and bottom-up approach in urbanization policy, the particular measures of developing sustainable transport infrastructure, the comparative (dis)advantages, the role of locality, and the need for active civic participation.

The fourth session discussed Urban Socio-cultural Dynamics as a Vehicle for EU-Asia Cooperation. Huang Liya of Sun Yat-sen University analysed cultural brownfields as venues for cooperation in urban areas. She analysed the cases of the 798 Art District in Beijing and the Redtory Art district in Guangzhou. Cultural brownfields act as bridges of cross-cultural interactions and tool for cross-cultural

communication between China and the EU. There is a national policy and regulations for cultural brownfields needed aiming at local cultural engagement.

Xue Bai of the Social Sciences Academic Press compared the role of Beijing and Hangzhou in city diplomacy, analysing the challenges for the EU-China city-to-city diplomacy. Chinese cities have multiple roles and participate in foreign affairs as actors. However, there are notable differences and not all cities have an opportunity to conduct foreign affairs activities at the same level.

Dr. Li Zhuyu from the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at the Sichuan University discussed the mutual (re)cognition of Chinese and European youth. People-to-people understanding is one of the three pillars of EU-China relations. Given the fact that the majority of Europeans have never travelled to China or had direct experience with it, media play a special role in the shaping of young Europeans' understanding of China.



The discussion by Anastas Vangeli of the Polish Academy of Science emphasized the potential role of the sense of European identity, and social and political values as determinants of how they relate to other countries; the political context of cultural brownfields, the practice of reclaiming public space by expelled people and the potential of subculture to steer international cooperation; and the structural preconditions that allow cities, rather than national governments, to have successful diplomatic role (more symmetrical, more similar, and more honest to each other). The Q&A session devoted notable attention to the issue of internet censorship, the potential benefits for China's soft power by a hypothetical deregulation, and the way "good" and "bad" news are generated.

At the end of the Workshop, the Head of the Organization Team, Maximilian Rech of ESSCA rounded up the event with a summary of the main points and a retrospective overview of the four consecutive annual Workshops organized by the CRN. He particularly thanked Peter Hefele of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Shanghai, a great supporter of the CRN Workshops, who moves to the new branch of the foundation dealing with Energy Security and Climate Change in Southeast Asia. Finally, two young scholars, Gabriela Radu and Zhang Xingxing were awarded special prizes for their papers presented at the Workshop.



## The Organising Institutions

**The UACES Collaborative Research Network on EU-China Relations.** UACES is the University Association for Contemporary European Studies. It is a membership organization for academics, students and practitioners who are interested in all aspects of Europe and the European Union. The UACES Collaborative Research Network (CRN) on EU-China Relations was initiated by Prof. Dr. SHEN Wei, Director of the Confucius Institute and Jean Monnet Professor of International Business, Lancaster University & ESSCA School of Management, Prof. Dr. MEN Jing, InBev-Baillet Latour Chair of EU-China Relations at the College of Europe in Bruges, and Dr. Frauke AUSTERMANN, Head of Campus, International School of Management, Cologne and Research Associate at the ESSCA EU\*Asia Institute, and an alumna of the Graduate School of Global Politics at Free University Berlin. The UACES EU-China CRN aims at promoting discussion, exchange of ideas and high quality research on the current state of EU-China relations, in an inclusive environment. More information can be found on <http://www.uaces.org/china/>.

**ESSCA EU\*Asia Institute.** The European Union and Asia play a major role in shaping this new global environment. The complex relationship between the two regions clearly appears to be of increasing relevance, not only with regard to market opportunities and professional careers, but also to issues of global governance and models of regional integration. The mission of the ESSCA EU\*Asia Institute is to make an original contribution to the academic community of European Studies and research on EU-Asia relations and provide interdisciplinary input from this area to the programmes offered by ESSCA School of Management on its campuses in Angers, Paris, Budapest and Shanghai. More information can be found on <http://www.essca.fr/EU-Asia/>.

**The Graduate School of Global Politics, Free University Berlin.** The Graduate School of Global Politics (GSGP) is the first German-Chinese structured doctoral programme in the social sciences. It is based at the Center for Global Politics at Free University Berlin and is run in cooperation with several top-level partner universities in China. These include: Renmin University of China, Beijing; Fudan University, Shanghai; the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences; and Jinan University, Guangzhou. The GSGP attracts students and young researchers from all over the world, particularly those with a special research focus on Europe and China. It offers high quality training and supervision from a team of internationally renowned scholars. More information can be found on <http://www.cgp-phd.org/>.

**Sichuan University, Chengdu.** Located in the historic city of Chengdu, Sichuan University is one of China's key universities under the direct supervision of the Chinese Ministry of Education. It is a key high-level comprehensive research university with national Program 985 and Program 211. It consists of three campuses of Wangjiang, Huaxi and Jiangan. The present Sichuan University succeeds former Sichuan University, Chengdu University and West China University of Medical Science. It enjoys a long tradition in education and covers a wide range of disciplines spanning in 30 colleges. The university offers 229 doctoral programs, 346 master programs, 13 professional master's programs, and 126 undergraduate programs. The present student population is over 60 000, consisting of 40,000 undergraduates, over 20,000 master and PhD candidates, excluding around 2000 international students. Sichuan University has established cooperative relationships with over 150 universities in 42 countries. Its annual research budget is around RMB 2 billion yuan.

**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Shanghai.** The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is one of the political foundations of the Federal Republic of Germany, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). With its activities and projects, the foundation makes an active and substantial contribution to international cooperation and understanding. It is the fundamental aim of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme for China to support the Chinese process of reform, focusing particularly on the transformation of the economy and on reforms related to the rule of law. More information can be found on <http://www.kas.de/china/>.

## Previous Workshops

### First Workshop: Partnership, Competition or Co-Evolution

The First Workshop on Europe-China Relations in Global Politics took place at the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China in March 2012. The overarching theme was “China and Europe in 21st Century Global Politics: Partnership, Competition or Co-Evolution”. Given the simultaneous presence of partnership and competition in China-Europe relations, the Workshop’s purpose was to investigate if Sino-European relations have become what Henry KISSINGER has termed a “co-evolution”: both China and Europe “pursue their domestic imperatives, cooperating where possible, and adjust their relations to minimize conflict”. There were four panel themes on the following topics: High Politics and Diplomacy; Socio-Economic Transition; Energy and Environmental Issues; and the Role of Culture. In 2013, the Workshop-conveners Frauke AUSTERMANN, Anastas VANGELI and WANG Xiaoguang published an edited volume based on the best papers presented at the Workshop (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Beijing generously supported the event.

### Second Workshop: EU-China Relations under a New Leadership

The Second Workshop on Europe-China Relations in Global Politics again took place at the School of International Studies at Renmin University in March 2013. The overarching theme in the second year was “Strategic Partnership? EU-China Relations under a New Leadership”. The Workshop thereby tied up to governmental changes in both Europe, such as in France or Italy, and in China with XI Jinping and LI Keqiang replacing the previous top-leaders Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. The four specific themes that were addressed related to the Role of (new) Leadership in EU-China Relations; Strategic Resources and Trade Relations; Urbanization and Global Cities; and finally EU-China People-to-People Exchanges. As in the previous year, the event was generously sponsored by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Beijing.

### Third Workshop: Regional Integration in Asia and Europe

The Third Workshop on Europe-China Relations in Global Politics took place at the School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, on March 13-14, 2014. The overarching theme in the third year was “Regional Integration in Asia and Europe”. The Workshop welcomed 80 participants from 20 countries, who presented their research in a total of eight panels, divided in four themes: A German Europe, a Chinese Asia? Leadership of Regional Integration in Asia and Europe; Regional Integration in Asia and Europe and the Role of the United States; Overcoming the Crisis: Economic and Business Prospects in the course of Regional Integration in Asia and Europe; and From Borders to Bridges or Vice Versa? Regional Integration, Peripheral Countries, and Sub-State Actors. The event was generously sponsored by the Shanghai office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, as well as the Association France Euro-Chine.

CHINA &  
EUROPE



IN 21ST CENTURY  
GLOBAL POLITICS

Partnership, Competition or Co-Evolution

Edited by Frauke Austermann  
Anastas Vangeli & Xiaoguang Wang

***China and Europe in 21st Century  
Global Politics: partnership,  
Cooperation or Co-Evolution?***

edited by Frauke AUSTERMANN,  
Anastas VANGELI and Xiaoguang  
WANG (Cambridge Scholars  
Publishing, 2013). Includes  
chapters by: HE Yin, WANG Liang  
and SHI Wentao, Antonia  
HMAIDI, Maximilian RECH, LI  
Xinlei, Julia SOEFFNER, and  
WANG Haiping and HE Zhigao.



## The Organising Team



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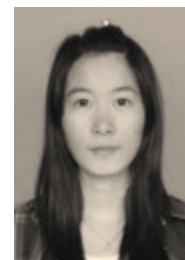
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## UACES EU-China Collaborative Research Network

The event took place in the framework of the **UACES Collaborative Research Network on EU-China Relations** organised by ESSCA School of Management at Angers / College of Europe at Bruges / Graduate School of Global Politics at Free University Berlin).

The event was kindly supported by **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Shanghai** and hosted by **Sichuan University, Chengdu**.