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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The economic rise of China during the last decade has strongly influenced its appeal to the rest of the world. This has led the Chinese government to increase the use of culture in external relations as a tool to shape the perception and image of China abroad and expand its international influence. Globalization has given culture a new value and status as a tool of China's 'soft power'.

Yet China has been relatively slow in embracing the concept of 'soft power' and investing substantially in culture in its external relations. In 2007, President Hu Jintao announced at the Communist Party Congress that culture was of strategic importance for the image of China and its economic development. This policy prompted a shift in focus from cultural exchange to cultural trade, from culture as a means to promote mutual understanding or the image of China abroad to culture as a resource that can generate income and other economic benefits.

Yet while culture in external relations has become significantly more important in recent years, China does not have a masterminded strategy for this purpose. The relevant activities in its 11th and 12th Five-Year Plans and follow-up programmes are not the result of a coordinated approach amongst its ministries and other governmental bodies. The country appears still to be in the process of learning and trying out different possibilities and options.

Apart from investing heavily in the cultural and creative industries (turnover of 208 billion euros and 3.48 per cent of GDP in 2012) the Chinese government has also invested in education, communication and information. A good example is the establishment of the Confucius Institutes around the world to promote Chinese language and culture abroad. There are currently 456 Confucius Institutes and plans to have 1,000 in place by 2020. To expand the number of institutes as quickly as possible the Chinese government is establishing joint ventures with foreign universities. This would, in their view, create a win-win situation for most western universities facing budget cuts due to the economic crisis. There are no geographical priorities with regard to the location of these entities and many are being created in response to growing demand from foreign universities. China is also planning to increase the number of its Cultural Centres abroad from 14 to 50 by 2020.

In order to provide a Chinese perspective on world events, the government has set up a 24-hour news channel (a corporation between the official press agency Xinhua and the public television broadcaster CCTV) and an international newspaper (*Daily China*).

At central government level, the Ministries of Culture, Foreign Affairs, Education and Commerce have the competence to deal with culture in external relations. Regional and local governments are also entitled to engage in cultural cooperation with foreign authorities and cultural institutions. They have taken an active role in setting up culture-orientated development strategies and developed their own policies for cultural cooperation with foreign countries. In particular, the major Chinese cities have espoused the 'creative cities' discourse and have adopted plans to enhance local culture and creativity. For example, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Qingdao are becoming the leading 'creative cities' of China. The local

authorities also deal with the financing and selection of international projects and cooperate with state-owned companies to set up large-scale projects.

China's priority countries for culture in external relations are in line with its foreign policy strategies (both political and economic). The US is the first priority and the EU is the second. Japan follows at some distance. Also its Asian neighbours are becoming relevant.

Chinese public and private stakeholders on the whole see an added value in an EU Strategy for external cultural relations. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have in the last decade improved their cultural cooperation with the EC and wish to continue the dialogues that have been set up. An EU strategy will in their view benefit the smaller EU Member States, as the large countries are already quite active in China. It will also be a means to increase the opportunities for Chinese cultural institutions and artists to operate in various EU Member States during their stay in Europe. An EU strategy would also allow the EU and China to reflect on developing a joint strategy towards third countries to counter US dominance and promote access in the global marketplace for European and Chinese cultural goods and services.

The areas for cooperation suggested by Chinese public stakeholders are largely in line with the Five-Year Plans, programmes and the joint EU-China Declarations: transfer of knowledge for the development of innovative products; access to markets in the EU; management of cultural institutions and CCIs; cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage as well as the increase of exchanges in the area of contemporary performing and visual arts. City-to-city cooperation and the expansion of European and Chinese networks/alliances of creative cities were also highlighted.

Chinese private stakeholders are however more critical. Although they support an EU strategy for culture in external relations, they hope that it will not turn out to be merely a 'soft power' tool of the EU institutions or another strategy to impose a Eurocentric perspective on a new and attractive economic sector. People in China lack awareness about the EU and culture could be a way to inform them about the changes taking place in Europe and the rest of the world. Many find culture to be a better tool of intercultural communication than trade or politics. Activities in the arts and culture could serve as the ideal mediators between the two very different value systems, through their capacity to express and convey mind-sets and concepts beyond preconceived positions.

According to private stakeholders, China's mainstream CCIs and consumption currently provide the government's terms of reference. As European culture is heterogeneous it would be valuable for the EU to focus on measures that could also explore the diversity of culture in China. People-to-people based artistic exchanges, creative hubs, intercultural training, management training, residency programmes and co-production activities were seen as essential tools by private Chinese stakeholders to improve EU-China cultural cooperation.

OVERVIEW

China is the only ancient 'empire' left in today's world.¹ The empire of the Great Qing still exists and has converted itself into the People's Republic of China. Chinese empires have been built throughout history on the bedrock of its ancient civilization and today China has examples of ancient and modern culture in theatre, paintings, crafts, etc. It is a multi-ethnic nation-state with a great deal of linguistic diversity with many different kinds of markets for cultural goods and services. China is thus not a single unit of analysis.

The current Chinese President, Xi Jinping, is striving to fulfil the Chinese dream of the great renewal of the Chinese nation. In a speech at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in March 2014 he highlighted that exchanges and mutual learning are important for human progress and global peace and stressed that the Chinese dream was also a process of both material and cultural development.² To inject new vitality into the Chinese civilization he wished to energize all cultural elements that transcend time, space and national borders and bring all its museum collections, heritage structures and records of Chinese classics to life. This would allow China to play a greater role in advancing mutual understanding in the world.

Despite the President's desire to revive the knowledge of Chinese civilization and culture at global level the government does not yet have a systematic strategy to deal with culture in external relations. It has been trying out different policies and actions. Some have been successful, others less so, but China continues to learn and test.

The economic rise of China during the last decades has strongly influenced its appeal to the rest of the world. This has led the Chinese government to increase the use of culture in its external relations as a tool to shape the perception and image of China abroad and expand its international influence. Globalization has given culture a new value and status in China as an instrument of 'soft power'.³

Yet China has been relatively slow in embracing the concept of 'soft power' and making cultural investments a significant pillar of its external relations. In 2007 President Hu Jintao announced at the Party Congress that culture was of strategic importance for the image of China in the world and it would allow China to increase its soft power and strengthen its economic development. He mentioned that this could only be achieved through proactive cultural policies and made a budget of five billion euros available for investments in the cultural and creative sector. Since then the term 'soft power' has been regularly used in public speeches by the government.

This policy prompted a shift in focus in dealing with culture in external relations. China has

¹ Although some consider the USA also to be an empire in addition to being the global superpower.

² *Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27 March 2014.* Online. Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ERI/pdf/Speech_Xi_Jinping_English.pdf.

³ A concept developed by Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard University in 1990 to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion.

moved its focus from cultural exchange to cultural trade. Culture is thus not only being used to improve the image of China or promote mutual understanding, but has become an important tool to generate income and economic benefits. In this new context, China is interested in sharing experience and knowhow internationally, particularly as regards the CCIs. Their activities are centred on assisting their cultural and creative sectors to get a better knowledge of foreign markets, better understand the taste of foreign audiences, and get into contact with foreign cultural operators to promote Chinese cultural activities in their countries.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China these industries have grown rapidly in recent years. Its figures for 2012 indicated that the added value of the CCIs was 208 billion euros (1.8 trillion RMB) – an increase of 16.5 per cent from 2011. The sector accounted for 3.48 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), an increase of 0.2 per cent from 2011.⁴ Mr Cai Wu, the Minister of Culture, expects the value-added output of the cultural industry to contribute 5 per cent to the country's GDP in 2016.⁵ This is particularly relevant in comparison with the figures in the EU: the core CCIs in the 27 Member States were estimated to generate almost 860 billion euros in value added to GDP in 2008. This contribution was approximately 6.9 per cent of total European GDP in the same year.⁶ Figures indicating the increase in international activities of the Chinese CCIs were not available.

Some other economic figures also illustrate the growth of the sector: China has set up 600,000 rural reading rooms; it published 370,000 books in 2011 – more than any other country;⁷ it produced 745 feature films in 2012 compared to 140 feature films in 2003; it had 2,838 museums and 3,286 culture centres in 2012 compared to 1,519 museums and 2,892 culture centres in 2003.⁸

The Chinese government has also invested in other 'soft power' instruments such as education, communication and information, e.g. through the establishment of Confucius Institutes around the world to promote Chinese language and culture abroad. The government is rapidly expanding their number. This is however not a masterminded strategy but a reaction to a foreign demand for Chinese language teaching and learning. Currently there are 456 Confucius Institutes (in Europe there were 129 institutes in 34 countries in 2012) and there are plans to have 1,000 by 2020. The Hanban/Confucius Institute is a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.⁹ Many westerners see it as the spearheading of a Chinese 'charm offensive' based on the use of culture as a soft power tool, but it is often the foreign universities that find it prestigious to

⁴ National Bureau of Statistics of China, *The Value-added of Corporate Units of Cultural and Related Industries in 2012*, 27 August 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/201308/t20130827_72336.html.

⁵ China Daily Online, 'China's cultural industry predicted to become a pillar of the economy by 2016', *Xinhua*, Beijing, 22 October 2011. Online. Available: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-10/22/c_131206627.htm.

⁶ Tera Study, *Building a Digital Economy*, 2010.

⁷ Dr Hans d'Oreville (Assistant Director-General, UNESCO)'s address at the 10th Euro-China Forum in Bologna, Italy, on 28 November 2012.

⁸ Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, 2004 and 2013.

⁹ Hanban/Confucius Institute website: http://english.hanban.org/node_7719.htm.

have a Confucius Institute on their premises.¹⁰

In order to expand the number of Confucius Institutes as quickly as possible, the Chinese government decided to set up an 'independent' cultural institute similar to those of Europe. To save money it has chosen to work with universities around the world and use their buildings and premises. This would, in their view, create a win-win situation for western universities facing budget cuts due to the economic crisis. The Haban/Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing have no geographical priorities regarding the location of Confucius Institutes abroad. They are established in response to the demands of foreign countries. Currently they have more applications than means to meet them.

It is seen as a problem by many that the Haban/Confucius Institute is not part of the Ministry of Culture and/or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Better coordination would allow China to better expand its cultural sector. The Ministry of Culture has set up its own Culture Centres. There are 14 of them around the world (the plan is to open 50 by 2020), but they do not function as well as the Confucius Institutes (due to the lack of cooperation with local partners according to some European experts).

A number of scholars in the EU have criticised the principle of universities accepting funds from a foreign country to set up cultural institutes on their premises, since in their view this could adversely affect academic freedom. To date this seems not to have been the case as the Confucius Institutes operate independently from the Chinese government and language teaching is not necessarily seen as a political activity.

To give the Chinese perspective on world events, the government is setting up a 24-hour news channel (corporation between the official press agency Xinhua and the public television broadcaster CCTV) and publishing an international newspaper (*Daily China*). In 2011 CCTV had 249 million viewers¹¹ and it is now providing international channels in several languages.¹² It is difficult to determine if China's use of international media has been effective in improving and communicating the image of China. Competition among international news broadcasters (e.g. BBC World of the UK, NHK World of Japan and France 24 of France) is fierce and viewers tend to watch national television stations. This is also the case for newspapers; readers prefer their local newspapers to international ones. For the media to be attractive to an international audience it must be credible and reliable. This seems to be difficult for the Chinese government to understand as it still controls the TV stations and newspapers.

China has also developed giant Internet companies such as Alibaba, Baidu and Tencent that

¹⁰ Fokke Obbema, *China en Europa: Waar twee werelden elkaar raken*, Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2013.

¹¹ *Financial Times*, 12 November 2012.

¹² Helmut K. Anheier and Bernhard Lorentz (eds), *Bridging the trust divide. Cultural Diplomacy and Fostering Understanding Between China and the West*, Essen: Stiftung Mercator GmbH, 2012, p.55. Online. Available at: http://www.stiftung-mercator.de/fileadmin/user_upload/INHALTE_UPLOAD/Service/Publicationen/2012/Publication_Bridging_the_trust_divide.pdf.

now range among the global top 10 Internet sites next to Google, Facebook, Amazon and Ebay.¹³ According to Anne Stevenson-Yang of J Capital Research the political importance of these private companies cannot be underestimated: 'When companies are this big in China, the difference between public and private is not that important. For all intents and purposes these companies have become the Ministry of the Internet'.¹⁴ It is expected that these companies will also expand themselves internationally and interact with people outside of China and thus be able to control the distribution of cultural content.

Yet China's use of culture and communication tools is significantly challenged. It is well known that the authorities consider it necessary to ensure that culture and communication convey the 'right' message, an approach that in other regions of the world is viewed negatively and linked to censorship and propaganda. 'The main challenge for China will thus be to identify a more appropriate balance between the legitimate need for social cohesion and requirements of an open society.'¹⁵

These examples demonstrate that China does not have a fully-fledged strategy for culture in external relations. Even if such a strategy were adopted, the challenge would be, as in many other countries, to actively involve cultural operators and artists. The question arises as to which actors in the 'independent' cultural sector could contribute to such a strategy and implement the people-to-people dimension of it. There is a general distrust of 'cultural power' on the part of artists and cultural operators, whom the government does not find easy to control.

Large blockbuster events often have a bigger impact on the image of the country than its cultural events, investments in the culture and creative industries or the media. This was particularly the case with the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. During the Olympic Games, China projected itself as a great innovative country contributing to the development of science and technology in the world and showed the cultural developments that had taken place in the past centuries. It provided a showcase for China's creativity. At the opening ceremony the famous Chinese film director Zhang Yimou used art, culture and technology in a creative way to represent the connection between Chinese history and the China of today.¹⁶

Writing in *The New York Times* in January 2012, Joseph Nye observed that the violation of human rights has a negative impact on the image of China and this is an issue that China needs to address to improve its image.¹⁷ Yet the Dutch journalist Fokke Obbema (2013) feels that Nye puts too much emphasis on the protection of human rights in judging the soft power of China and neglects the impact of its rising economic power. The economic crisis in Europe and the size of the Chinese economy have reduced European governmental protests about the status of human rights in China.

¹³ Market cap of Internet companies: Google US \$ 407 bn, Facebook US \$ 176 bn, Amazon \$ 174bn, Tencent US \$ 136 bn, Alibaba US \$ 120 bn, Ebay US \$ 73 bn and Baidu US \$ 57 bn (*Financial Times*, 20 March 2014, p.7).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dr Hans d'Oreille (Assistant Director-General, UNESCO)'s address, op. cit.

¹⁶ Li Wuwei, *How Creativity is Changing China*, London/New York: Bloomsbury Academics, 2011.

¹⁷ Joseph S. Nye Jr., 'Why China Is Weak on Soft Power', *New York Times*, 17 January 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/opinion/why-china-is-weak-on-soft-power.html>.

For example, when President Xi Jinping visited France in March 2014, the French government decided not to raise human rights issues in order to be able to sign business deals with China. A more general complaint of some Chinese officials in this respect is that Europeans can tie anything and everything together with culture, politics, human rights and talk about them all in the same breath. If the Europeans continue to do so it will be difficult for both sides to increase mutual understanding, hence this is an issue that Europeans need to ponder.

EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE CULTURAL POLICY CONTEXT

The main elements of the Chinese strategy for culture in external relations

China does not have a masterminded strategy for culture in external relations. The activities in its Five-Year Plans and follow-up programmes are not part of a single coordinated strategy between its ministries and other governmental bodies. China is currently in the process of learning and trying out different possibilities and options. An overview of the efforts undertaken by the Chinese government in the last decade is given below.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century and in particular after the 16th, 17th, and 18th National Congresses of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese Government has stressed the value of culture as one of the main ‘pillars’ of its external relations, economy and social development and has developed its so-called ‘going-out’ strategy. The four ‘legs’ of this strategy are the following:

1. improve the image of China abroad;
2. present and disseminate Chinese culture all over the world;
3. promote mutual understanding as a basis to improve political and economic cooperation between different countries; and
4. open international markets for its cultural and creative industries.

The most recent document outlining China’s strategy for culture in external is the *Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms* adopted at the close of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee on 12 November 2013.¹⁸ The top leaders of the Communist Party decided among others to:

- build a culturally strong country and increase China’s cultural power;
- continue to transform its state-owned cultural institutions into profitable enterprises and encourage the development of non-state-owned cultural companies – allowing them to participate in overseas publishing activities;
- encourage investments in cultural services as well as the set-up of non-profit organisations;
- enter cultural markets abroad by enlarging the scope of China’s cultural exchanges and support the use of China’s key media to increase international cultural exchanges;
- strengthen copyright protection.

¹⁸ ‘The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms in brief’, *China.org.cn*, 16 November 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.china.org.cn/china/third_plenary_session/2013-11/16/content_30620736.htm.

Other elements of the strategy of China on culture and external relations can also be found in various Five-Year National Plans and Reports to the National Congress of the CPC:

- **11th Five-Year National Plan 2006-2011**¹⁹ – the blueprint for a ‘Harmonious Society’ states for the first time the importance of culture and the need for the government to ‘satisfy the increasing demand of the people for better cultural and spiritual life’.
- **Report to 17th National Congress of CPC of 2007**²⁰ and **Report on the work of the Government of 2009**²¹ – stress the importance of cultural soft power. The more attractive China would become, the stronger its soft power.²² They also mention the desire of China to become a leading centre for creativity in the world and outline a work programme for the cultural and creative sector. International elements include the need to focus on the international cultural sector and the creation of platforms for international cooperation; reinforce domestic brands and cultural companies by welcoming foreign shareholding and direct investments; and export more cultural products ‘Created in China’ and not only ‘Made in China’.²³
- **12th Five-Year Plan 2011-2015**²⁴ – lays down the *Cultural Reform and Development Plan* in Part 10. It focuses on the economic dimension of culture, the development of the Chinese CCIs and the boosting of China’s cultural influence abroad. Special attention is paid to: emerging cultural sectors, such as digital publication and mobile multimedia; building 50,000 cinema screens in rural areas; making television and radio networks accessible to 99 per cent of the country's population; and preserving cultural heritage. The revenue from the culture and creative industries is targeted to double and is expected to triple by 2020.²⁵ The Ministry of Commerce also indicates in its *Development Plan for Trade in Services* that cultural services are a key sector for China and that it intends to develop cultural projects and support trade in cultural services in order to expand the global influence of Chinese culture. The activities proposed include incubation facilities for traders in cultural services and the development of cultural projects that meet the needs and demands of international markets and have Chinese characteristics.

¹⁹ See at: http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/hot/t20060529_71334.htm.

Chapter on culture: <http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/hot/W020060531535888377802.jpg>.

²⁰ ‘Full text of Hu Jintao’s report at 17th Party Congress’, *Xinhua*, 24 October 2007. Online. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm.

²¹ ‘Report on the Work of the Government (2009)’, *Chinese Government’s Official Web Portal*, March 2009. Online. Available at: http://english.gov.cn/official/2009-03/14/content_1259415.htm.

²² See at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/24/content_6938568.htm.

²³ Michael Keane, ‘From made in China to created in China’ and Rod Kemp, ‘“Made” in China to “created” in China: What can the international community offer?’, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, September 2006; vol. 9, pp. 285-296 and pp. 267-270.

²⁴ See at: <http://www.britishchamber.cn/content/chinas-twelfth-five-year-plan-2011-2015-full-english-version>.

²⁵ *UNESCO Creative Economy Report 2013, Special Edition – Widening Local Development Pathways*, p.69.

- **Report to 18th National Congress of the CPC of China of 2012**²⁶ – states that the cultural sector will become one of the main pillars of the economy and mentions that the development of the CCIs rank among the top five national priorities. It also indicates the desire of the Chinese government to enhance the overall strength and international competitiveness of Chinese culture, seen as important indicators of China's power and prosperity. The report mentions that China needs to open its cultural sector to the outside world and draw on the cultural achievements of other countries. The grand goal is to increase the awareness and confidence in Chinese culture in and outside the country and develop a strong socialist culture in China.
- **Report on the implementation of the 2013 Plan for National Economic and Social Development and on the 2014 Draft Plan for National Economic and Social Development**²⁷ – the government announces that it would relax controls on market access for foreign investments including culture services. No mention was made of the type of the cultural services for which the market would be opened up. This is a point that the EU should follow up with their Chinese counterparts.

Despite the increased focus of the government on culture in external relations in its Five-Year Plan, a number of academics and policy advisors feel that China is not moving fast enough in developing a strategy. Culture is still being used in traditional ways, they find. The government is not taking sufficient account of the rapid changes taking place in the relations between governments and citizens around the world and, more importantly, it does not yet entrust cultural operators with the execution of cultural cooperation projects with or without governmental participation.

Li Wuwei, a senior Chinese policy advisor, states that 'while three decades of economic reform and opening up has witnessed marked progress, China's image has not improved to the same extent (...)'. He mentions as an example that other nations have made profits out of tapping into China's cultural resources. For example Hollywood made *Mulan* and *Kung Fu Panda* while Japan has turned China's popular novels *Journey to the West* and *Romans of Three Kingdoms* into animation programmes and videogames.²⁸

Although in recent years the Chinese policy for culture has been strongly focused on the economic dimension of the cultural sector – paying more attention to financial outcomes than cultural content – officials also have started to recognise that it is important to fill their newly designed cultural containers (museums and theatres) with interesting content to attract an audience. This has led to the adoption of a more strategic approach to the internationalization of its cultural sector. According to Peter Anders, the Director of the National Office of the Goethe-Institut, the Chinese government has become more interested in curatorial and technical assistance from foreign

²⁶ 'Full text of Hu Jintao's report at 18th Party Congress', *Xinhua*, 17 November 2012. Online. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/special/18cpcnc/2012-11/17/c_131981259.htm.

²⁷ 'Full text: Report on China's economic, social development plan', *Xinhuanet*, 15 March 2014. Online. Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-03/15/c_133188226_10.htm.

²⁸ Li Wuwei, *How Creativity is Changing China*, London/New York: Bloomsbury Academics, 2011, p.24.

experts to manage cultural institutions. This demand on the Chinese side can be seen as an opportunity for both the Chinese and European cultural and creative sectors to reflect on common cultural interests and new means of cooperation.

Chinese governmental bodies dealing with culture in external relations

The Chinese Constitution outlines the importance of the state's intervention in developing cultural activities and guarantees its citizens the right to artistic creation. The Chinese governance model is highly centralised and the ministries in charge of defining foreign cultural policies are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in consultation with Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education with the support of academics and research centres. The CPC Central Committee and the State Council are also involved. An overview of the relevant activities follows.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)**²⁹ studies strategic issues of importance to the international relations of China, coordinates its diplomatic work with relevant governmental departments and reports to and advises the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on matters such as foreign trade, economic cooperation, culture, Chinese nationals abroad and education. It organises public diplomacy activities and takes charge of affairs related to foreign journalists and news agencies operating in China. The MFA is also responsible for concluding bilateral and multilateral treaties, assisting in examining foreign-related draft laws and regulations, and organising and coordinating the work of fulfilling international conventions and agreements. It leads and directs the Chinese diplomatic missions abroad and the offices of Commissioners in Hong Kong and Macao.

The **Ministry of Culture (MoC)**³⁰ deals with general cultural activities such as music, performing arts, literature and design. The MoC is nominally in charge of all activities in these sectors, including regulations and licences. Within the MoC, the Bureau for External Cultural Relations deals with foreign affairs for cultural works and signs agreements with foreign governments on cultural cooperation, cultural exchange and mutual financing of cultural projects. The Chinese Cultural Centres abroad are also run by the MoC to promote Chinese Culture in foreign countries – 60 to 70 per cent of their activities involve the promotion of Chinese artists and 30 to 40 per cent focus on increasing collaboration with local partners.

The Department of Cultural Market Administration deals with research and makes regulations for cultural markets and products. A new Department of Cultural Industry has been created in 2006 with the task of researching and designing plans, policies and regulations for the cultural industries. There is also an independent agency under the Ministry of Culture whose role is to promote cultural performances in foreign countries.

²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China website: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>.

³⁰ Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China websites: <http://www.ccnt.gov.cn> and <http://www.mcprc.gov.cn/>.

The **State Administration of Radio, Film and TV (SARFT)**³¹ and the **General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP)**³² merged in 2013 to become **GAPPRFT**. They have a threefold strategic role of policy planner, legislator and supervisor, in the audio-visual and press sectors respectively. They draft laws and regulations concerning broadcasting, press, publication, supervise different activities (publications, imports, etc.) and apply censorship rules. They also act as agents and manage the state-owned publishing companies (but there are now an increasing number of private and independent publishing houses affiliated to the state-owned companies). GAPPRFT also runs the China National Radio, China Radio International and the China Central Television and approve publication licences for periodicals, books and music.

GAPPRFT collaborates with the National Copyright Administration of China (NCAC), the highest authority responsible for copyright issues. It was established in 1985 and its main functions include devising copyright-related policies, drafting laws and regulations, international relations and promoting policies to raise public awareness on IPR protection. Several regions and cities have now set up their own Copyright Administration Agency.

The Ministry of Culture and GAPPRFT as well as a number of other governmental bodies run state-driven culture exchanges. There are also non-governmental culture exchanges – they are state-funded but privately organised. These exchanges are gaining in importance and numerous groups are touring the world and performing for foreign audiences such as Chinese opera companies, orchestras and acrobatic groups. Also private galleries and art museums are becoming more active internationally.

The Ministry of Education³³ – deals with international cooperation and exchanges and supervises the Hanban/Confucius Institutes.³⁴

The Hanban/Confucius Institute³⁵ is a public institution. The Confucius Institutes are mainly language schools (90 per cent of the activities) and not comparable with the Chinese cultural centres. The Institutes are supposed to be run autonomously and receive support for the first three years (e.g. teachers and books).³⁶ Only a small number of cultural activities are organised by the

³¹ State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of The People's Republic of China website (in Chinese only): <http://www.sarft.gov.cn/>.

³² State Administration of Press and Publication of The People's Republic of China website (in Chinese only): <http://www.gapp.gov.cn/>.

³³ Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China website: <http://www.moe.edu.cn/>.

³⁴ Although the Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters report(s) to the Ministry of Education, it is/they are operating more and more independently from it.

³⁵ Hanban/Confucius Institute website: http://english.hanban.org/node_7719.htm.

³⁶ The headquarters of the Hanban/Confucius Institute in Beijing employ 150 people whose tasks are to draft policies to promote Chinese language internationally, support Chinese language programmes in foreign countries; and draft international Chinese teaching standards and develop language teaching materials. Apart from the Chinese language teachers, local personnel staff the Confucius Institutes in foreign countries – they are very free in determining their activities and the Hanban Headquarters is primarily interested in quantitative targets such as the number of students and the number of information evenings organised – are not concerned with the content of the language courses offered or the profile of the students.

Haban/Confucius Headquarters at central level, but this may change in the future. At the moment they have a centralised offer of performing arts tours (dance, theatre, etc.). Each Confucius Institute is responsible for its own cultural activities. For example in 2012 a Confucius Music Institute was set up in Denmark, which seems to indicate that Confucius Institutes are starting to have a greater role in promoting Chinese culture, which is going beyond language promotion and teaching.³⁷

The Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)³⁸ – the Department of Trade in Services of MOFCOM promotes trade exchanges with the cultural and creative sector of Europe. It has set up bilateral programmes among others with Germany and the UK to develop trade relationships with the copyright industries. It is also pressing for a joint programme with the EU on creative industries with a view to developing B2B and cross-licensing activities.³⁹

The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)⁴⁰ is also called the Chinese International Chamber of Commerce and organises trade delegations and exhibitions for Chinese companies abroad.

The Ministry of Communications⁴¹ has a Department for International Cooperation and plays an important role too.

In practice, the government continues to control the international activities of its cultural and creative sector. It oversees all exchanges and cooperation activities through a complex framework of regulations and administrative measures. The approval of national ministries is needed to carry out different types of activities. For example regulations on foreign investment (e.g. need to set up joint ventures with a Chinese company) import and screening quotas for films, content regulations, licences for publishing and distribution of cultural and creative works, etc.

³⁷ See at: <http://english.dkdm.dk/International/Music-Confucius-Institute/About-MCI>.

³⁸ Ministry of Commerce of The People's Republic of China website: <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/>.

³⁹ *Mapping the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU and China: A Working Paper in support to the development of an EU-China Cultural and Creative Industries' (CCIs) platform*. Brussels: KEA, p.31. Online. See at: <http://www.keanet.eu/en/mapping%20EU%20China.htm>.

⁴⁰ 'China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)', *China Council for the promotion of International Trade, China Chamber of International Commerce*, 5 January 2007. Online. Available at: http://english.ccpit.org/Contents/Channel_416/2007/0105/21880/content_21880.htm.

⁴¹ 'Ministry of Communications', *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal*. Online. Available at: http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/22/content_81617.htm.

Infrastructure in Foreign Countries

China has the following infrastructure in foreign countries to deal with culture in external relations:

- 80 Cultural Departments in its Embassies,⁴²
- 14 Chinese Cultural Centres (the Minister of Culture announced that there will be 50 centres by 2020),⁴³ and it is foreseen that a Cultural Centre will be opened in Brussels by the end of 2014 (next to DG EAC of the European Commission),
- 456 Confucius Institutes (1,000 by 2020), and
- 15 representative offices of CCPIT.⁴⁴

This increasing number of Confucius Institutes and Cultural Centres contrasts with the fact that in China itself the number of foreign national cultural institutes is restricted to one per country.

Provincial and local strategies/policies/approaches

Regional and local governments are entitled to engage in cultural cooperation with foreign authorities and cultural institutions. Large-scale events (e.g. cultural years and art festivals) are usually managed by government – the central and local governments cooperate to carry out these projects. Regional and local governments are increasingly interested in ‘creativity’ as a factor to build their international image. In the last decade they have taken an active role in setting up culture-orientated development strategies. Cities have their own policies to develop cultural exchanges with foreign countries and state-owned companies managing art and craft clusters are involved in foreign cultural missions. In particular, the major Chinese cities have welcomed the focus on the creative sectors and backed it with local policy plans to enhance culture and creativity. Beijing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Qingdao are becoming the leading ‘creative cities’ of China. Shenzhen and Shanghai, for instance, have acquired the label ‘UNESCO City of Design’, and are using culture and creativity to brand themselves internationally. Many Chinese cities also wish to join the UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network – covering key dimensions like literature, film, music, craft and folk art, design, media arts and gastronomy. Currently 5 out of the 42 cities that belong to the network are from China: Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Chengdu, and Hangzhou.

The local authorities of Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen also deal with the financing and selection of international projects.⁴⁵ They work in cooperation with ‘Creative Industry Leadership Groups’ (state-owned enterprises) to implement and sponsor large scale projects (like the

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China website: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zwjg/2490/2495/>.

⁴³ ‘Number of China Cultural Centers to reach 50 by 2020’, *People’s Daily Online*, 26 February 2014. Online. Available at: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/98649/8547189.html>.

⁴⁴ Hong Kong, the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Belgium, France, Mexico, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

⁴⁵ The City of Shanghai recently signed an agreement with Christie’s. The company can operate throughout China but will be based in Shanghai and pay taxes there.

International Cultural Industries Fair (ICIF) or the UNESCO City of Design initiative in Shenzhen). Large cultural groups (not necessarily state-owned) can also be nominated as ‘key cultural groups’ in order to invest in local cultural projects and act as local ‘Creative Industries Promotion Centres’.

Other areas where the regional and local governments are active include:

- Chinese town-twinning initiatives (see list of towns and sister cities in China);⁴⁶
- World Heritage List of UNESCO – 48 Chinese cultural sites are on the list.

⁴⁶ List of towns and sister cities in China: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_twin_towns_and_sister_cities_in_China.

Geographical priorities

China's priority countries for culture in external relations are in line with the foreign policy strategies of the government (both political and economic). The US is the first priority and the EU is the second. Japan follows at some distance. The bilateral cultural cooperation agreements signed by China are listed on the following website: http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_exchange/node_741.htm.

As is the case for most countries, economic relations and cultural cooperation with neighbouring states are of great importance to China. It is planning to build among others the Silk Road Economic Belt, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and strengthen infrastructure connectivity with neighbouring countries. It also wishes to negotiate free trade zones with South Korea and Australia and enter into regional economic partnerships. There are also Chinese minorities living in Asia (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) with an increasing demand to learn the Chinese language.

Examples of cultural relations with a number of priority countries and regions are provided below. The EU will be dealt with separately in the section of this report dealing with '[Cultural Relations with the EU: Realities and Expectations](#)'.

USA

China considers cultural relations to be a very important aspect of China-US relations aimed at maintaining peace and promoting common development and prosperity. The Chinese government encourages both sides to actively expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields. They believe that cooperation between the official cultural institutions is essential and will lay the foundations and framework for all types of cultural exchanges and cooperation. China and the USA signed in 2008 a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation, an agreement to allow the National Library of China to join the World Digital Library, and a training cooperation agreement for Chinese and American librarians.⁴⁷

American cultural institutions are more open to cultural cooperation than European ones according to a number of European experts in China. There are more cultural and academic exchanges between the US and China than between the EU and China. US museums (mostly private) organise more exhibitions on Chinese contemporary art than European ones (often public). Also more Chinese intellectuals and academics give lectures at American universities than Europeans and more Chinese students wish to study in the US than in Europe. The US cultural sector has an extended network in China and the Americans treat their Chinese counterparts as equals (although in some cases the Chinese resent the USA as a threat/competitor). Currently there are 60 Confucius

⁴⁷ Minister of Culture Cai Wu, *Address for the Congress of the National Committee, the U.S. Presidential Committee of Art and Humanities*, Washington, USA, 16 November 2008. Online. Available at: http://www.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/2013caiwuspeeches/content_492704.htm.

Institutes in the USA and the demand to open more institutes at American universities is still growing.

Asia

The following examples illustrate how China is improving its cultural relations with a number of Asian countries (some experts consider, however, that cultural cooperation with Asia is still not the real focus of the Chinese government).

ASEAN-China – the ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations was launched in 1996 and a few years later (in 2003) a [*Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity*](#) was signed at the 7th ASEAN-China Summit. It highlighted among others the importance of cultural exchanges and the need to improve cultural cooperation mechanisms. Two plans of action have been adopted in the meantime to implement the Joint Declaration: the [*ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action \(POA\) 2005-2010*](#) at the 8th ASEAN-China Summit in 2004 and its follow-up [*Plan of Action for the period of 2011-2015*](#) at the 13th ASEAN-China Summit in 2010. Culture was one of the eleven priority areas of these two plans of action.⁴⁸ To promote ASEAN-China cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, education and culture, the ASEAN-China Centre was thereafter set up in Beijing in 2011.⁴⁹ It also serves as a platform for better understanding, communication and cooperation through cultural exchanges and education. At the 16th ASEAN-China Summit in 2013 it was agreed to designate the year 2014 as the ‘ASEAN-China Cultural Exchange Year’. China also announced that it would provide 15,000 government scholarships to young students from the ASEAN Member States in the next three to five years starting from 2014.⁵⁰

China-Japan-South Korea – In recent years, China-Japan-South Korea cultural cooperation has made considerable progress and they are a key component of their partnership, according to Chinese Minister of Culture, Cai Wu.⁵¹ Bilateral exchanges and cooperative relations in the fields of traditional culture and art are now very close between China, Japan and South Korea. The three countries have established BESETO (an acronym of Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo), a mechanism of regular exchanges, in fields such as fine arts, calligraphy, and Chinese opera. They have also set up the ASEAN 10+3 training seminars for the cultural sector. Cooperation is taking place in the area of cultural heritage protection and there are plans to set up an intangible cultural heritage protection centre. Several China-Japan-South Korea Culture Industry Forums have also been held. For the future China says it is open to the proposal of South Korea to cooperate on exploring the feasibility of non-

⁴⁸ See point 3.4 of the *Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2011-2015)*. Online. Available at: <http://www.asean-china-center.org/english/download/PlanofAction.pdf>.

⁴⁹ The Centre is a one-stop information centre. See the ASEAN-China Centre website: <http://www.asean-china-center.org/>.

⁵⁰ *Joint Statement of the 16th ASEAN-China Summit on Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership*. Online. Available at: http://www.miti.gov.my/cms/documentstorage/com.tms.cms.document.Document_a58f0438-c0a81573-26b77801-34c88e58/23rd%20ASEAN%20Summit%20Joint%20Statement%20of%20the%2016th%20ASEAN%20China%20Summit.pdf

⁵¹ He attended the 2nd Conference of China, Japan and South Korea Culture Ministers in December 2008 in South Korea. See at: http://www.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/2013caiwuspeeches/content_492705_2.htm.

traditional cultural cooperation (activities not be confined to enhancing cultural identity) and discuss plans for example for cooperation in ecological culture, resource sharing and joint research.

The Minister of Culture recently expressed China's desire to improve cooperation with the Asian region at the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF)⁵² held in Hong Kong in November 2013. He mentioned that China hoped that the Asian countries could deepen cultural exchanges through a widening of its dialogue platforms and cooperation in literature translation.⁵³ Under the theme of 'Literature and Cultural Vibrancy', cultural ministers and senior officials from ten Asian countries came together to promote the co-operation and development of culture and the arts.

Africa

Africa has also become an important economic partner for China. China has intensified its relations with Africa during the last decade. The Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Tanzania in March 2013 and declared China's wish to become 'bosom-friends' with Africa and foster people-to-people exchanges. He announced that China intended to strengthen cultural and youth exchanges in the future and presented a plan to provide training to 30,000 Africans in the next three years, including 18,000 scholarships (China's Africa Talent Programme).⁵⁴ The President further highlighted (in his speech at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar-es-Salaam) the growing popularity of Chinese TV-series in Africa and their impact on Sino-African friendship – they were playing a vital role in understanding each other's cultures.⁵⁵

The journalist Li Lianxing, who writes for the China Daily newspaper in Africa, has further pushed the message that Africa and China need to collaborate in the cultural field. He reported that 'the trade and economic ties between China and Africa are making great strides, but sometimes misunderstandings between the two distinct cultures were hampering relations. In a move similar to what Hollywood had done for the US, China now hopes that its films and TV shows could bridge those cultural gaps and further develop collaboration with Africa. Two hit Chinese TV shows were dubbed into Swahili, the national language of Tanzania and aired during primetime. "Father's Wishes" and "Mother's Glorious Days" are stories about the everyday lives of ordinary people who have experienced the great changes in China over the past few decades.' He also mentioned that the broadcasting of Chinese TV shows in Africa should not be seen as a tool of the Chinese government

⁵² Launched in 2003, ACCF is one of the Hong Kong government's key initiatives to foster regional cultural co-operation, while sharing good practices and promoting culture and the arts.

⁵³ 'Chinese Cultural Minister hopes to strengthen regional cooperation', *ChinaCulture.org*, 2 December 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.chinaculture.org/info/2013-12/02/content_498028.htm.

⁵⁴ 'Video: Xi Jinping delivers speech in Tanzania', *People's Daily Online*, 25 March 2013. Online. Available at: <http://english.people.com.cn/90883/8181964.html>.

⁵⁵ Wang Mengru, 'Chinese TV Series well-received in Tanzania', *China.org.cn*, 8 April 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2013-04/08/content_28475765.htm.

to spread its 'soft power', but as means for African audiences to learn more about contemporary China and how it is changing.⁵⁶

There are however no real specific cultural projects with Africa apart from student exchanges and the audio-visual industry is merely being used to improve China's image and create a better understanding of the China in Africa. Some experts commented that it had only been by chance that the Chinese government had discovered that African people also liked to watch Chinese soap operas on television (South Korean TV programmes are more popular).

Relations with cultural institutions and civil society

In China, most cultural institutions and CCIs are state-owned. Cultural (grassroots) operators are thus not involved in the formulation of strategies and policies for culture in external relations.⁵⁷ China's public cultural institutions on the other hand cooperate with the government on a regular basis in implementing international cultural exchange projects. In recent years the Ministry of Culture as well as some local governments have been working more together with private actors and independent artists – they have not only invited them to take part in large-scale international exchange activities but also offered subsidies to the participants.⁵⁸ At provincial level, certain public stakeholders stated that the diversity of cultural expressions is becoming an important policy issue for the Chinese government as well as the respect for artists and their works. They refer to 'the new spring of culture and artists' and welcome more international exchanges with foreign artists.

Several cultural bodies that engage in international activities and audiences are briefly described below:

China Radio International (CRI) – the state-owned international radio broadcaster. It has an English-language broadcasting platform called NEWS Plus and broadcasts more than 600 hours of programming around the world each day. CRI has a global audience of nearly 3 billion people.

China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC)⁵⁹ – is composed of 46 associations representing writers and artists at provincial, regional and local level. Its main task is to follow the basic guidelines of the CPC and comply with the principle of 'serving the people and serving socialism'. Its member associations have publishing offices and publish around 40 newspapers and magazines. CFLAC also organises international exchanges with foreign writers and artists to promote friendship and cooperation between Chinese and foreign cultural organisations.

⁵⁶ Li Lianxing, 'Chinese culture on show in Africa', *ChinaCulture.org*, 12 November 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.chinaculture.org//info/2013-11/12/content_494462.htm.

⁵⁷ Helmut K. Anheier and Bernhard Lorentz (eds), *Bridging the trustdivide*, op. cit., p.41.

⁵⁸ Questionnaire completed by Mr Chen Ping, Cultural Attaché, Chinese Embassy in Berlin, Germany.

⁵⁹ 'China Federation of Literary and Art Circles', *ChinaCulture.org*. Online. Available at: http://www1.chinaculture.org/library/2008-01/16/content_26919.htm.

China International Culture (Exchange) Association (CICA)⁶⁰ – is a non-profit organisation dedicated to people-to-people cultural exchange and cooperation under the guidance and support of the Ministry of Culture. It has organised a large amount of international culture exchanges and cooperation project such as arts performances, exhibitions, international cultural research and forums. CICA also strives to contribute positively to introducing Chinese culture abroad. Some of their major activities are: the Oriental Cultural Studies, the China International Youth Arts Week, the Oriental Express Youth Artists Recommendation Plan, and the China Culture Summer Camp.

China Scholarship Council (CSC)⁶¹ – is a non-profit organisation connected to the Ministry of Education. It organises study visits to promote scientific, technological, economic and cultural cooperation between China and other countries to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding and support world peace and the socialist modernization in China.

According to the Director of the National Office of the Goethe-Institut in China, the ‘promotion of Chinese culture in the world’ is central to its strategy, but is pursued in ways that differs from the approach of European cultural institutes, which do not promote their own national cultures for their own sake and benefit but seek rather to foster dialogue and cultural cooperation abroad – including critical self-reflection. They go beyond language teaching and are open to innovative and experimental formats not only addressed to academic circles but also civil society, cultural operators and artists.

Cultural events

Many cultural events have taken place in China or involved China abroad in recent years. A selection is presented below. EU-specific programmes have been listed in the section of this report dealing with [‘Cultural Relations with the EU: Realities and Expectations’](#) and [Annex II](#).

- **China Shanghai International Arts Festival** – annual international arts festival organised by the Shanghai Municipal People's Government and sponsored by the Ministry of Culture. The festival aims to absorb the best cultures around the world, promote Chinese traditional arts, and enhance cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world.⁶²
- **Expo 2010 Shanghai China** –EU Member States presented aspects of their national cultures in China.⁶³
- **International trade fairs** –the Chinese government organises a large number of trade fairs to promote international cooperation. ‘All of these international fairs attract hundreds of thousands

⁶⁰ China International Culture Association website: http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_association/2004-11/15/content_63234.htm.

⁶¹ China Scholarship Council website: <http://en.csc.edu.cn>.

⁶² China Shanghai International Arts Festival: <http://www.artsbird.com/>.

⁶³ World Expo Shanghai 2010 website: <http://www.expo2010.cn/expo/expoenglish/oe/es/index.html>.

of Chinese visitors eager to learn about creative jobs and cultural traditions from China and abroad.⁶⁴ Some of the best known are:

- **International Cultural Industries Fair (ICIF)** in Shenzhen – it attracts every year 450,000 visitors and 2,000 exhibitors and is supported by the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Culture. The fair takes place in May and has been dedicated to Culture and Creative Industries for the last ten years.⁶⁵
 - **China International Fair of Trade in Services (CIFTIS)** established by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.⁶⁶
 - **Beijing Design Week (BJDW)** is held every year and organised by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Culture and the Beijing Municipal People's Government.⁶⁷
 - **Macao Fair (MIF)** in Trade and Investment focuses on the creative industries aiming to attract animation and audiovisual production companies in a new development zone and looking to diversify its casino economy.⁶⁸
- **International Frankfurt Book Fair** – in 2009 China was the guest of honour. In the field of book and copyright trade China now cultivates contacts with nearly 200 countries and territories. It has signed agreements on the translation of classical works with 35 countries. In 2008, over 270,000 books were published in China and 17,000 books were imported⁶⁹ and by 2011 the number of books published reached 370,000 – more than any other country in the world.
 - **Humanism in China** – Exhibition of Contemporary Photography from China, shown in China, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. It was organised by Huangshan Wang, the Director of the Guangdong Museum of Art.⁷⁰
 - **'Cultural' Years and Art Festivals with EU Member States:**
 - 2003-2005 Sino-French Culture Years
 - 2004 Sino-Irish Culture Festival
 - 2005 Amsterdam China Art Festival
 - 2006 Year of Italian Culture in China

⁶⁴ 'In the mood for love', *KEA Newsletter n°33*, June 2012. Online. Available at: http://www.keanet.eu/news/independent%20voice%2033_china_en.pdf.

⁶⁵ Shenzhen International Cultural Industry Fair website: <http://en.cnci.gov.cn/>.

⁶⁶ China Beijing International Fair for Trade in Services website: <http://www.ciftis.org/en/>.

⁶⁷ Beijing Design Week website: <http://www.bjdw.org/cn/>.

⁶⁸ Macao International Trade and Investment Fair website: <http://www.mif.com.mo/mif2012/en/intro.php>.

⁶⁹ 'Chinas Auftritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse – ein Rückblick', *CRIonline*. Online. Available at (in German): <http://german.cri.cn/1833/2009/10/22/1s124653.htm>.

⁷⁰ 'Humanism in China', *Staatsgalerie Stuttgart*. Online. Available at (in German): <http://www.staatsgalerie.de/ausstellung/rueckblick/china>.

'Humanism in China', *Fotoe – Chinese stock photography*. Online. Available at: <http://www.fotoe.com/exhibition/renben/summarize.html> (in Chinese) and at <http://www.fotoe.com/english/topic/900086> (in English).

- 2007 Year of Spain in China and China Art Festival in Spain
- 2007-2010 Germany and China (a series of German intercultural events in China)
- 2008 Year of Greek Culture in China and China Art Festival in Rome
- 2009 Europalia China Art Festival in Belgium
- 2010 Year of Chinese Culture in Italy and China Art Festival in Sweden
- 2012 Year of Chinese Culture in Germany.

A number of interesting case studies can be found in the *Europe-China Cultural Compass*.⁷¹

Funding

An annual budget of approximately 240 million RMB (28 million euros) is allocated for the international activities of the Ministry of Culture. This budget has not changed significantly in the last five years and does not include the amounts other ministries, provinces and municipalities spend on such activities.

Funding of cultural events has undergone reforms in recent years. The changes started with the 11th Five Year Plan (2006-2011), when guidelines were introduced by the Ministry of Culture to reduce state subsidies and transform their state-owned cultural institutions and companies into market-oriented and competitive businesses. Although the Ministry of Culture is responsible for cultural policy and the Ministry of Commerce for trade and foreign investment policy, cultural operators do not deal with them directly. It is the task of the provincial and local governments to carry out China's cultural policy. Large cultural projects are no longer organised by governmental organisations but large state-owned companies (e.g. the Beijing Gehua Cultural Development Group or the Poly Group).⁷²

The budget for culture and the arts has increased in recent years (annual growth rates between 10 and 20 per cent) according to the Ministry of Finance and in 2010 the budget was approximately 30 billion RMB (3.5 billion euros).⁷³ The central government is responsible for less than one tenth of the total cultural budget and the provinces, directly governed cities, municipalities, special economic zones, villages and districts receive the rest. State-owned foundations, such as the Beijing Cultural Development Foundation (BCDF) and the Shanghai Cultural Development Foundation (SCDF), manage public subsidies.⁷⁴ These subsidies (in the form of direct payments or loans) are only available for individuals or organisations registered in Beijing or Shanghai. There is little funding for foreign project partners.

⁷¹ *Europe-China Cultural Compass*, Beijing: Goethe-Institut/EUNIC, 2011. Online. Available at: http://site.eunic-online.eu/sites/eunic-online.eu/files/EN_Europe%20China%20Cultural%20Compass_E-Book_2011%282%29.pdf.

⁷² Beijing Gehua Cultural Development Group website: <http://www.gehua.com/>, and Beijing Poly Theatre Management website: <http://www.polytheatre.com/>.

⁷³ Tobias Zuser, 'How the Cultural Sector Works in China', *Europe-China Cultural Compass*, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Beijing Culture Development Foundation (BCDF) website: <http://www.bcdf.org.cn/>, and Shanghai Culture Development Foundation (SCDF) website: <http://shcdf.eastday.com/eastday/whjjh/index.htm>.

The Chinese government does not have a specific budget line for cultural cooperation with the EU and its funding is 'project-based'. Also here the Ministry of Culture is not directly involved in the funding of cultural events and it is usually the governmental bodies that funds cultural projects. The Chinese government normally prefers the EU to fund EU-China cultural cooperation activities. This position is a result of the foreign policies strategy of the EU in the 1990s when it was willing to finance many EU-China cooperation projects. The EU should review its funding strategy and deal with the Chinese government as equal partners; according to a number of European experts in China there is room for such a change. The Chinese authorities are ready for it, but the EU has first to ascertain exactly where the interests of the Chinese lie and which projects they are willing to co-fund.

Fundraising and commercial sponsorship are not widely used to fund cultural activities. Large-scale projects usually have a public sponsor such as a city or a university. In recent years the number of private foundations for the arts has increased slightly. Examples are the Minsheng Art Fund⁷⁵ founded by Minsheng Bank, which gives awards to outstanding contemporary artists and sponsors their exhibitions around the world - others are the Modern Chinese Art Foundation and the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Minsheng Art Museum website: <http://www.minshengart.com/>.

⁷⁶ Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation website: <http://www.rhfamilyfoundation.org/>.

CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE EU: REALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

China and individual EU Member States

China's general strategy towards European countries has been outlined in its Policy for External Cultural Exchange, where it indicates that it wishes to 'further develop cultural relations with countries from Western Europe (...). Countries in these regions possess advanced economy and higher-level culture and arts, and have accumulated rich experience in the operation and management of the cultural cause. It will be of great benefit to China's culture construction to develop cultural exchanges with these countries and to embrace their excellent cultural achievements. On the other hand, cultural exchanges will help people of these countries recognise China and eliminate the misunderstanding caused by some false reports used by the West.'⁷⁷

China has signed bilateral cultural cooperation agreements with most EU Member States, notably with Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Other bilateral cultural cooperation programmes exist for Denmark, Hungary and Poland.⁷⁸

On trade level it can be noted that in 2004 and 2007 the export of cultural services from the EU27 to China increased, growing from 31 million euros in 2004 to 49 million euros (+58 per cent). However, China is a less important importer of creative goods and services. It is ranked 8th and accounts for about 4 per cent of the world total. In relation to the EU, the country represented only 2.9 per cent of the EU27's cultural trade abroad in 2004 and only 5.1 per cent in 2007.⁷⁹

Cultural exchanges with China have also increased in the last decade according to Chen Ping of the Ministry of Culture in an interview published in the EU-China Cultural Compass, but he wished that 'the Europeans would listen more to what the Chinese were saying and make it a priority to understand Chinese culture, Chinese society and the state of China's economic development to avoid misunderstandings. Treating each other as equals was the basis of any dialogue between the EU and China'.⁸⁰ He also believed that 'the Chinese people knew more about Europe than Europeans did about China'.

⁷⁷ 'Dedicated to the Co-Development of Chinese Culture and World Culture', *Speech by Ms. Meng Xiaosi, deputy minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China, at the 2nd International Conference of Culture and Development in Cuba*. Online. Available at: http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_podium/2003-09/24/content_31704.htm.

⁷⁸ Judith Staines, *Mapping Asia-Europe cultural cooperation*, ASEF & On The Move, July 2010. Online. Available at: <http://culture360.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/MappingAsiaEurope.pdf>.

⁷⁹ KEA European Affairs, *Mapping the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU and China*, IPR2 Programme, 2011.

⁸⁰ *Europe-China Cultural Compass*, op. cit.

China-EU relations

Since 2007 cultural relations between the European Union and China have advanced considerably, albeit only on EU-China policy dialogue level. A lot still needs to be done to involve cultural operators and entrepreneurs on both sides. The relations are officially anchored on the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention.

China is one of the ten strategic partners of the EU and a geographical priority for the EU and its Member States. China is now the EU's second trading partner behind the United States and the EU is China's biggest trading partner.⁸¹ The EU-China Strategic Partnership is based on the EU-China Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 1985.⁸² Annual EU-China summits and dialogues are part of the framework that has been set up for China and the EU to deal with each other on a regular basis. There are three high level dialogues and more than fifty sectorial dialogues.⁸³ Culture is part of the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue (HPPD), which was set up during the 14th EU-China Summit in 2012. The HPPD forms the third pillar of EU-China relations, alongside the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue and the High-Level Strategic Dialogue. The first HPPD Joint Declaration was signed by EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and the Chinese State Counsellor Liu Yandong on 18 April 2012 in Brussels to reinforce existing cooperation on people-to-people issues, including the policy dialogue on education, culture, multilingualism and youth.⁸⁴ At the end of May 2014 the EU Commissioner will attend the second meeting of the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue in Beijing. This meeting will focus on education, as according to a Chinese government representative the EU has more funding for educational activities (Erasmus+ programme) than cultural cooperation.

From 2007 to 2012 EU-China cultural cooperation had advanced at political and sectorial dialogue level.⁸⁵ A policy dialogue was set up in 2009 at the Cultural Industries Forum in Shenzhen,⁸⁶ following the signing of a Joint Declaration between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Culture in 2007 to reinforce their cultural cooperation.⁸⁷ The importance of the cultural dimension of EU-China relations was reaffirmed at the 12th EU-China Summit in 2009, where Premier

⁸¹ According to DG Trade of the European Commission, EU-China trade has increased dramatically in recent years. China is the EU's biggest source of imports by far, and has also become one of the EU's fastest growing export markets. The EU has also become China's biggest source of imports. China and Europe now trade well over 1 billion € a day. For more information see: *Facts and figures on EU-China trade*. Online. Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/september/tradoc_144591.pdf.

⁸² The general framework for the EU-China strategic partnership is laid down in the *EU-China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities* document of 2006. One of its objectives is to negotiate a comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) to improve trade and investment relations. The negotiations started in January 2007 and will replace the EC-China Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement of 1985.

⁸³ *EU-China Dialogue Architecture, main elements*. Online. Available at: <http://www.euecran.eu/pdf/EU-China%20Dialogue%20Architecture%20231112.pdf>.

⁸⁴ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc/china/joint12_en.pdf.

⁸⁵ General Information on the EU Cooperation with China and its Policy Dialogue. See at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/culture-and-external-relations/cooperation-with-china_en.htm.

⁸⁶ European Commission, *Policy dialogue launched at first-ever EU-China Cultural Industries Forum* (press release), Brussels, 15 May 2009. Online. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-09-796_en.htm?locale=en.

⁸⁷ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/joint_declaration_with_china.pdf.

Wen Jiabao and President José Manuel Barroso agreed to organise an EU-China Forum on Culture. The forum was organised in 2010 and brought together leading intellectuals from both the EU and China and was one of the supporting events of the 13th EU-China Summit.⁸⁸ The next High Level Cultural Forum took place in 2011 and dealt with cities and urbanisation ('Inventing Cities') and launched the EU-China 2011 Year of Youth aimed at encouraging intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between young people.⁸⁹

The HPPD mentioned above is a platform for dialogue, discussion and the exchange of ideas. One of its first concrete outputs was the 2012 EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue with 194 activities in the field of culture, audio-visual, youth, research and multilingualism. These activities were not co-financed by the EU or China, but they were able to carry the logo/label of the 2012 EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue if they complied with its objectives. A new *Joint Declaration on EU-China Cultural Cooperation* was adopted by Commissioner Vassiliou and Chinese Minister for Culture Cai Wu on the occasion of the Closing Ceremony of the EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue.⁹⁰ Both stressed their particular interest in strengthening cooperation in the fields of cultural industries, heritage and contemporary art (and use existing funding instruments). At the 16th EU-China Summit in November 2013, a strategic agenda for cooperation was released that also covered the cultural sector. It reiterated the aforementioned areas of cooperation and encouraged China and EU Member States to establish cultural centres and boost long-term and stable cooperation between major cultural institutions and between important art festivals. It also encouraged the learning of the Chinese language and EU languages in the education systems of the EU and China.⁹¹

Despite all these positive political declarations, however, few European funding instruments or programmes exist for the purpose of increasing cultural relations with China. The Culture Programme (2007-2013) had a special action for projects with third countries and in 2007 China was the selected third country (together with India). Ten projects were financed based on cooperation among partners of at least three EU Member States and China; the majority of the projects were run by applicants from France and the UK.⁹² The Media Mundus Programme also provided funds to reinforce cooperation among independent audio-visual professionals. The new Creative Europe Programme, which replaces the Culture Programme and the MEDIA (Mundus) Programme from

⁸⁸ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/culture-and-external-relations/high-level-cultural-forum_en.htm.

⁸⁹ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/focus/2011-eu-china-year-of-youth_en.htm.

⁹⁰ *Joint Declaration on EU-China Cultural Cooperation*, Beijing, 30 November 2012. Online. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/vassiliou/headlines/press-releases/2012/12/docs/20121205-joint-declaration-final-del.pdf.

⁹¹ See on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China website: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/2649/t1101804.shtml>.

⁹² *Programme Culture 2007-2013 – Strand 1.3 'Special actions. Cultural cooperation with and in third countries', Call for Proposals EACEA 21/2007, List of selected projects*. Online. Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2007/selection/documents/selection_strand_13_2007/eacea_21_2007_results_en.pdf.

2014, opens up new international opportunities, markets and audiences for European cultural operators.⁹³

The European Commission has also carried out a number of policy activities under the EU-China Trade Project (EUCTP II), a project to support China's economic, trade and investment reform – the Chinese government is the main beneficiary.⁹⁴ The EUCTP II included the cultural and creative industries in its services component for the period 2010-2015. A number of meetings and study visits have been organised covering topics and sectors such as the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention, the publishing sector, and policies for the development of CCI. The annual work programme for the cultural and creative industries for the period March 2014 to February 2015 will consist of three main activities: 1) seminar on Film Industry Promotion Law; 2) study visit (in the EU) on Role of Culture and Creativity for Regional And Local Development; and 3) seminar on Developing Cultural Product and Services Platforms. Policy activities can also be financed through the Policy Dialogue Support Facility (PDSF); such as a mapping of EU-China stakeholders in the fields of cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries and contemporary art.

A real drawback has been that no specific funding programmes exist to support cooperation with the European cultural and creative industries (CCIs). The latter were already identified as an area for EU-China cooperation at the first EU-China Cultural Industries Forum held in May 2009 during the International Cultural Industries Fair (ICIF) in Shenzhen. In 2011 and 2012, ICIF organised together with the Chinese Ministry for Commerce and the Ministry of Culture, two forums during the ICIF trade fair in Shenzhen to promote EU-China cooperation for the CCIs. The EU-China IPR2 programme contributed by financing the first mapping of the cultural and creative sectors in the EU and China – A Working Paper in support to the development of an EU-China Cultural and Creative Industries' platform⁹⁵ as well as Working Paper on IP licensing as a strategic business tool for EU and Chinese CCIs.⁹⁶ In 2013 ICIF received a Delegation of Ministers of Culture from a number of Central and Eastern European countries.

Yet developing relations in this sector has not received the attention it deserves. DG Trade and DG Enterprise, in particular, have not been willing to acknowledge the export and investment potential of the cultural and creative industries or facilitate their market access in China, whereas DG EAC is understandably focused on non-commercial cultural policy issues. DG Trade, DG Market and DG Enterprise have been too concerned with the problems of inadequate copyright legislation and the lack of effective enforcement in China; they have not tackled the investment needs of the sector. Negotiations have just been launched for an EU-China Investment Agreement, which aims at facilitating investments in both directions, including in the field of CCIs. It is to be hoped that deeper

⁹³ 'Calls for proposals and tenders', *European Commission Creative Europe*. Online. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm.

⁹⁴ 'Creative & Cultural Industries', *EU-China Trade Project (II)*. Online. Available at: <http://www.euctp.org/index.php/en/services/creative-cultural-industries.html>.

⁹⁵ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/mapping-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors-in-the-eu-and-china_en.htm.

⁹⁶ KEA European Affairs, *Culture and Creative Industries: IP licensing as a strategic business tool for EU and China*, IPR 2, May 2011. Online. Available at: http://www.ipr2.org/storage/IP_licensing_as_a_strategic_business_tool_for_EU_and_China_CCI-EN1062.pdf.

cooperation among different DGs of the European Commission such as DG EAC, DG Trade, DG Market, DG Enterprise and DG Connect as well as the EEAS can lead to promotion of the interests in China of the European cultural and creative industries.

EU Member States Expert Group On Culture And External Relations

In March 2012, the European Commission set up an expert group to reflect on a common EU strategy for culture in external relations (in line with the Council *Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014*).⁹⁷ The expert group was composed of representatives of both the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of Culture and co-chaired by the European Commission and the European External Actions Service. It was jointly decided to take China as a test case to propose a strategic vision for the future of EU-China cultural relations as well as contribute to the development of a more general EU strategy on culture and external relations.⁹⁸ In November 2012 the expert group presented its report entitled *United in Diversity* that proposed a strategy for EU-China cultural relations. It identified the areas where EU initiatives and cooperation could contribute to supporting or complementing the activities of the Member States. It came to the following conclusions:⁹⁹

While bilateral cultural relations will remain fundamental, there is a need for closer cooperation to create a stronger impact. Seeking synergies and pooling individual initiatives can help achieve a greater scale and critical mass of activities. Economies of scale will also allow to be done within the current financial constraints.

Projecting a more coherent image of the EU in China can improve the way the EU cultural potential and the richness of its diversity is perceived by the Chinese public, thereby strengthening the EU image and the values it embodies.

Strengthening information sharing and networking among Member States and European cultural stakeholders can help better identify common interests and challenges, as well as mobilise appropriate expertise more effectively.

Mutual interests and opportunities can potentially arise in all cultural and creative sectors and therefore encourage a flexible and open approach to the development of EU-China cultural relations. Special emphasis was placed on the need for both sides to support the development of professional skills and build capacity in the cultural and creative sectors through training, peer learning, the exchange of best practices and networking.

Under the Irish Presidency in May 2013 the report was the basis for the policy debate of the Council of Culture Ministers on the topic ‘culture as a soft policy option in the EU external relations’.

⁹⁷ Council of the European Union, *Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 – Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the member states, meeting within the Council*, 3,046th Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 18-19 November 2010. Online. Available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117795.pdf.

⁹⁸ The EU-China strategic partnership has evolved with the establishment of the High-Level People to-People Dialogue in 2012 (the third pillar of EU-China relations).

⁹⁹ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/summary-expert-group-external-relations_en.pdf.

The debate highlighted the need to give fuller recognition to the role of culture in the EU external relations as well as expectations for concrete actions to be taken in EU-China cultural relations.

Priority shifts of the Chinese government in Europe

The EU is currently China's most important economic partner, but in recent years its relations with the EU have suffered a setback due to the on-going economic crisis in the EU and the cancellation of the 11th EU-China Summit in 2008 following a planned visit of the Dalai Lama to the EU.¹⁰⁰ At the April 2013 International Conference on EU-China Soft Diplomacy in Brussels, the Chinese Ambassador noted that the recent official visit of Lady Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, to China had been seen by the Chinese as a 'a new starting point' for high level EU-China relations.¹⁰¹

The Euro crisis has had a serious impact on how China views and approaches the EU and its Member States. At a seminar on 'The Dwarfing of Europe? A Dialogue between Brazil, India, China and Europe' organised by the European Cultural Foundation in May 2013 in Amsterdam, Dr Hongjian Cui of the China Institute of International Studies in Beijing mentioned that the Chinese government was now focusing more on the individual EU Member States or groups of countries rather than the EU institutions.¹⁰² Owing to the economic crisis, many EU Member States had started to 're-nationalise' and a number of western European countries were no longer able to invest as much as they did before in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This made the CEE countries very receptive to investments from China. What also made them attractive to China was the fact that they did not depict China as a 'threat' as most Western European countries do. The Chinese government is satisfied with the results of the EU-China political, trade and people to people high level dialogues set up with the EU institutions and it now wishes to replicate similar dialogues with the CEE countries.

The shift of focus from the 'old' Europe to the CEE was also highlighted at the International Conference on EU-Chinese Soft Diplomacy by Dr. Song of the Tongji University of Shanghai. She referred to the new Chinese Public Diplomacy strategy towards Central and Eastern Europe and outlined that the government was now focusing its European relations on the former socialist/communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. According to Dr. Tong there was a significant lack of knowledge and information about China in these countries that needed to be overcome. A short-term goal was providing support to Chinese enterprises to allow them to enter CEE markets.

In the cultural sphere China is focusing on the CEE as well and wishes to increase cultural exchanges, promote the Chinese language, foster 'inter-city' diplomacy, and boost tourism to improve the public opinion's stand towards China. This can be witnessed by the announcement by

¹⁰⁰ Ian Traynor, 'China cancels EU summit over Dalai Lama visit', *The Guardian*, 27 November 2008. Online. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/27/china-dalai-lama-nicholas-sarkozy>.

¹⁰¹ Lady Ashton had stated that it had been 'a moment to renew ties, take stock of events in the world and assess how we can best move forward and work together. The world needs more stability and our leadership – in areas of mutual interest where we can make a difference through joint efforts – can be a significant positive force in this respect.'

¹⁰² Interview in the margins of the ECF seminar.

the former Premier Wen Jiabao in April 2013 of a series of projects to push forward cooperation between China and CEE countries. Cultural cooperation topped this list according to CCTV News and Chinese officials stated that cross-culture exchange and cooperation between China and CEE countries have proven to be the most effective means to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding.

From 14 to 19 May 2013, a Delegation of 16 Ministers of Culture from CEE travelled to China. They attended a forum on cultural cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries in Beijing. More high-level meetings are expected. The CCTV news reported that the Chinese Culture Minister Cai Wu had praised cultural cooperation between China and CEE and mentioned that 'Cultural cooperation between China and CEE countries has strong support from the highest level on both sides. A cultural exchange platform has been formed and more in-depth communication is anticipated. Our joint efforts are needed to develop creative cultural cooperation.' After the forum a small number of Cultural Ministers of CEE attended the 9th International Cultural Industries Fair (ICIF) in Shenzhen.

EU Delegation in Beijing

The EU Delegation in China holds regular meetings with cultural counsellors of the Embassies of the EU Member States based in Beijing as well as with the EUNIC Cluster (as an observer). They are engaged in joint cultural activities, for example EU Film Festivals, EU Olympic Photo Book Exhibition, Encounters with Europe Photo Book, etc. A full list of the cultural programme and activities of the EU Delegation can be found in [Annex II](#). The Press and Information Section also exchanges information as well as best practices with the representatives of the Member States to promote the EU among Chinese people.

One of the recommendations of the EU Expert Group on Culture and External Relations – China (see [above](#)) was to appoint a cultural focal point at the EU Delegation in Beijing so as to ensure that culture could play a more notable role in EU-China relations. In their opinion the cultural contact point could facilitate stakeholders' coordination, gathering and sharing of information as well as joint approaches vis-à-vis the Chinese authorities on issues of common interest for the EU Member States.

In the meantime, a mixed DG EAC/DG HOME post has been created in the EU Delegation in Beijing. From July 2014 on the Commission official will share his 'DG EAC' time between education, culture/cultural diplomacy and youth. DG EAC credits have also been allocated to recruit a local agent for one year to support the DG EAC/HOME official seconded from Brussels. It is disappointing that the official will only devote a limited part of his time to culture; this may be insufficient to kick-start a new EU strategy for culture in China.

Relations with foreign cultural institutions/centres/NGOs

EUNIC Cluster

The EUNIC Cluster is composed of the Austrian Cultural Forum, the British Council China, the Instituto Cervantes, the [Danish Cultural Institute](#), the [Institut français de Chine](#), the [Goethe-Institut](#), the [Istituto Italiano di Cultura](#) and the [Délégation Wallonie Bruxelles en Chine](#). Its associate members are the [Embassy of Greece](#), the [Embassy of Hungary](#), the [Embassy of Ireland](#), the [Embassy of Poland](#), the [Embassy of Romania](#) and the [Embassy of the Netherlands](#). Under the previous Presidency of the cluster (Eric Messerschmidt of the Danish Cultural Institute) the following three projects were among others carried out:

- International Conference on ‘Curating Festivals’,
- Symposium on ‘New Digital Strategies for Promoting Literature’, and
- Architecture Biennale Shenzhen.

Unfortunately cooperation between the EUNIC Cluster and the Chinese Ministry of Culture is not very effective, according to a number of European cultural operators in China. The Ministry of Culture does not consider EUNIC to be a valid counterpart to discuss European issues and it also does not recognise some of its members such as the Danish Cultural Institute (considered to be a private company). The Ministry of Culture prefers to work with the EU Delegation and the European Commission.

European-Chinese Cultural Dialogue (EUNIC and CNAA)

The European-Chinese Cultural Dialogue is organised and financed by EUNIC and the Chinese National Academy of Art (CNAA) and its partners. It was set up a number of years ago as a reaction to the limited scope and scale of the official policy dialogue between the EU institutions and the Chinese government. Although some Member States had already managed to develop strong bilateral cultural programmes with China, EUNIC considered that more needed to be done to make the EU as an entity more visible on the Chinese cultural scene. The dialogue brings together intellectuals, cultural practitioners and cultural policy makers from Europe and China to strengthen cultural cooperation and develop people-to-people relations. The first dialogue took place in Beijing in 2008, followed by Copenhagen (2009), Shanghai (2010), Luxembourg (2011), and Xi’an (2013). The sixth edition will take place in October 2014 in Bucharest and focus on exploring the role and value of well designed public spaces in Europe and China and how they can contribute to well-being and community building in cities. More information on previous sessions of European-Chinese Dialogue can be found under www.eunic-online.eu/china-cultural-dialogue.

Another initiative of the EUNIC Cluster was the launch of the ‘EU-China Cultural Compass’, a comprehensive manual to support cultural cooperation between the EU and China, including a range of perspectives from Chinese and European stakeholders.¹⁰³ According to EUNIC, this book was to

¹⁰³ *Europe-China Cultural Compass*, op. cit.

make a major contribution to mutual understanding and facilitate future exchange, although some stakeholders have stated that this has not been the case and a more long-term approach is needed to improve the relations between Europe and China.

Chinese perceptions of the added value of a potential EU strategy for culture in external relations

The Preparatory Action did not include a mission to China. However, the National Office of the Goethe-Institut China, the Presidency of the EUNIC China Cluster and KEA, carried out a number of consultation meetings with public and private stakeholders (see [Annex IV](#)); the views expressed by both Chinese and European stakeholders on the added value on an EU strategy for culture in external relations are summarised below.

Chinese Government

Consultations were held with the **representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a major Province in China**, as it was not possible to receive official statements from the national MoC and MFA on cultural policy other than the published ones or only after a lengthy process involving different levels of the political hierarchy. These interviews indicated that there was no thought-out strategy. The officials merely outlined elements in the official documents and indicated that these were also the areas that should be covered in an EU strategy for culture in external relations. They thought that there was a major need to strengthen cooperation with the cultural and creative industries sector of the EU – as well as collaboration in the following three areas: the transfer of knowledge with respect to the development of innovative products; access to markets in the EU; and management of cultural institutions/industries. In addition China also wished to consolidate cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage as well as increase exchanges in the area of contemporary performing and visual arts. The **Executive Director of the Haban/Confucius Institute** was interested in developing a closer relationship with the EU, notably on research to develop standard curricula for teaching the Chinese language in foreign countries.

A **Representative of the China Mission in Brussels** was of the opinion that an EU strategy could further deepen EU-China cultural cooperation and increase coordination at different levels of governance. The smaller EU Member States in particular could benefit from a joint EU approach in China, as the large European countries were already active there. There would also be several advantages for the Chinese cultural sector: institutions, operators and artists would be more encouraged to visit more than one Member State for performances, etc. and thus be able to reach a much wider audience. In addition, the EU and China could develop a joint strategy towards third countries (for example Africa and Latin America) to counter the US dominance in the global cultural marketplace and promote access to European and Chinese goods and services.

The latter, like the **Director for Communication and Cooperation, Shenzhen Creative Culture Center**, believed that increased cooperation between European and Chinese cities would be mutually beneficial; it could be useful to set up a network between European Capitals of Culture and Chinese creative cities and/or an EU-China alliance of cities that could operate parallel to the UNESCO networks of creative cities and design cities. A special EU-China logo could be developed to give

visibility to these networks. The set-up of creative hubs in China was also seen by both as a practical instrument to boost collaboration between Chinese and European CCI and facilitate market access to China.

A **Representative of a State-owned-Enterprise (SoE) in Cultural Industry** also stressed that the creative industries were one of the areas that had the most potential to boost EU-China cooperation. Concrete actions could be directed to the following areas: lowering market entry limits and less protection measures, more free capital flow, more talent exchanges, etc.

The **Director of a theatre centre at the Central Academy of Drama**, an **Independent curator/editor/multimedia artist** and an **Independent owner of a theatre in Beijing** were sceptical, however. They were concerned that a strategy could be used as a political instrument, as merely another means of imposing an Eurocentric view on a seemingly new and attractive economic sector. To improve cooperation between China and Europe a more open-minded approach was needed from both sides that would allow artists and cultural operators to work together without any technical barriers (linguistic, legal or media coverage). Given that the Chinese structures were less mature than the European ones, the EU would do cultural relations a major service by proposing activities that would cover training in cultural management, the distribution of cultural goods and services and the development of NGOs to strengthen artistic and intellectual development. Although people-to-people artistic exchange was seen as the most important instrument to improve cultural cooperation they also felt that exchanges on cultural policy making would be useful.

A **director of a private museum for contemporary art** outlined that relationships between private art museums and the government were quite new in China – allowing private museums to bring more foreign culture and art to the Chinese public. Museums could be used to improve intercultural relations between the EU and China and serve as a platform to increase knowledge about China and Chinese art and European culture. A **Chief architect from a domestic and international established architectural office** pointed out that cultural exchanges were crucial for Chinese citizens, but it was the opening up of China that was impacting the government's policies on culture in external relations. Since Chinese citizens had increasing opportunities to travel abroad, they were no longer dependent on official showcasing of European culture in China. Major societal changes were taking place in China that would force architects to face new challenges in terms of urban planning. European developments in this field could offer useful models for China.

Chinese Academics

The **Director General of the Institute of European Studies – Chinese Academy of Social Sciences** observed that China does not really recognise the added value of culture in its external relations. In recent years there has been some change, yet cooperation has focused on higher education rather than culture. A **Senior Fellow and Director of European Studies of the China Institute of International studies** was more critical about the development of China-EU relations in recent years and mentioned that the image of Europe had changed in China. Two recent events had played a decisive role in casting doubts on the future of Europe: the way in which the 2008 Olympic Games torch relay was organised in a number of European countries and the Eurozone debt crisis. Culture was highlighting the differences between Europe and China. Longstanding ideological and political differences were not decreasing, but increasing. In his view, the economic growth of China

had made it more confident, while the economic development of Europe had taken it in the opposite direction. The European life style was still very attractive, however, and Europe was one of the most desired places for shopping, holidays and studying abroad, but the EU faced a rigid social structure and a lack of competitiveness. In his view, Europe needed a more innovative and global vision in its foreign affairs and had to try to play the role of the 'third pole' between the USA and the emerging economies.¹⁰⁴

European Stakeholders

Members of the EUNIC China Cluster in Beijing shared the following views expressed by the National Office of the Goethe-Institut China and the Danish Cultural Institute (Presidency of EUNIC). European culture is characterized by its great diversity. China is culturally speaking exactly an example – if not *the* example – of 'unity in diversity' made up by 56 distinct cultures (called 'nationalities') held together by political and legal institutions, one lingua franca and a common currency. Cultural cooperation is very complex and should go far beyond the showcasing of 'national brands'. To learn from each other means to understand human existence within different systems. Cultural cooperation has an intrinsic value and is not just the 'playful' or 'decorative' element for other interests, whether political or economic. A project should therefore not be generated by bureaucrats from inside the system but developed on the ground by cultural actors. This is not only the best way to secure quality, it is also the only approach that can generate respect and interest amongst those in the Chinese society who are willing to act as agents for change.

Mutual understanding aims to sensitise rather than scandalise. The discussion of different values in different systems follows different political strategies. Nothing else worries the Chinese authorities more than losing control over public opinion. A successful approach in cultural relations needs a balance of arguments without polarising them. This does not mean that differences in values (e.g. human rights, ecological matters, freedom of the arts etc.) could not be expressed. But critical remarks must be placed in a well-reflected manner, since cooperating with China can never exclude (either on state level or on NGO level) official governmental influence. Activities are controlled by the state to a more or less and non-transparent extent. Competence is built and trust grows only through 'best practices'. This is the condition for recognising the impact of civil rather than political engagement in cultural relations and prepares the principle of 'arm's lengths' which leads to credibility towards a sincere dialogue without 'hidden agenda' to missionize one's culture.

Europe's system of publicly funded culture differs from those in the Anglo-American world and could be a role model for the emerging countries. But for the time being, China is firmly attracted by the dynamics of 'cultural industries' and its market orientation, which neglect the educational value of culture. A EU strategy should not focus on large-scale projects, but on smaller and more long-term endeavours with multifaceted layers of exchange.

The former Head of the National Office of the Goethe-Institut in China and Adviser to the Haban Institute was of the opinion that an EU strategy for culture in external could have added

¹⁰⁴ European Culture Foundation seminar 'The Dwarfing of Europe? A Dialogue between Brazil, India, China and Europe', Amsterdam, May 2013.

value, but that the EU should only coordinate the activities of the EU Member States where necessary or useful. For example, the EUNIC Cluster could be directly linked to the EU Delegation for it to be more effective. He found it an excellent recommendation that a person should be appointed in the EU Delegation to deal with culture. Also activities and programmes to be funded and coordinated by the EU needed to have a European dimension and embrace various Member States. In his view, the EU's strategy should not be based on an ideology or focused on changing the Chinese society. Many European cultural institutes operating in Chinese have become frustrated by the need to work with official institutions or consider that Europeans and Chinese do not share the same values. This is partly because they were not open minded and willing to listen to what the Chinese were saying (Europeans have to 'learn to learn'). In this context, he felt that one of the main areas in which the EU should intervene was a long-term project to 'Strengthen cooperation in intercultural competences' and set up a pool of Chinese and European people that understood each other. Training programmes would need to be developed on intercultural competences skills, for language learning and institution building (with long term exchanges). Europeans have to acknowledge that they are dealing with a very large and diverse country whose cultural roots are very ancient.

CONCLUSIONS

The growing global interest in China contrasts with the low level of cultural engagement of foreign stakeholders there. There is much uncertainty on how to deal with China culturally.

Neither China nor the EU has a strategy for culture in external relations. In China there is no coordination between different ministries (foreign affairs, culture, education, commerce etc.). The current system is a mix between the European (promote national language and culture – less at present) and US approach (get private companies such as large publishing groups) to promote Chinese influence. Which approach will prevail is not yet clear. As the EU considers a new strategy it has decided to make China a test case. An expert group has drafted a report outlining a strategy for EU-China cultural relations that sets out a number of useful principles and steps to be taken.

This situation is an opportunity for the EU to develop a coherent strategy that meets both the needs and interests of the Chinese and European governments, cultural institutions, artists and people. An open mind and the willingness to learn are the key requirements. The EU has been a reference for China in the cultural field since the 1980s, but now China is more focused on its own cultural heritage. China now stands alongside the USA as a superpower. Over the past six years the European economy has stalled while that of China has grown by 70 per cent.

Chinese stakeholders often mentioned that the Chinese know little about the EU or its Member States and citizens. The EU itself is seen as a political and economic unity rather than a cultural one. Stakeholders agree that an EU strategy for culture in external relations could provide a better understanding of the EU and European societies. Non-governmental stakeholders wonder whether this would mean simply a new layer of bureaucracy. In a country where the government controls the cultural sector, they naturally favour decentralisation, de-standardisation and de-commercialisation. They only see an added value for an EU strategy if the EU sets the framework, but not the content of projects. Projects should not be developed by EU or Chinese governmental officials, but by cultural operators on the ground. This is seen as the best way to secure a minimum of quality and generate respect and interest amongst those in the Chinese society who are willing to act as agents for change.

A long-term global vision is thus needed for the EU to deal with China, one that is focused on strengthening intercultural competences. More long-term education and cultural exchange programmes are required at all levels (schools, universities, cultural institutions, culture and creative industries, etc.). Europeans need to understand that the Chinese will never become like them. Yet they wish to continue to interact with Europe and the rest of the world. The diversity of cultural operators and artists of the 28 EU Member States makes the EU very attractive to China. An EU strategy that would assist Chinese cultural actors and artists in working with their counterparts in Europe would certainly have added value.

There has been a shift of focus of the Chinese government from cultural exchange to promoting and developing its cultural and creative industries abroad. There are many opportunities for European companies and cultural operators, as China is hungry for creative content and talent

from Europe. The EU currently lacks a concrete programme to promote its CCIs in China and lift the existing market access barriers for European companies. This means that at the level of the European Commission not only DG EAC should be involved in fostering relations between Chinese and European CCIs, but also DG Enterprise, DG Trade, DG Market, DG Connect, etc. In addition to cultural policy dialogues, cultural exchanges and education programmes the EU and China need to concentrate on developing a programme that meets the needs and interests of both the European and Chinese cultural and creative sectors. EU-China creative hubs and platforms were seen as a good way for cultural operators to interact and learn from each other. A well-developed and financed strategy should be drafted to enable the European CCIs to better engage with China.

All EU Member States consider China to be one of their top priority countries for cultural relations and are developing their own programmes for this purpose. They are also working together within the EUNIC Cluster in China and have engaged in a number of joint programmes. The latter would like to be the European counterpart of the Chinese Ministry of Culture and operate at arm's length from their national governments. However, the Ministry of Culture prefers to deal with the EU Delegation and the European Commission, while it has not recognised EUNIC as a valid body for the execution of EU-China cultural cooperation. The EU, its Member States and cultural institutes will thus have to develop a mechanism in China that overcomes this difficulty. A person in the EU Delegation dedicated to culture is a (pre) requisite and would be seen as a first good step to increase cooperation and information sharing between European stakeholders, cultural operators and artists.

Any EU strategy for China will also have to focus more on the major provinces and cities in China, since they each have their own cultural programmes and budgets. More concrete EU-China projects will be able to emerge at these levels of governance in China and the EU should encourage the set up of more networks and alliances between European and Chinese creative cities.

The funding of projects is a major issue. Neither the Chinese government nor the state-owned companies are eager to finance foreign partners or have budgets for this purpose. The EU and its Member States will thus need to find ways of pooling public and private resources to achieve greater economies of scale to leverage their cooperation efforts with China. At the same time the Chinese government should also be encouraged to finance its share of EU-China collaboration projects.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Methodology and list of people consulted

As was the case for all the third countries concerned, the first step in the preparation of this report was the so-called ‘mapping’ process. This consisted of desk research, informed principally by official Chinese and other websites, supplemented by some scholarly publications, as well as the replies to the mapping questionnaire provided by the Chinese Embassy in Germany. No replies to the questionnaire and interviews were received from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (although requests were made by the European Delegation through the normal diplomatic channels).

This material provided the basis for further inquiry through the consultation process. Consultations meetings were organised with both Chinese and European public and private stakeholders in China and Europe.

The persons interviewed individually were the following:

Chinese officials (a number of persons did not wish to be identified)

- **Mr Chen Ping**, Cultural Attaché, Chinese Embassy in Berlin, Germany
- **Mr Ma Jian Fai**, Executive Director of the Haban/Confucius institute
- **Ms Zhao Xinshu** (Director) and Mr Wen Dayan (now head of SACH) of the Bureau of External Relations of the Ministry of Culture, Beijing, China
- Representative of the Ministry of Culture of a major Chinese Province
- Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a major Chinese Province
- Representative of the Chinese Mission in Brussels, Belgium

Chinese private and public stakeholders

- **Mr Ting Xu**, Director for Communication and Cooperation Shenzhen Creative Culture Centre, Shenzhen, China
- Chief architect from a domestic and international established architectural office
- Director of a Theatre Centre at the Central Academy of Drama
- Director of a private museum for contemporary art
- Independent curator, editor and multimedia artist
- Independent owner of theatre in Beijing
- Representative of a state-owned-enterprise (SoE) in cultural industry

Chinese academic

- **Ms Zhou Hong**, Director General of the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, China

- **Dr Cui Hongjian**, Senior Fellow and Director of European Studies of the China Institute of International studies in Beijing, China

European stakeholders and academics

- **Mr Peter Anders**, Director, National Office of the Goethe Institut-China
- **Mr Michael Kahn-Ackerman**, former Director, National Office of the Goethe Institut-China; Advisor of the Haban Institute
- **Mr Eric Messerschmidt**, CEO, Danish Cultural Institut in China; President, EUNIC Cluster in China
- **Mr Marc Bermann**, Head of China Programs, Stiftung Mercator, Germany
- **Mr Falk Hartig**, Post-Doctoral Researcher, AFRASO – Africa’s Asian Options, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany
- **Mr Fokke Obbema**, editor of the foreign affairs section of Dutch newspaper *Volkscrant* and writer.

Annex II: EU-Chinese joint programmes and initiatives

EU-Chinese cultural cooperation activities run by the EU Delegation

Name of Activity	Year	Description
Europe Street	2005	As the crowning event celebrating the 30 th anniversary of EU-China Diplomatic Relations, Europe Street was conceived to showcase European culture in its larger sense including performing arts, food, and information presented by the EU Member States.
EU Film Festivals	Since 2008, held annually	Invites all 28 EU Member States to showcase one recent, popular and successful film, to allow the Chinese general public to discover the new faces of European cinema.
EUYO Concert in Beijing	2008	Visit of the EU Youth Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Ashkenazy, at the end of August in Beijing 2008.
EU Olympic Photo Exhibition	2008	' <i>Olympic Spirit: the Olympics Games through the lens of European photographers</i> ' was an exhibition featuring Olympic-related photos provided by EU Member States.
EU Extravaganza	2009	Showcases the highlights of Europe's diverse culture through music and cuisine in a two-day outdoor event.
Encounters with Europe Photo Book	2010	The EU Delegation requested Member States to provide professional photographs featuring traditional scenes of their country's culture, which they then had compiled into a book.
EU at Shanghai Expo	First time in 2010	Joint cultural events such as the EU street parade on Europe Day, with marching bands from all over Europe, were some of the highlights of the participation of the EU Delegation.
EU-China Year of Youth	2011	Strengthen and expand people-to-people contacts, educational and cultural exchanges between youth from the EU and China.
EU Open Days	Since 2011, held annually	The purpose of the Open Days is to strengthen young people's understanding and knowledge of the European Union, its Member States and EU-China relations, as well as to foster friendship and offer occasions for people-to-people exchanges between European and Chinese youth.
Europe in my Heart 'Children's Art Exhibition'	Since 2011	It is composed of paintings and calligraphy made by Chinese children from 4 to 18 on the theme 'Europe in my heart'.
EU-China Year of	2012	To promote cultural exchanges but also all forms of people-to-people contacts and mobility

Intercultural Dialogue		contributing to policymaking in the fields it covers.
EU-China Love Links	2012	Produced by the European Union Delegation to China, <i>EU-China Love Links</i> is a series of 10 short documentary films about 10 real-life European-Chinese couples.
EU-China People-to-People photo exhibition and book	2012	The acclaimed photographer Mr Steve Zhao was commissioned by the Delegation to create intimate comparative portraits of daily life in both China and European Union Member States.
EU-China Dream Seekers	2013	A series of 6 short films entitled ' <i>EU-China Dream Seekers</i> ' filmed in various locations across Europe and China. They show that no matter whether you are Chinese or European, we all strive to pursue our dreams.
EU Tasty Europe Cooking Book	2013	This booklet offers a simple yet comprehensive introduction to some of the finest food of the countries of the European Union, inspiring the reader to discover Tasty Europe.
European Wine & Food Festival	2013	Showcasing the diversity of European cuisine and agricultural produce and the cultural heritage and tradition in their production is also a form of cultural diplomacy.
China in my Dreams	2013	Paintings by young Europeans with their visions of China called ' <i>China in my Dreams</i> '.
Online Film Festival	2012 & 2014	The new EUFF Online provides Chinese audience with a unique opportunity to experience the most recent and exciting films the EU has to offer.

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Annex IV: Overview interviews with Chinese and European stakeholders

Below more details are given on a number of the interviews held with public and private stakeholders.

Chinese Government

- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** The government uses culture in its diplomatic relations to strengthen the pluralism of cultures around the world; improve mutual understanding and trust between people; build stable and friendly relations between nations; and increase the quality of life of people around the world. In their view culture is the symbolisation of a nation and the world is enriched by the diversity of cultures. Culture is a communication tool that has been accepted by most people to share common emotions. It can also be used to overcome ideologies. The Chinese cultural institutions (e.g. opera, acrobatic, cultural heritage and recently contemporary art) thus play an important role in China's diplomatic relations.

Private/Public Chinese stakeholders

- **Director for Communication and Cooperation, Shenzhen Creative Culture Centre:** City-to-city cooperation is the best way forward to increase collaboration between China and the EU. In many Chinese cities the state-owned cultural companies are financed by the local government, but operate at 'arm's length' from the government. They have considerable freedom to develop networks with cities throughout the EU. Shenzhen is currently part of the UNESCO Network of Design Cities and recently organised a design award for young international designers. The city is interested in expanding its network and developing cooperation activities with other European cities (outside its UNESCO network). Regular meetings could be organised between a network of European and Chinese cities to discuss areas of cooperation.
- **Director of a Theatre Centre at the Central Academy of Drama:** Culture in external relations can have a great impact on citizens, as culture is often the only sphere that touches them. Most people are not involved in trade or politics, but can relate to culture. He is not in favour of just showcasing European culture in China as this would only provide shallow insights and not trigger a real dialogue. If he could collaborate with European contemporary theatre, he would, for example, like to work with the Ernst-Busch-Schule of Germany, the Ecole Jacques Lecoq of France and other schools. It is this kind of mix that in his view defines the attractiveness of Europe. If he was given the opportunity to bring Chinese culture to Europe, he would definitely not choose famous cultural operators such as the Beijing Opera or Kunju, but the less known performing arts such the ballad singers from Zhejiang or shadow puppetry from Shaanxi.
- **Director of a private museum for contemporary art:** Chinese people have been closed from the outside world for many years and have stereotyped views of European countries and people (despite the fact that in the last ten years they have been able to travel abroad). Their views have remained superficial as they do not speak or understand foreign languages. The

older generation in China still thinks of Europe and the EU as a set of totally different independent countries. The awareness of the EU with its open internal borders and its diversity is still very low. Culture can be a way to inform the people about the changes taking place in the world and cultural events could help Chinese and Europeans to understand each other better. Contrary to economics and politics, culture can be a better and softer tool to communicate between different countries and people. If there is no mutual understanding and communication between China and Europe, there can be no cultural cooperation. Thus to advance a better understanding between both parties Europe needs to create opportunities to showcase Chinese art and invite more Chinese artists to perform or exhibit in the EU Member States. Funding was not an obstacle according to the director, as long as both sides covered their costs. In his view the increasing wealth of a great number of Chinese citizens would contribute the strengthening of EU-Chine cooperation in the near future – Europeans brands have a great appeal on Chinese consumers.

- **Independent curator, editor and multimedia artist with a nomadic work programme in a number of major Chinese cities:** Culture can contribute to developing better relations between Europe and China if it is based on a non-political agenda. To large extent Europeans have always considered European culture to be superior to that of all other civilizations. Most European politicians and media – hence the majority of Europeans – have a biased view on China (based on a lack of critical thinking). The credibility of Europe vis-à-vis China stands and falls with its capacity to acknowledge and recognize the full scope of the country. Europe must get its picture of China straight and not only lean towards those views, which fit into a preconceived vision.

Among Chinese, the EU is mostly seen as a political and economic unity and not as a cultural identity. Any dialogue between Brussels and Beijing should involve philosophers, think tanks, artists, and practitioners and allow politicians and technocrats to listen to them. Politicians and government officials need to concentrate on the set up of a framework for cultural cooperation – not its content.

If the EU would apply such an open mind-set in their dialogues with China, this could very well lead to China starting to trust its own critical mass more than it does at present. At the moment China's mainstream cultural and creative industries and the increase of national consumption are the main terms of reference of the government for action. As European culture is heterogeneous it would be valuable for the EU to focus on measures that could also explore the diversity of culture in China.

- **Representative of a State-owned-Enterprise (SoE) in Cultural Industry:** Culture has a two-fold contribution to external relations and policies. First, cultural exchange projects often serve as harmonising agents in diplomatic activities. One great example is the Ping Pong Diplomacy between China and the U.S. in the 1970s. Second, cultural exchange projects are in themselves valuable and meaningful activities, not only because they increase mutual understanding on different levels from governmental officials to the general public, but also because they create distinctive values in respective fields, especially when the project demands lots of sharing and co-creation. The development of external relations strategies/policies should be more open, thus allowing more free-flowing exchanges of

information, resources and capitals, all of which in return contribute to the flourishing of cultural exchange projects. Emphasis on the importance of culture should be voiced when opportunities arise, especially when the project or programme involves decision makers – but the quality of cultural programmes needs to remain an essential factor. He does not see the EU as an independent cultural identity; for him it is a collective political body. When it comes to culture, each European country has its own icon and voice. He doubts if it would be a good strategy for the EU to try to create a unique EU cultural identity.

- **Independent owner of a theatre in Beijing who runs an annual alternative theatre festival:** The relationship between China and EU is too focused on politics and cultural industries – rather than art itself. Both sides primarily see each other as a market opportunity rather than fertile soil for exchange and inspiration. This is a great shame. Although the problems and challenges with the commercialization of culture are also present in European countries, they are not as severe as they are in China, where more and more state-driven initiatives are diluting art into sheer entertainment.

The major obstacles in Chinese culture and art life are related to structures and to the fact that important stakeholders are of poor or rather ‘lazy’ intellectual quality. With regard to structures, there is no democracy in the economic decision-making process. The process of providing financial support and funding for projects and activities remains a closed circuit in which decision-makers seek to protect their own (political) interests rather than to invest in activities with a cultural potential. Adding to this, he believes that the financial support system is not sufficient.

If the EU wants to develop a true cultural relationship with China, it is crucial that both the European Commission and the Member States pay more attention to (the search for) real art and artistic form instead of its derived commercialised cousins disguised as festivals, galas and show pieces. More focus must be put on exchange programmes and intercultural training that can enhance the intercultural understanding on both sides. For this reason, he emphasizes the need of a more sustainable approach – more communication with NGOs rather than governmental bodies (whose agendas will never go beyond the development of a commercial market for cultural products). In this respect Europe should act more in line with its own tradition of involving civil society and advocate for the establishment of more NGOs in its dialogue with the Chinese government. The EU should avoid (the Chinese trap) of signing wide-ranging agreements with the government and instead focus on the collaboration with NGOs and non-commercial stakeholders. By strengthening its relations with independent cultural actors, the EU will not only help the Chinese organisations to develop (with Chinese characteristics) but also give ground for a revitalisation of the EU’s own cultural structure. Culture is what distinguishes both China and Europe and separates them from USA. In this way, both Chinese and European cultural life will benefit from a closer non-political and non-commercial collaboration.

- **Chief architect from a domestic and international established architectural office:** In comparison to the EU, urban planning is quite radical in China. An example is the top-down city planning approach of the Chinese government to construct high-rise buildings. Two

models have influenced contemporary Chinese residential construction: in the 1950s the Soviet model and in the 1980s the American model of gated compounds. In the last twenty years these two models have been combined and Chinese elements have been added, but nothing has changed very much since then. This 'radicalism' has also led to the demolition of traditional communities in China and the creation of different social levels (unequal rents are a contradiction for a Chinese mind-set).

European architecture sits in the middle between the individual American culture/architecture and the collective Chinese culture/architecture and could therefore offer some interesting models for China. It will be important for China to integrate certain European concepts, but not to impose them as was for example the case when the Austrian village Hallstatt was replicated in China.

Chinese Academics

- The **Director General of the Institute of European Studies – Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**: China is taking insufficient account of rapid changes in the understanding of relationships between people. In her view, culture needs to be defined as signs of civilization, thinking, ways of living, philosophy, etc. There are two main challenges in China: 1) the national identity – how to define what is valuable Chinese culture and 2) the clash of civilization – how to create a common understanding to enable the emergence of a new culture that can be part of globalization.