



3rd round High Level People to People Dialogue

*European Union and China
– Co-operation in the field
of youth: Past experience
and perspectives for the
future*

Preliminary report

Within the third round of EU-China High level People to People Dialogue the delegations on youth were composed of youth organisation representatives, youth workers, policy experts and young people themselves.

The Chinese side was lead Mr Jin Dong President of the China Youth Association of New Media on behalf of the All China Youth Federation (ACYF).

On the European side, discussions were opened by Antonia Silva Mendes Director, Youth and Sport, General Education and Culture, European Commission with a keynote speech from Mr Harald Hartung, Head of Unit Youth and Policy Programme, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission.

The theme of the dialogue was "European Union and China: Co-operation in the field of youth past experience and perspectives for the future".

Co-operation was explored at four levels

- Between youth organisations at global level
- At national authorities level
- Between public authorities at local and regional level
- Between youth players at local and regional level

Furthermore, the inclusion of Member States in the third round of the Dialogue brought to light many good co-operation initiatives between Member States and China, and potential new initiatives that could occur at this level

It was agreed that cooperation around youth is essential as the young people will build the future of our societies. This involves cooperation between national leaders, experts, youth organisations, youth workers, and of course young people themselves. This message was presented at the plenary of the High Level People to People Dialogue and heard by the other delegations for education & training, culture, multilingualism and gender equality. This reinforced the essential need for discussion and collaboration on youth within High level People to People Dialogue.

The delegation noted the strong progress and trust that had built up around collaboration on youth between the European Commission and the ACYF. This had been achieved through the annual mechanism for EU-China policy and expert seminars on youth, following the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth. With this history of cooperation it was found that both sides were now in a position to engage in frank and candid dialogue, which was called for by Mr Jin Dong. It was further identified that co-operation between the EU Commission and ACYF had both enhanced and complemented direct co-operation at different administrative levels of Member States with China, and between youth organisations of both sides.

With a view to make such co-operation activities efficient, it was agreed it would be suitable to enhance mutual information and exchange of good practices amongst the stakeholders involved, and to support contact and partner making between youth organisations. Good steps have been made to achieving this through the EU-China Youth Friends link, The China Youth Net Website and the EU Youth Portal. In addition to this Erasmus+ was cited as a valued resource to stimulate further co-operation.

Speakers presented examples of previous co-operations between European and Chinese actors, from which delegates were able to identify success factors and potential barriers to creating effective co-operation. This process enabled both parties to consider both the progress that had been made, and potential next steps for future co-operation. In addition to this the delegations conducted a field study to the Flemish Knowledge Centre for International Youth Mobility, to explore their co-operation with South African National Youth Development Agency. This created a number of further insights highly relevant to the progress of EU-China co-operation, such as the contrasting reality of civil society organisations in the EU and China.

The climax of the seminar was undoubtedly the opportunity for delegates to meet with Vice Premier Madame Liu Yangdong, who addressed the delegation directly on matters of youth. A direct meeting with the Vice Premier indicated the commitment of China and Madame Liu herself to increasing collaboration on youth with Europe.

As a result of the progress made delegates agreed it was now possible to increase the number of concrete steps and projects and thereby create more co-operation focused on practical implementation of political initiatives. A number of co-operations were initiated between delegates, and further projects are still in discussion. In addition both sides will identify a theme for the policy and expert seminar on youth in China, 2016 that will allow for a focus on the practical implication of their political initiatives.

by Dan Moxon, Rapporteur on Youth (EU Side) , Director - People Dialogue and Change.