

EU-China Roundtable on Urbanisation

1 April 2013 (Monday)		9:30-12:00	Crowne Plaza Lake Malaren, Shanghai
Organisers	China-Europa Forum (CEF), China Centre for Urban Development (CCUD)		
Content	<p>After the 2013 China International Urbanisation Forum on March 30 and 31, the China-Europa Forum (CEF) took the opportunity of bringing together more than 30 Chinese and European urban partners to share existing initiatives and experiences on EU-China urbanisation collaborations.</p> <p>This roundtable aimed at seeking potential collaborations with partners to advance EU-China cooperation on urbanisation took place on April 1 at the Crowne Plaza Lake Malaren in Shanghai. It was organised by the China-Europa Forum (CEF) and the China Centre for Urban Development (CCUD).</p> <p>Key issues included a reflexion on the ways participants could contribute to the EU-China partnership on urbanisation and how they could work together in the future.</p>		
Summary of discussion			
Mr LI Tie	Director General, China Centre for Urban Development (CCUD), National Development and Reform Commission in China (NDRC)		
<p>Mr LI Tie highlighted developments in the cooperation between the NDRC and the DG Energy of the European Commission within the framework of the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership as well as several plans for the near future.</p> <p>According to him, the Concept Note and the Working Program of the <i>Partnership</i> was recently submitted to the State Council of China for approval. One of the priorities for 2013 would be the EU-China Urbanisation Summit which would take place next October or November in Beijing. The event was expected to have four to five parallel sessions covering across themes ranging from the development of smart cities, innovative cities, energy-saving cities and eco-cities, to urban infrastructure financing etc. In addition to these, the EU-China Mayors' Forum would also be organised at the same time by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD).</p> <p>He hoped to establish increasing cooperation between European and Chinese civilian organisations and local authorities and appreciated the CEF's initiative bringing urban experts together in Shanghai to exchange points of view.</p> <p>LI Tie believed that collaborations among CSOs of the two sides should focus on the following three aspects: 1) how would European experiences on urbanisation, urban management and planning be better employed in China? and how could Chinese cities actually learn these good experiences and methods? 2) how could European advanced technologies and concepts be combined with the Chinese market? 3) how to promote and deepen inter-city collaborations and cooperation between cities and enterprises?</p> <p>He emphasised that the EU-China cooperation on urbanisation should remain neither on surface nor at the talking level. It was more urgent to have a in-depth, detailed and pragmatic cooperation, inter-city collaborations and business links between cities and enterprises.</p>			
Mr Pierre Calame	President, the China-Europa Forum Foundation, President of The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH)		

Pierre Calame believed that the transition towards sustainable societies was not only the common challenge faced by China and Europe but also a focal point for EU-China cooperation on urbanisation because cities played a key role in this transition.

He said that this partnership has two dimensions: on the one hand it enables China to draw lessons from European experiences whether successes or failures, and on the other it allows China and Europe to debate means of facing common challenges in the future. According to him, the mutual learning process between China and Europe is far beyond imitation, he stated as an example technology transfer which seems to be relatively easy but which involves a better understanding of the cultural and contextual backgrounds.

He underlined the fact that the CEF is a platform for EU-China dialogues and exchanges in this matter and would like to do its best to promote EU-China urbanisation cooperation projects in order to develop sustainable societies. He hoped that China and Europe would become a leading force in the world in its way to a transition.

Mr SHI Jian	Chairman of the Shanghai Real Estate Limited
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After sharing his experiences of study tours in Europe with local government officials, Mr SHI pointed out that China should learn planning concepts from European urban designers. European experts and scholars were recommended to carry out researches and study tours on China's urban development, providing new ideas for local authorities in China.

In particular, he stressed the importance of education and training for urban professionals, expecting the integration of potential European resources into the Chinese educational system, such as the establishment of institutes or colleges of urbanisation in some Chinese universities.

Mr PAN Haixiao	Professor, Department of Urban Planning, Tongji University
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Prof. PAN believed that the most important element in China's urbanisation process is the talented personnel who not only understands local features and advantages but also has advanced international concepts. He briefed the efforts of Tongji University in training urban professionals in recent years, and highlighted a couple of multi-year programmes, such as Master Class for Mayors of Small and Medium-sized Cities, Sino-French Symposium, seminars on different urban issues, and a training class on China's urban sustainability etc.

He indicated that apart from field observations the training for professionals should focus on dialogues and case studies which would help them understand the backgrounds. Training is of great importance and could take many different forms.

Mr Maurizio Mariani	President of the Consortium Risteco, CEO of Sotral Spa, Vice-president of the Italian association for enterprises environmental competitiveness
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Mr Maurizio Mariani put forward the idea that the food dimension and the *Eating City* concept should be included in the design and building of new towns in China. It should be part of the topics for training mayors, politicians and decision makers because it is something that if built up at the beginning would cost less money and less resources.

Mr ZHANG Renbiao	Professor, School of Political Science and International Relations, Director, Urban Sociology Institute, Tongji University; Deputy Director, Chinese Urban Sociology Society
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Prof ZHANG shared his reflection on the current situation of China's urbanisation from the perspectives of social sciences and the humanities. He stated outright that many Chinese cities simply had a shape but no spirit or soul. He considered that EU-China exchanges on urbanisation should shift from the technical level to social and humanistic aspects. Meantime, attentions should also be paid to the integration of China's own culture and to the local context.

Mr Edoardo Guglielmetti	Network and Project Manager, the European New Towns Platform (ENTP)
<p>Mr Guglielmetti totally agreed with Prof ZHANG. He said that it is very easy to build houses but the following question is how to build a community and the soul of a city?</p> <p>EU-China partnership on urbanisation should not just be a transfer of technical skills or solutions but the sharing of knowledge and the collective conception of cities, such as the way a city is able to organise not just the planning but also the city life, the anticipation of the impact on lifestyles, the demands of the future generations and so on.</p>	
Ms TIAN Jun	Secretary General, the Chengdu Urban Rivers Association (CURA)
<p>Ms TIAN Jun expressed her deep concerns about the speed, scale and mode of China's urbanisation. Because Chinese people traditionally believe that a priest from abroad has an easy time preaching, she considered that European experts could greatly influence local decision-makers in China and rescue some villages and towns with distinct Chinese characteristics. In her view, it is strategically important that European experts tell Chinese local authorities what is good and attractive in their eyes.</p>	
Ms Pascaline Gaborit	Director, the European New Towns Platform (ENTP)
<p>Ms Gaborit has worked with the Luodian New Town of Baoshan District in Shanghai for several years. She believed that the aim of the April 1 roundtable was to identify topics on which Chinese and European sides could collaborate. Those topics such as food in the city, public services, urban development and technical development were interesting. But she had concerns about how results from all sides could be delivered, how cooperation and exchanges between European and Chinese sides could be justified and how indicators could be defined for these results afterwards.</p>	
Ms QIU Aijun	Deputy Director General, China Center for Urban Development (CCUD), National Development and Reform Commission in China (NDRC)
<p>Ms QIU said that multi-disciplinary cooperation was of great importance in the process of China's urbanisation. She believed that only with in-depth and solid researches and specific cases, could new demands of local authorities be better met and could concrete results be achieved.</p> <p>A dedicated website on EU-China urbanisation would be set up to integrate and optimise as many resources from China and Europe as possible, said she.</p>	
Mr Marc Glaudemans	Professor of Urban Strategies, Architecture and Planning, European Urban Design Lab in Tilburg, the Netherlands
<p>According to Prof Glaudemans, the EU-China Partnership on urbanisation could be defined as having four levels: "first the decision makers, like the DG's, ministries, politicians and mayors; the next level are the experts, experts exchanges like we have here today and like we had yesterday, but also there seems to be a need of professional training from EU to China and conversely; and another level is NGO and small and medium-sized businesses."</p> <p>He proposed making a document to concretise the agenda for each of these levels, stakeholders, terms and expected outcomes.</p> <p>Prof. Glaudemans and his organisation - Stadslab European Urban Design Laboratory – have been working with cities on professional trainings and expert exchanges. They did not work in China yet but had quite lot of projects in Japan and in Central Europe. Mr Glaudemans précised that he would be very happy to be part of the EU-China partnership on the expert level, professional training level and even on the grassroots level but would like to discuss the structure of and the way the partnership is going to work first.</p>	
Mr CHEN Shuo	Professor, Vice President, Fuzhou Urban Planning Design Research Institute

<p>Prof CHEN Shuo believed that ideas, energy-saving and high-tech, and culture were three dimensions which China could learn from Europe within the urbanisation process. He proposed organising more learning journeys and on-site visits in Europe for Chinese government officials, leaders of research institutions and the next generation, and placed much emphasis on the learning of quintessence and long-term exchanges.</p> <p>As for himself, he was interested in a European website – a dedicated network of European urban resources – and would like to translate it into Chinese, thus European experiences reaching more Chinese people.</p>	
Mr ZHANG Jun	Associate Professor, Dr, Department of Sociology, Tongji University
<p>Dr ZHANG Jun suggested that Chinese and European experts, scholars, institutions and other stakeholders should work together to set up a database of case studies on urbanisation in China and Europe.</p>	
Mr Hervé Philippe	CEO of Le Pont des Arts (LPDA)
<p>Mr Hervé Philippe is working in a private company which is promoting European products in China. He shared his ideas about the EU-China Partnership on urbanisation and intellectual property (IP) from the perspective of business. He pointed out the fact that for a private company, when promoting some new technology and some know-how, the immediate question might be the preservation of IP. But this does not mean that private company cannot contribute because there is space for communication to promote new products and new organisations, and there is space for this communication preserving IP. He added that a company should be sustainable, while having ethic concerns as well and that each company working in China wants to contribute to the development of China.</p> <p>Specifically with regard to the EU-China urbanisation cooperation, a private company could contribute to the education of professional people in China because it is easier for a private company to identify some specific cases, some specific cities or some specific problems.</p>	
Mr Pierre Bauby	President of the RAP (Reconstruire l'action publique)
<p>Mr Bauby said it was a clear confirmation of the two-day conference that Chinese and European have the same challenges, that they are living in one same world but with diversity of history, tradition, institutions and situations. According to him, unity and diversity should be combined, he précised that it would not be easy and it would take time. A Better understanding of the situation and histories of each other would help deal with challenges.</p> <p>However he indicated that some situations implied quick term answers because the issue of sustainability has been an issue for 20 or 30 years, and some answers and some solutions are needed now.</p>	
Mr CHEN Guang	Professor, Dean of School of Public Administration, Southwest Jiaotong University; Vice President, Chengdu Association for Science and Technology

Prof. CHEN shared his reflection on the two-day conference and expectations on EU-China urbanisation cooperation for the future, and his ideas on the sustainability of the CEF.

He considered that China's urban development came to a critical time when there was a need of a shift from quantitative expanding to quality improvement. His research on the city quality assessment which began in 2010 aimed at evaluating the performances of China's urbanisation from qualitative and quantitative perspectives. He proposed the release of a *Report of the Performance of China's Urban Development* during the China International Urbanisation Forum which would be held every March in Shanghai. The report would be a result of extensive researches, case studies, diagnoses and international exchanges, with an ambition to influence the general public and even decision-makers, thus leading the policy trend towards a more sustainable future.

Based on its seven-year achievements, the CEF was also facing the challenge of transition, said Prof CHEN. In the future, the CEF should not only continue making dialogues, but more importantly focus on actions, practices and concrete projects.

In addition, he pointed out that Europe had advanced concepts, technologies and management experience, but if there is no benefit considerations for the two sides then cooperation would remain superficial.

He agreed with the idea of integrating potential European resources into the Chinese educational system to carry out trainings, educational programs related to urbanisation.

Mr SHAO Yu

Professor, Vice President, Sichuan Administration Institute

Mr SHAO highlighted the vision and efforts of Chengdu in internationalisation and modernisation. He expected Chengdu to be a pilot city in the promotion of the EU-China Partnership on urbanisation.

Mr Pierre Calame

President, the China-Europa Forum Foundation, President of The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH)

As responses to previous speakers, Mr Calame defined the role of the CEF in this new strategic partnership in three points: WHY, WHAT and HOW.

In his view, the CEF, as a platform, a space and a spirit, is not going to replace any exchanges which are going on, such as academic exchanges and city twinning. He added that whenever addressing the issue of transition the issue of the mind-set and the issue of the institutional arrangement are also addressed. In his opinion the approach of "having a problem getting a solution" cannot work for this transition because it would create new problems. The present cooperation should better address the key issues of "let us sit together and think", "let us invent new ways", and "let us invent new development models". New concepts are needed.

According to him, the most concrete thing to do now is to sit and think. The CEF should be in a position to address these basic issues, bring methodology and let people think together and find a new answer. The results could be brought to the trainings for professionals. He precised that in such actions lie the value-added of the CEF.

Mr Calame also touched upon the question of money and remarked that as a network, the CEF had no money. China is no longer the pupil of Europe and the two sides are on an equal footing. He then raised the thorny question of the conception of the CEF within such equal footing.

At last he shared two plans for the near future: first, the CEF should be able to help organise a real seminar within the framework of the EU-China Urbanisation Summit next October or November in China, deepening each of the major questions concerning urbanisation. However who was going to pay for the trips was an unsolved question. Second, it is possible for European cities to be ready to welcome Chinese guests, but whether Chinese participants were in a position to pay for that trip was still an obstacle.

Mr ZHANG Renbiao

Professor, School of Political Science and International Relations, Director, Urban Sociology Institute, Tongji University; Deputy Director, Chinese Urban Sociology Society

Prof ZHANG agreed with Mr Calame on the idea that the CEF needed to go beyond the current model and create new modes of communication between Chinese and European societies.

He believed that exchanges are greatly important. That is one of reasons why he had been keen to participate in the CEF activities over years. In regard to the financial issue, he said it could be resolved in a variety of ways under different circumstances, for example by universities and local authorities in China. As long as the two sides are willing to have more exchanges, it is possible for the Chinese part to cover costs.

Particularly stressing that the CEF had been an important platform with a lofty ambition, he believed that a large number of participants of the CEF had shared spirit and ideal. People-to-people communication is a common responsibility of human beings, and as long as this basic spirit remains the same, specific problems such as fundraising can be solved.

Mr PAN Haixiao

Professor, Department of Urban Planning, Tongji University

Prof PAN agreed on the importance of exchanges. He proposed a focus on failures and reflections in the process of Europe's urbanisation from which the Chinese could draw lessons.

Regarding financial issues, he pointed out that it would be more crucial to integrate resources and optimise the existing efforts. For example, many universities and research institutions were carrying out training classes and studies on urbanisation in Europe and China, so it mattered to think about how to collaborate and create a new methodology of exchanges.

Ms Pascaline Gaborit

Director, the European New Towns Platform (ENTP)

Ms Gaborit totally agreed with everybody about the value of exchanges and the value of thinking in particular. She added that in a context of economic crisis the question of funding did exist. If there is no concrete results, companies and local governments are not likely to act in an active way because mind-sets has not changed and a new model has not been developed yet. She remarked that in the context of economic crisis, scepticism, resurgence of nationalism and local identities especially in Europe, it would be more and more difficult to find funding for new types of exchanges.

In her view, however, exchanges such as conferences we already had would still be possible because there was still the enthusiasm for the cooperation between China and Europe but it is not granted for the long term. It could always change.

Mr Edoardo Guglielmetti

Network and Project Manager, the European New Towns Platform (ENTP)

Mr Gugliemetti considered that we could at least start with providing training classes and research projects for the stakeholders, which might be able to gradually solve the financial problem.

Ms QIU Aijun

Deputy Director General, China Center for Urban Development (CCUD), National Development and Reform Commission in China (NDRC)

Ms QIU said the funding issue should not be a concern or an obstacle in EU-China cooperation because when a city needs wisdom and experience, it would be amenable to offering financial support. She also added that "do not worry about money; we would like to get things done eventually."

Mr CHEN Yan

Executive President, the China-Europa Forum

Mr CHEN Yan noted that this meeting was the first-ever follow-up organised by the CEF and the CCUD to the EU-China Partnership on Urbanisation. It proved to be an important and successful starting point of the cooperation between the two organisations.

The CEF would regard the issue of urbanisation as one of its systematic projects and one of its comprehensive dialogues. The CEF team would like to build and maintain this platform to promote better exchanges and dialogues and facilitate pragmatic projects on urbanisation between Europe and China.

Meanwhile, he said that the CEF would like to participate in the EU-China urbanisation summit in 2013, and expected further cooperation with the CCUD.

Mr Pierre Calame	President, the China-Europa Forum Foundation, President of The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH)
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Mr Calame concluded that we are at a historical moment of building together a collective think tank for the future, centred on the role of cities and on sustainable transition, and that we should not miss it. Instead of being an individual platform, the CEF is a collective platform which involves common commitments of everyone from both the Chinese and European sides.

Though old and tired, Mr Calame would continue to work on a volunteer basis to share his wisdom and expertise to the EU-China urbanisation cooperation in the future.

Other participants included Mr **Jacques Saint Marc**, Delegate of the President of the Interdepartmental Steering Committee, France; Mr **Jean René Brunetière**, French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Territory Management; Mr **TAN Xuewen**, Associate Research Fellow, Rural Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS), Secretary-General of the Chinese Society of Foreign Agricultural Economy; Ms **Matilda Sanden**, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Sweden; Mr **Edouard Laurent**, Project Manager, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL) and University of Lausanne, Dept. of Environment Sciences; Ms **Lauriane Lahery**, Project officer of the ENTP; and Mr **Remi Ferrand**, Urban Expert of the ENTP.

China Europa Forum
April 2013