

Report of the 1st meeting of the EU-China Higher Education Platform for Cooperation and Exchange (HEPCE) in the framework of the EU-China HPPD

Thursday 25 April 2013

Bilateral meeting between VMOE Du Yubo and DG Truszczyński (Flagey VIP Room Diongre/ 08:20 – 08:50 am)

DG Jan Truszczyński and VMOE Du Yubo had a short meeting before the opening of the HEPCE event. They were both accompanied by delegations of senior officials. After brief welcome remarks and mutual congratulations on the satisfactory progress of the EU-China High Level People to People Dialogue (HPPD) – implemented via a number of joint actions including the EU-China Tuning project, respective scholarship schemes and the forthcoming language initiative to train Chinese teachers of lesser spoken EU languages, due to start in July 2013 – DG Truszczyński and VMOE Du recalled the importance of the HEPCE to increase the compatibility of EU/China HE systems. The two parts committed to exchange updated data on EU-China student mobility. The meeting was followed by a short visit to the university exhibition set up in the entry hall of the Flagey building.

HEPCE Presidents' Dialogue (Flagey, Studio 1/ 09:00 – 15:40)

Some 170 people (approx. 2/3 from Chinese universities and 1/3 from EU universities, plus Chinese officials from MOE and CSC/China Scholarship Council, EU officials from DG EAC and EEAS and representatives from EUA and ACA associations) participated in the meeting.

The **opening session** was introduced by Mr H. Hartung with welcome speeches by DG Truszczyński and VMOE Du. DG Truszczyński referred to the positive results achieved so far by the HPPD-related actions and recalled the main objectives and modalities of the HPPD mechanism, which should serve as a guide for the identification and production of future outcomes. VMOE Du pointed out the need to move forward in the EU-China dialogue by extending the scope of our higher education cooperation to cover emerging disciplines and enhance joint studies on respective education systems with a view to increase mutual understanding.

The **keynote speeches** by Prof. <blank>, President of EUA, and <blank> Secretary-General of CSC provided statistical data and general information on the activities and achievements of EUA in Europe and CSC in China. The two interventions highlighted the growing importance of academic international strategies with a global perspective, the need to further develop platforms for multiple university cooperation in research education on the basis of disciplines and the need to promote international students' mobility with particular focus on the mobility from the EU to China.

The Presidents' Dialogue continued then with three consecutive panel sessions:

Panel 1: Models for EU-China Joint Higher Education Schools and Institutions: experiences and challenges

This panel, moderated <blank> (Deputy Secretary-General, CSC) aimed to present positive experiences and challenges linked to the development of EU-China joint schools and institutions. Presentations concerned the EU-China schools CESL and ICARE, the Sino-French Engineering School, the Nottingham Ningbo University and the Sino-French Institute of Nuclear Energy and Technology. The main recommendations, which emerged from this panel concerned:

- the need to enhance multidisciplinary training (engineers/managers are in great need) and soft skills (capacity to interact between cultures) with a view to fostering graduates' employability;
- the need for long-term and strategically planned cooperation to build mutual trust and obtain effective and sustainable results;
- the need for more collaboration and less competition, which could translate into more effective mechanisms for mutual degree recognition.

Panel 2: China-EU Cooperation in degree programmes and joint supervision of postgraduate students

This panel, moderated <blank> (Rector, Université Libre de Bruxelles) aimed to present concrete examples of China-EU cooperation in degree programmes and joint supervision of postgraduate students. The following examples were presented: Double Master degree programme in law with university of Göttingen, China Platform at the Ghent University, Joint PhD training Program of the East China Normal University, Queen Mary (University of London), Joint programme with Beijing University of Posts & Telecommunications, Tongji University joint programme with European Universities (Germany, France, Italy and Finland) and KHT Royal Institute of Technology's Sino-EU Engineering Education platform. The main recommendations which emerged from this panel concerned:

- the need to continue cooperation, which shall be based on the principles of equality and joint benefit;
- the need to choose the right partners for cooperation, in order to make sure that programmes are sustainable, meet the global challenges and bring out the best of both education systems;
- the need to maintain a strict quality control system and to facilitate credits transfer and recognition;
- the need to find appropriate financing for present and new initiatives (also involving the private sector), as well as to make visible existing financing opportunities.

Panel 3: Current situation and opportunities for China-EU cooperation in the field of European studies and Chinese studies

The Centres of European Studies of Renmin and Sichuan universities, the Beijing Foreign Study University Teaching & Research Consortium for EU Language & Culture, the VUB Centre for Contemporary China Studies and the Sino-German Research Centre of Göttingen University presented concrete examples of China-EU cooperation in the field of European studies and Chinese studies. A presentation of the Jean Monnet programme complemented the previous information with an update on the latest developments of the EU leading action in the promotion of EU integration studies. The main recommendations, which emerged from this panel concerned:

- the need to update present cooperation (through joint academic projects, joint research teams, joint consulting activities for governments and enterprises...);
- the need to do more than 'occasional cooperation' and to increase areas of cooperation;
- the need to increase knowledge about China in Europe (there is presently a cognitive asymmetry: more knowledge in China about Europe than in Europe about China);
- the need for Chinese Universities to make further use of the possibilities offered by the Jean Monnet programme/activity.

EU-China TUNING Workshop (Flagey, Studio 2/ 14:00 – 15:30)

The workshop was attended by approximately 15 tuning experts, both from China and the EU.

<blank>, Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies at the Groningen University and co-coordinator of the consortium that is preparing the joint study EU-China Tuning on request of the Commission stated that the Tuning Study has been set-up in close consultation between the EU and the Chinese authorities for a number of reasons, the most important of which is the strengthening of the compatibility of the EU and Chinese Higher Education. The approach followed will allow developing a 'common language' that will facilitate mobility, cooperation and mutual recognition from China to the EU and vice-versa. The joint study is co-coordinated by Prof. Xianjin Dou from China.

Three subject areas were chosen for the tuning exercise: Business Administration, Education Sciences and Civil Engineering. The three groups are coordinated by three leading Chinese universities:

- Business Administration: Xi'an Jiao Tong University, Xi'an; <blank>;
- Education Studies (Comparative Education): Beijing Normal University, Beijing; <blank>;
- Civil Engineering: Tong Ji University, Shanghai; <blank>.

On 23/24 March 2013 a preparatory meeting took place at the Xi'An Jiao Tong University in Xi'An, in which the Tuning methodology was presented and discussed. The methodology defined implies that for each subject area a so-called meta-profile or conceptual framework will be drawn up, which includes the mapping of the profession, the mapping of each discipline/subject area, the identification of generic competences and subject specific competences, the consultation of stakeholders on the basis of questionnaires on specific and generic competences, the identification of key competences on the basis of the outcomes of the consultation process and the identification of appropriate teaching, learning and assessment approaches/strategies on the basis of discussion and reflection.

Presentations were made on the generic and specific competences necessary for the 3 chosen areas of study. <blank> proposed the alignment of the list of generic competences for the three areas in order to facilitate comparison. This was discussed and accepted during the learning visit to EU HEIs (Groningen, Ghent and Bilbao) that followed the workshop. The consultation of stakeholders will start at the end of May/beginning of June. Results will be analysed in July. The study is expected to be completed by April 2014.

Bilateral meeting between VMOE Du Yubo and Commissioner Vassiliou (Berlaymont / 12:00 – 13:00)

The bilateral between Commissioner Vassiliou and VMOE Du Yubo took place in a friendly atmosphere. Commissioner Vassiliou referred to the recent appointment of Madam Liu (her counterpart in the HPPD) as vice-premier and expressed the wish to continue to interact with her in future. VMOE Du assured that Madam Liu will continue to be involved in the HPPD and recalled that his visit was in the framework of the 10th anniversary of the EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership. Commissioner Vassiliou recalled the recently launched “A new narrative for Europe” project aiming to propose a new vision and identity for Europe’s culture and cultural values. The two leaders referred to HEPCE as an important instrument to make EU and China HE systems more compatible and support collaborative projects. They also expressed satisfaction on the HPPD's progress and its follow-up actions and views on future perspectives. The next HPPD meeting is expected to take place in China in spring (May?) 2014 and on that occasion its frequency (annual or biennial) will be discussed. Forthcoming activities include the continuation (and possible broadening) of the EU-China Tuning exercise, the language initiative for Chinese professors of lesser spoken EU languages and the implementation of the U-Multirank project. Commissioner Vassiliou informed that a letter was recently sent to the MOE to stimulate the participation of Chinese universities in the U-Multirank exercise.

HEPCE Policy Dialogue (Flagey, Studio 2/ 16:00 – 18:20)

Approximately 25 people participated in the policy dialogue, in representation of Chinese MOE and CSC, DG EAC, EEAS, EUA, ACA and a couple of university representatives. The policy dialogue – co-chaired by MOE DG Zhang Daliang and DDG Xavier Prats-Monné - started with reports from the Presidents' Dialogue panels

(by Mr Wächter and Prof Zhu) and from the TUNING Workshop (by Prof. Wagenaar and Mr Dou). Then four presentations followed, namely by <blank> on international exchanges and cooperation of Chinese Higher Education, Prof Guo on Internationalisation of HE – Chinese universities' perspectives, Mr Hartung on the European HE in the world and <blank> on the U-Multirank initiative. Then the two co-chairs gave presentations on the reform and development of Chinese higher education and the modernisation of higher education in the EU.

Conclusions by Chairs

The Policy Dialogue allowed drawing from the multiple inputs received during the day and within the session to formulate a number of conclusions:

- The first **HEPCE** meeting was constructive and offered the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices. HEPCE meetings should therefore continue in future;
- the **TUNING** China exercise is proving to be very effective in its initial phase. Therefore it should be considered enlarging it in future to further areas of knowledge;
- **QA** criteria are not yet fully compatible between the EU and China. Further work and research on this matter could prove important to ensure the quality of student and staff mobility in future, as well as the development of excellence in academic teaching. The QA conference (Bxl 25 June) targeted to ASEAN countries could represent an appropriate forum to discuss these issues.
- Importance of having Chinese Universities participating in the **U-Multirank** exercise.
- Need to make more **visible** the opportunities for mutual student and staff exchanges between EU and China also to respond to current mobility flow imbalance.
- The **second HPPD meeting** could take place in China in spring (May?) 2014. Its future frequency (annual or biennial) will be discussed on that occasion.

These conclusions will have to be agreed in the next weeks on with the Chinese MOE.

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