

# GROUP T'S NEWSMAGAZINE INTERVIEW

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Ms. Xu Lin, Chief Executive of the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing and Prof. Johan De Graeve, President and Chief Executive of GROUP T and Chairman of the Confucius Institute at GROUP T.

2009 JOINT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AT GROUP T  
LEUVEN, OCTOBER 18 TO 20, 2009

## Connecting & Developing

From October 18 to 20, 2009, GROUP T was host to the first Conference of the European Confucius Institutes. The directors of 64 institutes from 20 countries gathered in Leuven to share ideas and experiences and to strengthen existing ties. Also the top of the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing, led by Chief Executive Ms. Xu Lin, and the presidents and vice-presidents of 13 prominent Chinese universities participated in the conference, which focused entirely on the theme 'Connecting & Developing'.

**W**orldwide, there are 282 Confucius Institutes (CIs) active in 87 countries. Of these, there are 94 in Europe spread over 29 countries. The majority of them were represented in Leuven, which immediately made this first European CI Conference the largest regional CI meeting in the world.

Prof. Johan De Graeve, President and Chief Executive of GROUP T and Chairman of the CI at GROUP T, gave the welcoming speech during the opening ceremony on October 18. "China is at the center of our attention," President De Graeve started. "There were the impressive Olympic Games in Beijing last year, next year the World Fair will be held in Shanghai, and in October the Europalia festival China began here in Belgium. In other parts of Europe as well, China has also been in the spotlight. In Frankfurt, for example, a long

exhibition dedicated to China with the theme 'Tradition and Innovation' is just coming to an end. Whereas in Frankfurt 'tradition' was given more significance, we here in Leuven want to place the emphasis firmly on 'innovation'.

### Breeze of innovation

Subsequently, President De Graeve delved more deeply into the conference theme itself. "Innovation does not happen behind closed doors. Many companies and organizations that still cling to the traditional 'invention model' base don the idea that renewal is first and foremost a private affair, an internal pursuit. That is no longer the case. Recently, the multinational corporation Proctor & Gamble introduced a radical strategy of open innovation based on the concept of 'Connecting & Developing'. It firmly abolished resistance

to change and created enthusiasm for 'proudly found elsewhere'. 'Connecting & Developing' is all about finding good ideas elsewhere, bringing them together, and in this way raising the level of internal capacities. This model works. Today it is responsible for more than 35% of all innovations at Proctor & Gamble, creating a turnover of millions of dollars. We are convinced that the approach of 'Connecting & Developing' will create a fresh breeze of innovation and growth to invigorate the CIs of Europe."

### Roots in China

'Connecting & Developing' may well be a recent model of innovation in the corporate world, but its roots, according to President De Graeve, reach far back in time. "They go back to what was already well known in China millennia ago. >>



>> Kon Fuzi was convinced of the connection of things, of the connection between nature and culture and the reciprocal bond between human and cosmos, and his ideas remain vigorous both inside and outside China. The essence of the Confucian lifestyle is respect in the broadest sense of the word: respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for our ancestors, respect for the material and the spiritual, respect for the past, present, and future. Why? Because we are all one. One dream, one world, one word: one!”

Next, President De Graeve considered the important conference topics: “The ten-year plan of the CIs, the training of local Chinese teachers, the strengthening of the social role of the institutes and the development of didactic material and resources through ‘Connecting & Developing’, in short ‘code’. You may have read The Da Vinci Code, but I’m speaking of the ‘Confucius Code’. Through this Code we will discover what binds and brings us together. We will discover, or perhaps rediscover, and develop our intrinsic Chineseness, our intrinsic togetherness.”

### Trinity

In the final part of his speech, President De Graeve made the link with GROUP T. According to him, it is in no way a coincidence that this first European CI Conference is being hosted by GROUP T in Leuven. “You may be familiar with the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity, which consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Well, it is a Confucius trinity that has brought us together today. The father, that is Zhou Ji,

the Chinese Minister of Education, whom I have known for a long time and would like to thank on this occasion for a wonderful and longstanding collaboration. The holy spirit in action is Ms. Xu Lin, Chief Executive

“ Through the ‘Confucius Code’ we will discover what binds and brings us together ”

of the Confucius Headquarters, and may I humbly ask to be considered your host, and the son of this trinity. Because we connected and developed you can all be considered as their daughters and their sons.”

### Keynote speakers

After President De Graeve’s speech, five other keynote speakers followed. First came Mr. Yves Leterme, Belgium’s Minister of Foreign Affairs. He welcomed the international gathering and pointed out the century-old bonds between China and Belgium, a relationship according to the minister that is becoming increasingly more important.

Baring witness to this is the intensive collaboration between the Chinese and the European universities. “It does not matter how slow you go, as long as you don’t stop,” the minister believes.

HE Mr. Zhang Yuanyuan, Ambassador of China, in whose presence the CI at GROUP T was opened in November 2008, pointed out the important role the CIs play in bringing Europe and China closer together and in advancing their mutual understanding. Also, according to the Ambassador, the three institutes that are active in Belgium are doing excellent work in promoting the Chinese language and culture.

Mr. Louis Tobback, Mayor of Leuven, said he was honored that such a great and prestigious gathering could take place in his city. “Despite the fact that we only have 95,000 inhabitants, Leuven distinguishes itself as an international meeting place of 142 different nationalities. Also, contacts between Leuven and China are increasing, thanks in part to the efforts of the University and GROUP T.”

One of the first partner universities of GROUP T in China is the Beijing Jiaotong University. Vice President Chen Feng spoke on behalf of the University. He thanked President De Graeve for his efforts to spur on the Belgian-Chinese cause, a contribution for which he was awarded an honorary doctorate in China. According to Vice President Chen, further shared expertise must be developed so that the students, both Belgian and Chinese, are “encouraged to cooperate internationally.”





### Cultural platform

The final keynote speech was delivered by Ms. Xu Lin, Chief Executive of the CI Headquarters. She believes that the CIs in Europe and elsewhere around the world must be the platforms on which intercultural exchange takes place. Learning the Chinese language and culture is important in this, but it must be reciprocal: China would also like to learn a great deal about the ideas that are alive elsewhere. It is time, according to Ms. Xu Lin, to think far into the future. That is why conferences such as this one have been organized in seven regions all over the world. The concerns and advice voiced in these contexts will be discussed at a worldwide conference in which the further development of the CIs will be the key issue. In view of the conference, GROUP T surveyed 500 young

young age. The survey further shows that 40% of those surveyed have positive attitudes towards China. After a first contact, the appreciation increases to 56% and after a second visit this number increased even further to 67%. Sixty percent of the young Belgians interviewed would like to go to China on holiday, 24% would be interested in going to China to study, and 17% would be willing to live there.

### Best practices

With the motto 'Experience sharing', six best practices were introduced during the conference, and this was done by Mr. Federico Masini, Director of the CI at the University of Rome; Mrs. Dagmar Yu-Dembski, Executive Director of the CI at the Free University of Berlin; Mr. Zhu Zhiwen, Director General of Xiamen University Council; Mrs. Katharine Carruthers, Director of the CI at Specialist Schools and the Academic Trust (UK); Mr. Hamar Imre, Director of the CI at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary; and Mr. Wim Polet, Director of the CI at GROUP T. Each presented his or her most important accomplishments as well as his or her plans for the future.

On the second day of the conference, the participants were divided into four work groups that discussed the aforementioned conference topics. During the final day, the conclusions of the sessions were presented by Ms. Jin Siyan, Director of the CI in Artois (France); Ms. Stefania Staffuti, Director of the CI at the University of Turin (Italy); Mr. Verner Worm, Director of the Copenhagen Business CI

(Denmark); and Mr. Nicholas Byrne, Director of the CI for Business London. Important conclusions included the advice not to emphasize only learning the language but also studying China and its culture, further training local Chinese language teachers, developing localized didactic material, and promoting cooperation with local government organizations "using technology and e-partnering."

### Professional organization

The closing ceremony was led by Mr. Zhao Guocheng, Deputy General Director of the CI Headquarters. He used as his starting point the mission of the CIs: forging strong bonds between people who love the Chinese language and culture. Extending this network further into the future is essential. Therefore, according to Mr. Zhao, the CIs must be well embedded in the local community and the various processes must be linked: training teachers, developing teaching material and drawing up tests. But also looking for extra means will become an important task. This means that the professionalization of the local staff must be continued further. It is also the intention of the CI Headquarters to develop model institutes that can serve as an example to the others. Finally, Mr. Zhao thanked GROUP T for the hospitality and the professional organization which ensured that the first Joint Conference of Confucius Institutes in Europe was a great success.

Y.P.

“ Extending this network further into the future is essential ”

Belgians. The purpose of the survey was to probe their knowledge, appreciation, and perception of China, and the results were presented during the opening ceremony in the presentation 'Looking for China'. From the study, it appears that one out of four young Belgians thinks it advisable that children learn Chinese at school from a



# Connecting and Developing

**Johan De Graeve, PhD**

*President – Chief Executive of  
GROUP T*

*Chairman of the Confucius Institute  
at GROUP T*

*Deputy-Chair of the Human  
Resources Promotion Committee,  
Confucius Institute Headquarters  
Senior Consultant to Hanban*



**H**.E. Zhang Yuanyuan, H.E. Yves Leterme, Mrs. Xu Lin, Mr. Breyne, Mr. Tobback, Mr. Ning Bin, Ladies and Gentlemen, China is at the center of our attention. There were the impressive Olympic Games in Beijing last year, next year the World Fair will be held in Shanghai, and in October the Europalia festival China began here in Belgium. In other parts of Europe as well, China has also been in the spotlight. In Frankfurt, for example, a large exhibition dedicated to China with the theme 'Tradition and Innovation' is just coming to an end. Whereas in Frankfurt 'tradition' was given more significance, we here in Leuven today, in the coming days and in the future, want to firmly put the emphasis on 'innovation'.

Innovation does not happen within closed doors. Many companies and organizations still cling to the traditional 'invention model' based on the idea that renewal is first and foremost a private affair, an internal pursuit. That is no longer the case. Recently, the multinational corporation Procter & Gamble introduced a radical strategy of open innovation based on the concept of 'Connecting & Developing'. It firmly abolishes resistance to change and created enthusiasm for 'proudly found elsewhere'. 'Connecting & Developing' is all about finding good ideas elsewhere, bringing them together, and in this way raising the level of your internal capacities. This model works. Today it is responsible for more than 35% of all innovations at Procter & Gamble, creating millions of dollars of turnover. We are convinced that the approach of 'Connecting & Developing' will create a fresh breeze of innovation and growth to invigorate the Confucius Institutes of Europe.

Even though 'Connecting and Developing' is a recent model of innovation within the world of business, its roots go much deeper. They go back to what was already well known in China millennia ago. Kong Fuzi was convinced of the connection of things, of the connection between nature and culture and the reciprocal bond between human and cosmos, and his ideas remain vigorous within and outside of China. The essence of a Confucian lifestyle is respect in the broadest sense of the word: respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for ancestors, respect for the material and the spiritual, respect for the past, present, and future. Why? Because we are all one.

Comrades of Confucius,

By **connecting** with  
Confucian Chineseness  
we are **developing**  
Cosmic Consciousness

Connecting & Developing shall  
be the new Confucian Code

'Connecting and Developing'. Under this motto we will deliberate today and in the next few days on a number of important topics: the ten-year-plan of the Confucius Institutes, the training of local Chinese teachers, the strengthening of the social role of the Institutes and the development of didactic material and resources and through 'Connecting and Developing' – in short 'co-de' (you may have read The Da Vinci Code, but I'm speaking here of the Confucius Code). Through the Confucius Code we will discover what binds and brings us together. We will discover – or perhaps rediscover – and develop our intrinsic Chineseness, our intrinsic togetherness.

It is no coincidence that the first Joint Conference of the European Confucius Institutes is being hosted by GROUP T here in Leuven. You may be familiar with the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity, which consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Well, it is a

Confucian trinity that has brought us together today. The father, that is Zhou Ji, the Chinese Minister of Education, whom I have known for a long time and would like to thank on this occasion for a wonderful and longstanding collaboration; the holy spirit in action that is Mrs. Xu Lin, Chief Executive of the Confucius Headquarters, and may I humbly ask you to consider me, your host for the coming days, as the son of this trinity. Because we connected and developed you can all be considered as their daughters and their sons today.

The friends of our friends are also our friends.  
Die Freunde unserer Freunde sind auch unsere Freunde.  
Les amis de nos amis sont également nos amis.  
De vrienden van onze vrienden zijn natuurlijk ook onze vrienden.  
Péngyǒu De Péngyǒu Yě Shì Wǒmen De Péngyǒu.

## GROUP T AND CHINA

As an international university college, GROUP T stands out for its innovative view on enterprising engineering education. Engineering (embracing technology, management, and communication) is enhanced by Educating and Enterprising skills, enabling students to Ensemble; to become one with the Environment.

GROUP T has forged an extensive network across China and South-East Asia. Each year numerous Chinese students obtain an undergraduate or graduate degree at GROUP T in joint programs with prestigious universities all over China. Situated in the heart of Europe, GROUP T today serves as the gateway for Chinese students to all of Europe, and increasingly, for Flemish students to China. In the last 10 years, GROUP T's China Journey Project has brought more than 2000 students and faculty to China.

In recognition of GROUP T's strong alliances with the world of enterprise, its president was offered the cochairmanship of the UNESCO Chair on Cooperation between Higher Engineering Education and Industries, which was inaugurated at Beijing Jiaotong University in 2005. At the same time, GROUP T has appointed several Chinese citizens to its Board of Directors and its General Assembly.

For other initiatives, GROUP T has teamed up with China's Ministry of Education. In 2004, GROUP T and the China Scholarship Council launched the Hongzhi Engineering Scholarship Fund for brighter but less affluent students. In 2007, the GROUP T–China–Academic Alumni Alliance was founded in the China Club in Beijing. And in 2008, GROUP T celebrated the inauguration of the first Confucius Institute in Flanders.

# The ancient link between Belgium and Confucius

**Yves Leterme,**

*Prime Minister of Belgium*

*Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium*

**D**ear President, Dear Chief Executive, Dear Mayor, Your Excellencies, Dear Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
There is an ancient link between Belgium and Confucius.

Philippe Couplet, a Belgian missionary born in the town of Mechelen, devoted most of his lifetime to China. Couplet was instrumental in introducing Chinese thought, Confucian philosophy, and Chinese medicine to the European intelligentsia of his time.

In 1654, he attended a lecture right here, in the city of Leuven, by the Italian Jesuit Martino Martini, an historian and cartographer working in China. This aroused Couplet's interest, calling him to leave as a missionary for the distant Middle Kingdom.

His most famous legacy was the first western translation of Confucius' works in 1687, of which Couplet was the principal editor. It was called *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Confucius, philosopher of the Chinese). The preface had nothing but high praise for Confucius, calling his moral system "infinitely sublime, at the same time simple, sensible and drawn from the purest sources of natural reason."

Indeed, the contribution of Confucius' thought to the development of western science, philosophy, and the development of sinology cannot be underestimated.

Confucius always put the greatest emphasis on study, and indeed his famous *Analects* start with the Chinese character for 'study'. At the same time, he struck a fine balance by saying that "learning without a thought is labor lost, but thought without learning is perilous."

The teachings of Confucius are not only important to academics, but also to political leaders. In his view, the ruler should learn self-discipline, govern his subjects by his own example, and treat them with love and concern.

Coming back to today, it gives me great pleasure to be present at the opening of the first conference of the European Confucius Institutes.

It is fitting that this historic event takes place here, in the prestigious academic city of Leuven, and more specifically at GROUPE T-International University College Leuven, which has a long history of cooperation with China and its universities.

Generally speaking, academic relations between the Chinese and Belgians are becoming ever more intensive. We have witnessed in recent years a tremendous increase in the amount of energy and commitment dedicated to China by Belgian universities. Many have a permanent representative in China and new connections are established almost every day. I am sure that the same applies to other European countries.

We are living in times where cultures are cross-fertilizing relentlessly. What is defined in the view of our citizens as modern, does not necessarily originate anymore from Europe or the United States, but from all over the world, and increasingly from China.

Chinese students in ever greater numbers are coming to

Europe to live an enriching experience. However, this is far from being a one way street, because of the different points of view and approach they offer Europeans.

I feel that the study of the Chinese language, traditions, and practices will become ever more important topics in the curricula of European universities and schools. In this century, more than ever, Europe and China can learn from each other.

Only last week, I attended the opening ceremony of the Europalia Festival. Through a variety of high-level cultural manifestations, it not only focuses on prestigious historic artifacts and things of the past, but also demonstrates that China is omnipresent in our hearts and minds and, indeed, in our vision of the future. This future also lies in the hands of the Chinese and European students learning at each others' universities.

The excellent Chinese-Belgian relations were demonstrated during the successful recent visit to Belgium of His Excellency Vice President Xi Jinping, who was accompanied by a number of officials and a large trade and investment mission. During his stay, the Vice President rightly affirmed that people-to-people contacts constitute an important base. I fully subscribe to this.

Indeed, international relations are not only about political, high-level contacts and volumes of trade exchanges or other forms of economic cooperation; the contacts between people and, more particularly,

the exchanges between the academic circles, whether professors, researchers, or students, are of great importance as well.

By the way, during his visit to Leuven last week, the Chinese Vice President kindly offered a present to the young winner of the eighth Chinese Bridge, an international competition in Chinese eloquence for university students. I would like to commend the excellent contribution of the Confucius Institutes to such cross-cultural interaction.

The participants of this Conference have a substantial agenda before them. The interaction between the Confucius Institutes Headquarters, the directors and deans of the Confucius Institutes in Europe, and a wide array of Chinese universities, provides a unique opportunity for Connecting and Developing, as illustrated by the well-chosen motto of the Conference.

Distinguished audience and dear friends, the number of famous citations by Confucius seems almost endless. He wrote, for example, this wise proverb: "It does not matter how slowly you go, as long as you do not stop." However, let me reassure you that this is not my intention this evening.

I would therefore like to conclude by wishing you very fruitful proceedings and a memorable conference.

Thank you.



# The Confucius Institute, an **effective platform** for people outside China

Zhang Yuanyuan,  
Chinese Ambassador to Belgium



**T**he Honorable Yves Leterme, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Respected Mayor Louis Tobback, Respected President Johan De Graeve of GROUP T, Madame Xu Lin, National Director of Hanban, Friends, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Good evening. Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Belgium, my warmest congratulations for the opening of the conference and my cordial welcome to each and every participant coming from Europe and from China.

The Confucius Institute provides an effective platform for people outside China to learn the Chinese language and to become familiar with Chinese culture. Since the first of its kind came into being in June 2004, 282 Confucius Institutes and 114 Confucius Classes have been established around the world. Three such Institutes are here in Belgium. They have done a remarkable job of popularizing Chinese teaching and learning, and promoting a better understanding of China among the Belgian people.

Not long ago, Vice President Xi Jinping of China paid an official visit to Belgium where he met with the Chairman of these three Confucius Institutes and presented them with a valuable gift: a set of tools from the Chinese Culture Experience Center. Hanban, which is represented here by its national director Xu Lin, has made a strong commitment to helping the Belgian Three with their cause by, among other things, agreeing to have the current conference held here in Belgium. It is my sincere hope that the Belgian Three will take this good opportunity to learn from the useful experience of their counterparts, and will continue

“ Turn schools into successful examples of educational cooperation and inter-civilization dialogue ”

to flesh out their curriculums, improve their schools' facilities, and reach out to even broader communities.

It is also my hope that Confucius Institutes in Europe will take full advantage of the continent's fertile soil of culture and human development and turn their schools into successful examples of educational cooperation and inter-civilization dialogue.

May I conclude by wishing our distinguished visitors a successful conference and a warm and pleasant stay in Belgium.

Thank you.

# Welcome to Leuven

**Louis Tobback,**  
*Mayor of Leuven*

**Y**our Excellency, Madame President, Mister Minister, Distinguished guests coming from all over Europe (if I understood it correctly), Ladies and Gentlemen,

My intervention will be very brief. It is before all else an expression of our gratitude, of our appreciation for the fact that the Confucius organization, Madame President, has chosen this city, Leuven, to organize this international conference—once more, if I understood it correctly, the first European Congress of Confucius Institutes.

It is a pleasure, it is an honor, it is a privilege from more than one point of view. It meets the ambitions of Leuven; a city that wants to be an international place even as a small city. I don't dare to tell our Chinese guests that we are a city of 95,000 people. How can I explain to you that, with those 95,000 people, we are the fourth city in Belgium—not in Belgium, in Flanders!

Once, not so long ago, I was at a meeting of international districts of creativity. I was at a dinner with the vice-mayor of Shanghai. At a certain moment I had the really daring idea to ask him how many people are living in Shanghai. He said: "19 million". At that moment I just said to myself, "I hope he is not going to ask how many we are."

We feel very honored to have you here, especially to have the organization here. As you of course already learned from this meeting, we put the Son of the Trinity at your disposal; this is very important and has to be appreciated.

The contacts between the city and the People's Republic of China are multiplying more and more. In the

first place because of the university, but also because of GROUP T and other organizations, on different occasions. It has already been mentioned that, last week, we had the honor to have his Excellency the Vice-President of the People's Republic of China here. It was a very, very important and special occasion. Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to attend, Mister Ambassador, and I want to present my apologies for that, but it really did not fit into my agenda. But it stressed once more the already ancient relations, as the Minister explained, of the city, and especially the university, with China. Two days ago, for the second time, I met an astronaut from China—I do not remember it, how do you call it, a taikonaut? (That was my first step in the Chinese language!)

So I wish you very, very successful proceedings. I hope this is once more, one more link between the city and China and the Chinese people.

You should know that we have 142 nationalities officially registered each month. So the 95,000 cover 142 nationalities from all over the world – a very multicultural city and we want to keep it like that. It is very important to know that, each month there is a kind of competition on which is the largest group. It is always between the Chinese and the Dutch, and, given our special relationship with the Dutch, we always hope that the Chinese are the most numerous group!

Thank you for your attention!



“  
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”

# Beijing Jiaotong University, a Confucius Institute partner

**Chen Feng,**

*Vice-President of Beijing  
Jiaotong University*

**D**ear distinguished guests and friends,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good evening! On behalf of Beijing Jiaotong University, I am honored to be able to take this opportunity to say a few words to you.

Beijing Jiaotong University is a multi-disciplinary, national key university in China with a history of 113 years. The university is known for its strong telecommunication, information engineering, and railway transportation curricula. It has made significant contributions to the economic and technological progress of China. For many years, the university has fostered a great number of technological talents for China's economic development. Our professors and scholars have been major driving forces of such grand, national projects as the Qinghai-Tibet Railways, the super high-speed trains, the Olympic venues, and clean-energy solutions.

Beijing Jiaotong University attaches great importance to international cooperation and exchange. Step-by-step it is progressing towards the goal of building a research university that is 'first-rate in China and well-known in the world'.

Although known traditionally as a technology school, Beijing Jiaotong University has been putting great effort and investments in her disciplines and programs in the humanities and social sciences. The harmonious and complementary development of technology and art programs is a key element in the comprehensive development strategy of the university. The Confucius Institute at GROUP T in partnership with Beijing Jiaotong University not only sets a good foundation for this strategic goal, but also broadens the vision for international cooperation.

Beijing Jiaotong University and GROUP T have gone through a cooperation route of over ten years, consisting of 91 graduates in a joint international education project; joint management of the UNESCO Chair of Cooperation of Engineering Education and Industries; joint guidance of more than a 1,000 Belgian students visiting China; etc. On this solid foundation, the opening ceremony of the Confucius Institute at GROUP T was held on November 20, 2008. Beijing Jiaotong University is the Chinese partner of this Confucius Institute. The establishment of this institute is another important achievement of the long-time cooperation between our two universities.

All the colleagues in our two institutions agree that we should put forward our common professional expertise as the unique feature of our Confucius Institute: engineering education as a perfect combination and embodiment of the cultures of the two nations. Chinese young people full of upward mobility and enthusiasm will become competent doers under the influence of the strict and realistic Belgian professors. Modest and polite Belgian students will become excellent bridges



between and contacts for Sino-Belgian relations when having profound understanding of the rich Chinese culture. We will meet China's national macroeconomic policies; comply with the mission of the Confucius Institutes; associate all aspects of the cooperation of our two institutions with the engineering feature of our Confucius Institute; and cultivate more and more engineers familiar with Chinese culture and Belgian culture. It's like the 'T' in 'GROUP T': the horizontal line represents broadness; the vertical line depth. Our Confucius Institute will adopt the philosophy of 'broad comprehensive knowledge and deep theoretical foundation' as the direction for education.

The common strength of our two universities is engineering education. Engineering is not simply about mathematics, physics, or chemistry. To foster a qualified engineer, we need to provide our students with training in science and technology, management, communication skills, teamwork, ethics, professionalism, human relations, international exchanges, etc. The economic globalization demands that our students have a cross-cultural vision and capabilities that cross boundaries. This should become a special task for our Confucius Institute. At the same time, we need to fully carry out the basic work of dissemination and education of Chinese language and culture. Although language and culture education is not one of our strengths, we have the responsibility and the capability to accomplish the task. We have 57 years of experience in international student education. Now we have about 500 international students from more than 80 countries. We offer Chinese language courses and faculty resources for international students; have organized three International Culture Festivals; and send volunteer faculty members abroad. Besides, we also send more than 10 students to GROUP T each year, pursuing degree studies. They can help to improve the strength of our Confucius Institute and to coordinate all kinds of work.

Beijing Jiaotong University is willing to give full support to the cultural exchange and communication work of the Confucius Institute.

Recently, we discussed the International Class Program with GROUP T. We hope that through this opportunity, this new cooperation mode, we can further promote innovation and development of international education cooperation and exchange.

Please allow me hereby to express my sincere thanks to President Johan De Graeve of GROUP T. Our cooperation so far would not have been as smooth and successful without his tireless efforts and outstanding contributions. For his significant contributions to the cooperation between our two universities, Beijing Jiaotong University has nominated President De Graeve for an Honorary Doctorate. The nomination has been approved by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council of China. An awarding ceremony will be held at Beijing Jiaotong University in December 2009. Let us extend our warm congratulations to him.

It is a great honor for this young Confucius Institute to hold this Joint European Conference of Confucius Institutes. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Hanban for their trust and guidance; my sincere thanks to the Chinese Embassy in Belgium, and especially the Education Section for their full support; my sincere thanks to the colleagues of our partner of over 10 years, GROUP T, for their all-out effort; and my sincere thanks to all the attendants of this conference for your kind cooperation and presence. On behalf of the staff and students of Beijing Jiaotong University I cordially wish this conference to be a complete success!

Thank you for your attention.

# Objectives of the Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes



**Xu Lin,**  
*Director-General of Hanban*  
*CEO Confucius Institute Headquarters*

**D**ear President Johan De Graeve, Distinguished Ambassador H.E. Zhang Yuanyuan, Distinguished Minister H.E. Yves Leterme, Distinguished Mayor Mister Tobbback.

I found it very interesting that you made a comparison between Leuven and Shanghai, but actually, I feel the opposite of what you concluded holds true.

This afternoon, we went to the Confucius Institute (CI) in Brussels to attend the celebrative concert for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Republic of China. After the concert, we rushed downtown. Upon arrival at the Grand Place, I realized that Belgium is a country with a lot of cultural depth. Seeing is believing. Although I only spent an hour between the Cinquantenaire Museum and the Grand Place, I really found it very striking and it made a very strong impact. I felt that Belgium is incredibly great, although its population is not as big as that of Shanghai. However, your culture can absolutely be compared to the Chinese one, and is even better than that of Shanghai. Take for example the places where Victor Hugo wrote and that little coffee shop. And remember, Marx and Engels are still very great men in the eyes of the Chinese people: their thoughts, their works have affected us Chinese, generation after generation. So when we saw the site in the House of the Swan where Marx used to write and the Grand Place where the Communist Manifesto was completed, I was really very astonished. I had heard of them, but had never seen these places myself. The following also left a very strong impression this afternoon: the parliament, a church, several community organizations of various enterprises, as well as many well-known small restaurants, all clustered in a place less than one square kilometer in size. All testified to the depth and tolerance of its culture, and its long history.

Regarding the Confucius Institutes (CI), they bear the mission to disseminate Chinese culture throughout foreign countries. We established over 280 CIs in 87 countries in less than 5 years. Throughout this process, we experienced that Chinese culture is deeply profound, but that the diversity of other countries' cultures is even more colorful—especially European culture, and more specifically Belgian culture.

“ Discuss together how we can run the Confucius Institutes better and how Chinese can cooperate better with foreign parties ”

13 Chinese institutions of higher education are represented at this conference, including Xiamen University, one of the 30 highly respected provincial-level universities in China. Its vice president, Professor Zhu Zhiwen, is here with us today. He shares my sentiment that we had not realized that we Chinese need to learn many things from other countries until we went through the procedure of running the CIs with foreign partners. This is true especially in the cultural, ideological, and speculative areas, especially regarding the language system and aspects of humor. For instance, Chinese used to say that strangers meeting for the first time become acquaintances during

the second contact, and good friends the third time around. But when we meet with foreigners, especially with African friends, we become good friends even upon the first contact. Therefore, I think China is still slow compared to foreign countries. We have to move faster to spread our culture all over the world. In this process, we must learn from your ability and qualifications when it comes to disseminating culture. Otherwise China will lag behind as far as the development of its culture goes.

The purpose of this conference is not to tell what China wants to say to the world, but to discuss together how we can run the CIs better and how Chinese can cooperate better with foreign parties. Via the platform, bridge, and window of the CIs, we would like to find out how we can enable people all over the world to communicate more and enter into dialogues on cultural context, ideological aspects, ways of thinking, and value orientation. This is the real purpose behind establishing the CIs. In the past and for a long time, at least within the last 500 years, the world acknowledged that Europe was the center of culture. Whether you are talking about philosophy or history, Europe has always taken the lead, especially since the Renaissance. I think this is true even today.

As we all know, at the end of 2008 state councilor Liu Yandong attended the Confucius Institute Annual Conference as the president of the Council of the Confucius Institute Headquarters. He also perceived the enthusiasm amongst people from all countries to become acquainted with the Chinese culture and language. But he pointed out that, although thousands of attendants were all very positive and enthusiastic, they were not given adequate time to express their views. Therefore, this year the Confucius Institute Headquarters organized additional regional confer- >>

>> ences. This conference in Europe is the last one of these 7 regional conferences. Chinese believe that 'the last laughter is the best laughter', hence the last conference will definitely be the most important one.

At the Asian regional conference in Japan we were hoping to further consolidate the Asian countries through the platform of CIs in Asia, but the representatives of Pakistan and India did not even shake hands or talk. But, at the end of the conference they hugged one another goodbye and we felt that this Asian conference had been a success.

At the conference in Australia and New Zealand, people talked about how to promote mutual trade and how to train more business personnel through CIs, making better use of the resources in Australia and New Zealand.

The attendants at the Russian conference were mainly from the Far East. The Russian-speaking countries thought it more convenient to meet together because of their common language and similar problems. One of these is the selection of teaching materials: Russian-language ones are in great shortage and the attendants expected to find solutions by compiling teaching materials faster through the conference.

Most of the Latin American countries were invited to attend the regional conference of Latin American countries held in Spain. This allowed them to see how Spaniards run CIs so that they themselves could set up CIs more quickly.

At the conference of African CIs, it was discussed how China can support Africa better in terms of budget and teaching staff. At the conference in 2008, African representatives presented strong arguments and expressed their concern. The difficulties were shortage of funds, lack of venues, ignorance when it comes to organizing conferences, and being far-removed from China. However, at the most recent conference in 2009, they were all extraordinarily happy and satisfied with the great support provided to all African CIs and with the efforts of the past year.

In contrast, the Chinese teachers we sent to Africa in the past, especially several of our female teachers, could not help bursting into tears when we met, because their stay in Africa had been too harsh. Many Chinese teachers are from supporting universities in large cities. They are not only bilingual or trilingual with excellent English and/or French, but are also able to teach the Chinese language in Africa. When working in Africa though, their income, opportunities, and even social circle decrease a lot, while risks increase to some extent. But they set out to African countries with confidence after the gathering.

Now that we are holding this European conference, we would really like to hear your experiences and find out what benefit we can derive from them to solve

the problems linked to our future development. More importantly, we would like to find out what we should say during the global conference of CIs in December 2009; what the topics suitable to all countries could be. Also, what work Europe, as the cultural and ideological center par excellence, should do; what efforts Europe should make; and what Europe should contribute to help the Confucius Institute Headquarters provide good service and good administration to the CIs all over the world.

I would like to stress again that the purpose of our conference is to learn from you all. Firstly, facing the shortage of teachers, how can we recruit more local teachers?

Secondly, with regard to teaching materials, at the Confucius Institute Headquarters there is currently a great shortage in staff for editing teaching materials. We would like to call on the European CIs, as you have the ability, the experience, and the potential, to help CIs in developing materials taking into account the local situation.

Thirdly, on the network of CIs, we have made great efforts in setting up five mirror stations globally, whose power and service coverage technically

“ The Confucius Institutes are the institutions bearing the mission to disseminate Chinese culture throughout foreign countries ”

exceeds CCTV.COM. When looking at the software on this network, it looks like a new road with only a few vehicles—far fewer than adequately meets the needs of our CIs, and sometimes it can even be called a mess. How can we help the CIs on this network with resources to deliver more global services?

Fourthly, regarding the new HSK test, and especially the test for pupils in primary and secondary schools. Because many European schools have started Chinese language courses, both parents and pupils want to know the student's level of achievement as it is a motivating factor in the study of the Chinese language. Then what would be an appropriate test for European primary and secondary schools, matching the capabilities of its pupils?

Fifthly, regarding how the CIs can serve greater communities: how they can extend to secondary schools

and how a CI can operate as a company, to establish Confucius Classrooms. That is, the CIs run as groups, centered upon themselves on a platform of secondary schools and radiating to all communities.

Sixthly, regarding the CI's planning. China has its own characteristics, that is, a five-year development plan is always drawn up at the beginning of every five years on which basis ten-year prospects are made. All Chinese industries are making development plans that run up to the year 2020. We, the CIs, cannot lag behind. So I hope that the European CIs' representatives here are wondering: "How should we draw up our ten-year plan? How can we develop ourselves?"

In short, I expect that in these next days, I will be able to learn more from you, from your experiences in particular, so that we, the Confucius Institute Headquarters, can bring our services to a higher level.

Thank you!



# 2009 JOINT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AT GROUP T TESTIMONIALS

**Federico Mansini,**  
*Director of the Confucius Institute at  
the University of Rome La Sapienza*

**S**ir, Minister, Dear Ambassador, President, Ms. Xu Lin, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a great honor for me to be here and to have the opportunity to give a short speech about our Confucius Institute (CI) at the University of Rome, which was established three years ago.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza was entrusted by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), in cooperation with Beijing Foreign Language University. The institute was formally established on September 29, 2006. Since then, we have organized seven Chinese language classes with over 1,000 students. Our courses include Beginners Chinese, Intermediate Chinese, Advanced Chinese, Business Chinese, and Chinese for Children. We also collaborate with government agencies and schools to organize Chinese language courses for them. For example, we offer these for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and secondary schools. In addition to Chinese language teaching, we also attach great importance to the promotion of Chinese culture. Since its formal establishment, the institute has organized nearly 30 cultural lectures and events, such as the picture exhibition in celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Cultural Salon of Dragons Boat Festival, and so on. In addition, with the support of the Education Office of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Italy, we have organized a few sessions in Italy of the qualifying competition for Chinese Bridge (the Chinese proficiency competition for foreign college students) and the Chinese Proficiency Test. We have attracted a lot of attention, established a good social network, and produced solid economic returns. As a result, the Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza received the Confucius Institute of the Year Award from Hanban both in the year 2007 and in 2008.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza is progressing steadily, due to the strong support from Hanban in funding, personnel, equipment, and in many other aspects. In other words, Hanban is the cornerstone of our institute's achievements. Furthermore, we carried out a series of management practices, which also contributed to improving the institute's quality.

I would like to say a few words about the teaching practices and administration of our CI.

First, regarding the self-positioning of our institute. The Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza positioned itself very precisely. In preparation of the institute's establishment, we did a lot of research into the Chinese language schools in and outside of Rome. Our CI was positioned as a 'formal and flexible Chinese language teaching unit'. We set up an office, library, and classrooms especially for the CI, and hired a part-time secretary to assist the director. The institute developed a website to promote the CI even before its formal establishment. To attract more students, rather than publishing advertisements randomly, we posted well-produced, formal messages at different universities in Rome and published advertisements in the most important and most popular newspapers. With regard to registration, we adopted a formal and flexible approach. The students can register either at the institute or online, while the tuition fees are paid by bank transfer. This latter point is also an indication of the formal position of the institute in Italy. Once they have enrolled, the students normally stay in the same class group. However, students are also allowed to change groups according to their



level. A graduation ceremony is held at the end of each term, and students receive a certificate issued by the institute stating they completed the course. In addition, the outstanding students receive a scholarship from the institute to study at the Beijing Foreign Language University.

Throughout the entire process—from attending the Chinese language course to receiving the certificate—the Chinese language students should always be able to perceive the difference between the CI and other

“ **The idea is to expand the social visibility and impact of the Confucius Institute at the University of Rome and to establish a sort of brand of Chinese teaching in Italy** ”

language schools. On the one hand, the CI is supported by the Chinese government and hosted by a famous university in Italy, on the other, the CI has a formal and flexible administration procedure. Our good name has already attracted many students; especially after the great success of our very first term. Ever since, there has been a continuous amount of students transferring from other schools to our CI. It is this clear self-positioning that makes for the current size of the student body at our institute. Due to the global economic crisis in 2009, almost all Chinese language schools in Rome encountered difficulties in recruiting students. But the number of students enrolled at our institute has exceeded the 200-number, and is maintaining a steady growth.

Second, regarding the arrangement of curriculums. On the basis of the survey at neighboring Chinese language schools and an analysis of Italian students' characteristics, we divided the Chinese language classes into four levels: elementary, intermediate, advanced, and excellent. In addition, we have professional Chinese language classes such as a business Chinese class. Each year consists of two terms, with 60 hours for each term at four hours per week. As

far as arranging the timetable goes, we can organize courses during lunch breaks and also in the evening. The number of students per class ranges from 6 to 15. The planning of all courses is authorized by the institute, but teachers can adjust course hours depending on practical circumstances. For example, if the class is made up of elderly people, we can slow down the teaching process. Considering the difficulties they face in writing Chinese characters, we also allow them to use the alphabet during the examination. In this way, we make sure they do not lose self-confidence in learning the Chinese language.

Third, the teaching model. We have both Italian and Chinese teachers and each have different functions. Most Italian teachers are PhD students who majored in Chinese language and literature. They are responsible for the Chinese grammar and translation courses. They learned Chinese systematically and, Italian being their mother tongue, they can teach these two subjects, and at the same time make comparisons with Italian grammar. This can help students understand the new language better. The Chinese teachers are responsible for the teaching of pronunciation and communication. Living in Italy, there are few opportunities for our students to practice Chinese, while the most important goal in learning Chinese is to speak it and use it. The way of teaching meets the Italian students' demands, and as such it is well-received by them. Because we have the Italian teachers teaching grammar, the Chinese teachers have time to help students read text aloud and to organize oral sessions. In particular, we emphasize the cooperation between Italian and Chinese teachers and ask them to meet regularly to discuss any emerging problems. This teaching model was created in keeping with the specific situation of Italian students of the Chinese language. It is consistent with the characteristics of Italian students, and as such very effective.

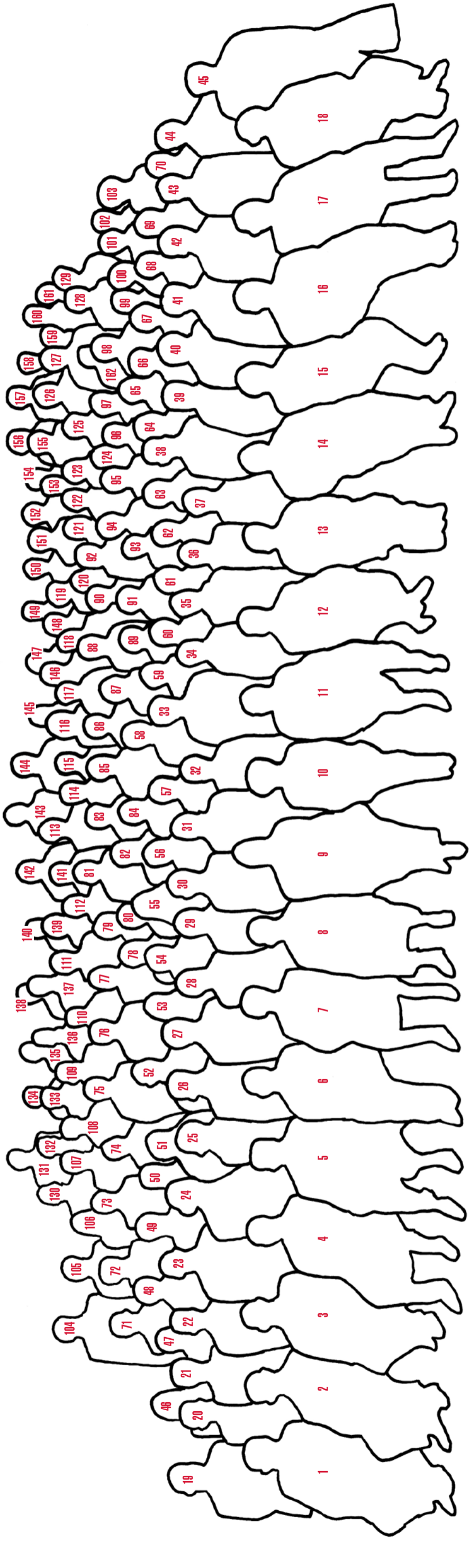
Fourth, teachers' administration. With the exception of teachers sent by Hanban, all the teachers at the Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza are selected through a formal recruitment examination and this every semester. To ensure that candidates have experience at teaching the Chinese language, a serious assessment of their academic qualifications and teaching experience is made before this examination. The teachers who pass receive a training session before each course. This training is organized by the Chinese director of the institute and aims to introduce all course details they should pay attention to. We also developed an evaluation form with regard to pronunciation, the quality of instruction, etc. Each semester, at the end of the course, we invite students to evaluate their teachers. This evaluation forms the basis for prolonging their contract.

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>> Fifth, the teaching materials. The textbook we use is Italian People Learn Chinese, edited by myself. It was published two years ago by an Italian publisher of textbooks, and nearly 10,000 copies have been sold so far. One important reason for the textbook's success, is the tripartite cooperation it was based on. The first party consisted of foreign teachers like me who have personal experience at learning Chinese. The second party was made up of Chinese teachers who understand Italian and have long been engaged in Chinese language teaching in Italy. Professional Chinese language teachers in China formed the third party. This tripartite cooperation makes our textbook both comprehensive and focused, suitable for both Italian teachers and students. In addition to the Italian People Learn Chinese textbook, we also use other specialized teaching materials. Depending on the course content these can be multimedia materials, newspapers, and/or journals.

Sixthly, future development. Based on the success of the various types of regular Chinese language courses, we plan to further expand the social impact and size of our CI. First of all, in terms of teaching activities, we actively cooperate with a number of secondary schools to offer them a variety of Chinese language courses. This to set up a group of Confucius Classrooms as soon as possible. Secondly, in terms of cultural activities, we took the chance of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the China-Italy Culture Year to invest more effort and funds in carrying out a number of social activities with a broad social impact. The idea is to expand the social visibility and impact of the Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza and to establish a sort of brand of Chinese teaching in Italy. Thirdly, in terms of teaching and academic research, we hope to further provide more opportunities for our teachers to receive professional training and to participate in aca-

demical conferences. Thus, we hope to encourage them towards greater enthusiasm for research into Chinese language teaching and Chinese studies. Developing teaching aids and educational software, preparing teaching materials, and writing papers will help to improve our CI's teaching practices and academic research, and will help train a top-rate and stable team of teachers.

The success of the Confucius Institute at the University of Rome La Sapienza could not have been achieved without the hard work of both Chinese and Italian teachers of the Chinese language, without the close collaboration with the other CIs, and, especially, without the great support from Hanban. We hope that in the future we can achieve a yet higher goal in running the CI and make an even bigger contribution to the teaching of the Chinese language and the promotion of Chinese culture.

**Dagmar Yu-Dembksi,**  
*Executive director of the Confucius  
Institute at Free University Berlin*

**D**ear Mrs. Xu Lin, Dear Ambassador Zhang, Honorary Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives from the European Confucius Institutes, Colleagues from the Confucius Institute of Leuven,

I am greatly honored to have the opportunity to speak for the Confucius Institute at Free University Berlin on this first Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes (CIs). My short speech will deal with the topic of strengthening the social service function of the CIs.

The Berlin CI has been around for more than three years now and even though we have received the award of model institution twice, we think we should still enhance our efforts to promote Chinese language and culture. We wish to share our experiences with all of you and are eager to discuss further concepts concerning the social function of the CIs.

Maybe you remember the movie *Lost in Translation*; directed by Sofia Coppola and with Scarlett Johansson in the part of a young married woman with a rather busy husband. Staying in Tokyo in an anonymous hotel, she feels lonely and excluded from her surroundings. She cannot find anything that is familiar to her. That is why she is 'lost in translation'. I would like to tie in on this idea and give my speech the title: *Overcoming Being Lost in Translation*.

Transmitting culture has been defined as a soft power strategy. It is an important component of China's strategy of building friendly relations between all nations. Part of this strategy is the establishing of CIs to promote Chinese language and culture. These institutes have been compared with institutions like the German Goethe Institute, the British Council, or the Instituto Cervantes. All these institutes pursue the same basic idea: to foster and enhance the knowledge of their language and culture. From my point of view, the Chinese CIs have a specific task as most of them are organized around intercultural cooperation. What does this mean and how can we serve as an intercultural transmitter?

Our experience has led us to develop a concept combining Chinese language teaching and the arranging of cultural events. Of course, each CI has different prevailing conditions, so the chosen concepts have to

refer to the given situation. But as the CIs differ from normal private language schools, they act as bridges between two or more cultures. This requires thorough comprehension and sound knowledge of both cultures and also understanding of the particular characteristics of each culture.

Keeping these premises in mind, the CIs have to take into account the needs of the local communities and analyze their interest in China. What do they know about China and Chinese culture? How can we motivate them to attend our cultural events and apply for our language courses? Based on our experience, we use a step-by-step concept and tie in on their existing knowledge, pointing out the similarities and differences between the two cultures. Sometimes we even tackle existing stereotyped biases and prejudices.

Assuming that most of the local public only has limited knowledge of Chinese calligraphy we start by making them curious about Chinese characters. For example we ask them: "Why do the Chinese people still use those traditional characters for writing? Isn't it more practical to use the Latin alphabet?" Showing the lyric images in some characters (maybe 'leaning against a tree for having a rest'), we give the participants of our lessons and events a feeling of the magical beauty of Chinese characters. The next step could be explaining Hanyu Pinyin or using the computer for writing Chinese.

Another example I would like to give, is the focus on the similarities and differences. Last year we arranged a theme exhibition on Peking opera. Most of our local public doesn't have any serious knowledge of this kind of music. That is why we first talked about West-

ern opera, for example Italian opera, and then asked a Chinese singer to give a performance—first singing some arias in Chinese, then in German. That was a great, cheerful surprise.

The third example I would like to give, is to tie in on perhaps existing stereotypes and try to break down those prejudices. As some of us recently visited the Frankfurt Book Fair, we have been confronted with ideological and political discussions. In my opinion the CIs do not only promote Chinese language and culture, they also build bridges between cultures and nations. For example, to start up a discussion about differences and similarities, we talk about Western and Chinese cooking and eating habits. (I will not refer to the question: "Do Chinese really eat dogs?") We talk about likings and non-likings, about different and similar habits, and their social reasons.

I would like to quote Claudio Magri, the Italian writer from Trieste, who was just awarded the prize for peace by the German book traders. When asked about his view on China, he stated: "We should discover the unknown on the other side to understand it one day as our own."

In this way the Confucius Institutes are acting as cultural translators. Speaking different languages and living in different cultures we should not get 'lost in translation'. It is our task to promote Chinese language and culture by intercultural relations and intercultural communication; to overcome being 'lost in translation' by mutual perception and with enthusiasm for this exciting goal.

Thank you for your attention!





**Zhu Zhiwen,**  
*Director-General of the Xiamen  
 University Council*

**D**ear Madam Xu Lin, Director-General of Hanban, Chief Executive of the Confucius Institute Headquarters, Dear H.E. Mr. Zhang Yuanyuan, Ambassador of the PR China to Belgium, Dear H.E. Mr. Yves Leterme, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Dear Dr. Johan De Graeve, President of GROUP T, Dear Mr. Louis Tobback, Mayor of the City of Leuven, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

I am pleased to be able to attend the 2009 Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes and to give a speech on behalf of the Chinese institutions here in order to exchange ideas and explore understanding and experiences on developing Confucius Institutes (CIs).

Xiamen University is one of the universities in China under the special development plan of both the 211 Project and the 985 Project. Since the day it was founded in 1921, Xiamen University has put forward 'speaking out clearly on world culture' as an important motto in running the school. It has consistently carried out the work of international promotion of the Chinese Language, and has gone all out to promote Sino-foreign educational and cultural exchange and cooperation. To date, Xiamen University has established intercollegiate, cooperative relations with more than 150 internationally renowned universities and has established ten CIs throughout the world. It is encouraging to see that, due to the mutual efforts of both Chinese and foreign institutions, the development of these CIs yields progress and encouraging achievements.

Next, I would like to report all the relevant circumstances of Xiamen University's cooperation with the European universities in setting up CIs.

#### **1. Development planning aimed at rational distribution and orderly development**

In today's world open doors, cooperation, mutual benefit, and win-win concepts have become the common consensus in the international community. This results in more frequent global exchanges of ideas and culture; more inseparable inter-linkages between countries; and more dynamic exchanges and cooperation among universities. Taking into account this new situation, we put the establishment of CIs into the long-term development plan of the university. We seek to 'strive for the best', following the CIs' mission.

At present, among the ten CIs set up by our university, there are two in Asia, two in Africa, one in the American region, and five in Europe. The five in Europe are: Confucius Institute at University of Cardiff in the UK, Confucius Institute at the University of Trier in Germany, Confucius Institute at West Paris Nanterre La Defense University in France, Confucius Institute at the University of Wroclaw in Poland, and Confucius Institute at the University of Malta.

#### **2. Selection of director and teachers: aiming for the best and survival of the fittest**

Selection of an excellent director and excellent teachers for the CIs is the key element in running a good institute. We paid great attention to the open recruitment of a Chinese director and teachers. The fundamental qualifications for a Chinese director are: a love for the cause of international promotion of the Chinese language, being familiar with foreign affairs policies, a true pioneering spirit, good ability to coordinate and cooperate, strong administrative skills, and a feel for public relations. Fundamental qualifications for teachers are: overseas Chinese teaching experience or training experience of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and good communication skills.

For example, we selected the Associate Dean of the School of Foreign Languages, Professor Fu Si-Yi, to be the Chinese director of the CI at Cardiff University in the UK. The associate dean was at the time a visiting scholar at the University of Cardiff and familiar with local conditions. The Chinese teachers we sent

“ We put the establishment of CIs into the long-term development plan of the university ”

to the CI at Cardiff University are strong teachers from our Overseas Education College with extended experience in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. We appointed Professor Zhang Lilong of our English Department at the Foreign Language College as Chinese director of the CI at the University of Wroclaw in Poland. The professor started a close and open-minded cooperation with the Polish director, and soon brought the work to be done to a good end. We appointed Professor Yang Xiaoqing as Chinese director of the CI at the University of Trier in Germany. The professor worked together with the German director, Professor Liang Yong of the Department of Sinology at the University of Trier, to promote the expansion of the project and carry out effective work.

#### **3. Continuing exploration and innovation and striving for CIs with their own characteristics**

Innovation is the permanent moving force behind the CIs' sustainable development. We should start from the reality of different countries and actively explore the local cultural background. We need to set up the teaching and management mode according to the different levels and characteristics of the local people.

We need to carry out a variety of Chinese language and culture promotional activities in order to create a favorable atmosphere for the sustainable development of the CIs.

For example, the CI at Cardiff University, has opened a series of training courses for Cardiff University's Lifelong Learning Center including Beginner's Chinese, Improving Chinese, Intermediate Chinese, Advanced Chinese, Business Chinese, and so on. Meanwhile, the CI offered a basic Chinese optional course for the university's undergraduate students. It also provides Chinese language courses and consulting services for the local business people and public sectors. The CI at Cardiff University has been praised by the British Parliament, and is regarded as a successful example of global cooperation.

The CI at the University of Trier has organized intensive Chinese summer courses, international Chinese teacher training courses in Germany, and preparatory courses in China. It also successfully launched the eighth Chinese Bridge, the world qualifying match for university students, in Germany; the 2009 Chinese Language and Culture Seminars; tourism courses in Chinese; business Chinese; and so on.

The CI at Paris X University regularly organizes free basic Chinese language courses and a series of lectures on contemporary China for all university students and teachers.

The CI at the University of Wroclaw, Poland, held the first Wroclaw Chinese martial arts and basic Chinese-language courses after careful preparation and extensive publicity. These were welcomed enthusiastically by the Polish students and received a total enrollment of 42 students—the oldest participant being 60, the youngest 17 years old.

Our university will also make full use of the advantages of the comprehensive universities to regularly organize cultural performances and Chinese culture promotion by visiting groups. These will travel to different CIs around the world to perform and give lectures, demonstrating the charm of traditional Chinese culture.

#### **4. Promoting equal cooperation and striving for mutual benefit and common development**

The founding and development of the CIs is based on voluntary and equal cooperation, mutual benefit, and a win-win situation. During the founding process of CIs, we always cooperate closely and sincerely with partner institutions. In addition to sending the Chinese director and teachers, we do the best possible to offer information on Chinese books, Chinese teaching materials, and other support. The foreign partner institutions have also provided offices, classrooms, and other kinds of support.

>> Through the establishment of the CIs, Chinese and foreign institutions not only make progress in the international promotion of the Chinese language and Sino-foreign cultural exchanges, but also promote bilateral cooperation in personnel training, scientific research, and many other exchanges and forms of cooperation. For example, the University of Trier in Germany greatly helped us to establish a German language department at our university and offered training for our German teachers. The Paris X University carried out student exchange programs with us. The UK Cardiff University collaborated with us to start the Joint Master of Urban Planning Culture project, and so on.

#### 5. Supporting the building of infrastructure and striving for strong supportive services in situ.

In order to better facilitate the establishment of worldwide CIs and having secured talent and various types

of resources, Hanban approved the establishment of 8 Chinese Language International Promotion Bases in 2008. The south base is at Xiamen University. It covers an area of 33 hectares of land, and is a comprehensive base with a training center for teachers, a development center for teaching materials, a resources center, a distance learning center, and a cultural experience center. It can train at least 500 Chinese and foreign directors, 500 Chinese teachers, and 1,000 Chinese language voluntary teachers per year. It can also receive 5,000 foreign students for studying Chinese and experiencing the Chinese culture while in China.

During the past two years, thanks to the south base, we have successfully held a number of workshops for establishing CIs, for studying the problems during the development of CIs, and exploring possible solutions. In August 2009, the south base was also the host of the

2009 Chinese Language Voluntary Teachers Training for teachers who are going to CIs all around the world. 172 volunteers received a six-week intensive training. These volunteers head for the five continents and provide services for hundreds of CIs across the globe.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have already done some work to strengthen friendly cooperation, establishment of the CIs, and promotion of Sino-foreign cultural exchanges. It is a good start. As the old saying goes: 'Take another step from atop a hundred-foot high pole'. We would like to work together with colleagues from China or abroad for the prosperity and development of the CIs, in order to jointly build a harmonious world of cultural pluralism to which we can make our own contribution!

Thank you!



**Katharine Carruthers,**  
*Director of the Confucius Institute  
at Specialist Schools and Academies  
Trust UK*

We obviously want to look at the cultural dimension of the language classroom and also work very closely with Hanban. I will give some short examples. Some children who haven't really started Chinese, have the opportunity to go to China this summer to enjoy the Hanban-organized summer camps. Obviously, these combine two strengths: promotion and development. Promoting Chinese like this is a fantastic experience. The children often come back to school and start Chinese lessons.

The other key area for us to develop is a Chinese course in the curriculum. By that I mean not just as a cultural adjunct in the language classroom, but also in history lessons, in geography lessons, and in other lessons, so that it really is embedded in the curriculum of the school. To do that, we work with student events. We invited 250 students to come along and take apart. The academics presented their papers and then there was a debate. The level of questions from the young people was very sound.

So partners are very important, terribly important, especially on the Chinese side. We are working with partners, connecting with partners across the country.

CCs, I have already mentioned them. We keep on saying they are helped enormously by teachers from Hanban, coming from partner schools in China. We have hub schools in China who put forward teachers who go through the Hanban interview-process. Then, they come over to England for a whole year and are attached to a CC and help that CC with what we call 'outreach work': going to other schools, introducing Chinese, holding Chinese Days and introductions to Chinese lessons. Obviously, each CC has only two or three teachers. So we need the Hanban teachers to come in and help us with the development work. This year, for example, we are waiting for 21 more teachers to come.

We support all development in a number of different ways. We have 380 teachers on our e-mail forum in England. There are a lot of teachers; not all of them are very experienced, but they are very interested. Have a look at our website: you can easily join the forum because it is an international one, not one only for English teachers. We had six Chinese conferences. Our most recent one was in July 2009. Some other things we do: each term we help, we support the schools.

Our job is to help support schools to introduce Chinese. Not just to say: "Well, you go, get on, set it up." We want to solve the problem and also support them.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Good morning everybody,

I am the director of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Confucius Institute (CI), which is slightly different in structure to most of the other CIs. We are not a university, we are a secondary - school network in England. We network across England in all secondary schools and a lot of primary schools, and this in all curriculum areas.

We set up a Confucius Institute within this Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. We have the grand mission to secure a matrix among the many instances of Mandarin-Chinese teaching throughout our system so that by 2012, when we have the Olympics, every student who wants to learn Mandarin Chinese, has the opportunity to do so. But this may not be in their own school; we are not saying we are going to manage Chinese running across all schools in England. But we are going to do our best.

How do we work? Basically, in London I have a team of five people working on the project. We also run Confucius Classrooms (CC). We have 12 at the moment, spread out across the country. These first 12 CCs were chosen because they already have Chinese in the curriculum. They already have pupils taking Chinese exams at 16 and also at A-level at 18 years old. They have head teachers who are firmly committed to Chinese: they trained Chinese teachers who have been teaching for at least 10 years. And, obviously, they have partner schools in China.

What these CCs do is not just aim to get better within their own schools. What they have to do is help promote Chinese in their area. They work with what we call in English 'spoke schools': a hub with spokes

around it. These spoke schools need these CCs' help to introduce Chinese.

Obviously, none of this would be possible at all without Hanban, but also not without our main partner in China, Beida, or more specifically, as we are a secondary school organization, Beida Fuzhong. What we do is the following: we have 12 CCs in England and on the Chinese side the head teachers of Beida Fuzhong are working with 12 Chinese schools. So, we support each other: there is a network of classrooms or schools in China supporting our classroom work in England. At this very moment, people are visiting their hub schools in China. They are there for one week. They visit just the first five Chinese schools, but there are a total of 12 schools in China: in Beijing, Tianjin, and Chengde. This will expand-it is interesting to have network opportunities expand in China.

What we do in the center in London, is very important too. The most important thing for the language teaching is getting the teaching materials right; getting the teachers and teacher training sorted out; and getting the accreditation sorted out (we had a problem, but luckily we solved it). The fact that children who are taking Chinese at 16 get maybe a D for Chinese but an A for everything else, obviously does not help to develop Chinese. There are tensions with the children themselves and with parents too: "Chinese is too hard. We can't get the right levels; we can't get good marks in it." We did a lot of work with the exam board. We produced a text book without CC teachers, in conjunction with Pearson. We just produced the first three textbooks especially for children. And we are working on teacher training. We have both training and develop agencies in England. Also, with the London CI we have short-term teacher-training plans.

**Hamar Imre,**  
*Director of the Confucius Institute at  
Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary*

**F**irst of all, our Confucius Institute (CI) was established in October 2006, in cooperation with Roland University and Beijing Foreign Studies University. Our main activity is teaching Chinese. We organized Chinese language courses in 15 secondary schools and at 8 universities. In one of the secondary schools, the affiliated high school of Roland University, Chinese has become the second foreign language. We also organized a number of Chinese language courses for adults. Perhaps the most distinctive and the most interesting thing is that we contacted the Hungarian ministry's training center and organized Chinese courses for their staff. These were very popular: 107 people applied to learn Chinese and indicated it as their first choice. There is also a very unique case amongst the 8 universities I referred to: it is interesting to see that at the University of Defense, over 80 people applied for the course we organized. Not only the students, but also the teachers began to learn Chinese. By the end of 2009, the number of students reached 1,000.

Ms. Xu Lin, Chief Executive of Hanban, very recently attended the opening ceremony of our CI's first Confucius Classroom (CC), a Chinese Proficiency Test Center. The most special of our cultural achievements may be the fact that Roland University became a full partner of the Hungarian government when this government ran a Chinese Culture Festival in China in 2007. That year, we also became an official partner of the Chinese Ministry of Education when the Chinese government ran a Chinese Culture Festival in Budapest. We established a research center on contemporary China where monthly seminars are organized on current Chinese topics. We set up a library collecting information. Not only scholars and economists, but also sociologists come to find references there. We published a number of newsletters to introduce what our CI does and to introduce Chinese history and culture. Because we are currently the only CI in Hungary, we want to set up a network by establishing CCs. In this way, the people who should have the opportunity to learn Chinese can be taken into account. We should train professional personnel. Like other CIs, we may have some people coming in to help, but they are not professionals. Our aim is also to make Chinese the second foreign language in five secondary schools.

Hanban cannot keep on establishing CIs, but a network can be set up in Europe. 'Promotion of connecting by development and promotion of development by connecting': in fact, these two aspects and two words are closely related. We must be connected in the first place so as to further development. When we have furthered development we must again make more common connections.

**Wim Polet,**  
*Director of the Confucius Institute at GROUP T, Belgium*

**E**steemed Mrs. Xu Lin, Director-General, Esteemed Mr. Leterme, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Esteemed Mr. Tobback, Mayor of Leuven, Esteemed President Chen, Esteemed President Johan De Graeve, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank Hanban and President Johan De Graeve especially for this opportunity to introduce the Confucius Institute at GROUP T to everybody. The English name of our university college is GROUP T – International University College Leuven, everybody calls it GROUP T.

One day fifteen years ago in this season, I was driving at 2 in the morning from the Haidan District in Beijing to the Beijing Capital Airport to welcome a Belgian delegation. When this delegation arrived, it became clear



Next, I would like to report some of my personal experiences, which are not limited to our own CI. I know the situation of some of the other CIs, as I attend CI conferences every year. I will tell my experience in this domain.

Currently, Europe has more than 100 CIs and CCs, which operate in different ways. There are various focuses. Some may concentrate on teaching the Chinese language; others may focus on martial arts, medicine, or research. This diversity is an advantage of the CI and should be maintained.

However, there are some problems as well; for example, the infrastructure of CIs varies widely. Some may be very small with merely an office, whereas others may be very big and can easily be ranked as a model CI. Another problem is the lack of contact between the CIs or limited contact. Contact facilities covering the whole of Europe do not yet exist. I heard that even adequate contacts between the CIs within a particular country do not always exist. They do in some countries, but this is not sufficient. We should also pay attention to the following problem: the weak link to the local sinology centers. Sometimes problems or contradictions crop up.

So, is there anything we can do about this? As a first step, a website of CIs within the European Union (EU) should be set up. We have already officially registered [www.confuciusinstitute.eu](http://www.confuciusinstitute.eu). All of you are invited to provide us with information; we are willing to upload this to the site. In other words, the first step should be to establish an information center, so that we can begin to establish more connections. We can

also organize a European Association of Confucius Institutes, so that we do not have to rely on Hanban completely. This can be an independent association of our own that can help Hanban to coordinate even better. This conference has been very successful. We should hold such regional conferences within the EU regularly in the future. We can also consider a Confucius Institute Center in the EU, as there are so many CIs in Europe.

Regarding development, how can we promote it? By sharing information on different approaches to teaching and by sharing teaching materials. We can organize seminars to discuss topics such as: how to teach the Chinese language in Europe or in specific countries; what kind of method is used; what kind of problems appear—all these are possible topics for discussion. We can organize a number of projects together and thus enhance the efficiency. For example, when a delegation comes to Europe they can visit not just one, but many countries. If we set up the Confucius Institute Association of the European Union, we could apply for EU funding. We do not rely on Hanban only, but we can also have our own funds for the development of Chinese language teaching. Finally, we can also consider carrying out some research projects with sinology departments. If there are such opportunities, they will certainly be very happy.

Finally, as there are several bridges in Budapest, we can not only build bridges to connect with China, but we can also build some bridges connecting the EU countries.

to me immediately that it was a special delegation. They were making a special trip to China. Who was the delegation leader, then? It was GROUP T's founder and strategist, President Johan De Graeve. He had come to China to find partner universities. It was his first time in China and it was GROUP T's first step in its exceptional China cooperation.

Our first group of Chinese students were six students from Beijing Jiaotong University. They arrived in January 2001. Over the next ten years, many more Chinese students came to Belgium. At the same time, more than a thousand Belgian students went to China. In fact we should say that the Confucius Institute at GROUP T is a result of the strong cooperation with Chinese university partners. But if we hadn't been able to count on the support of Prof. Cha Jianzhong

of the Beijing Jiaotong University, and of Mrs. Xu Lin, Director-General of Hanban, and of Mrs. Xue Huanbai, in charge of the Chinese embassy education committee at the time, the Confucius Institute at GROUP T would never have come about.

The majority of the European Confucius Institutes were established in cooperation with the sinology departments at prominent universities. This is not the case with the Confucius Institute at GROUP T. It has an unconventional, radically different approach. How does it distinguish itself, then?

Allow me to briefly explain this to you. We have two different target audiences. One is the students and teachers at GROUP T, the other target audience is society.

>> First something on the service towards the students and teachers at GROUP T.

GROUP T has three colleges: Leuven Engineering College, Leuven Education College, and Leuven Anticipative Continuing Education (ACE-GROUP T).

The Chinese and Belgian students participated in a cross-cultural team building together, a cooking activity through which the Chinese and Belgian students gain greater insight into and a better idea of each others culinary habits and tastes. This activity had a strong result. At first there were students who did not want to participate. In the end, the students still had so much to say to each other that they lost track of time.

Every year, 150 Belgian engineering students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> bachelor year take part in the China Project. It is a two-week study trip to China. They get a China pre-departure training, in which they learn how to eat with chop sticks, learn how to count on their fingers, and to bargain. Furthermore, the students contact the companies they visit themselves and also map out the route. As a result, they learn a lot. Every year, there are fellow students from China to guide them.

Our Leuven Educating School, as the only one in Belgium, has begun preparations for starting a three-year Chinese teacher program. This is to prepare us for the near future in which lessons in Chinese can be offered in Belgian secondary education.

We are considering to set up a European Chinese Language Teachers Training Center at GROUP T. This approach has already been approved by Hanban.

ACE-GROUP T already started offering Chinese classes in the nineties. After the establishment of our Confucius Institute, Hanban was of great assistance in providing new educational materials and software.

The Confucius Institute at GROUP T also has external clients. This year, we organized initiation lessons



in Chinese, known in English as A Touch of China. In the 20-hour course using an electronic pen and other software, the lessons focused on learning how to communicate with Chinese people respectfully. By learning Chinese in this way, the students become interested and achieve good results. With a view to addressing the needs of entrepreneurs, we prepared a series of lessons to look at China through lessons in Chinese. The intention is to learn Chinese in a rather limited time. We help people who have to understand China in their professional capacity, to overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese and to understand as much as possible of China and the Chinese people in the little time they have. Getting to know Chinese culture and customs to improve their work and to make a difference as quickly as possible. This will allow them to study China with more interest and vigor, to make more Chinese friends and to accelerate their China business development.

For November, we have organized a first seminar named China Intensive in which we want to offer Belgian entrepreneurs advice on how best to cooperate with China in the framework of the Shanghai Expo next year.

Under the guidance and with the support of the Confucius Institute Headquarters, with the assistance of these conference participants and with our diligent work, we hope to be able to accomplish the above-mentioned approach.

Thank you all!



**Sophie Matthé,**

*Winner of the 2009 Chinese Bridge - Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students*

**C**hinese friends, Belgian friends, I am very happy to have the opportunity today to be with you. My name is Sophie and I am a Sinology student who has just graduated from the K.U.Leuven. In August, I participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> Chinese Bridge - Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students, organized by Hanban in the Chinese city Changsha. There were three parts to this contest, we had to give a speech, take a knowledge test, and present an all-round performance. There were 112 participants from 60 countries participating. The finals of the competition continued for an entire month with no opportunity to take a break.

I've had a Chinese dream since I was little: I wanted to go to China and to learn proper Chinese. To realize

this dream, I always pushed myself to study Sinology in Belgium first and then go study in China to get to know the Chinese culture even better. From 2007 to 2008, I studied at the Shandong University. That year I combined traveling and studying. From early in the morning to late in the evening I was in contact with Chinese people and my Chinese language skills became more and more fluent.

Since winning the Chinese language competition, many beautiful things happened to me. First, I won the title of Ambassador of the Chinese Language and I received a Chinese Bridge Scholarship for China. When, in Beijing, we and the other participants were given the opportunity to explore the culture, we visited the Confucius Institute Headquarters. Two weeks ago, I was given the honor of representing the

K.U.Leuven in offering a gift to Vice President Xi. Luck befalls me! Next year, in September, I will go and study at Beijing University. Then, my Chinese life will really take off.

Learning Chinese has given me a great deal of pleasure and has taught me to deal with challenges. I truly hope that in the future, like the Confucius Institute, I will be able to be a bridge of friendship between China and the world, carrying messages of peace and friendship. Let there be more foreigners starting to learn Chinese and let them enjoy the beauty of China.

Thank you all very much.

# 2009 JOINT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AT GROUP T

## CONCLUSIONS

**Jin Siyan,**

*Director of the Confucius Institute  
in Artois*

October 19, 2009, Group One, a total of 39 people from 20 Confucius Institutes (CIs) (Germany, France, The Netherlands, Austria, and Czech Republic), four Chinese institutions, and Chinese Hanban representatives, held a one-day discussion. Different CIs exchanged their rich experience and open-minded delegates spoke enthusiastically on the CIs' sustainable development model. They reflected and made recommendations. The first European Confucius Institute Conference is essential to the development of CIs. It is a very important platform for exchanging experiences, answering inquiries, and discussing issues. It would be very interesting to hold other regional conferences on thematic issues.

We divided the six issues at hand into two parts. In the morning we discussed the third, fourth, and fifth topic and in the afternoon the first, second, and sixth.

### **Topic 3 Training Local Chinese Teachers in Europe and Preparing Local Chinese Teaching Material**

Representatives were concerned about how to hire and train local teachers.

First, definitions: What is local? Non-native Chinese speakers or native Chinese speakers who understand the local culture through long-term study and experience at living abroad. If we want to develop high-level teachers, then we should concentrate on these two groups of people. We should have a local teacher training program in order to enhance cross-cultural communication skills. The training groups should consist of three components: local language-teachers with Chinese mother tongue, local Chinese-language teachers, and the Chinese teachers sent by Hanban. Teacher qualification and teacher training should be separated. The level of teachers and the issue of knowledge do not just come down to the simple problem of teaching materials. Hanban should be very strict about this. Teacher's 'localization' should be done through recruitment by local CIs. We need to consider how to make everything compatible: qualifications, professional education, teacher certification, and so on.

There can be two ways to do this. First, government control. The CI from The Hague suggested that the Confucius Institute Headquarters should be the only provider of Chinese teachers. Second, with partner institutions, train native teachers together during short-term and long-term training. Combine the long- or short-term employment of the Chinese teachers. The CI from Germany mentioned that the local Chinese language teachers with Chinese mother tongue had problems with the transition.

We now need knowledge and language training for cross-cultural communication. And I hope that the training can be focused so as to deal with these two aspects.

Some representatives reflected that the role of local CIs is in line with that of the host countries but does not replace it. They should work together; coordinating between Hanban and host countries. This should serve as a basis for creating innovative CI models.

### **Topic 4 Teaching Materials' Development and Sharing of Teaching Resources**

Developing Chinese language teaching materials will take time. It is better not to rush it. For example, it took more than 20 years for Spanish language courses to enter the German secondary schools.

The CI from Poitiers, France, pointed out that it is not enough to just teach Chinese. The publishing situation should also be discussed. Editing and proofreading constitute a very big workload. Design and layout



can be done by us. In the end, books should be published with some help from other organizations.

The CI from Paris VII, France, said: teaching material has its own characteristics. We need to use authoritative teaching materials. Also, we need to concentrate on the targeted group: intermediate students. Publications should be both theoretical and academic. The target group is not only the Chinese level-six students, but also the Chinese-language French teacher or scholar. We received positive response upon the publication and met high-level needs. We took advantage of resources such as bilingual French research journals.

With regard to local teaching materials, we can jointly develop these. We need to form a group of three participants for the preparation of teaching materials. We need to publish co-edited teaching materials to ensure they are scientific and authoritative.

“ We need the help from the Confucius Institutes Headquarters and coordination at all levels in the foreign universities ”

Do we need to develop universal teaching materials? Great Wall Chinese works very well, especially for France. It is not possible for one set of teaching materials to suit students of all ages. The characteristics of each CI are not the same. Great Wall Chinese language training is suitable for beginners. Cultural exchange and interaction are involved. Hanban did give great support. However, we didn't make full use of local resources, such as the German ones. They have a great deal of resources, and perhaps editors can add German factors to the teaching materials. Another issue is how to integrate the local teaching materials into the Hanban materials, for example, the European Times' adult classes and Chinese Angle. Such classes have no teaching materials but are in accordance with the model of scenarios. We hope Hanban can consider these kinds of models in the future. One representative suggested equipping CIs with karaoke machines.

Taiwanese teachers wish to participate in the activities of CIs.

The CI from Freiburg University, asked: "Besides the teaching of Mandarin, is it possible to promote a cer-

tain amount of minority-language teaching (Mongolian, Tibetan, Dai language, Uighur, etc.) in order to respond to the needs of society?" We all have teachers in this regard as well as some dialect teachers (Shanghai dialect, Cantonese, and so on).

### **Topic 5 Development of the Online Confucius Institute**

Online teaching and classroom teaching as a whole complete each other and are inseparable. Web-based teaching and online self-study should be separate. It is not simply online learning, but an interaction between teachers and students that is involved. Great Wall Chinese is a very good learning resource. The Chinese five thousand years' vocabulary should be put on the Internet for resource sharing.

### **Topic 2 Enhancement of the Community Service of Confucius Institutes: Confucius Classroom Establishment and Development**

The most fundamental exchange between countries is cultural exchange. We can cooperate with the help of local cultural and communication platforms such as the Paris Chinese Culture Center, the Netherlands Asia Center, the Asian Museum, and so on.

To determine the positioning of CIs: What is our mission? It is to establish a cultural exchange platform. (For example, the CI from The Hague has started a The Hague column; an Air Confucius forum; a photo tour: My Eyes of China.) Ms. Gong, from Beijing Foreign Languages Institute: "We have 15 Partner CIs and 12 of them are located in Europe. We have this geographical advantage, but we are more concerned about the exchanges between these CIs. We had a partly joint conference in 2007 and found out about their uneven development. We don't compete when it comes to recruiting numbers of students, but try to provide a higher service and higher levels. We have created four country seminars, platforms for mutual exchanges aimed at solving problems."

CIs' role should be an interactive one; center-coordinated through the help of a variety of platforms, subsidiaries, and complementarities.

Dean Cheng Aimin, from Nanjing University's Overseas Education: "The present developing layout is multi-directional. Once we start developing, we should do it well. It is quite difficult to make a brand. We need the help from the Confucius Institutes Headquarters and coordination at all levels in the foreign universities. Even more important is the coordination between us, the partner universities."

### **Topic 6 Introducing the New HSK and New YCT in CIs**

The CI from La Rochelle, Ms. Young: "The new test was very successful. Both high school students and >>>

>> adults like it very much. This successful experience involved cooperation with the Chinese teachers from the Sinology Department. It encouraged the students' confidence and this is the best result you can get. Relatively new kinds of questions also brought in a new way of thinking."

The CI from Paris VII, Mr. An Shaokang: "Surprisingly good experience: 75 students did the test and 90% of them scored more than 90 points. The principle of the test for the first and second level examinations, is to not make it too difficult because we need to encourage the beginners. This is very wise of Hanban. Analysis of the papers and French instructional leadership assessment are both in line with Chinese language teaching in France."

The drawback is: not enough publicity.

The key is to find ways to motivate candidates. The experience of CI The Hague is that you can do this by visiting schools. They analyzed 7000 primary schools and 700 secondary schools and got to know who was taking the HSK test: mostly students from Chinese schools. Then they went to the schools to explain the new tests and tried to motivate them. Also they tried to retain students through the new test.

Question: Are there any requirements for examiners? And is it possible to explain things a bit more in detail in the examiner's manual?

We shouldn't frequently change the administration fees. Keeping sustainability in mind, a certain amount should be charged, though.

We should provide standard examination question types.

Test centers must be established. There are only three test centers in Germany. But we do not need that many test centers, just to ensure the quality.

Examinations should be further improved upon. There must be a level description. Are there any classifications on arts and science?

#### Topic 1 Confucius Institute's Ten-year Development Plan

The speed at which CIs have been developing over the last five years and the results they yield are a cultural miracle. For the ten-year plan, CIs Headquarters should have a clear strategic plan. CIs represent China abroad, displaying its overall image and strength, health, and sustainability. The ways of the world are changing, from confrontation over dialogue to coop-

eration. CIs not only further China's development, but also the future world's development to reflect Chinese wisdom.

Wuhan University's vice president: "We need to pay attention to the following three issues: 1. Formulation of the development of CIs. We need to standardize all CIs. 2. The choice of this standard and the development of requirements to set up CIs. 3. There are many useful resources at each CI. We hope CIs can share these. We still do not share teachers or teaching materials."

The problem of teacher resources is more difficult to solve than that of teaching materials. We need to look at the agreement on the recognition of diplomas of Chinese students abroad. For example, China and France have signed the Sino-French Higher Education and Diploma Mutual Recognition Agreement in 2003. That's why a large number of university students went to study in France later on. France has strict qualifications for teachers, involving inter-governmental agreements. This is very complex and linked to many departments. We hope the Ministry of Education and Hanban can consult with the French side, so that teachers' resources can flow. Then, ten-years planning can be considered as possible.

Hu Chunchun pointed out the drafting of CI regulations. This is a full-time plan for the dean. At this moment we are lacking in communication. How to execute this plan? Europeans are not used to 'crossing the river by touching the stones'. Hanban should give a clear answer.

I hope Hanban can send notices in advance. Put us in the same position as that of foreign deans.

Teaching should be included in the agenda of the next conference.

We want to know the relationship between the sinology departments and the CIs. It is not possible to discuss this at this time.

The overseas Chinese cannot be ignored. Hanban should be clear about this. We had better pay attention to local Chinese newspapers and media. For example, send our highlights to newspapers such as the European Journal.

Some Chinese deans mentioned that they didn't have the required financial power; sometimes even

no budget at all. Can we set up a kind of funding? A part of the funding is fixed, such as the administration costs.

The ten-year development plan is too brief. What are the ideas of Hanban about the CIs' sustainable development?

#### Conclusion

Peace and cross-cultural dialogue are like stars leading our way to a constant, inspiring, and distant end. We are attracted to it like magnets. It is the reason why we work together, are responsible, and take actions.

Today, China once again responds to history. It hopes that the CIs will be China's peace and culture ambassadors throughout the world. After Zheng He's voyages, this is China's second large-scale fleet of peace messengers to the world. It attracts worldwide attention and has an enormous impact.

Looking to the future of the CIs, we hope:

**To establish a school of ideology and culture.** Our concern is to create a collective wisdom, to become thinkers and practitioners. We hope to establish a CI of the Chinese culture and a cross-cultural platform.

**To make room for an innovative and practical Confucius Institute.** We are concerned about the accumulation and sharing of Chinese culture in the world under the umbrella of various other cultures. CIs will use the method of dialogue and practice to provide a broad vision, alert observation, a flexible organization, and an involved development model for history and the modern world.

All participants used collective wisdom when establishing CIs and they are excellent cross-cultural and peace envoys. The Hanban team is open, effective, and flexible and as such they constitute our firm backbone.

The CIs' sustainable development is our common concern. CIs are built on the basis of interaction, complementary and collectively. Let us work together to invent new cross-cultural patterns in this collective adventure.

Thank to all the members of Group One. Thank you for your attention.

## Stefania Stafutti,

Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Turin

Good morning everybody, During the Monday workshops, we talked a lot and the discussion was lively, but because of time limitations, we will mention only some of the important problems.

Firstly, we discussed the educational material for primary and secondary schools. What is important here is the 'localization' of this material. Then, we also talked about the new professional compilation standards, without which this educational material cannot be used easily. In the third place, we discussed the matter of corresponding with foreign language-education regulations stipulated by local educational organisms. We think we should set up a committee for compiling educational material—especially in those countries of which the language is only spoken by a small amount of people, but that are at the same time very interested in the Chinese language.

My next point is about the teachers' training. We see two domains in the teachers' training. One is about the local teachers. The local teacher should comply with the local qualification standards for teachers. The teachers' training must meet a certain need. During the local teachers' training, local sinologists and Chi-



nese language experts with much experience should be involved and this within Hanban's cooperation framework of already existing international Chinese-language master degree programs and within China's national schools and universities.

Then we talked about the teachers sent by China. These should meet the local needs. The best is to select

graduates who studied the local language and who followed a training of teaching the Chinese language to foreigners. We need to consult other countries as well.

Thirdly, we talked about the topic of the Confucius Classes. These need to cooperate with primary and secondary schools with a basic Chinese language education. But they should also cooperate with other uni-

versities. Some universities do not have Chinese language courses, but probably they are very interested in China and its culture. Therefore we also need to cooperate with these universities. We need to cooperate with foreign language-organizations, and also consider the local extent of receptivity. Honestly speaking, we all love China and really like the Chinese language, but the Chinese language courses are not necessarily welcomed, especially at primary and secondary schools. This is something we really should consider carefully. There is quite an amount of problems on the side of society; we talked about this rather straightforwardly during the workshops. We could formulate it like this: one more Chinese teacher is one

fewer French teacher, or a teacher of any language that is not as widespread as Chinese. We should consider that, in other words, in the future Chinese language courses will not for sure be welcomed.

Finally, we also discussed the most difficult item, the ten-year plan. The ten-year plan should consider the future position and the most important goals of the Confucius Institutes (CIs): the decrease in financing by Hanban (we all considered this as very important); the setup of appropriate organizations to protect the quality of the institutes; the support for stability of the teaching resources. For the economic independence of the CIs, we need to develop courses and events for

societies with different demands; we need to have a mutual support model with the local universities' Chinese Studies departments; every CI needs to work on its characteristics; and, last, in the development of the CIs, quality should be crucial.

At the end of the workshop, we talked quite a lot about the CI online, but because of time limitations, I just want to mention the most important thing: the CI online should become an educational-resources glossary.

Thank you everybody!

**Verner Worm,**  
*Director of the Copenhagen Business  
Confucius Institute in Denmark*

**D**iscussion in Group 3

The core objectives of the Confucius Institutes (CIs) were touched upon several times during the session. Chinese core values should be connected with the teaching of Chinese language and culture. Both language and culture should be taught at a high level. An outline for a teaching curriculum is needed. Language will usually be the starting point, but—depending on the CI's profile—it can be wushu, music, etc. There should be specialized research at each CI according to its profile. Quality, instead of quantity, should be the leading principle of all CIs. (Especially in small countries it is difficult to reach high rates of participation.)

**Confucius Classrooms** should be established according to needs. They should target high schools and universities. Should the CIs be expected to administer them, then this considerably increases CI staff workload.

**CI teachers and staff**

Hanban has a pool of teachers. CIs should apply for teachers 1.5 years before the expected need. It would be good if the Chinese teachers could stay longer than one year, but it is probably not always possible due to their own career ambitions. It would be good if they could also bring their families with them.

However, because of increasing interest in Chinese language courses, there is a need for more teachers than what Hanban can provide. Therefore, training of local teachers becomes necessary. Another possibility is to send graduates to China for teacher training (for example at the Chinese partner university) and then take them back to be teachers for the CIs and other units. (Staff training for two months at the partner university was suggested.)



Training courses for directors should also be open to other staff, such as coordinators. Staff training could even be offered in China for all European CIs.

**Teaching materials**

Several CIs are developing teaching materials in their own language. They are needed especially in high schools. Textbooks are under preparation, even in martial arts.

Online courses can reach a large number of participants, especially in big countries or in large language areas.

Classifying library donations is very time-consuming. A joint basis for all CI libraries formulas could be created by Hanban, helping the classifying work.

**New HSK**

Many CIs offer language courses without credits. The

HSK exams can motivate students to study Chinese. The suggestion of a so-called degree\* was made, a degree certificate mentioning Chinese language studies.

**Ten-year plan**

It is important that the CIs receive official recognition as educational institutions, otherwise it is difficult to serve as an expert organization. There is still a long way to go. Teachers need to know local languages and need to be aware of local teaching methods.

Bergen CI has a plan for several Confucius Classrooms to be established in different places across the country. It also plans to start an overseas wushu center. Regarding the future development of CIs, open innovation is encouraged.



**Nicolas Byrne,**  
*Director of the Confucius Institute for  
Business, London*

**A**n “A – Z” of issues arising from the Leuven meeting.

**L**

Localisation and the importance of making things work for your area of activity, your clients, your workforce, your city, country and even neighbourhood. In short, getting the fit right between the overarching aims of a Confucius Institute (CI) and the needs of your clients. This affects visiting teachers who need special training in making sure they adapt to local conditions, but it conversely affects local teachers who must make sure they are brought into the brand. >>

>> **Q**  
Quality, and not necessarily quantity, is the immediate future. Consolidating on existing strengths, building up those that need to be improved. Teacher Training is key to ensuring quality with both pre-arrival and ongoing professional development programmes that may also link up to teaching qualifications available in the host country. Quality is also ensured by having a strong administration dedicated to the workings of a CI. Whereas the existing arrangement of a shared directorship of UK & China directors is still the best way forward – any permanent externally appointed director would both dilute and damage the working relationship between the partner universities. These directors generally will have – quite rightly – other China related responsibilities in their own home institutions, and therefore any extra Hanban funding should be directed to firming up/creating posts of CI Managers or Administrative Directorships.

**I**  
Individuality and Impact. This means looking at what you do and making sure it has a Unique Selling Point

(USP). Do what you and your home and partner institutions do best and bind it to the principles of CI's.

**C**  
Connecting with partner institutions to strengthen both national and trans-national organisations. Connect with the right people in your area: local government, governmental organisations, business, CI champions, and particularly language organisations such as CERCLES ([www.cercles.org](http://www.cercles.org)).

**D**  
Developing the brand, and working with all communities to make sure there is a range of high and low level activities to appeal to all sections of the community. It's not just about language, but language in a socio-linguistic context and inter-cultural communication.

**S**  
Schools: key to the future and necessary for future brand awareness and effectiveness. Developments in CLIL to ensure that China is embedded in the cur-

ricula, and becomes a mainstream not just an extra-curricular activity.

Sustainability: looking at your bottom line – not just in accounting terms but also in your aims and objectives. Could you survive without Hanban? Could you make a profit? You may not have the solutions but we have to ask the questions!

Streaming: LSE will look into the feasibility of live streaming of events to other CI's to create a sense of excitement and effective collaboration.

**V**  
The UK problem has to be solved – action has to be at the highest diplomatic level.

**T**  
Technology in all areas to play a bigger role in dissemination of CI activities.

Thanks for an amazing conference!



**Zhao Guocheng,**  
*Deputy Director-General of Hanban  
Deputy Chief Executive of the  
Confucius Institute Headquarters*

**H**onorable Director Johan De Graeve, Honorable Director-General Xu Lin, Dear representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,  
Good morning!

The 2009 Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes (CIs), after Sunday evening's opening, the one-day group discussions and the reports of these just submitted by the various groups, and successful achievement of the objectives, will immediately be declared closed. During the conference there were deep discussions, results presented, and experiences and ideas exchanged. Aimed at achieving progress for the local CIs, many goal-oriented, perceptive, and valuable ideas were put forward and visions and lines of thought developed, which meant a step forward for the practical operation of each Confucius Institute. The conference, in fact, was a great success!

If we were to describe the ideas and experiences of this conference very concisely, yet also elaborately, I think the theme of this conference would fit the purpose: connecting & developing.

First and foremost, connecting & developing can embody the purpose of founding Confucius Institutes. So far, the track record of the Confucius Institutes has the following appearance: there are already 282 of them and there are as many as 241 Confucius Classes spread throughout the world in over 87 countries. Is this enough? It is a question many people often ask. What about the quality of all these Confucius Institutes? Quite a few people have their doubts about that.

The mission of the Confucius Institutes consists in offering education to all people who aspire to learn Chinese and want to acquire a better understanding of China. This mission requires that the Confucius Institutes form a most elaborate network with those from all over the world who make China and Chinese their hobby. If we look at the existence of the Confucius Institutes from that perspective, we feel proud and encouraged with the progress already

“ The theme of this conference—connecting & developing—offers us a very good guiding principle ”

achieved. At the same time, we see that there are many people in the world who do not yet have the opportunity to make use of the services of a Confucius Institute. The ‘feelers’ of every Confucius Institute network still have a great deal of maneuvering space to spread further. There is an objective need for a greater number, especially with regard to the quantity of Confucius Classes. As regards the quality, the

operational scope of each Confucius Institute must increase further. This is why we have to continue to strive for a stronger networking system so as to connect to the greatest extent possible with all who wish to learn Chinese. This is of the utmost importance in the development of the Confucius Institutes, it is the purpose of their foundation.

At the same time, connecting & developing is also the strategy for increasing the quality within the Confucius Institutes. Quality is the lifeline of the Confucius Institutes. Europe has 94 Confucius Institutes in 29 countries. This is the greatest number of institutes of all the continents, spread out over the largest number of countries. As such, the basic layout has already been achieved.

At the moment, we have to ask ourselves how we can refine the Confucius Institutes. At this conference, we have already focused on the various domains of activity of the Confucius Institutes. The main topics of this conference were the teachers, the materials, Confucius Institute online, the testing, the Confucius Classes, the programs, and so on. They are the inevitable requirements at this stage in the development of the European Confucius Institutes. For the solution to these problems we must simply use the method of connecting & developing so that the Confucius Institutes develop into an organically cohesive, smoothly operating educational system that is well-embedded in local society and fits in very closely with the needs of the target audience. In general, the quality of the Confucius Institutes lies in extending and deepening the contacts.

We all know that the contact between the Confucius Institutes and the universities, secondary and primary schools as well as each layer of society is still in need of improvement. This also implies closer contact with the world of Sinology studies and Chinese studies in every European country, with every Ministry of Education. This way, each Confucius Institute will be able to carry out its function towards all groups of society and evolve to a key organization of Chinese language and culture.

Everybody realizes that the process of each Confucius Institute must be connected to every 'node'. These nodes are everywhere: selection and training of teachers, student enrollment, drawing up curricula, composing and selecting educational materials, organizing education, testing, and so on. This must be perfectly organized, adverse effects must be cut out. In this way, the Confucius Institute will form a full, refined body of education.

We have to ensure that language education is connected to the cultural events so that the appeal and the influence of the Confucius Institute gets stronger still and is able to comply with the needs of the target audiences at every level.

We must also connect the Confucius Institutes per country, region, and the entire continent so that every Confucius Institute, while it maintains its own nature, also forms a team with the other Confucius Institutes, joins forces, and shares resources.

In general, the theme of this conference—connecting & developing—offers us a very good guiding principle. For the solution of so many problems, we have a need for independent thought and open visions in the Confucius Institutes in order to make progress at all levels in an active connecting story.

Take the training of local teachers. Quite a few Confucius Institutes can offer good results in this matter. Their successful experience must come to the attention of the local authorities for them to be able to find a solution to the problems of teacher recruitment. Sinology and education departments at universities must be contacted to solve the problems in the matter of certificates. We must get in touch with the local China experts, with the local overseas Chinese teachers who have already been living in the region for a long time, and with the experts who come from China especially. Such to solve the teachers' problem of direction and usability of the training courses.

The educational materials are another example. The European Confucius Institutes are ahead of the other large continents in the area of educational material development. According to our data, more than 80 requests were filed worldwide for financing educational materials. More than 40 of these come from Europe, including from the French Confucius Institute in Poitiers, the British SSAT Confucius Institute, the Italian Confucius Institute at the University of Rome and so on. We cannot name them all one by one. They have written excellent educational materi-

als that are used over the entire region. Their experience also achieved results at each level of connecting. Let us make full use of the power of Chinese and foreign experts in this matter, let us contact the units that use the materials, the publishers, the Chinese publishers, the magazine groups and so on, to ensure the usability and the quality of the educational materials that have been drafted, to publish these successfully, and to continue republishing them. This is why, in the development process of refining the European Confucius Institutes, it is of particular importance that the connecting idea becomes the central idea. The experiences of every institute and the proposals formulated at the conference will be taken into serious consideration by headquarters.

In the process of improvement of the Confucius Institute online, Hanban and Headquarters will offer everybody more service and support. During the opening ceremony, Ms. Xu Lin gave a speech—a part of which had to be left out due to time constraints. In that part of her speech, she lists all of Hanban's support possibilities to every Confucius Institute. Everyone is welcome to read these in the document that was distributed yesterday. Hanban wishes to offer financial support to the financed projects. There is no mandatory assignment but rather each Confucius Institute may use it according to its own development needs.

At this point, I would like to explain further the four projects about which everybody had many questions and doubts during the conference:

#### 1. The start-up of Confucius Classes in the Confucius Institutes

Most of the Confucius Institutes participating in this conference are particularly interested in the development of the Confucius Classes. This important project deals with the services that Confucius Institutes can offer to primary and secondary schools. I want to emphasize here that the partner that starts up a Confucius Class must be elected from those schools that are very likely to offer Chinese classes and are willing to actively contribute to this. Clearly, it is not possible for every start-up of a Confucius Class to be conducted in the same way all the time.

#### 2. The financing of the full-time directors

The motive for this project lies in changing the current situation of directors who perform this job on a part-time basis. We understand that each current director cannot deal with the practical difficulties on a full-time basis. To support every director's work, the available financing can be used to hire an assistant or other full-time administrative assistants.

#### 3. Confucius Institute online

During the group discussions, there was little mention of the Confucius Institute online. This was probably due to the fact that the Confucius Institutes do not yet adequately understand Confucius Institute online.

I hope that everybody, upon returning, will surf to 'www.chinese.cn' more often to better understand the function of Confucius Institute online. It is our intention that Confucius Institute online will develop into the largest website with materials on the Chinese language and culture. It can offer great support and service to each Confucius Institute by providing online resources. We hope that each Confucius Institute will advise us and provide us with suggestions on how to develop the site further.

We encourage every Confucius Institute to use Confucius Institute online to start up collaborations and to develop first-class educational materials. Confucius Institute online can also provide every Confucius Institute with a platform and offer online teaching materials.

#### 4. The model Confucius Institutes

Every Confucius Institute in Europe that makes use of its own educational materials, that can present a long history in research on China, and this on a high level, can probably become a Global Confucius Institute Model. In the project of the start-up of Model Confucius Institutes, some standards as regards space, student enrollment, and scale were presented. I should explain that these standards are not selection standards but start-up objectives. Every Confucius Institute that wishes to take up a model function is asked to present the accents within their development and projects as well as a concrete plan. These projects can rely on strong support from Headquarters.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference has come to an end. Every director will return to his or her post to continue the hard work. Rest assured that this conference represents a new start for the development of the European Confucius Institutes.

Finally, I wish to thank all Confucius Institutes and the Chinese partner universities for your great interest in this conference and for your active participation. Our gratitude to the education committee of the Chinese embassy in Belgium for their support and help.

Special thanks go to GROUP T under the directly involved leadership of Mr. Johan De Graeve, with the strength of the entire institute of education, for the great work of this conference and the assurance of the great success of this conference. I suggest that everybody gives a thunderous applause for every director of GROUP T, every professor, every student, by way of expressing a very sincere thank you and paying them great tribute!

We wish every Confucius Institute even greater success, smooth sailing, and a safe journey home. We respectfully await your attendance at the December conference in Beijing.

Good-bye and thank you!



## INTERVIEW

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# The 2009 Joint European Confucius Institutes Conference: **looking back**

*"A milestone in the development of the Confucius Institutes in Europe" is how Wang Luxin, Counselor of the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy in Belgium, styles the past conference of the European Confucius Institutes hosted by GROUP T. The important set of objectives of 'Connecting & Developing' were realized. A platform was created in Leuven where the various institutes of the continent could find each other and especially find each other again.*

Promoting the educational exchange and cooperation between Belgium and China is Wang Luxin's mission. This kind a mission includes activities that span from student exchanges through to the implementation of the agreements between the Flemish, French and German communities and the People's Republic to cooperation between Belgian and Chinese universities. The fact that the three Confucius Institutes of this country play a vital role in this is obvious according to Wang Luxin. "It is precisely their task to promote the Chinese language and culture but it is also intended to include showing Chinese people the way to the Western culture. As such, the Confucius Institutes form the hub where cultures meet and inspire each other."

"The Confucius Institute at GROUP T is the most recent one in Belgium and, as it stands, the first one in Flanders", Wang Luxin continues. "It is the pinnacle of GROUP T's many years of cooperation with China, a cooperation that has since grown into a close friendship. That this young institute succeeded in a relatively short time to host the largest regional Confucius Institutes conference in the world is an extraordinary achievement. The Confucius Institute at GROUP T has in this way instantly made itself indispensable in the European-Chinese landscape."

## International Cooperation

Wang Luxin works in the Chinese Embassy in Brussels. His employer is the Ministry of Education in China, more precisely the Department of International Cooperation and Exchange. But also other units of the Ministry can make use of his services. Like, for instance, the Chinese Scholarship Council, the Chinese International Exchange Association, the Chinese Service Center for Oversea Students, and so on.

In the course of his now almost 20-year career with the Ministry of Education, Wang Luxin has gained much experience in the field of international cooperation. He was, for instance, active in the Republic of Korea where he was responsible for the international exchange between Asia and Africa. Also, he was program officer for the International Students Affairs in China and, as director at the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing, he was responsible for the new initiatives.

Wang Luxin has now been active in Belgium for a year. In that short period he has been able to form a good picture of the country. "Complicated, but efficient," he describes it.

At the moment, Belgium hosts 2,000 Chinese students. Ten percent of them study at GROUP T in Leuven. For that reason alone, GROUP T, according to Wang Luxin, has become a key element in the Belgian-Chinese cooperation and exchange in the field of education. "Not only for the Chinese students but also for the Flemish students there is great added value in meeting each other and learning from each other. It is the reflection of what is to come: a globalizing world. Economically and technologically, this is already a reality, the minds will follow. Clearly, GROUP T has already captured this spirit."

## Pioneering Work

Back to the 2009 Joint European Confucius Institutes Conference in Leuven. "The first of its kind in Europe and immediately on the mark," says Wang Luxin.

"Indeed, pioneering steps were taken in Leuven for the further development and growth of the Confucius Institutes in Europe. Experiences, ideas and points of view were exchanged, there was active participation in connecting and developing, the discussions in the workshops were intense and lively, all opinions were discussed. It was also particularly instructive for the top of Hanban and the Confucius Institutes' Headquarters. They now know exactly what is on the minds of the people in the Confucius Institutes in Europe, what are the ambitions and expectations that they can build on from China to support the institutes further in their development and growth so that they are even better positioned to realize their mission, which is to bring China closer to Europe and vice versa."

According to Wang Luxin, the conference in Leuven could have lasted a little longer. "In the end, only one day was reserved for the different workshops. This is precisely where the debate was held, where there was connecting and developing and where the future of the Confucius Institutes was discussed. Time was maybe a bit limited to get to the essence of all themes."

## Larger exhibit

Wang Luxin was very excited about the cultural activities during the conference. "The tea ceremonies, the magician Jan Bardi's show, the visit to the new M museum in Leuven, the musical performances and the city trips were all very successful. So was the book exhibit. Next time, we should probably implement that on a larger scale. This time, there was ultimately only English, French, German and Italian didactic material available at the booth. Considering the diversity of Europe, all languages should be represented. And, for

that matter, not only in books or brochures but also in CDs and multimedia. If the aim is to bring China to the Europeans, it is best to address them in their own language using contemporary media."

The global organization of the conference went smoothly according to Wang Luxin. "That can be attributed to the good preparation and productive consultation between Hanban, the Confucius Institute Headquarters, the Embassy and the Confucius Institute at GROUP T. Everything was thoroughly discussed and agreed upon with everyone involved so that everything was anticipated. In other words, there was no need for on-site improvising, everything was dealt with professionally."

## To be repeated

In 2009 alone, the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing organized seven such regional conferences all over the world. As mentioned earlier, the first European conference was immediately the largest ever. According to Wang Luxin, this cannot be explained only by the fact that there are more Confucius Institutes in Europe than on other continents, it also proved that this conference met a clear need. The wish to connect and to develop, to meet each other, to learn from each other. "The representatives of all Confucius Institutes with whom I spoke during the conference in Leuven expressed the desire to repeat this initiative in the future, even annually, if possible. Belgium as the center of Europe with the capital and the presidency of the European Union is the ideal location for this.

Of course, the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing will take the decision on this issue because they are the actual organizers of such regional conferences. The experience gained at GROUP T is certainly a strong argument for a continuation of this initiative. The Confucius Institute at GROUP T may rightfully call itself the flagship of the European Institutes from now on."

Y.P.

More information on the 2009 European Confucius Institutes Conference: [www.confuciusconference.eu](http://www.confuciusconference.eu)



Mr. Wang Luxin, Counselor of the Chinese Embassy Education Section in Belgium, calls the 2009 Joint European Confucius Institutes Conference in Leuven a success.