



Assessing Europe-China Collaboration in Higher Education and Research

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INTRODUCTION RESEARCH: Who?

- Prof. Frank Pieke: CEO Mercator Institute for China Studies, former director Leiden Asia Centre
- Dr. Ingrid d'Hooghe, Leiden Asia Centre, Leiden Institute of Area Studies, Leiden University
- Marijn de Wolff, Leiden Asia Centre
- Annemarie Montulet, Leiden Asia Centre

With HCSS and Silk Road Project Utrecht University

INTRODUCTION RESEARCH: Why?

Relevance

- China's strategic investment in HE & research
- China's rise as an academic power & innovator
- Europe's increasing collaboration with China
- Concerns, risks, problems
- Perceptions & suspicions

PERCEPTIONS

- **Rising concerns**
- **Cases in Australia, New Zealand, US**
- **Case of Springer Nature bowing to Chinese censorship**
- **Risks get much attention**

INTRODUCTION RESEARCH: Goals

Goals

- **Assess the benefits and risks**
- **Strengthen basis for further cooperation**
- **Help European HEIs to:**
 - **identify opportunities & risks,**
 - **define best interests**
 - **improve the cooperation**

INTRODUCTION RESEARCH: How?

- **Focus countries: N-W & Central Europe**
- **65 interviews**
 - Policy-makers, scholars, funding agency representatives, university representatives
- **Literature research**
 - Chinese and European policy documents
 - Academic / think tank reports
 - Media reports

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

China's objectives?

Benefits and opportunities ?

Problems and risks?

How to maximize benefits?

How to manage risks?

CHINA'S STRATEGY

- **By 2050 China wants to be:**
 - **a higher-education power**
 - **world-leading in S&T**
- **Policy documents**
 - **Double First-class University Plan**
 - **Next-Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan**

CHINA'S STRATEGY

HE & research strategy tied to:

Made in China 2025

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) →

Belt & Road Science, Technology and Innovation
Cooperation Action Plan (2017)

Focus on strategic areas reflected in funding

- **Scholarships**
- **Talents Plans**

FINDINGS: BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Size Matters:

- Talents
- Funding
- Data
- Equipment
- Quality of research
- Promise of a future S&T powerhouse

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES AND RISKS (1/2)

CHALLENGES

- Cultural and language barriers
- Differences in administrative practices and procedures

→ Lack of transparency China's academic system

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES AND RISKS (2/2)

RISKS:

- **Unbalanced cooperation**
- **Infringements on academic freedom**
- **Self-censorship**
- **Undesirable loss of data/espionage**
- **IPR disputes**
- **Political influencing**

FINDINGS: CONCLUSIONS

- **A wide range of views on the balance between risks & challenges, opportunities & problems**
- **Majority: not cooperating with China is no option**
- **On both sides a race for talents and technologies driving strategies for cooperation.**
- **Chinese HEIs take a far more strategic approach**
- **Biggest challenges for European HEIs: lack of knowledge; awareness of risks; & funding**
- **Censorship and self-censorship**

RECOMMENDATIONS (1/2)

At institutional, national and EU-level:

- **Match China's strategic approach:**
 - **match Chinese planning and management of international cooperation**
 - **provide equal funding**

RECOMMENDATIONS (2/2)

- **Develop a better understanding of China's academic system**
- **Assess the risks and raise awareness**
- **Develop and implement guidelines/protocols**
- **Invest in outgoing mobility to China**