

15 YEARS CHINA PLATFORM

From Monkey to Ox

Brave and Persistent

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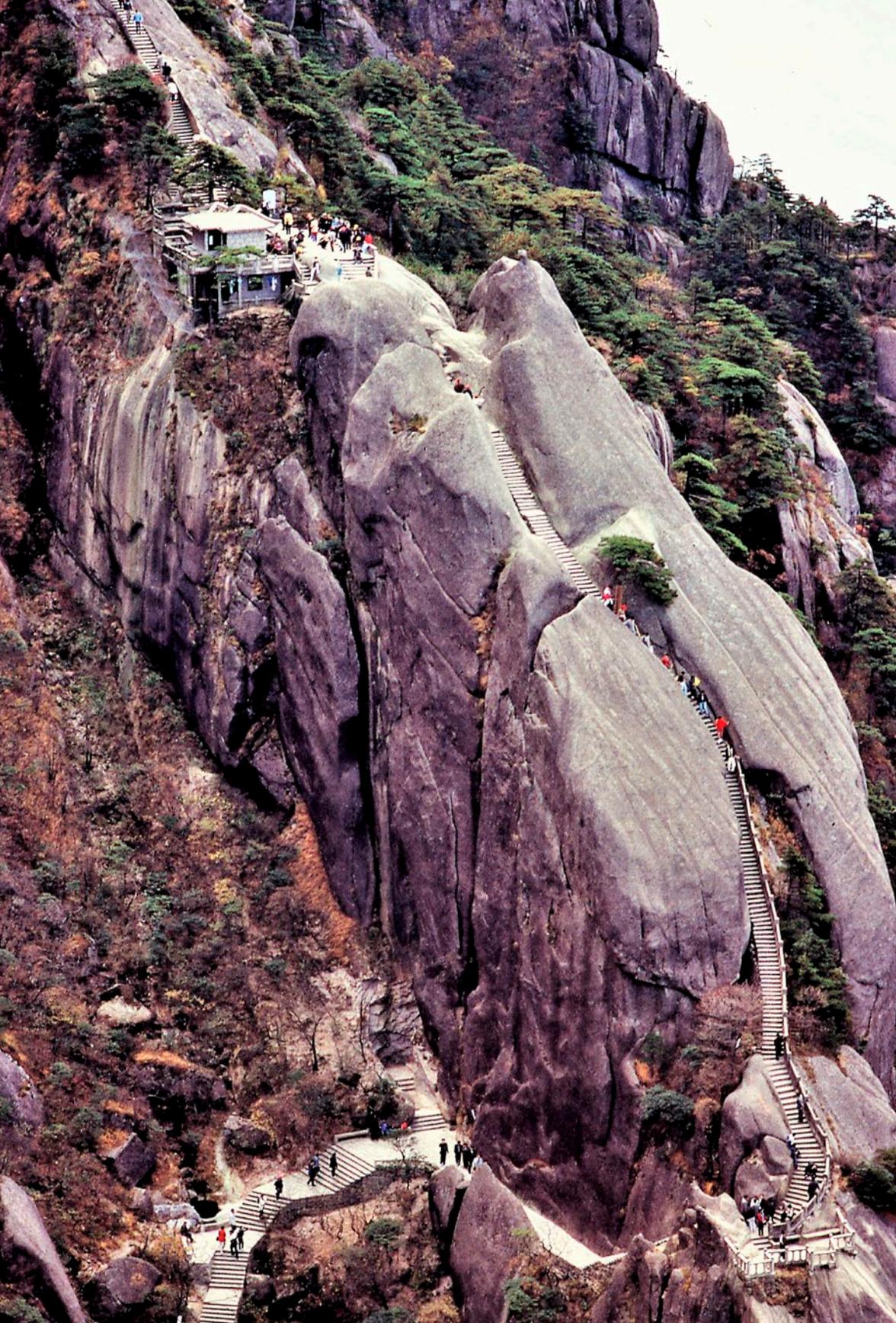
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15 Years China Platform



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I. From Monkey to Ox Brave and Persistent

Prof. Dr Bart Dessein, Department of Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University

The booklet in your hands celebrates the 15th anniversary of the establishment of Ghent University's 'China Platform'. The Platform's creation in 2006, the year of the Dog, was prompted by the awareness of the growing academic importance of the Chinese cultural area, and the conviction that cooperation with universities and academic institutes in this part of the world would become increasingly important in the future. The Platform's purpose was therefore to assist Ghent University colleagues in their initiatives with respect to academic exchange and scientific collaboration. Gradually, this Regional Platform has developed into an important policy instrument of Ghent University.

On the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Platform's establishment, a first issue of this booklet was published: 'From Dog to Rabbit'. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Platform, the second issue, 'From Rabbit to Monkey', was published in 2016.

Dog, Rabbit, Monkey and Ox are animals of the Chinese zodiac. Everyone in the Chinese cultural area will immediately associate some personal characteristics with each of these animals, and the question which zodiac animal is yours will be one of the first questions you will be asked. If a Dog happens to come to a house, it symbolizes the coming of fortune. Therefore, a Dog is a *yang* element, representing light and strength. Rabbits are decent, noble, and intelligent, and they represent hope for a long life. While Monkeys are brave, Oxen stand out for their persistence. Indeed, at 15, the 'China Platform' has not only proven to be brave and persistent, but looking five years ahead, to the year of the Horse, the 'China Platform' has a bright future ahead – as was announced in the year of the Dog when the Platform was established: a Horse stands for heroism and talent.

II. 15 Years China Platform From Monkey to Ox

Preface by Prof. Dr Rik Van de Walle, Rector, Ghent University
and **Prof. Dr Mieke Van Herreweghe**, Vice Rector, Ghent University

Since its inception in 2006, the Ghent University China Platform has been constantly developing in terms of scope and range of activities. In 'From Dog to Rabbit' and 'From Rabbit to Monkey', published in 2011 and 2016 respectively, we took stock of the activities and achievements of the past lustrum. Now, as we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the China Platform, the time is right for an update. 'From Monkey to Ox' once again offers an overview of, as well as a series of in-depth presentations on the various remarkable accomplishments of the past five years.

The inventory is truly impressive and proves that our collaboration with Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan has continued to increase over the past five years. One may find this somewhat surprising, as some strain on collaboration with China can currently be witnessed due to a rise of geopolitical tensions as well as growing concerns about diverging values and interests between Europe and China. As an internationally oriented university, we do believe, though, that cross-border collaboration in a transparent manner and with genuine respect for each other is still the only way forward.

This doesn't mean turning a blind eye to certain developments. We should remain careful to ensure the core principles of modern universities, such as academic freedom, scientific integrity, institutional autonomy, and respect for human rights in all our contacts and contracts. But we should also keep reminding that academic collaboration allows for a thorough exchange of views, and fosters mutual understanding and international solidarity in the protection and promotion of values and principles that are paramount to the quality of higher education and scientific research. In other words: at Ghent University we continue to firmly believe in working together with our partners in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In our capacity of Rector and Vice-rector, we are committed to continue offering sustainable support to faculties and academic staff wishing to explore and further develop all kinds of collaborative projects and activities with their Chinese counterparts.



For let it be clear that all initiatives described in this volume stem from individual contacts between academics. These contacts – like each and every contact we have elsewhere in the world – are typically based on academic grounds. As scientific knowledge has no passport and academic curiosity knows no limits, the value of our collaborations does not depend on location or nationality, let alone on political interference, but on the shared desire and joint efforts to expand mutual knowledge and push scientific boundaries.

The aim of the China Platform hence remains the same as it was 15 years ago, at its inception: to create mutual awareness and understanding with the region in order to facilitate academic cooperation and exchange based on educational and scientific excellence. The many achievements described in this volume demonstrate that the China Platform is successfully pursuing its mission, and is committed to continue doing so in the years to come.

After 15 years of hard work, our China Platform is stronger than ever, and it has a bright future ahead. We thank all colleagues, both from our own university and from our partner universities and institutions, for their engagement and tremendous endeavours!



iii. The China Platform within the International Relations Office of Ghent University

Mr Frederik De Decker

Head International Relations Office, Ghent University

Prof. dr ir. Luc Taerwe

Director China Platform, Ghent University

Mrs Inge Mangelschots

Coordinator China Platform, International Relations Office, Ghent University

The origin of Ghent University's China Platform

Even though international cooperation in the recent past was immensely impacted by the global covid19-pandemic, it is no exaggeration to state that over the past 30 years, Ghent University has intensively strengthened its cooperation with China as the interest in collaboration with China continued to increase in the different university departments. But as not all professors and administrative staff, whether they are active in China or have an intention to set up a cooperation, have a thorough knowledge of Chinese society and the Chinese culture, they sometimes failed to set up a concrete cooperation due to administrative obstacles and cultural differences. Furthermore, that the number of staff members and students (both incoming and outgoing) in need of assistance steadily increased year after year, showed that the need for a central point of contact for China within Ghent University could at a certain point no longer be ignored. China, with all the developments it went through during the last decades, will surely continue to offer numerous opportunities for academic cooperation in the field of research and education and Ghent University did not want to leave this source untouched.

Consequently, the need for an institution-wide coordination point for all matters related to China at Ghent University led to the establishment of the China Platform within the university's International Relations Office in 2006. And since then, the cooperation, in both education and research, has continuously grown.

As a partner country, China takes a crucial place in the university's internationalisation policy. The China Platform acts as the central point of contact for students, professors, researchers, embassies, governments, etc. in all China-related affairs. The China Platform stimulates, facilitates and supports cooperation initiatives from Ghent University and from external partners.

In 2008, in order to structurally embed and jointly approach the academic, political, social-cultural and economic aspects of cooperation with China, the China Platform became part of a strategic partnership with the Province of East Flanders, the City of Ghent, the Port of Ghent and the Flemish-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In principle, the term *China Platform* denotes two different entities. On the one hand, there is *Ghent University's China Platform* based in the International Relations Office of the university, whose mission it is to design, further development and implement an institutional policy related to university educational cooperation and research. On the other hand, there is the formal cooperation agreement for a *Strategic Partnership* with China between Ghent University and the Province of East Flanders, with the City of Ghent, the Port of Ghent and the Flemish-Chinese Chamber of Commerce acting as additional partners.

The establishment of the representation office in Beijing in 2008

Personal contacts are very important for the success of any undertaking in China. Hence, with a view to strengthening its visibility in China, and to create and perpetuate an extensive and permanent network of Chinese economic, institutional and academic partners, the Province of East Flanders and Ghent University joined forces and established a representation office in Beijing in 2008. The present representative is Mr Zhang Chi. A local presence in China means closer contact with embassies, universities, government-bodies, companies and chambers of commerce.

The representation office also offers direct assistance to incoming and outbound students and helps professors and researchers to find and transmit information. Additionally, the representation office plays a crucial role in detecting and identifying strategic partner institutions, and in following trends in the Chinese (educational) landscape.



The China Platform within Ghent University's Internationalisation Policy

Within Ghent University, the China Platform aims for the dynamic and coherent conduct of all activities connected to cooperation with China. This includes supporting students and faculties in their initiatives and projects related to China:

- Incoming Chinese students and researchers are guided through administrative procedures related to obtaining a visa, accommodation, registration at Ghent University, APS screening, application and extension of residence permits, etc. To smoothen such processes, the China Platform regularly dovetails its activities with other Ghent University departments such as the Registrar's Office, the Personnel and Organisation Department and the Research Coordination Unit; with the Belgian consulates in China; with the city of Ghent etc.;
- Chinese students and researchers are also encouraged to become involved in ongoing activities, to answer third-party questions (e.g. from media) and to apply for vacancies for which they qualify. In such matters, the China Platform works closely together with ChiSAG (the Chinese Student Association of Ghent).
- The China Platform offers support to professors and researchers in facilitating and establishing contacts with Chinese institutions and individual cooperation partners. In addition, it offers incentives for exploratory visits and other activities in China.

The role of the China Platform is not limited to a supportive function: central initiatives are taken with a view to start up new education and research projects. These are achieved by opening up new ways of cooperation and by maintaining and consolidating existing contacts with Chinese partners, governments and embassies. As a result, relevant information can be exchanged immediately and in that way we can capitalise on current events, new trends, calls for newly announced funding and exchange initiatives in an efficient manner.

Based on these networks and the expertise of the China Platform, Ghent University was able to enter into the Erasmus Mundus calls focused on China, which led to the very successful LiSUM and Lotus projects which have played a pivotal role in enhancing close cooperation between Ghent University (and some of its strategic European partners) on the one hand and many renowned Chinese universities on the other hand.

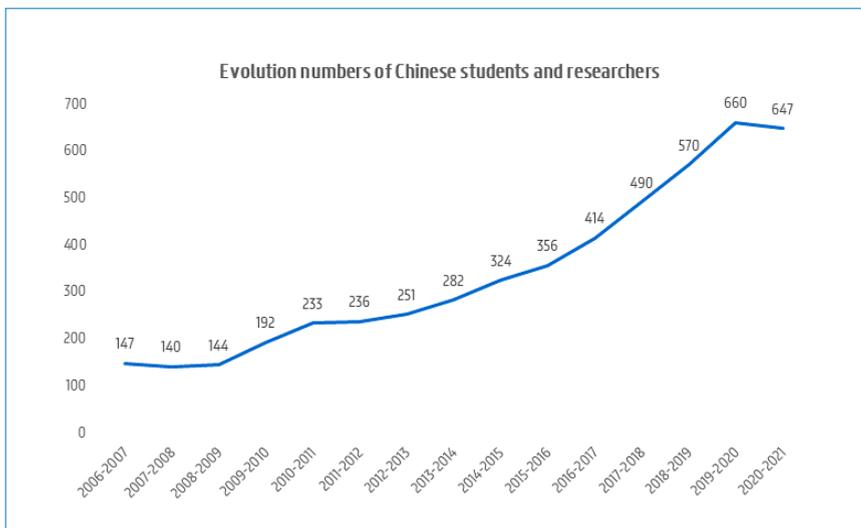
In 2014 Ghent University capitalised on its rapidly growing reputation and realm, particularly in Asia, by opening a branch campus in South Korea as part of the emerging Global Campus in Incheon (Songdo), near the capital Seoul. There, and with a particular aim to focus not only on Korean students, but on other Asian students (and especially Chinese students) as well, Ghent University offers since 2014-15 English-taught bachelor programmes in three STEM-disciplines, viz. Molecular Biotechnology, Environmental Technology and Food Technology

and is currently exploring the possibility to establish a Graduate School there as well. These programmes are particularly appealing to Chinese students because of their dual accreditation (Flemish (NVAO)/Korean), the combination of programmes with a firm theoretical background combined with hands-on research experience, one semester at the main campus in Belgium and intensive internship opportunities. This will in the future hopefully lead to the establishment of a structural cooperation between the Ghent University Global Campus and some of our Chinese partner universities.

Gradually, the China Platform has extended its activity range to other Chinese speaking universities, e.g. from Hong Kong and Taiwan, which has increased opportunities for scholars to embark on joint endeavours with their peers there or for students to study in a Chinese speaking environment.

But the main focus logically remains on the cooperation with mainland China. To boost cooperation with Chinese universities and attract more Chinese (PhD) students, the China Platform launched a few initiatives:

- Tuition fee waivers for all Chinese PhD students and reimbursement of enrolment fees for defending PhD theses
- Reimbursement of the costs of APS screening for Chinese students that actually enrol at Ghent University
- A co-funding programme in collaboration with the Research Department for Chinese PhD students with a scholarship of the CSC (China Scholarship Council). This co-funding covers travel expenses, accommodation, insurance and bench fees.



These measures do not only ensure that Ghent University becomes more attractive to Chinese students; a financial contribution enables Chinese PhD students with a CSC scholarship to study in Ghent because CSC considers a tuition fee waiver by the recipient university as a minimum requirement for a scholarship request.

The figure on the left very clearly shows that this policy has proven to be very effective, with a continuous growth in the number of Chinese students over the last years (source: UGI, August 2021).

However, the China Platform does not only want to profile itself as an internal, inward-looking, closed club. It has also been and wants to remain a point of contact (and in many cases an important partner) with regard to China-related matters for third parties such as the Chinese diplomatic representation in Belgium and the Chinese representation in the EU, the Taipei Representative Office, research institutions (e.g. the European Institute for Asian Studies – EIAS), other universities and institutions of higher education, the media, companies, etc.

Combining academic, political-diplomatic, technological and economic expertise related to China has been translated more and more into more resources and more opportunities for Ghent University, and in the long run for all parties involved as well. The China Platform aims to remain a point of contact, literally a platform, in which all partners can exchange ideas and information and can start up concrete initiatives.

This outward – and forward-looking attitude is one of the reasons why one of the main objectives for the future is to invest more in the network of Chinese Ghent University alumni (and by extension other international alumni) and to look for ways in which we can capitalise on the enthusiasm of our grateful alumni.



Launch of the Ghent University Alumni Network in 2013

In September 2013, Ghent University with its China Platform and China representative in Beijing launched the Ghent University Alumni Network in Shanghai and Beijing. For this occasion, a Ghent University delegation, headed by then rector Paul Van Cauwenberge, visited China.

For Ghent University, strengthening the relationship with its international alumni is a priority. China was the pilot project in the development of an international alumni policy.

As such, the Chinese Ghent University Alumni Networks in Shanghai and Beijing were some of the first to be launched by Ghent University, together with networks in the Western Balkans, the United States and a few other Asian countries e.g. Vietnam and Indonesia. This shows the importance and China's groundbreaking role in the overall international alumni policy of Ghent University. By now, focussing more on our alumni has become a university-wide policy priority which has led to the creation of the overall Infitum platform which encompasses all alumni activities, including those of the international alumni chapters with a total of about 16,000 alumni abroad.

A new step: active Recruitment and Marketing Strategy of Ghent University

Because of the framework outlined above, with many current and former Chinese Ghent University students and alumni and especially the important role of China in the overall international alumni policy of Ghent University, it seemed logical to choose China as the pilot country for the implementation of Ghent University's recently adopted strategy focussing on the development of an active policy for recruiting international students. This new endeavour started off with the development of an online social media strategy.



A very successful action has been to set up – in close cooperation with NextportChina, a full service China – focused Digital Marketing Agency with offices in Amsterdam and Beijing. NextportChina's team is specialised in developing creative marketing campaigns to link Ghent University with our Chinese target audience, or in our case potential students and their parents (who play a very important role in the Chinese context), by using a diversity of marketing channels. This means that Ghent University does not only have an official website in Mandarin, but also has registered official accounts on typical Chinese social media such as WeChat, Sina Weibo and Youku. Even more than in the rest of the world these media play a crucial role in the day-to-day life of Chinese (youngsters), including in life-changing decision-making processes such as these related to university studies abroad. One of the strongholds of this approach is that the content of these official Ghent University social media accounts are fed to a large extent by authentic material originating from our current Chinese students and our active alumni, who have enthusiastically and massively responded to our call for support.

The success of joint labs

A significant trend of the past few years has been the creation of an increasing number of successful joint labs between Chinese and Ghent University-researchers. In general, focusing more on so-called "triple helix" cooperation seems to be the way forward, also for the cooperation with China. This is one of the reasons why the Ghent University China Platform will continue to invest, also by means of its joint representation with the Province of East-Flanders, in strengthening its ties with the worlds of industry and official authorities. This is of course fully in line with its ambition to not only be supportive for the internationalisation of Ghent University but to remain an outward looking platform.





A further look towards the future

From all the above, it is very clear that a great deal has been achieved at Ghent University in which the China Platform has played a decisive role and that novel initiatives arise at a quick pace. Yet we see new initiatives and cooperation opportunities emerging at the horizon.

It is for instance noticeable that in China (and in the rest of Asia for that matter) internationalisation is becoming more than just mobility or research cooperation. Just like in Europe, where we have seen the Bologna process impacting the higher education system heavily in general, internationalisation is becoming a driving force for educational innovation and systemic changes e.g. regarding credit systems, learning outcomes based education, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance mechanisms, etc. in China as well. Our strong status in the region offers us the opportunity to be at the forefront of cooperating on these topics with Chinese counterparts, often in a broader Asian context. The China Platform, together with the more recently established ASEAN+ platform, will cherish this unique position enabling Ghent University to further build on its reputation and to become a wanted partner for cooperation that goes beyond the traditions of internationalisation. So let there be no doubt that there is more than enough new territory to discover by the China Platform for the decades to come.





IV. A stronger alumni policy

Em. Prof. Kristiaan Versluys

President Alumni Association, Ghent University

Ms Carole Picavet

International Alumni Coordinator, International Relations Office, Ghent University

Ghent University is a pluralistic and socially committed institution and, as such, it has always been at the forefront in Europe when it comes to internationalisation.

In that context, it is obvious that Ghent University wants to stay in touch with his international alumni, far-flung over the entire globe, and aims to increase the effectiveness of its national and international alumni policy. The faculties will become the centre of the national alumni policy, with each faculty further expanding the scope of its own alumni association(s). The central alumni work group supports the faculties in this, while focusing on university-wide initiatives. Flemish alumni abroad and foreign alumni are united in international chapters.

Our alumni are our ambassadors, as they represent the Ghent University spirit and values abroad. All our alumni share a kind of “UGhent-ness” which unites them with each other and with the university. This is an asset that we want to develop further in the coming years. The success of the already existing alumni chapters is proof that such an effort is worthwhile and mutually beneficial.

The development of a global alumni association is an indispensable instrument to strengthen the international profile of our university.

Our first international alumni chapter was established in China in 2013. At the present moment we have several additional chapters in each region of China and more chapters worldwide. These chapters – each one headed by an Executive Committee – are representatives of our university. They act as go-betweens and greatly enhance the reach of the university. This is mainly because our international alumni chapters are all about community-building. They create opportunities for alumni to connect with each other and constitute a direct link with the alma mater. As such, they create genuine added value and support Ghent University in strengthening its global network. It is heart-warming to know that we can call upon the chapters, the alumni representatives and the members for setting up new forms of cooperation, establishing links with partner institutions and the

local economy, for being involved in student recruitment activities like study abroad fairs, in academic diplomacy, etc.

Our alumni representatives are a tremendous help in our efforts to engage with key stakeholders abroad. They open the road to new forms in collaboration within the different regions in which our alumni live and work. The alumni chapters also function as networks that are both socially enjoyable and professionally useful.

For the future, we plan to engage even more intensely with our international alumni on a more structural basis and with even more ambition. Through news feeds about achievements of alumni, newsletters, information about events and other interesting initiatives, we hope to inform our alumni abroad about what is happening at the university and in the different areas where we operate! In addition, the alumni platform 'Infinitem' was recently launched, which facilitates communication with and from members and is a great help in organising and publicising meetings and events.

Thanks to all our alumni representatives for donating their valuable time to support current and future students and fellow alumni.

Activities of the Shanghai Alumni Chapter

Dr Fan Peng, Ghent University
Alumni Network – Shanghai
Chapter Ambassador

The China Alumni, Shanghai Chapter has been the most active chapter during the past years. Mr Fan Peng is currently playing a crucial role in its organisation. Since 2021, the Chapter has a new committee consisting of three other active alumni. Since 2017, it has organised and participated in many events:

- On Oct 28, 2017, the Shanghai Alumni Chapter organised the celebration of Ghent University's 200-year anniversary together with the China Platform and Ghent University Professors.
- On April 28, 2018, the Ghent University Tech Transfer took place



with Shanghai Alumni and the Ghent University China Platform.

- On November 11, 2018, the Shanghai Alumni Chapter welcomed the Ghent University delegation headed by Prof. Rik Van de Walle, Rector of Ghent University.
- On November 21, 2018, the Shanghai Alumni Chapter participated in the Belgian Shanghai Alumni Network organised by the Consulate General in Shanghai.
- On November 20, 2019, the Shanghai Alumni Chapter joined by Prof. Luc Taerwe participated in the event of Belgian Economic Mission to the People's Republic of China presided by HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium, Representative of His Majesty the King.
- On January 15, 2020, the Shanghai Alumni Chapter had a dinner with former Consul General Mr Paul Lambert and Consul for economic affairs Ms Marie-Adélaïde Matheï.
- On June 22, 2021, the Shanghai Chapter's new committee visited Consul General Bruno Jans to have a meeting about the planned alumni events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Belgium and China, as well as the 15th anniversary of the China Platform.
- Below are the planned events in 2021 which are granted by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the label of the 50th anniversary:
 - Sino-Belgian Alumni Souvenirs Exhibition
 - Sino-Belgian Family Day in Shanghai – Mars Exploration
 - The Sino-Belgium Investment Seminar with FIT
 - Maes-Huangpu River Riding (with SORSA Benelux Chapter)
 - Official Event for the Ghent University China Platform's 15th Anniversary in Shanghai
 - Tree planting in Spring 2022

Below, these alumni wish to thank Ghent University's China Platform:

- Prof. Dr Suquan Song: My experience at Ghent University left me with unforgettable memories. Although I have been back to China for nearly ten years, I still miss it. I hope that Ghent University will become better and better, my friends in Ghent stay healthy, and the friendship between China and Belgium will last forever.
- Dr Kai Wu: the China Platform have offered a lot of help for Belgian and Chinese students and have contributed outstanding performance in science and technology, education and cultural exchange during these 15 years. The China Platform is the great bridge between China and Belgium. 相知无远近，万里尚为邻”。
- Mr Peng Zhao, Governmental Lawyer: Hi, China Platform and Alumni Association. Because of you, we are always together, thank you indeed!
- Ms Qing Huang, Lawyer in Shanghai: Thanks to the China Platform, it was nice to meet new alumni in China and reconnect with old friends.

Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter

Dr Zhuang Yan

Ghent University Alumni Network – Chengdu Chapter Ambassador

In the harvest month of October 2017, when Coordinator of the China Platform Mrs Inge Mangelschots and representative Mr Zhang Chi came to Chengdu for China Education Expo (CEE), they called together Ghent University alumni in Chengdu and started a new chapter of our alumni network in southwest China.

Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter was initially made up of a score of graduate students, researchers and visiting professors who were in a framework of a degree, exchange, or institutional cooperation programme at Ghent University from universities in or near Chengdu (such as Sichuan University, Sichuan Agricultural University, Chengdu University of Technology, and Chengdu University of Information Technology). The first alumni representative in Chengdu was Ms Liu Ning.

After four years' growth, Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter has already embraced 75 professionals (including academics, teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, entrepreneurs, etc.) of five provinces, three autonomous regions and one municipality directly under the Central Government of the P. R. China (i.e. Sichuan province, Shaanxi province, Hubei province, Gansu province, Qinghai province, Tibet Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Chongqing municipality). The present alumni representative of Chengdu Chapter is Dr Zhuang Yan.

Main activities of Chengdu Chapter:

- 23 October 2017, the Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter was established with the first networking event in Beer Nest.
- 30 May 2018, reception in Chengdu for Ghent University alumni during the visit of the Director Internationalisation of Ghent University, Prof. Dr ir. Guido Van Huylenbroeck, the Director of the China Platform, Prof. Dr Ir. Luc Taerwe, Mrs Inge Mangelschots and Mr Zhang Chi.
- March to September 2018; the Alumni Chapter in Chengdu participated in the #ExperienceEurope 2018 EU-China Tourism Year Grand Photo Contest, organised by the EU and all Member States. A Ghent University alumna won the weekly contest during the Belgium week in June 2018.
- 9 April 2019, the Ghent University Alumni Chapter in Chengdu attend the conference of “Intercultural Communication in the BRI: Eurasia Dialogue on the New Silk Road” in Chengdu.
- 27 March 2020, the Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter was invited to participate the online joint seminar on “Fight Against COVID-19 Together” between Ghent

University and Sichuan University hosted by Prof. Dr Jan Orbie.

- 9 June 2021, the Ambassador of Belgium to China, Dr Jan Hoogmartens led a delegation to Sichuan Province. Our alumni China Chapter was invited to the activity of Meet & Greet at the Abbaye in Chengdu, where further cooperation on art, food, education and trade was discussed, and the Belgian vibe met the local flavour.

Alumni say,

"It has been seven years since I returned from Belgium to China. Looking back on my two years at Ghent University, I can still remember the scene of working together with colleagues from all over the world to fight for our future. Ghent University, what you make me feel is not only a strong academic atmosphere, but also a valuable spirit of 'Dare to Think', which has benefited me all my life! As an alumnus of Ghent University, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the founding of Ghent University's China platform, I wish my alma mater better and better, and wish the friendship between China and Belgium will last forever." – Prof. Chen Hong.

Alumnus: Chen Hong, Department of Animal Production, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, 2012-2014. Current position: Dean of the Department of Food Quality and Safety, College of Food Science, Sichuan Agricultural University



"Ten years ago, a campus promotion on 'Touch Europe through Erasmus Mundus Action' attracted me. The dream of studying in Europe seeded in my heart. As an Erasmus Mundus Action 2 scholarship holder of an exchange PhD at Ghent University, my dream came true and turned to fulfillment. I am grateful to my mentor Prof. Dr Jan Orbie and my colleagues for their generous help; my research has had a broader international platform of high quality; the vibrant city of Ghent embraces me with its inclusiveness, cultural diversity and unique tranquility. Learning new languages and having new friends from all over the world in Europe give me in-depth understanding on European culture and European people. Afterwards, even my family members and some of my friends in China became fans of the Belgian football team, because of my Ghent University experience. Stories like these are far greater in number than what I wrote. Looking back and ahead on 15 years China Platform, what we had was fruitful, what we have valuable, what we are working for promising." – Dr Zhuang Yan, the representative of Ghent University Alumni China – Chengdu Chapter

Alumna: Zhuang Yan, Centre for EU Studies (CEUS), Department of Political Sciences, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, 2013-2014. Current position: Vice-Dean of English Department, College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Chengdu University of Technology; research fellow at the Centre for European Studies, Sichuan University

"The 15th anniversary is a time for us to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. It is not just an anniversary of China Platform at Ghent/University, but also an anniversary of a big family growing stronger while defying all odds. 'A time will come to ride the winds and cleave the waves, I will set my cloudlike sail to cross the sea which raves.'" – Associate Professor Liu Jing

Alumna: Liu Jing, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, 2015-2019
Current Position: Associate Professor at School of Materials and Energy, Southwest University

Ghent University Alumni China – Guangzhou Chapter

Dr Sun Xiaohuan

Ghent University Alumni Network – Guangzhou Chapter Ambassador
and Dr Han Yao

The Guangzhou Chapter of Ghent University Alumni China is a young group that was established in January 2020 with the approval of the Ghent University China Platform.

The Guangzhou Alumni Chapter is now the president of Ghent University Alumni Association for regions located in southern China, including seven provinces and two special administrative regions, which are: Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hainan, Hunan, Hongkong and Macao. So far, 67 alumni involved in a variety of professional fields have been connected by the Guangzhou Alumni Chapter. The present executive committee members of Guangzhou chapter are Dr Xiaohuan Sun and Dr Han Yao.

Relying on the alma mater, the Guangzhou Alumni Chapter has always been devoting efforts to build a platform for communication and cooperation among alumni, to the better use of alumni resources and serving as a bond among alumni and also between alumni and Ghent University, as well as to enhance the reputation of Ghent University in southern China.

In the first year of the establishment of our Guangzhou Chapter, we organized a small beer-meet up and participated in the reception organised by the Consulate General of the Kingdom of Belgium in Guangzhou. This year, we will organise more alumni interaction activities, such as family days, cycling activity to encourage communication and exchanges among alumni.



*Welcome to join
our Guangzhou
Chapter of Ghent
University Alumni
China!*

Dec. 2020, the reception organised by Consulate General of the Kingdom of Belgium in Guangzhou



Ghent University Alumni China – Beijing Chapter

Dr Yu Baoyi

Ghent University Alumni Network – Beijing Chapter Ambassador

The Ghent University Alumni China-Beijing Chapter was launched in 2013 and now it is one of the main alumni communities. It has over 100 alumni, mainly consisting of alumni from north China, including Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang. Graduate students, researchers and visiting professors coming from Ghent University constitute our big family, and they are professors, engineers, managers when they return to China.

Representatives of the chapter: Baoyi Yu, Studying at Ghent University: 2009-2015, Master in Environmental sanitation & PhD in Chemistry; Yanqing Bai, Ghent University in 2012, Master in environmental technology.

The community is not only a home for our alumni, but also a bridge to connect Belgium and China. Here, we regularly organised or participated in some activities in Beijing or the nearby cities.



v. Chinese Students and Scholars Association in Ghent (ChiSAG)

根特中国学生学者联合会

Mrs Inge Mangelschots

Coordinator China Platform, International Relations Office, Ghent University

Mr Liu Danyang

Chairman ChiSAG in academic year 2020-2021

For many years already, the China Platform at Ghent University has had a tight and very friendly connection with the *Chinese Students and Scholars Association in Ghent* (ChiSAG).

ChiSAG is an association for all Chinese students, researchers and scholars in Ghent. It creates a platform through which Chinese students and researchers/scholars – and by extension all Chinese citizens living and working in Ghent and surroundings – can find and meet each other through different types of activities and several types of social media such as WeChat or Facebook.

Apart from academic activities, cultural events, sports games and competitions, excursions and informal get-togethers, ChiSAG also hosts an annual *Welcome Event* for the new incoming students and researchers from China at the start of each academic year as well as an annual *Chinese New Year Event* to celebrate the Chinese New Year in a festive way. They do this together with all the Chinese students, scholars and Chinese residents in Ghent as well as Belgian and international students and friends. And over the years, a significant number of members from the academic and administrative staff at Ghent University, who are dealing with our Chinese students' and researchers' community at Ghent University on a day-to-day basis and/or have cooperation with Chinese partner institutions, found their way to this event in order to join in on the festivities on the occasion of the start of the new Lunar Year.

Every year, the China Platform in Ghent University supports and sponsors the Chinese New Year Gala of ChiSAG. This event offers a wonderful opportunity for our students and staff to get in touch with members from the Chinese community from Ghent and surroundings and to savour authentic Chinese dishes and enjoy delightful performances together.

ChiSAG has a close cooperation with the Education Section, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Belgium and can count on their financial support to a certain extent.

In 2016, ChiSAG started with a new initiative called the "Chinese Academic Salon-in Ghent", which aims to build a platform for Chinese students and scholars in Ghent to share their research in different fields and find corporation opportunities not only abroad but also after their return back to China.

In 2019, the China Platform and ChiSAG joined forces to bring their first *Joint China Networking Event*. The aim of this event is to put the spotlight on the Ghent University-China cooperation of the most recent years in a more informal way and at the same time offer the opportunity to the other members of the *Strategic Partnership China* (Province of East Flanders, City of Ghent, FCCC and North Sea Port) to give an overview of the latest developments and accomplishments in their China cooperation. It is still the intention of the China Platform to make this into an annual event that should create a unique opportunity for the staff and professors of Ghent University, who do not yet have a cooperation or are not so familiar with China, to get to know this country in all its aspects. Unfortunately, both the event in March 2020 as well as 2021 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. But no worries, 2022 will be here sooner than expected and we will be ready to organise a joint event again.

Furthermore, there is close and regular contact between the China Platform and ChiSAG as they share a lot of information about their events and opportunities that arise for the Chinese students and researchers, such as the traineeships offered by the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), the *Virtual Job Market for Young Researchers* organised by the Ghent University Doctoral Schools, the China Career Day organised by the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (BCECC), vacancies for Chinese students in both Belgium and China, offers to engage in volunteering work, etc.

Last but not least, since Ghent University started its own *Ghent University WeChat account* in 2016, in order to have a more direct link with Chinese potential students and their parents thus aiming for a more active recruitment for Ghent University and its Global Campus in South Korea, several members of the Board of ChiSAG of the most recent years have played a key role in the task force that was set up to help running this WeChat account and provide it with interesting articles in Mandarin Chinese on a regular basis.

The Chinese Students and Scholars Association in Ghent mainly operates through an online platform and several popular Chinese social media channels:

- WeChat public page – 根特 ChiSAG, generic email address: ghentchisag@gmail.com
- They also established their own Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GentChisag/>.

In October 2020, a new chairman and seven new members of the board of ChiSAG were selected. Every year, the Board of ChiSAG consists of a mixture of doctoral and Master students from the different faculties at Ghent University and ranges from seven to ten members.

We would like to conclude this chapter by once more thanking the chairmen and -women of ChiSAG for steering the Board and its members of ChiSAG with such a dedication and conviction year after year after year!

Well done!

Let us continue to work together in the future!

非常感谢你们!

Academic year	Chairmen/chairwomen of the Board
2005-2006	ZHAI Hua
2006-2007	LIU Yifei
2007-2008	YUAN Qiang
2008-2009	XIANG Wen
2009-2010	ZHANG Jinxin
2010-2011	HUANG Chaobo
2011-2012	FAN Peng
2012-2013	ZUO Zhimiao
2013-2014	LIU Ning
2014-2015	TIAN Tian
2015-2016	MA Lingshan
2016-2017	LIU Xiaojie
2017-2018	LI Ji
2018-2019	ZHANG Mengjin
2019-2020	SHEN Ke
2020-2021	LIU Danyang

Quotes by some of ChiSAG's former chairwomen and chairmen



"One of the treasures of studying abroad is that there might be no other time in life like it, that friends are living just a 10-minute walk from each other, that you can hang out so easily and casually (maybe just pass by during a walk after dinner) and do so many interesting things together (we are basically the gang of

Coupure). On the flip side, studying abroad also means years of absence from our beloved ones back home; their sacrifice and support shall be engraved in our mind."

Ma Lingshan, Chairman 2015-2016



"Like fate, in my best age, I got to know Ghent university during its 200th anniversary. With the same belief, we have been working hard together to build a bright future. This is something I am extremely proud of."

Li Ji, Chairman 2017-2018



"The great experiences associated with ChiSAG witness my transformation and growth from a Ghent University master to an Ghent University PhD candidate."

Liu Danyang, Chairman 2020 – 2021



vi. Research cooperation with Chinese Universities anno 2021

Dr Dirk De Craemer

Head, Research Co-ordination Office, Research Department, Ghent University

Dr Vincent Eechaedt

Research policy advisor, Research Department, Ghent University

A positive trend

Over the years, Ghent University researchers have laid numerous contacts with their colleagues at Chinese universities and research institutes. A great deal of these contacts have evolved towards true research collaborations and led to new insights and research output. The number of research collaborations between Ghent University and Chinese partners has grown continuously. This is not only reflected by the number of student exchanges and the number of junior Chinese researchers that opt for Ghent University as the institution to obtain a PhD degree, but also by the number of co-publications between Ghent University researchers and researchers affiliated to Chinese institutions.

Over the last five academic years, the number of Chinese PhD students has increased by more than 65%. While in the academic year 2015-2016 243 Chinese PhD students were enrolled at Ghent University, the number of Chinese PhD students increased to 400 in the academic year 2020-2021.¹ This group of PhD students includes 191 female and 209 male PhD students reflecting a nearly perfect gender balance (48%/52%).

Nearly all Chinese PhD students obtained a scholarship from the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC), allowing them to stay at Ghent University for up to four years to perform doctoral research. Ghent University has signed a cooperation agreement with the China Scholarship Council to stimulate Ghent University as host institution for Chinese PhD students. This cooperation agreement lasts for five years (2018-2023). In the framework of this cooperation agreement Ghent University engaged to co-fund the holders of a CSC PhD scholarship: they are exempted from paying tuition fees and bench fees during their PhD studies at Ghent University. In addition, Ghent University annually supports a preference co-funding programme by providing a merit-based top-up research allowance to the best 10 applicants

¹ Based on data retrieved by Noëmi Debacker and Annik Leyman, Research Policy Office, Ghent University.

for a scholarship of the Chinese Scholarship Council choosing Ghent University as destination for their PhD studies. This research allowance is to be used for paying the research expenses at Ghent University.

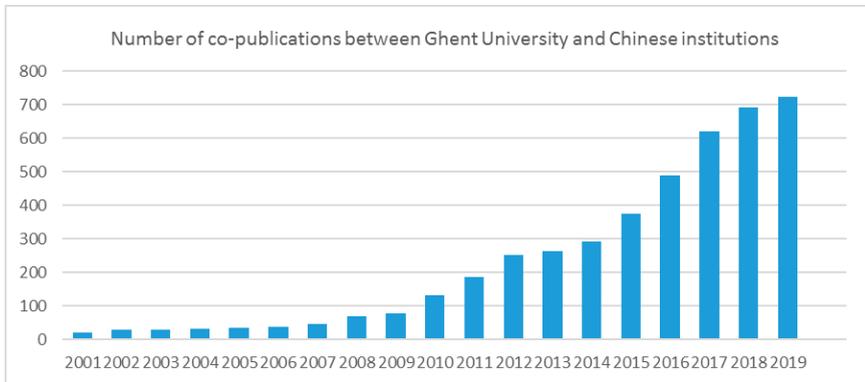
As a result of the growing number of Chinese PhD students at Ghent University, the number of Chinese researchers obtaining a PhD degree at Ghent University has obviously increased too: from 30 in 2016 to 68 in 2020. This stands for an increase of 126% and is similar to the uptrend already observed in the period 2010-2015. Of the 222 PhD degrees awarded to Chinese researchers in the period 2016-2020, 157 PhD degrees (71%) were awarded through three of the eleven faculties at Ghent University: the faculty of Engineering and Architecture (n=67), the faculty of Sciences (n=57) and the faculty of Bioscience Engineering (n=33). Nonetheless, all faculties have welcomed CSC PhD scholars. This shows that Ghent University supervisors of various research disciplines successfully supervise the doctoral research performed by Chinese PhD students.

Among the 222 PhD degrees awarded to Chinese researchers in the period 2016-2020, 31 PhD degrees were awarded jointly by Ghent University and by a Chinese higher education institution. Nearly half of these jointly awarded PhD degrees are the result of a successful collaboration with three Chinese higher education institutions: Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography (n=7), Renmin University (n=4) and Sichuan University (n=4). Almost all joint PhD degrees were awarded through three Ghent University faculties: the faculty of Engineering and Architecture (n=10), the faculty of Sciences (n=10) and the faculty of Arts and Philosophy (n=7). These three faculties also count for most of the 38 Chinese PhD students currently doing a joint PhD²: seventeen are studying at the faculty of Sciences, seven at the faculty of Arts and Philosophy and six at the faculty of Engineering and Architecture. At present, joint PhD studies are performed in collaboration with 20 Chinese higher education institutions. Most of these collaborations are set up with the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography (n=10), Sichuan Agricultural University (n=4) and Wuhan University (n=3).

Successful international research collaborations also result in co-publications. Based on the publications covered by the Web of Science database of Clarivate Analytics,³ the number of co-publications between Ghent University researchers and researchers affiliated to Chinese institutions show a nearly uninterrupted increase in number of co-publications: from 22 co-publications in 2001 to 723 co-publications in 2019. Preliminary data on the number of published co-publications in 2020 suggest that the total number of co-publications between Ghent University and Chinese research partners in 2020 will come close to the number of co-publications of 2019.

² Data retrieved on 19 April 2021.

³ Based on data retrieved by Aniek Toye, Policy advisor bibliometry, Research Department, Ghent University.



In the period 2016-2019 the total number of co-publications between Ghent University researchers and researchers affiliated with Chinese institutions is 3,380. This represents approximately 9% of the total number of scientific publications of Ghent University in this period (n=38,044).

Scientific publications in the field of physics often count more than 1,000 co-authors making it most likely to find a lot of international co-publications in these research fields. 983 of the 3,380 co-publications (29%) are the result of a collaboration between researchers affiliated to Ghent University and researchers affiliated to Chinese higher education institutions in the field of physics.

Based on the data retrieved from the Web of Science database, the number of co-publications between Ghent University researchers and researchers affiliated with Chinese institutions in the period 2016-2019 approximates or surpasses 100 publications in seven other research fields. These research fields are (in descending order of number of publications): Multidisciplinary Material Sciences (n=197), Environmental Sciences (n=171), Electrical & Electronic Engineering (n=121), Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (n=106), Physical Chemistry (n=97), Civil Engineering (n=96), and Plant Sciences (n=96).

One may conclude from these observations that most co-publications between Ghent University and Chinese institutions relate to research fields having affinity to (basic and applied) natural sciences. However, when we further analyse the remaining set of co-publications in the Web of Science database, an important number of the co-publications reflect collaborations in biomedical-related research fields and in geosciences-related research fields. Co-publications in the humanities, social and behavioural sciences are less prominent. This might reflect fewer collaborations between Ghent University and Chinese institutions when compared to the above-mentioned research fields. However, one should consider that the scientific output in the humanities, social and behavioural sciences has

not yet been fully captured by the Web of Science database (e.g. publications in books, monographs). The enrolment of several Chinese PhD students aiming for a joint PhD degree between their Chinese home university and Ghent University indicates that there are also active research collaborations between Ghent University and Chinese institutions in the fields of the humanities and the social and behavioural sciences.

Clouds on the horizon?

The above numbers are evidence of an ever more fruitful and intensive research collaboration between Ghent University and its Chinese counterparts. Nevertheless, collaborations with Chinese higher education institutions are increasingly scrutinized and made subject to conditions. Governmental bodies as well as funding agencies have expressed their concerns that joint research results are later misused for human rights violations or the development of military technology. Reference is also made to possible espionage and theft of strategic knowledge, and the possibility of researchers' academic freedom being limited. In light of these concerns, the European Commission has reserved the right to limit the participation of, amongst others, Chinese entities to several Horizon Europe calls.⁴ At the same time, governmental bodies are exercising stricter control over which academic knowledge is shared with Chinese researchers, including knowledge on digital surveillance and facial recognition technology. Furthermore, the European Commission intends to present guidelines on dealing with foreign interference targeting EU higher education institutions. These guidelines will *'aim to protect fundamental values by safeguarding academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy, and to shield students, researchers and innovators, and key research findings, from coercive, covert, deceptive or corrupting foreign actors'*.⁵ Well then, might clouds appear on the horizon?

Due to the growing awareness and an increasing number of sources pointing out that not all collaborations have been beneficial for all parties involved, the most pressing question, for Ghent University, is whether it can collaborate with its Chinese counterparts in a responsible way. Indeed, how can research culture, which is inherently open and aimed at international collaborations, be reconciled with an increasing distrust towards Chinese higher education institutions and with the fear that sharing academic knowledge might be misused later.

Universities have a responsibility here, as they cannot allow collaborations to negatively impact human rights or academic freedom, nor should they turn a blind eye to potential research misuse. It is therefore imperative that universities assess their collaborations, that they identify high-risk collaborations and that they take the necessary measures to prevent

⁴ European Commission, Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation, COM(2021) 252, Brussels, 18.5.2021.

⁵ Ibid.

negative effects of their collaborations. In 2017 and 2020, Ghent University adopted its policy on human rights and dual-use research, with the precise aim to uphold academic freedom and other human rights during its collaborations and to prevent later misuse of the research conducted at Ghent University. As part of this policy, Ghent University screens whether partner institutions are involved in serious human rights violations, whether the research results might contribute to the development of transport or weapons of mass destruction, and whether the project might lead to human rights violations. Important, however, is that these policies are country agnostic, and apply to all research collaborations which are conducted.

To date, Ghent University's policy on human rights and dual use research has not prevented it from having an impressive track record of high-quality research collaborations with Chinese universities. If future collaborations between Ghent University and China reflect what is already behind us, the announced governmental restrictions need not, in general, have a negative impact. Thus, there might be clouds on the horizon, but they do not seem to come our way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the number of collaborations between Ghent University researchers and researchers in Chinese universities and research institutes has increased. This is shown by the numbers of PhD students from China at Ghent University and by the numbers of co-publications. Several initiatives have been installed at Ghent University to stimulate collaborations with Chinese researchers and this has a positive effect on the willingness of Ghent University professors and researchers to set up new collaborations and to continue existing collaborations with their Chinese counterparts. One of these initiatives is the China Platform: the support provided by the coordinator and the members of the steering group of the China Platform at Ghent University plays a prominent role in facilitating, maintaining, and expanding contacts between Ghent University and Chinese universities and research institutions. Furthermore, Ghent University has adopted new policies, which should ensure that research collaborations do not impact negatively on human rights, nor that the research results are misused later. We believe that the numerous strong ties which have been built over the years between Ghent University and Chinese institutions form a strong basis for even closer collaborations in the years to come.

Activity report: achievements, events, missions and delegations

Mrs Inge Mangelschots

Coordinator China Platform, International Relations Office, Ghent University

New publication “From Monkey to Ox”

For an overview of the activities in the first ten years, I would like to refer to the first book “[From Dog to Rabbit – 5 Years China Platform](#)” and the second book “[From Rabbit to Monkey – Further developments since the 5th Anniversary Celebration of the China Platform](#)”.

It goes without saying that it is impossible to list all the activities that take place every year, so I have chosen to highlight some main events or happenings per academic year in order to put our fruitful and successful cooperation in the spotlight.

2016 – 2017

To support Ghent University in further strengthening its internationalisation policy and to put our university on the map in a more explicit and prominent way, the China Platform continued its close cooperation with the partners of the [Strategic Partnership China](#): the City of Ghent, the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), North Sea Port and the Province of East-Flanders. Ghent University participated in many events organized by these four valuable partners. This partnership is of key importance for the visits and missions of high level delegations, because together we can bring a multi-faceted programme clearly bringing 'the bigger picture'. On the one hand, joining academic, governmental and economic players has a very strong effect on the way our cooperation is being showcased, and on the other hand it increases and improves the visibility of each of these partners individually.

On 8 September 2016, [Prof. Bai Chunli, President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences \(CAS\), visited Ghent University](#) with a delegation from CAS that also included several representatives from the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences. During this visit they officially inaugurated the *Sino-Belgian Joint Laboratory*

for *Geo-Information* between the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Ghent University. As Prof. Alishir Kurban, fellow professor of Prof. Philippe De Maeyer in the XIEG, CAS helped to organize this visit, the programme also included a guided tour in the Faculty of Sciences of Ghent University which provided the delegation members with a better insight in the research cooperation in the framework of this Joint Laboratory.



On 12 December 2016, the **China Platform celebrated its 10th Anniversary** in the presence of many prominent guests including H.E. Minister Alexander De Croo and the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Belgium, H.E. Qu Xing.



In January 2017, **Mr Zhang Chi signed the extension of his contract as the representative of the China Platform and the Province of East-Flanders in Beijing.** His local presence improves the visibility of Ghent University in the specific region and enables a more efficient way of communicating with our partners, students and researchers and our Ghent University alumni. Our local representative facilitates and assists in incoming and outgoing mobility, provides assistance in prospective trips and visits, and is responsible for the dissemination of useful information. Furthermore, he plays an important role in the search for new partners and funding possibilities in order to increase the mobility flows between Ghent University and China.

On 5 May 2017, the **Chinese TV broadcaster CCTV-4 visited the Faculty of Sciences at Ghent University for a TV report about the Sino-Belgian Joint Laboratory for Geo-Information** between the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Ghent University. The goal of this TV report was to showcase the mutual benefits for both Chinese and Belgium partners through a win-win cooperation. See: <http://cartogis.ugent.be/bdewit/cctv/viewer.html>. With this media attention from one of the six China Central Television channels that broadcasts outside the PR China, Ghent University definitely enjoyed an increased visibility.





On 24 May 2017, [Ghent University](#) together with the partners of the [Strategic Partnership China](#) had the honor of welcoming the newly appointed Ambassador of Belgium to China, H.E. Marc Vinck. In the years that followed, H.E. Marc Vinck, referred to this visit a few times as an example of how important it is for provinces, cities, higher education institutions and other relevant organisations in Belgium to join

forces in order to take a structured and strategized approach on internationalisation.

2017 – 2018



On 31 October 2017, [Dr Chen Jiachang](#), Director-General, China Science and Technology Exchange Center, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), PR China, visited Ghent University together with representatives of the [Mission of China to EU](#). During this visit, the Rector of Ghent University, Prof. Rik Van de Walle emphasised the importance of international academic cooperation by giving the floor to several

of the Ghent University professors from different disciplines, who set an example on how to reach a win-win outcome through close and friendly ties in research and educational collaboration with their fellow professors in China.



In the autumn of 2017, the China Platform organised its [China Lecture Café Series 2017](#), honouring the tradition initiated by the former coordinator of the China Platform, Ms Isabelle De Coen, of hosting a series of monthly lectures to put research with China by the different faculties in Ghent University in the spotlight. In 2017, two lectures took place respectively on 13 September and 29 November 2017. The first lecture “The Academic Ranking of World Universities

(ARWU) – the Shanghai Ranking – the importance of the rankings”, given by Ms Yan Wu

from the Center for World-Class Universities, Graduate School of Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, touched upon the value of ranking systems. The second lecture on "Family planning in China: no longer a one-child policy" by Mrs Hong Ping, Deputy Secretary General and Director General of the International Cooperation Department in China Family Planning Association (CFPA), PR China gave us a clearer insight on the latest developments in China's family planning strategy.

On 12 December 2017, [National Sun Yat-sen University \(Kaohsiung\) visited Ghent University](#) with a delegation headed by the Dr Mitch Chou, Vice President for Research and Dr Chih-wen Kuo, Vice President for International Affairs. This visit was the result of the contacts that were established during the "Taiwan Matchmaking Event" that took place in May 2016 and – over the past few years – has led to a very close and fruitful collaboration that proves that academic cooperation, when supported by a strong commitment from both sides and a clear strategy to internationalize, can turn into a win-win situation for both partners involved.

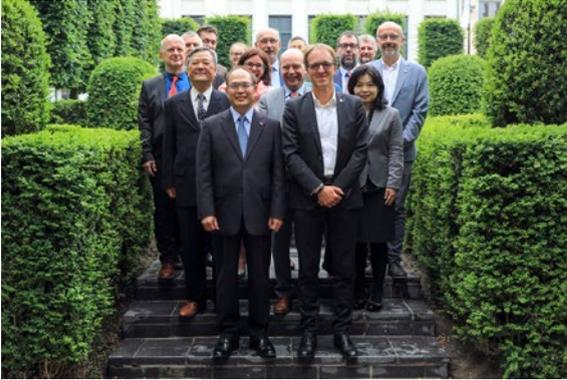


Triggered by the longstanding relationship of the Department of Oriental Languages and Cultures with its partner university in Beijing, [a delegation headed by the Prof. Cui Xiliang, former President of Beijing Language and Culture University visited Ghent University on 22 March 2018](#) in order to discuss further possibilities of strengthening the cooperation.



25 – 29 March 2018: participation in the [Asia Pacific Association for International Education \(APAIE\) 2018 Conference & Exhibition](#) in Singapore. Together with Dr Thomas Buerman, Mrs Inge Mangelschots and Mr Zhang Chi, represented Ghent University on the biggest international education conference in the Asia-Pacific region, where they met up with more than 30 partners from this specific region through B-2-B meetings.





23 May 2018 was the day on which Prof. Rik Van de Walle welcomed **H.E. Tseng Hou-Jen, Representative in the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium and his delegation, for a visit to Ghent University.** During this visit attention was not only given to the professors in Ghent University, who have on-going cooperation with one or more partner institutions in Taiwan but the programme also included a round of discussion with Taiwanese and Belgian students and researchers.



In 28 May until 2 June 2018, a **mission to China took place headed by Prof. Guido Van Huylenbroeck, Director of Internationalisation.** During this mission, the Ghent University delegation visited 3 partner universities as well as the China Scholarship Council. The programme included a visit to the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of China in Urumqi and a field trip to Turpan, one of the sites where Prof. Philippe De Maeyer and Prof. Jean Bourgeois are active; Sichuan University in Chengdu was

the second destination on the programme, followed by a visit to Southwest University in Chongqing and last but not least a meeting with the China Scholarship Council in Beijing. One of the highlights of this visit was the signing of the **new co-financing agreement between Ghent University (Special Research Fund) and the China Scholarship Council in the presence of the Belgian Ambassador, H.E. Marc Vinck.** This Preference Programme provides co-funding for 10 Chinese PhD students holding a PhD-grant from the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) on a yearly basis.

2018 – 2019

At the end of October 2018, Mr Zhang Chi, our representative in Beijing, participated in the [China Education Expo \(CEE\)](#) together with Dr Thomas Buerman, International Relations Office. As China's flagship event for student recruitment, the China Education Expo is set to bring more than 600 schools and universities together with more than 50,000 target attendees in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Shanghai every year.



From 6 to 12 November 2018, [Prof. Rik Van de Walle, Rector of Ghent University](#) headed a big delegation during an official visit to China, where they visited the China Scholarship Council and 8 partner universities in respectively Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai: University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS), Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University of China, Zhejiang University of Technology, Donghua University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Tongji University. The delegation also attended the signing of the Agreement on the establishment of an International Joint Laboratory on Sino-Belgium sustainable crop pest control between Ghent University and Southwest University, in the presence of the Belgian ambassador H.E. Marc Vinck. In Hangzhou, the delegation participated in the high-level programme that was organized in the framework of the MoU between Knowledge Institutes of Zhejiang and the Province of West-Flanders. Here, the TechTransfer Office of Ghent University also signed an agreement with the Industrial Technology Research Institute of Zhejiang University in the presence of the Governor of the Zhejiang Province and the Governor of the Province of West-Flanders. And in Shanghai, a Networking event that was hosted by the Belgian Consul General, Mr Paul Lambert, offered a nice opportunity to Rector Van de Walle and his delegation to mix and mingle with 'UGent' alumni and partners and friends from the academic and corporate world in Shanghai and surroundings.



On 14 January 2019, the [Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Belgium, H.E. Cao Zhongming](#), headed a delegation from the Chinese Embassy for a visit to Ghent and Ghent University, where they were welcomed in the morning by the Governor of the Province of East-Flanders, the Mayor of the City of Ghent, the Rector of Ghent University and all the other partners of the *Strategic Partnership China*.



The afternoon programme in Ghent University started with a round of presentations, during which several Ghent University professors – amongst them several professors who established a joint lab with one of their close partners in China – were offered the chance to elaborate on their activities with China and discuss some new opportunities for cooperation with China. The visit was concluded with a round of discussion with more than 20 Chinese and Belgian students and researchers, offering them the chance to discuss several aspects related to their study abroad period and life in Ghent (Belgium) or their host institution in PR China with the Ambassador and his delegation.



On 7 March 2019 a [delegation of 2 professors and 20 students from the Faculty of Chemical, Environmental and Biological Science and Technology, Dalian University of Technology, visited the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture](#). This university has established a close and very active cooperation with Ghent University and over the years many activities and exchanges took place in the framework of the cooperation agreement that was signed during one of the previous visits of DUT, in the presence of then Vice Rector, Prof. dr Freddy Mortier. More information about the cooperation with this university is given in the article by Prof. dr ir. Roel Baets in chapter 10 of this book.

In March 2019, Prof. Michel Tison, Dean of the [Faculty of Law and Criminology headed a small delegation to the PR China](#) with the aim to visit several partner universities in order to explore further possibilities to strengthen the cooperation. They visited several renowned partners in Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai: Peking University, Tsinghua University, Nanjing University (German-Sino Institute for Legal Studies), Nanjing Normal University, Tongji Law School, East China University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law. The delegation participated in the annual LLM Event that took place in Shanghai and was supported by Dr Fan Peng, representative of the Ghent University Alumni Chapter in Shanghai. Mr Zhang Chi, representative of Ghent University and the Province of East-Flanders was also involved in the organisation of this mission.

On 19 March 2019, the China Platform of Ghent University and the Chinese Student and Researchers Association of Ghent University (ChiSAG) jointly organized a [China Networking Event](#) in Het Pand. The aim of this event was to put the spotlight on Ghent University's China cooperation of the most recent years, in a more informal way, also offering the members of the *Strategic Partnership China* (Province of East Flanders, City of Ghent, FCCC and North Sea Port) the chance to provide some explanations about the latest developments in their cooperation. The main part of the programme consisted of a presentation by Mr Stefan Blommaert of his new book "De Eeuw van Xi".



On 21 May 2019, the China Platform in cooperation with Mr Kurt Defrancq organizer of the [literary-scientific salon "Belezen Wetenschappers"](#) organized a special "China Edition". Over 50 participants attended this literary salon, moderated by the famous journalist, presenter and radio anchor Pat Donnez in the Ghent city library "De Krook".



2019 – 2020

In September 2019, the [Faculty of Veterinary Sciences visited the PR China](#) with a small delegation headed by the Coordinator of the Faculty Council Scientific Research in order to strengthen the existing ties with their partners and explore possibilities to establish concrete collaboration with some potential new partners. The delegation visited a significant number of universities and research institutes during this trip and included a clear plan of action in their report of the mission:

1. Consolidate the current cooperation with Boehringer Ingelheim (China) Investment Co., Ltd
2. Further explore cooperation and maybe look into establishing a letter of intent with Sichuan Agricultural University
3. Expand current cooperation to a cooperation agreement with:
 - Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)
 - Nanjing Agricultural University
 - South China Agricultural University
 - Northwest A&F University
 - Harbin Veterinary Research Institute (HVRI), CAAS
 - China Agricultural University

In November 2019, a delegation from Ghent University headed by Vice Rector Mieke Van Herreweghe participated in the Economic Mission to the PR China headed by H.E. Princess Astrid. The China Platform organized a full academic 'side mission' in the framework of this visit during which the Ghent University delegation visited 5 cities and more in particular 10 partner institutions:

1. Renmin University of China (RUC)
2. China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) & the Institute of World Religions (IWR, CASS)
3. Beijing Normal University (BNU)
4. Nanjing University (NJU)
5. Southeast University (SEU)
6. Nanjing Forestry University (NFU)
7. Nanjing Agricultural University (NAU)
8. Shanghai University (SHU)
9. Zhejiang University (ZJU)
10. Sichuan University (SCU)



In total 8 new agreements were signed with 6 different partner institutions and one joint lab was inaugurated, more in particular the Joint Laboratory for Additive Manufacturing between Ghent University and Sichuan University – State Key Laboratory of Biotherapy & State Key Laboratory of Polymer Materials Engineering.

On 12 December 2019, a delegation from [Zhejiang University of Technology](#) visited Ghent University to discuss the ongoing activities with Prof. Diederik Rousseau and Prof. Stijn Van Hulle, Department of Green Chemistry and Technology, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering – campus Kortrijk in the framework of the agreement for the establishment of a Knowledge Institute between the Province of West-Flanders and the Zhejiang Province.



On 12-13 December 2019, the Africa Platform and China Platform at Ghent University in cooperation with the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences in Brussels jointly organized an [international conference on the relationship and interaction between Africa and China](#) with the title: “China in Africa and Africa in China – Impact on local societies, economies and cultures”.



On 9-10 March 2020 – right before the lockdown in Belgium/Europe – a [first bilateral Workshop was organized by Ghent University and National Sun Yat-sen university \(NSYSU\)](#). This first edition took place in Ghent and the Bluebridge Campus in Ostend and focused on the following domains: Photonics, Marine Sciences, Biomedical imaging/engineering and Marine Engineering and Technology. It is the aim to make this workshop into an annual event that will take place alternately in Ghent University one year and in NSYSU the next. As a part of the delegation of NSYSU decided not to participate in the workshop due to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Belgium/Europe, the workshop on Biomedical imaging/engineering had to be cancelled.

In the middle of March 2020, Belgium went into lockdown due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the whole of Europe. This affected all (physical) international activities, including the cooperation between Ghent University and its China Platform counterparts.





CHINA PLATFORM
China Lecture Café Series 2020

23 October 2020
Session "Research co-operation with Chinese partner institutions: joint labs as added value"
Speakers:
Leo Tavernier, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
Philippe De Maeyer, Faculty of Sciences
Guy Smagghé, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering
Bart Desein, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Ludwig Cardon, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
Stefaan De Smedt, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences
Zhang Wei-Hong, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

6 November 2020
Lecture "The dragon-slayer, the panda-hugger and the strategist: Europe and great power politics"
Sven Biscop, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Ghent University and Director of the Europe in the World Programme at the Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels

4 December 2020
Lecture "Car manufacturing with Chinese partners: the Corona challenge"(*)
Geert Bruyneel, Head of global production operations, Volvo Cars
This lecture is organized in cooperation with the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce, one of the partners of the Strategic Partnership China (see website: <https://www.ugent.be/chinaplatform/en/about-us>)

Time & location
12:00 – 14:00 in Het Pand, Room August Vermeylen – Oudeberg 1, 9000 Ghent
(*) 12:00 – 14:00 in Het Pand, Refter – Oudeberg 1, 9000 Ghent

These lecture sessions in Het Pand will also be live streamed.
Online registration: <https://eventmanager.ugent.be/ChinaJointLabs>
<https://eventmanager.ugent.be/ChinaPowerPolitics>
<https://eventmanager.ugent.be/ChinaCarManufacturing>

GHENT UNIVERSITY

Despite the fact that many of the activities were cancelled or postponed during the lockdown, the China Platform remained very active throughout the entire lockdown period by providing information about the possibilities of obtaining scholarships of the China Scholarship Council to many potential CSC grant holders and their potential supervisors in Ghent University. Moreover, close and regular contacts with the Chinese Embassy and the Mission of China to the EU in Brussels as well as many of the partner universities were maintained, in order to keep them up-to-date on the developments in the COVID-19 situation and to stay informed about the situation within the different partner institutions.

In the autumn of 2020, the China Platform organized its **China Lecture Café Series 2020** with 3 online lecture series:

- 23 October: "Research co-operation with Chinese partner institutions: joint labs as added value" with presentations by 7 members of the China Platform steering committee who have a joint lab.
- 6 November: "The dragon-slayer, the panda-hugger and the strategist: Europe and great power politics" by Prof. Sven Biscop, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Ghent University and Director of the Europe in the World Programme at the Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels.
- 4 December: "Car manufacturing with Chinese partners: the Corona challenge" by Mr Geert Bruyneel from the Volvo Cars company.

In the autumn of 2020, Prof. Bart Verschaffel organised [the exhibition "Souvenirs de Chine: the story of a Belgian engineer and doctors in China 1898-1908"](#), that officially opened on 15 October 2020. The exhibition was extended from 10 to 19 December 2020, and from 7 to 30 January 2021.

The exhibition which took place in the VANDENHOVE Center for Architecture and Art, was designed by Kris Coremans, and was based on the research of Dr Johan Mattelaer and Dr Mathieu Torck (Ghent University), published in the book "A Belgian Passage to China (1870-1930)", (Sterck & de Vreese, 2020). It was organised in collaboration with the Ghent University Library and STAM, with the financial support of the China Platform and the support of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of UGent.

Furthermore, during the past few years, the China Platform has given a strong support to the Department of Oriental Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, by providing an [internship place for one of the Sinology students each year](#). In the past few years, Mrs Inge Mangelschots, coordinator of the China Platform gave internship supervision to Ms Liesl Seys (spring 2018), Ms Kika Van Robays (spring 2020) and Ms Anastasia Novoselova (spring/summer 2021).



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vii. Joint Laboratories and International Thematic Networks (ITN's)

1. Joint Lab for World War I Studies

Prof. Dr Bart Dessein, Department of Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University

Even before the former warlord and commander of the so-called Beiyang Army (i.e. the Western-style Imperial Army that had been established in the late nineteenth century) and then Chinese Premier Duan Qirui (1865–1936) had decided that China had to join France and Great Britain against Germany in World War I and the Chinese government had declared war on Germany on 14 August 1917, some 140,000 Chinese labourers, mainly from Shandong Province, came to the Western front and were active in the logistical support of the French (about 40,000 men) and British (about 95,000 men) armies. Until recently, research on the motives why the Chinese government decided to join the 'European War' (as it is referred to in China), as well as on the reasons why these Chinese workers of the 'Chinese labour



corps' came to Europe, their travel experiences in Europe, their living and working conditions at the front in Flanders and in Northern France, and the importance their contributions had for the further course of the war and for political develop-

Chinese memorial site 'Busseboom', Sint-Jansstraat, Poperinge, where thirteen Chinese workers died in a bombing of their camp on November 15, 1917. Photo: B. Dessein.

ments in China upon their return to their home country, was virtually non-existent. However, in recent years, both in China and in Belgium, research on this common chapter of world history has gained attention.

This is why the Research Group 'East Asian Culture in Perspective: Identity, Historical Consciousness, Modernity' of the Department of Languages and Cultures of Ghent University and the Centre for Modern Humanities Studies of the College of Liberal Arts of Shanghai University, in further collaboration with the Departments of History and Archaeology of Ghent University and the In Flanders Fields Museum Ieper, joined forces and established the 'Joint Lab for World War I Studies'. The Joint Lab was officially founded in Shanghai on 14 November 2019 during the Belgian mission to China headed by HRH Princess Astrid.

The establishment of this Joint Lab builds on a longer collaboration between Ghent University, Shanghai University and the In Flanders Fields Museum. Prior to the establishment, joint summer schools (2018) and joint workshops (2018, 2019) had already been organised. The collaboration had already resulted in the joint publication of a special issue of the journal *Critical Theory* (Vol.3, No.1, June 2019) as well. Also in the domain of education, a collaboration between the two involved universities exists in the form of a '3+1+1'-programme.

2. Sino-Belgian Joint Laboratory for Geo-Information

Prof. Dr Philippe De Maeyer, Department of Geography, Faculty of Sciences,
Ghent University

Prof. Dr Jean Bourgeois, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy,
Ghent University

The collaboration between Ghent University and the *Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography* (XIEG) of the *Chinese Academy of Sciences* started in 2005 when Philippe De Maeyer was invited by Prof. Alishir Kurban (XIEG) and Prof. Vladimir Tikunov (Lomonosov Moscow State University) for a summer school in Urumqi, in the framework of the activities of the International Cartographic Association (ICA). Ever since, the exchanges between Ghent University and XIEG have become increasingly intense.

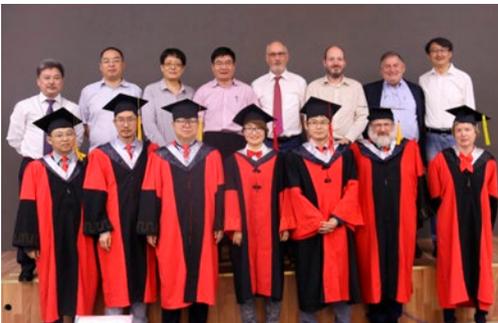
In 2007 a first cooperation agreement was signed between the two institutions, which was renewed in 2012 and 2017 for another five years. Based on these agreements several exchanges of academic staff, PhD students and master students have taken place during the last 15 years.

In May 2016 an agreement was signed for the '*Sino-Belgian Joint Laboratory for Geo-information*' in the presence of H.E. Michel Malherbe, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to China and representatives of the

Xinjiang Bureau of Foreign Experts, the Xinjiang Foreign Affairs Office and the Xinjiang Department of Science and Technology. This agreement was renewed in 2021.

The research themes in the collaboration Ghent University – XIEG include:

1. understanding the land cover and land use changes in a long-term and a short-term perspective in Xinjiang and the whole Central Asian (sub-)arid region;
2. climatological and hydrological modelling and how climate change will affect human activities and how at local and regional level human activities are influencing climate evolution;
3. geo-archaeology and the use of different geographical techniques, including image processing, for the understanding of the human influence to the landscape evolution;
4. study of European and Chinese historical maps demonstrating the intercontinental exchange of knowledge.



Different Ghent University master students realised field work in the region, especially land use and land cover change analysis in the Turpan region.

Ghent University and XIEG, together with the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, are involved in the co-promotorship of double PhDs. Between 2014 and 2021, 14 students have obtained a double PhD. Presently not only Chinese students are coming to Belgium, but a first Belgian student is also finalising her double PhD on karez – the canalised underground water system – around Turpan and their impact on the landscape.

The Sino-Belgian Joint Lab on Geo-Information is also strongly involved in collaborations with the (Academies of the) Central Asian republics. In December 2017, Ghent University confirmed its continued interest in exploring the possibilities for a collaboration in scientific research on the topics listed in the *Memorandum on collaborative research on ecosystem monitoring and management in response to climatic change in the arid*

zone in Central Asia. Both Ghent University's Department of Geography of and XIEG, joined the *Green Aral Sea Megascience Initiative* in 2020, which focuses on the ecological management and regional sustainable development of the Aral Sea in conducting scientific research and experiment and demonstration of green innovation technology.

Besides the land use and landcover regional evolution and the study of its drivers, the partners were active in geoarchaeology, especially the 3D modelling of the ancient city of Yar City (Yaohe), a World Heritage site. Today they are completing a study about an Iron Age petroglyph map found nearby the city of Toksun.



3. Joint Laboratory between Hebei Medical University and Ghent University for the Global Health

Prof. Dr Zhang Wei-Hong, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ghent University

Prof. Dr Tian Qing-Bao, Hebei Medical University, Shijiazhuang

Hebei Medical University, a university with over 120 years of history, owning five leading affiliated hospitals, is the best medical university in the Hebei Province.

The cooperation between Hebei Medical University and Ghent University has existed since 2010. In November 2019, Mr Didier Detollenaere, in his position of Governor of the Province of East Flanders, Mr Zhang Chi, Representative of Ghent University and the Province of East Flanders in Beijing, and Ms Zhang Wei-Hong, professor at Ghent University, visited Hebei Medical University for the signing ceremony of the joint health



research laboratory between Hebei Medical University and Ghent University. Mr Didier Detollenaere, Professor Zhang Wei-Hong and Professor Tian Qingbao, signed the agreement of the joint laboratory. Party Secretary Zhai Haihun and Governor Didier Detollenaere unveiled the joint laboratory.





Professor Qing-Bao Tian



Professor Jan Gettemans



Professor Wei-Hong Zhang

Professor Tian Qingbao is from the Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Hebei Medical University. Additionally, he works at the international office, and he is the dean of the International Education College. He has been cooperating with professor Jan Gettemans and professor Zhang Wei-Hong from Ghent University through the joint laboratory project.

Gettemans, and the GIS group which aims to analyse COVID-19. By now, one joint scientific paper has been published and one research project on 'Nanobody Application in the Diagnosis and Treatment of COVID-19' has been funded (2020-2021) by the government of Hebei province and led by Professor Gettemans.

Professor Tian's team counts thirteen members including three staff members and nine PhD and master candidates.

There are three research groups in Professor Tian's team, including the EBM group supported by Professor Zhang Wei-Hong, the nanobody research group supported by professor



4. Joint Laboratory for Industrialized Construction

Prof. Dr ir. Luc Taerwe and Prof. Dr ir. Geert De Schutter, Department of Structural Engineering and Building Materials, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Ghent University
Prof. Dr ir. Yuan Yong, Tongji University, Shanghai

The Joint Laboratory for Industrialised Construction was established in 2017 as a partnership between the Magnel-Vandepitte Lab for Structural Engineering and Building Materials of Ghent University, the State Key Laboratory of Disaster Reduction in Civil Engineering of Tongji University and the Shanghai Construction Group. This joint lab is the result of a long-lasting cooperation between both research groups, which started in 2004.

The main idea is to support the transition from classical construction practices to smart construction including precast concrete, self-compacting concrete, ultra-high performance concrete (UHPC), 3D printing, optimisation of tunnel lining segments and the green building concept.

The areas of cooperation include:

- Exchange of researchers, students, and professionals
- Development of joint technical collaboration projects
- Jointly organise conferences

- Share academic data and publications under confidentiality
- Other academic exchanges

In 2018, the partnership was extended with the Zhejiang Scientific Research Institute of Transport (Hangzhou) and the Jiangxi Transportation Institute (Nanchang), which broadened the scope of the Joint Lab.

From 2014 until 2016, Luc Taerwe was appointed as a High-End Foreign Expert at Tongji, mainly being involved in common research activities. He was also appointed as a National RPGE Chair Professor at Tongji within the '1000 Talents Program' for the period 2018-2020. From April 2014 to April 2017, Geert De Schutter was guest professor at Tongji University. The appointment was renewed for the period 2019-2022. Both these appointments intensified the cooperation between the partners.



Inauguration ceremony of the Joint Lab at Tongji University in 2017 (left: L. Taerwe, right: Yuan Yong)

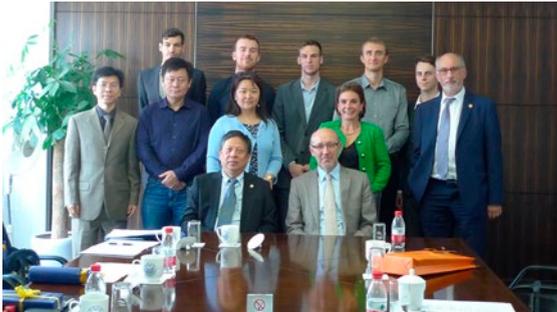


PhD student Tao Yaxin performing experiments on 3D printing of tunnel linings

Student exchange related to the Joint Lab activities gradually extended over the years. About 25 students from Tongji University obtained their (joint) PhD degree at Ghent University. More than 20 outgoing master students in civil and architectural engineering studied at Tongji University for one or two semesters. Several groups of civil engineering students visited Tongji University during their annual study trip through China.



Group of civil engineering students visiting Tongji University during their trip through China



Exchange students (last row) during official meeting with delegation from Ghent University



President Prof. Chen Jie meets rector Prof. Rik Van de Walle during his visit to Tongji University in November 2018

5. Joint Laboratory for Additive Manufacturing – JLAM

Prof. Dr Ludwig Cardon, Department of Materials, Textiles and Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Ghent University

Since April 2018, Sichuan University and Ghent University established the Joint Laboratory for Additive Manufacturing, also known as 'JLAM'. The joint lab arose from the strong collaboration between the research groups of both universities devoted to research on polymers and biomaterials, initiated from October 2013.

The purpose of the Joint Laboratory is to conduct academic exchanges and research cooperation in science and technology innovation and to strengthen their cooperative relationship. The research topics will mainly focus on additive manufacturing technologies in the field of extrusion or powder-bed based technologies, advanced materials including (bio)polymers and composites, machine development, building strategies, as well as pre- and post-processing techniques. JLAM is part of the State Key Laboratory of Polymer Materials Engineering and the State Key Laboratory of Biotherapy of Sichuan University in China, and of the Centre for Polymer and Material Technologies and the Centre for Textile Science and Engineering of Ghent University in Belgium. The research centres of Ghent

University belong to the Department of Materials, Textiles and Chemical Engineering MaTch of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

The driving forces in the setup of this collaboration are Prof. Yuquan Wei and Prof. Maling Gou (State Key Laboratory of Biotherapy), Prof. Guangxian Li and Prof. Hesheng Xia (State Key Laboratory of Polymer Materials Engineering, Prof. Karen De Clerck (Centre for Textile Science and Engineering), and Prof. Ludwig Cardon (Centre for Polymer and Material Technologies).

Since the creation of this joint lab, several contributions have been published in top-level international journals and conferences. Staff and student exchanges have been taken place as well, including joint PhD research programmes. This cooperation involves the yearly support of Ghent University staff at the University Immersion Programme (UIP) of Sichuan University, which is known for its high-quality international student exchange with participation of students at both Master and PhD level from Ghent University.



Inauguration ceremony of the Joint Lab at Sichuan University in November 2019.

6. Joint Laboratory of Global Change and Food Security

Prof. Dr Wim Cornelis, Department of Environment, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University

Prof. Em. Dr Eric Van Ranst, Department of Geology, Faculty of Sciences, Ghent University

In 2013, the Joint Laboratory of Global Change and Food Security was established in the presence of the Chinese President Xi and former Belgian Prime Minister Di Rupo. The lab is a joint effort between Ghent University's Departments of Environment and of Geology, and CAAS' Institute of Natural Resources and Regional Planning. It aims at fostering academic exchange and strengthening the scientific cooperation between the two partners with a main focus on global change, food security, soil health, sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, and ecosystem services.



The soil science related collaboration between Ghent University and CAAS dates back to the 1980s, with projects, from Ghent University's side, coordinated by Prof. Em. Eric Van Ranst, Prof. Em. Roger Hartmann, Prof. Em. Donald Gabriels, and the late Prof. Em. Marcel De Boodt. In 2001, Prof. Wim Cornelis, a junior academic at the time, had his first 'China experience' with a scientific mission to CAAS in Beijing and Luoyang. Several other members of both Ghent University departments were actively involved in the projects as well. Scientific meetings were jointly organised in Beijing (2000) and Ghent (2007, 2015).

Joint projects between Ghent University, CAAS and eventually other Chinese partners included Training in Analysis of Land Use Systems (1994-1997), Elaboration of Agro-Regional Development Models Based on a Sustainable Use of the Land Resources in Different Climatic Zones of China (1995-2000), China's Agenda 21 – China's Agricultural Education Network for Distance-Learning Applications (2000-2004), Simulation of Soil Organic Carbon Storage and Changes in Agricultural Crop Land in China and its Impact on Food Security (2005-2008), Strengthening of the Soil and Water Conservation Research at CAAS' Soil and Fertilizer Institute (1998-2002),

Wim Cornelis (right) explaining the importance of joint collaboration between Ghent University and CAAS to the president of CAAS, Prof. Huajun Tang (left) at the occasion of the 2015 scientific meeting at Ghent University.

and Improving the Capacity of CAAS' Soil and Fertilizer Institute for Controlling Nutrient Losses by Erosion (2003-2007). These projects were funded by the Flemish Government's Education Department, the Belgian Development Cooperation and Ghent University.

Several CAAS staff members of the Institute of Natural Resources and Regional Planning obtained a Ghent University PhD, including the President of CAAS Prof. Huajun Tang (1993), Dr Jin Ke (2007), Dr Ye Liming (2008) and Dr Lidong Ren (2020). CAAS staff members also followed work placements or graduated from Master programmes (Ma in Soil Science and Ma in Eremology, who later merged to Ma in Physical Land Resources) organised by the Ghent University soil groups.

In 1995 Eric Van Ranst was appointed Honorary Research Professor of CAS' Institute of Natural Resources and Regional Planning, and received the China Government Friendship Award in 2012, China's highest award for foreign experts who made outstanding contributions to the country's economic and social progress. From

2011 to 2015, Wim Cornelis was visiting professor at CAAS' Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment.

The current research interests of the Joint Lab focus on assessing multi-benefits of soybean-based rotations across scales in the Huang-Huai-Hai Plain and Belgium. With glass house and field experiments conducted in both Belgium and China, we wish to understand how cultivars of soybean, a tap-rooted legume, and other selected crops might contribute to alleviate soil structural degradation and thus increase production of maize and wheat, change soil and microbial community composition and diversity, reduce nitrate leaching and affect groundwater recharge, across soils and climates.



Eric Van Ranst receiving the China Government Friendship Award in 2012 in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

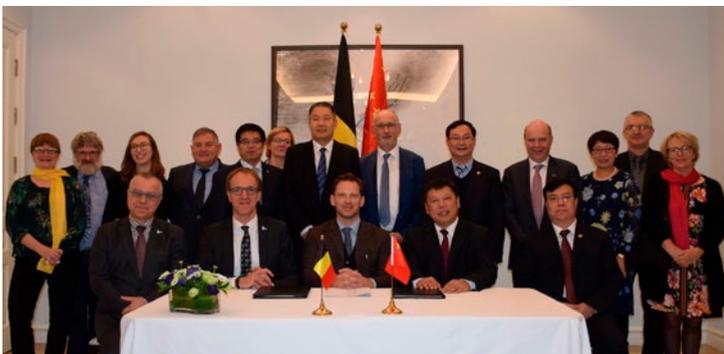
7. International China-Belgium Joint Laboratory on “Sustainable Crop Pest Control” between Southwest University of China and Ghent University of Belgium

Prof. Dr Guy Smagghe, Department of Plants and Crops, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University

This agreement was signed at the Belgian embassy in Beijing on November 7th, 2018 by and between the Southwest University (SWU, Chongqing) and Ghent University (UGent) for the establishment of an International Joint Laboratory on Sino-Belgium Sustainable Crop Pest Control. Regarding the organisational structures and directors of this Joint Lab in both sides, the joint laboratory is facilitated in Academy of Agricultural Sciences and College of Plant Protection at SWU, and Faculty of Bioscience Engineering at UGent. Prof. Jinjun Wang is the director on the Chinese side and Prof. Guy Smagghe is the director on the Belgian side.

The main objectives are:

- To promote the international development of the key discipline of agricultural entomology and pest control at SWU and UGent; introduce international and advanced concepts, facilities, technologies and managements, especially novel technologies such as RNA interference;
- To supervise and lead the teams at SWU and UGent in exploring front-line, innovative and unique research; publish high-quality papers;
- To promote and enhance international academic collaborations with other international entomology and crop protection research groups; organise international conferences; strengthen international personnel exchanges.



The specific objectives are:

- To develop more green agriculture in plant protection and sustainability in agro-ecology to reduce pesticides in the food chain;
- Sustainable pest control, with a special focus on citrus but also vegetables
- New (bio)technologies such as RNA interference, CRISPR-based genome editing, anti-pesticide resistance tactics, biological control, new natural enemies, etc.;
- Pollinators, pollination, food security, sustainability and biodiversity;
- Staff training, exchange and mutual visits.

Some highlights on accomplishments of the joint lab so far are:

- Training of 6 Master and 5 PhD students
- 2 CSC-doctoral grant holders (+co-funding by Special Research Fund of UGent)
- Exchange visits of 3 postdocs of SWU in Ghent and 2 postdocs of UGent in SWU
- Publication of 21 A1-papers
- One project application with FWO-Flanders in Belgium
- Start of the "111" project at SWU
- Projects with NSFC and PSFC, Chongqing and SWU
- National friendship medal in October 2019
- International congress on novel technologies in pest control
- Joint participation at International Congress of Entomology



8. SIBS-UGENT-SJTU Joint Laboratory of Mycotoxin Research

Prof. Dr Sarah De Saeger, Department of Bio-Analysis, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ghent University

At the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, many scientific collaborations and agreements with Chinese institutes of higher education can be listed. Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Nanjing Agricultural University, Peking University, Shanghai Institutes of Biological Sciences (Joint Laboratory of Mycotoxin Research), Shanghai Jiao Tong University (Joint Laboratory of Mycotoxin Research), Southeast University, Zhejiang University, China Agricultural University (Joint PhD agreements), and Nanjing Forestry University (Joint Laboratory of Advanced Biomedical Materials) are examples of institutes with whom our faculty members have longstanding collaborations. However, instead of listing all activities and research outcomes, we give the floor to one Ghent University alumnus and one Ghent University PhD student at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.



9. International Joint Laboratory of Advanced Biomedical Materials

Prof. Dr Stefaan De Smedt, Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ghent University

Dr Huang Chaobo, Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing

On November 19, 2019, Ghent University and Nanjing Forestry University (NFU) officially opened the 'Joint Laboratory of Advanced Biomedical Materials (NFU-UGent)' in Nanjing, China.

Following his doctoral research at Ghent University (Faculty of Pharmacy) and his post-doctoral research at EPFL, Dr Huang Chaobo joined NFU in 2015. Together with his Ghent University promoter, Prof. Stefaan De Smedt, he established the Joint Laboratory of Advanced Biomedical Materials. This Belgium-China collaboration aims to explore the potential of new biomaterials in pharmacy and life sciences. So far, Ghent University and Nanjing Forestry University have exchanged students and developed common research, which has been published in highly ranked international journals.



In March 2021, Dr Xiong Ranhua joined the staff of the Joint Laboratory. Trained as a physicist in China, Dr Xiong performed doctoral and post-doctoral research at Ghent University as well under the supervision of Prof. Kevin Braeckmans and Prof. S. De Smedt, which was financially supported by FWO Flanders.



From left to right: Prof. Stefaan C. De Smedt, Prof. Mieke Van Herreweghe (Vice-President Ghent University), NFU President Wang Hao, NFU Vice-President Zhang Hong (NFU), Prof. Chaobo Huang.

10. Joint Research Lab of Liquid Crystals and Photonics Devices

Prof. Dr Kristiaan Neyts, Department of Electronics and Information Systems, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Ghent University

There are ongoing collaborations and shared interests between two research groups in the field of liquid crystals and photonic devices:

- The Liquid Crystals and Photonics Group of the ELIS department at Ghent University
- The Electronic Paper Display Institute of the South China Academy of Advanced Optoelectronics at South China Normal University

Both of the abovementioned groups work on liquid crystal and electrophoretic devices for electro-optical components such as displays, lenses and smart windows. The joint research lab LCPD has been initiated by Prof. Kristiaan Neyts of Ghent University and Prof. Guofu Zhou of SCNU to increase collaboration, exchange of students, researchers and expertise. The joint research lab also involves Prof. Filip

Strubbe of Ghent University and Prof. Dong Yuan and Prof. Huapeng Ye of SCNU.

Prof. Neyts visited SCNU in March 2019, when he gave a keynote presentation at the 8th International Symposium on Liquid Crystal Photonics in Guanzhou, and in December 2019 when he discussed future collaboration. Since then, two SCNU master students worked on their master thesis in Ghent University and Sunqian Liu, an alumni of SCNU started her PhD research at UGent in April 2021.

The joint laboratory will benefit from the theoretical, simulation and photo-alignment expertise of the Ghent University group and of the technological and prototyping expertise of the SCNU group.



Left: Prof. Dong Yuan of SCNU with a poster to advertise the seminar of Prof. Neyts at SCNU on December 10th 2019. Exchange of gifts with Prof. Dong Yuan (left), Prof. Guofu Zhou (right) and Prof. Neyts (second from left).

11. Joint Laboratory for Smart Polymer Materials

Prof. Richard Hoogenboom, Department of Organic and Macromolecular Chemistry, Faculty of Sciences, Ghent University

Prof. Qilu Zhang, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an

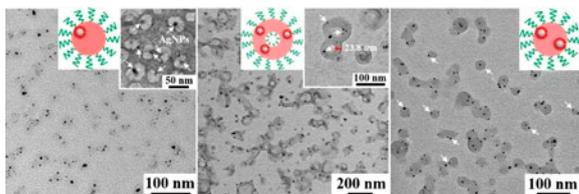
The Joint Laboratory for Smart Polymer Materials is currently being set up between the Supramolecular Chemistry Group from the Department of Organic and Macromolecular Chemistry at Ghent University and the State Key Laboratory for Mechanical Behaviour of Materials, Shaanxi International Research Center for Soft Matter at Xi'an Jiaotong University, aiming to be established later in 2021. The joint lab is founded based on the strong collaboration between the research groups of both universities devoted to study smart polymer materials, which was initiated in 2016. The purpose of the Joint Lab is to conduct academic exchanges and innovative collaborative research on smart polymer materials and to strengthen the cooperative relationship between Ghent University and Xi'an Jiaotong University.

The joint lab aims to develop smart polymer materials, focusing on the following research topics:

- Supramolecular control over responsive polymers
- Nanotechnology based on polymer self-assembly
- Polymer sensors
- Polymer actuators

These topics will strongly benefit from the combined expertise of the partners involved. In recent years a number of joint articles have already been published in high impact scientific journals. In addition, the foreseen exchange of students and researchers will be an important asset for their training and education while staff exchange will provide a fruitful basis

for scientific discussions and further extending the collaborations between the involved universities.



Example of joint research on development of asymmetrically assembled polymer nanoparticles



Prof. Richard Hoogenboom (left) and Prof. Qilu Zhang during a joint visit to the terracotta army.

International Thematic Networks

1. ITN – ANSER

Prof. Dr Olivier Degomme, Prof. Dr Zhang Wei-Hong, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ghent University

The 'Academic Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy' (ANSER) is an international research platform fostering interaction and knowledge sharing between academics and policy makers. The members engage in joint research projects, weigh in on current policy debates and host innovative training programmes. As a global resource for SRHR policy research, education, and service delivery, ANSER helps building evidence-based policies that support sexual and reproductive rights for everyone, everywhere.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) lie at the immediate intersect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Health and Gender Equality. SRHR should therefore be central to all policies advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Sound SRHR policymaking necessitates an evidence base to ensure their adequacy and effectiveness, reliable follow-up and monitoring, accountability, and regular sharing of experiences between different types of stakeholders.

ANSER was launched in 2016 as one of the first International Thematic Networks (ITN) of Ghent University. Over the years ANSER has grown into an internationally renowned network of 35 institutional members, of which 28 are academic institutions and 7 are non-profit organisations. In 2021 ANSER got granted its second round of ITN funding, securing the organisation of the network until the end of 2025.

Among the members, there are three Chinese institutions: Tsinghua University, Peking University and the National Research Institute

for Family Planning. Through ANSER Ghent University and the Chinese partners build further on previous collaborations in European funded research projects, exchange of students, joint-training programmes and conferences such as the annual EU-China Health Forum.



Feedback from Chinese partners:



Ms Ping HONG, Commissioner of the China Family Planning Association, China

"ANSER is a very good platform where we can exchange experience, discuss research and inspire thinking. In particular, the China-EU Health Forum has built a platform for South-south cooperation and North-south interaction. Here, governments, non-governmental organisations, universities, and institutes can jointly carry out international exchanges and cooperation in the fields of health and population development. By sharing experience and exchanging views, we can achieve the purpose of strengthening cooperation and jointly promoting development."



Mrs Kaiyan PEI, Professor, Director of Social Medical Research Centre of National Research Institute for Family Planning (NRIFP), China

"It is honoured for NRIFP to be one of the collaborating centers of ANSER. Through participating in the academic activities organised by ANSER, engaging in conducting joint research with other academic institutions of ANSER platform and organising international academic forums, a whole scientific idea has been developed to improve SRHR policy research, including exploring the academic problems in the SRHR field, carrying out targeted research and finally carrying out policy transformation. In addition, it is worth mentioning that we were proud of working together with other academic institutions of ANSER to make our due contribution to the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic in the extraordinary year of 2020."



Mr Kun TANG Prof. of Vanke School of Public Health, Tsinghua University, China.

"I was very privileged to join in the ANSER on behalf of Tsinghua University. ANSER is an important platform for academic institutes to advance our research agenda for the population sexual and reproductive health. I wish ANSER a continued success and look forward to our collaboration in the next 15 years!"



Mr Weiming TANG, University of North Carolina Project-China

"Co-create, Contribute, and Collaborate. I can summarise my experience in the ANSWER-ISHare survey into 3Cs. This study brings researchers from different countries together to co-create a survey tool, have each team work together to contribute and conduct the in-country survey, and then have different teams collaborate to summarise the results. It is an excellent example of international collaboration".

2. ITN ReSource: Looking beyond the current 'take, make and dispose'.

Prof. Dr Erik Meers, Department of Green Chemistry and Technology, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University

The focus of the ITN-ReSource lies on biorecovery from by-products and waste streams in the agro-food value chain. We aim to contribute to the transition to a more circular economy by means of resource recovery, looking towards science to provide the necessary solutions that can ensure this transition. Only by building a global association and knowledge-sharing model, those goals can be achieved. ITN ReSource, with Ghent University and its selected International Partners, want to strengthen research and services on biorecovery to deliver specific solutions to this challenge.

We aim to reach these objectives by:

- fostering international academic collaboration through a vigorous student exchange programme, allowing students and researchers from different partners to visit other institutions. For all involved inter-

- national partners, including a consolidated network with Asian Partners, we focus on Joint PhD development and establishment of a cohesive community around these PhDs;
- creating a context through which researchers can collectively profit from the opportunities created by the network. Therefore, summer schools and specific sessions at international conferences are organised to ensure optimal knowledge exchange;
- increasing the communication and interaction with industrial, agricultural and policy stakeholders to assure genuine impact on the field of organic waste upcycling.
- International academic collaboration through Joint PhDs is the main ingredient of the ITN Resource. Through a Joint PhD, graduate researchers gain skills from international colleagues, help them increase the impact of their research, grow their international networks and develop a global perspective, become part of two high-quality research environments and experience personal growth by discovering and enjoying other cultures. We have more than 20 ongoing joint PhDs. Those students enrolled as a PhD in biobased sciences and/or bio-engineering in their home institution, with experience on biobased value chains related to residues, can apply for a joint PhD. We can help find a supervisor who matches their topic at Ghent University where they will carry out the research for at least six months.



Regarding qualitative partnerships, we aim to make appropriate and effective strategic choices. The partner selection for the Re-Source network was based on their current research/activities on the bioresource recovery field and their will to move towards a circular bioeconomy. The Coordination is based at Ghent University, but synergies with our partners aim to vigorously exchange the existing expertise in various topics separated in working groups. For example, Copenhagen University, Central University of Catalonia or Wageningen University are part of our European network. Professors from China Agricultural University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University or the National University of Singapore are also part of our network and notable examples of our connection with Asia.

Furthermore, we are happy to cooperate with prominent academics from other institutions. Therefore, we welcome visiting researchers (i.e. PhDs, postdocs) to perform research on bioresource recovery topics. Their home institution typically covers the visitor's salary, but depending on the subject and thematic match, from Ghent University we can cover bench fee costs and compensation in some cases (when upgrading the Visiting Researcher to a Joint PhD) for the months spent in Ghent.

One of the core activities from our ReSource Network is the organisation and participation in scientific events and workshops on science communication. Our last two editions of our seasonal schools have brought together two summer schools organised with more than 30 PhD students participants from all over the EU. In collaboration with Biorefine Cluster Europe, Re-Source also participates in the European Sustainable Nutrient Initiative (ESNI) organisation. This annual event brings together policy-makers, researchers, industry representatives and many other stakeholders to discuss how to raise awareness on the benefits of nutrient recycling and reuse (NRR). ITN Resource is also part of two ongoing Marie-Sklodowska Curie Innovative training networks, with several PhD's who are either directly or indirectly involved.

Additionally, ReSource is proudly collaborating with the International Master of Science in Environmental Technology and Engineering (IMETE), a Joint Master Degree Programme, taught in English, bringing together students and scholars from all over the world. Last but not least, ReSource network pays strong attention to EU-Asian collaborations. At Ghent University, we benefit from the GUGC as a bridge to Asia and thereby also strengthen Ghent University's own position.



3. International Thematic Network: MYTOX-SOUTH®

Prof. Dr Sarah De Saeger, Department of Bio-Analysis, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ghent University

The international thematic network (ITN, Global Minds) MYTOX-SOUTH® (<https://mytoxsouth.org/>) intends to harness the expertise and infrastructure available at Ghent University and at the partner institutes to strengthen global capacity to tackle the mycotoxin problem and the associated food safety and food security issues. A visual representation of all collaborations is shown in Figure 1.

This multi-disciplinary partnership, which deals with all known aspects of mycotoxins and toxigenic moulds, is able to provide

the most adequate strategies and solutions for different stakeholders. MYTOX-SOUTH® is therefore a partnership to improve food security and food safety through mitigation of mycotoxins at global level with several long term goals. The first goal is human capacity building by networking and co-creation. Strengthening the human capacity of partners in the South is essential to mentor a new breed of innovators and researchers whose expertise is intimately tied to health outcomes. MYTOX-SOUTH® provides training, student/ staff exchange programmes and Joint PhDs



A global problem needs an international approach. The maps depicts all international collaborations with MYTOX-SOUTH® partners.

which can contribute to an increased capacity of partners in the South and the identification of new research areas. The second goal is to bridge the gap between (1) research and the development of more safe food and feed, and (2) different actors including farmer organisations, the private sector and policy makers. The third goal is to create awareness on the mycotoxin problem and build a sustainable network. A stimulating environment for a fruitful public-private partnership is a pre-requisite for long-term and sustainable innovation. As a solid consortium, MYTOX-SOUTH® seeks international funding opportunities to further enhance its capacity to deal with mycotoxins and the related food safety and food security challenges.

Moreover, the world-wide visibility is achieved through fruitful collaborations with China. The Joint Laboratory of Mycotoxin Research of the Ghent University-Shanghai Jiao Tong University-Chinese Academy of Sciences (Shanghai Institutes of Biological Sciences) (established in 2015) represented by Prof. Aibo Wu is an established partner in the network. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding

with Nanjing Agricultural University was signed in 2020 and represented by Prof. Suquan Song. Both Prof. Aibo Wu and Prof. Suquan Song have had long-time exchange and collaborations with Ghent University since 2008. In the frame of MYTOX-SOUTH® a triangle collaboration on mycotoxins' toxicology between Nanjing Agricultural University, Ghent University and the University of Nairobi, Kenya was initiated, but was temporarily put on-hold due to the pandemic situation.



Prof. WU Aibo Principal Investigator
Joint Lab of Mycotoxins Research and Food Safety



Dr Song Suquan, professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Nanjing Agricultural University and one of our MYTOX-SOUTH partners.

4. The Plant Biotechnology and Breeding Network

Laura Cortada, PhD, Visiting Professor, Nematology Didactics & Capacity Building, Ghent University

Prof. Dr Godelieve Gheysen, Department of Biotechnology, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University

Prof. Dr Danny Geelen, Department of Plants and Crops, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University

The Plant Biotechnology and Breeding (Plant B+B) international thematic network (ITN) is an international project funded by Ghent University and coordinated by the VIB-International Plant Biotechnology Outreach (IPBO). The VIB-IPBO was established in 2000 as a partnership of the Vlaams Instituut Voor Biotechnologie (VIB), a world-leading life sciences research institute based in Flanders (Belgium), and Ghent University (UGent).

The Plant B+B ITN has the objective to connect academic programmes, researchers,

plant biotechnologists and breeders for the global advancement and implementation of biotechnology towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). To this end, our collaborative network pursues to create an enabling environment for joint fundraising, learning and scaling up bio-innovations.

To tackle this goal, The Plant B+B network is structured and organised around three major work clusters (WC) in which partners will contribute to articulate their activities:



VIB-IPBO, banner by Laura Cortada, Opening of the Plant B+B online café by Prof. Dr Marc Van Montagu 'Green Enlightenment', 26th of February 2021.



viii. Partner Universities: an overview

As the number of cooperation agreements with our partner universities has grown significantly and there is also an increasing diversity in the type of agreements, we thought that the best way to present a clear overview, was to provide a separate list of the different formats of cooperation.

The majority of these cooperation agreements concern student and staff exchange agreements, but the overview also shows that Ghent University is gaining ground in the field of establishing Joint Laboratory agreements, agreements on (Collaborative) Research, Double Degree programme agreements (Ma and/or PhD) as well as agreements for joint supervision of doctoral research.

Moreover, the Ghent University Tech Transfer Office is already active for many years in setting up specific contracts and agreements that fall under their domain and has already gained a lot of experience in this field. Thanks to this, Ghent University is very much aware of the ever increasing importance of innovation and technology, the link with industry and the valorization of cooperation with our partners in this region.

Currently, Ghent University does not count many multilateral agreements with partners in this specific region yet but we see indications that this might change in the future.

CA = Cooperation Agreement

MoU = Memorandum of Understanding

ADD = addendum (if an existing agreement is being extended to an additional faculty)

LoI = Letter of Intent

* Explanatory note about the short names of the faculties in Ghent University:	
Name of the faculty in English	Short name used in list
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy	LW
Faculty of Engineering and Architecture	IrW
Faculty of Economics and Business Administration	EB
Faculty of Bioscience Engineering	BW
Faculty of Political and Social Sciences	PS
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences	GE
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	FW
Faculty of Sciences	WE
Faculty of Law and Criminology	RE
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences	PPW
Faculty of Veterinary Sciences	DI

Overview of agreement of Ghent University with partners in Mainland China

University of Chinese Academy of Sciences	Type of Agreement	Duration
Beijing Language and Culture University	CA	5 years
Beijing Normal University	SEA	5 years
Beijing Normal University	MoU	5 years
Beijing University of Chemical Technology	MoU	3 years
Capital Medical University	CA	5 years
China Agricultural University	CA	5 years (in process of being renewed)
China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)	CA	5 years
Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	CA	5 years
City University of Hong Kong	CA	5 years
City University of Hong Kong	SEA	5 years
Dalian University of Technology	CA	5 years
East China University of Political Science and Law	SEA	5 years
Fudan University	CA	5 years
Hebei Medical University	CA	5 years
Hebei University	CA	5 years
Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Beijing)	MoU	/
Jincheng College of Sichuan University	SEA	5 years
Liaoning University	MoU	5 years
Liaoning University	CA	5 years
Nanjing Agricultural University	CA+ADD+ADD	5 years
Nanjing Agricultural University	CA	5 years
Nanjing Forestry University	LoI	1 years
Nanjing University	CA	5 years
Northwest A&F University	CA	5 years
Peking University	CA	5 years
Peking University	CA	5 years
Peking University	Annex	5 years
Renmin University, Institute of Chinese Classics	CA	5 years
Renmin University, School of Philosophy	CA	5 years
Renmin University,	MoU+ADD	3 years
Shanghai Jiao Tong University	CA	5 years
Shanghai Ocean University	MoU+CA	5 years
Shanghai University	CA	5 years
Shenyang University of Chemical Technology	CA	5 years
Shenzhen University	MoU	3 years
Sichuan Agricultural University	MoU	5 years
Sichuan University	CA	5 years

	Faculty*	Professor
	LW	Ann Heirman
	LW, PPW,IRW,WE	An Heirman, Martin Valcke,Michael Monte, Philippe De Maeyer & Jan Nyssen
	LW,PPW,IRW,WE	Martine Valcke, An Heirman, Jelle Saldien, Philippe De Maeyer
	institutional	n.a.
	GE	Wei Hong Zhang, Olivier Degomme
	BW	Guido Van Huylenbroeck
	WE	Marc De Batist
	WE	Dominique Van Der Straeten
	EB	Ignace De Beelde
	EB	Bert George
	IRW	Roel Baets
	RE	Dominique Van Der Straeten
	LW,RE,EB	Ann Heirman, Peter Van Elsuwege, Véronique Limère
	GE	Wei-Hong Zhang
	LW	Bart Dessein
	BW	Oswald Van Cleemput, Pascal Boeckx
	LW	An Heirman
	LW	An Heirman
	LW	Ann Heirman
	BW/WE/FW	Guido Van Huylenbroeck, Wilfrieda Decraemer, Sarah De Saeger
	BW,WE,FW	Stijn Speelman, Sarah De Saeger, Wim Bert
	BW	Joris Van Acker
	LW	Ann Heirman
	DI	Geert Opsomer
	LW	Kristoffel Demoen, Ann Heirman, Bart Dessein, Christoph Anderl
	LW, RE	Ann Heirman, Marc De Vos
	RE	Marc De Vos
	LW	Ann Heirman
	LW	Ann Heirman
	LW	Jean Bourgeois
	LW,FW,IRW,EB	Sarah De Saeger, Ann Heirman, Frank Naert, Luc Taerwe
	BW	Peter Bossier
	LW	Ann Heirman
	WE	Pascal Van Der Voort
	IRW	Hans De Backer
	BW	Geert Haesaert
	PS,EB,IRW,LW	Jan Orbie, Ignace De Beelde, Luc Taerwe / Ludwig Cardon, Christoph Anderl

Sichuan University	MoU	3 years
South China University of Technology	CA	2 years
South China University of Technology	MoU	5 years
South China Normal University	CA	5 years
Southeast University	CA	5 years
Southwest University	MoU	5 years
Southwest University	CA	5 years
Southwest University	CA	5 years
Southwest University of Political Sciences and Law	CA	5 years
Tiangong University	CA	5 years
Tongji University	CA + ADD	5 years
Tsinghua University School of Civil Engineering	CA	5 years
Tsinghua University School of Law	CA	5 years
University of Chinese Academy of Sciences	MoU	3 years
Wuhan University Law School	CA	5 years
Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)	CA	5 years
Xinjiang Turpan Bureau of Cultural Heritage	MoU	5 years
Zhejiang University	MoU	5 years
Zhejiang University	ADD bij MoU/CA	saamen met Mou
Zhejiang University	ADD bij MoU/CA	saamen met Mou
Zhejiang University	ADD bij MoU/CA	saamen met Mou
Zhejiang University	ADD bij MoU/CA	saamen met MoU
Zhejiang University of Science and Technology	CA	5 years
Zhejiang University of Technology ZJUT	MoU	5 years
Zhejiang University of Technology ZJUT	CA+ADD	5 years
Zhejiang University of Technology ZJUT	CA	5 years
Zhengzhou University	CA	5 years

Overview of agreement of Ghent University with partners in Taiwan

National Chengchi University	CA	5 years
National Chiao Tung University / College of Biological Science and Technology	LoI	1 year
National Sun Yat-sen University	CA	5 years
National Sun Yat-sen University	CA+ADD+ADD	5 years
National Taiwan University	CA	5 years
The Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA)	CA	5 years
National Taiwan University	CA	5 years

	PS	Jan Orbie
	IRW	Wilfried Philips
	IrW	Luc Taerwe
	PPW	Martin Valcke
	IRW	Wouter De Corte
	BW	Guy Smagghe
	BW	Guy Smagghe
	BW	Guy Smagghe
	RE	Marc De Vos
	IrW	Lieva Van Langenhove
	IRW,WE, RE	Geert De Schutter / Ludwig Cardon, Philippe De Maeyer, Peter Van Elsuwege
	IRW	Geert De Schutter
	RE	Marc De Vos
	WE	Philippe De Maeyer
	RE	Marc De Vos
	WE	Philippe De Maeyer
	WE & LW	Philippe De Maeyer, Jean Bourgeois
	all	Elisabeth Velle/Zhenming Hu
	IrW	Roel Baets
	LW	Bart Dessein
	EB	Veronique Limère
	FA	Sarah De Saeger
	BW	Diederik Rousseau
	BW	Diederik Rousseau
	BW, IRW	Diederik Rousseau, Michael Monte
	BW	Diederik Rousseau
	LW	Ann Heirman

	LW,EB,PS
	BW
	EB,LW,PPW,IRW
	EB,LW,PPW
	LW
	LW
	LW,PS,IRW

Overview of the Joint Laboratory Agreements

University	Name of the Joint Lab
Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai Institutes for Biological Sciences & Chinese Academy of Sciences	Joint Laboratory of Mycotoxin Research
Tongji University & Shanghai Construction Group	Joint Laboratory for Industrial Construction
Extension of Joint Lab with Tongji & Shanghai Construction Group: Zhejiang Scientific Research Institute of Transport	Joint Laboratory for Industrial Construction: addendum
Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Chinese Academy of Sciences (extended agreement in 2021)	Sino-Belgian Joint Laboratory for Geo-Information
Feed Research Institute – Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science	Joint Laboratory of Global Change and Food Security
Sichuan University – State Key Laboratory of Biotherapy & State Key Laboratory of Polymer Materials Engineering	Joint Laboratory for Additive Manufacturing
Southwest University	International Joint Laboratory on Sino-Belgium sustainable crop pest control
Nanjing Forestry University	Joint Laboratory of Advanced Biomedical Technology
Shanghai University & Flanders Fields (Ieper)	Joint Laboratory for World War I Studies
Hebei Medical University	Joint Laboratory for Global Health
Xi'An Jiaotong University	Joint Laboratory of Smart Polymer Materials
South China Normal University	Joint Laboratory Agreement Liquid Crystals and Photonics Devices

Agreements for Joint or double degree programmes (Ma and/or PhD level)

	Faculty	Domain	Agreement description
China	EA	Photonics	Cooperative Education scheme agreement between Ghent University and Dalian University of Technology
China	EA	Materials, Textiles and Chemical Engineering	Cooperative Education scheme agreement between Ghent University and East China University of Science and Technology
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Beijing Normal University of China Educational Programme Agreement
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Renmin University of China Educational Programme Agreement
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Renmin University of China Educational Programme Agreement
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Renmin University of China Educational Programme Agreement
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Shanghai University Educational Program Agreement
China	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Ghent University and Sichuan University Educational Programme Agreement
China	EA	Photonics	Agreement regulating Collaborative Academic Programme Between Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China And Ghent University, Belgium And Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

	Type of agreement	Duration	Faculty	Professor
	Joint Lab	5 years	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Sarah De Saeger
	Joint Lab	5 years	Engineering and Architecture	Luc Taerwe/Geert De Schutter
	extension Joint Lab	addendum	Engineering and Architecture	Luc Taerwe/Geert De Schutter
	Joint Lab	5 years	Sciences	Philippe De Maeyer
	Joint Lab	5 years	Bioscience Engineering	Eric Van Ranst & Wim Cornelis
	Joint Lab	5 years	Engineering and Architecture	Ludwig Cardon / Karen De Clerck
	Joint Lab	5 years	Bioscience Engineering	Guy Smagghe
	Joint Lab	5 years	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Stefan De Smedt
	Joint Lab	5 years	Arts and Philosophy	Bart Dessein
	Joint Lab	5 years	Medicine and Health Sciences	Zhang Wei-Hong
	Joint Lab	5 years	Sciences	Richard Hoogenboom
	Joint Lab	5 years	Engineering and Architecture	Kristiaan Neyts

	Partner universities	Coordinator	Type of agreement	Duration
	Dalian University of Technology	5 yrs	3+1+1	renewal of agreement initiated in 2017: exact dates & duration to be completed
	East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST)	Ghent University	3+2 agreement	12/07/2016 – 12/07/2021: 5 years
	Ghent University – Beijing Normal University of China		3+2 agreement	2020-2021 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – Renmin University of China (School of Classics)		3+2 agreement	2020-2021 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – Renmin University of China (School of History)		3+2 agreement	2020-2021 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – Renmin University of China (School of Philosophy)		3+2 agreement	2020-2021 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – Shanghai University		3+2 overeenkomsten	2019-2020 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – Sichuan University		3+2 agreement	2020-2021 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – VUB – Beijing Jiaotong University		3+2 agreement	2019-2020 for a duration of 5 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties

China	EA	Photonics	Agreement regulating Collaborative Academic Programma Between Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan (China) and Ghent University, Belgium and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
China	EA	Photonics	Agreement regulating Collaborative Academic Programme Between Nankai University, Tianjin, China And Ghent University, Belgium And Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
Taiwan	LW	Oriental Languages and Cultures	Agreement for the Internation Double Master's Degree Programme between the Department of Philosophy, National Chengchi University, Taiwan and the Department of Oriental Languages and Cultures – Main subject China, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University, Belgium
Taiwan	EA	Photonics	Agreement to establish a double Master's Degree in the area of Photonics between Universiteit Gent and Vrije Universiteit Brussel and National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

China	South China University of Technology	Agreement for Joint supervision and double degree of doctoral research	2016
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Research agreements

Country	Partner institution/organisation	Title
China	ChinaCDC (Chinese Center for Disease control and prevention)	Collaboration study on the characteristics, propagation in vitro and inactivation of epidemic strains of foodborne norovirus
China	Xinjiang Institute of Geography and Ecology	Agreement for the establishment of the Sino-Belgian joint laboratory for geo-information
China	Xinjiang Institute of Geography and Ecology	Agreement for the establishment of the Sino-Belgian joint laboratory for geo-information – amendment
China	Qingdao Beibao Marine Sciences & Technology, Co., Ltd.	BeiBao – CDA – Probiotics in China
China	China Anti-Doping Agency	China Anti-Doping Agency – analyses normal turn-around
China	University of China, Qingdao	University of China – Artemia cysts
China	University of Science and Technology of China (USTC)	USTC – Building artificial genetic circuits in E. coli
China	Solvay (China) Co. Ltd	Solvay + CNRS – CDA – DFT calculations
China	EMTI HK Ltd.	EMTI – CDA – agricultural products in China
China	Transportation Engineering College Dalian Maritime University, Ganjingzi District Dalian City, Liaoning Province, P.R. China.	E-waste collection and recycling in China: the case of mobile phones. Evidence from Liaoning province
China	South China Agricultural University (SCAU)	African Swine fever virus isolation and vaccine development – amendment
China	Huawei China	Huawei China – CDA – onderhandeligen

	Ghent University – VUB- Huazhong University of Science and Technology	Ghent University	3+2 agreement	2019-2020 for a duration of 5 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – VUB-Nankai University	Ghent University	3+2 agreement	2020 for a duration of 3 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	Ghent University – National Chengchi University (Taiwan)		Double degree	Feb. 2019 for a duration of 5 years
	Ghent University – VUB – National Sun Yat-sen University Taiwan		Double degree	2020-2021 for a duration of 5 years: can be extended upon agreement of all parties
	2021	5 yrs	EA	Wilfried Philips

	Type of agreement	Faculty/department
	Letter of Intent (LOI)	BW23 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Food Technology, Safety and Health
	Cooperation agreement	WE12 – Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography
	Cooperation agreement	WE12 – Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography
	Non-Disclosure Agreement	BW25 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Biotechnology
	SAP contract	GE32 – Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Department of Diagnostic Sciences
	Material Transfer Agreement	BW22 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Animal Sciences and Aquatic Ecology
	Material Transfer Agreement	BW25 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Biotechnology
	Confidentiality Agreement	TW11 – Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Materials, Textiles and Chemical Engineering
	Non-Disclosure Agreement	BW25 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Biotechnology
	Research agreement	WE12 – Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography
	Material Transfer Agreement	DI04 – Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Virology, Parasitology and Immunology
	Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreement	TW07 – Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Telecommunications and Information Processing

China	Huawei Technologies Co	Huawei – stochastic modeling and queueing theory
China	School of Information and Electronics (SIE), and Beijing Key Laboratory of Fractional Signals and Systems (FSS), Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT)	FWO/China – Smart Forestry – Multi-Modal Remote Sensing Image Processing and Interpretation with Its Application in Smart Forestry
China	China Anti-Doping Agency	Chinada – Analysis of Doping control samples according to WADA regulations
China	Chongqing Smart City and Sustainable Development Academy (SCSDA)	Memorandum of Understanding between Chongqing Smart City and Sustainable Development Academy (SCSDA) and Ghent University (Ghent University)
China	Chinese Provincie Zhejiang	Steunovereenkomst tussen de Provincie West-Vlaanderen, en Universiteit Gent m.b.t. de ondersteuning van het pilootproject 'Ontwikkeling van betaalbare sensoren en monitoringsystemen voor landelijke afvalwaterzuiveringsstations' i.k.v. de joint call 'Zhejiang – West Flanders Industrial R&D projects'

Overview of co-financing agreements

Country	University	Type of agreement
China	Chinese Scholarship Council	Cofunding

Taiwan	Taiwan Studies Programme agreement with the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, Groningen University and Goettingen University	MOU Taiwan Studies Programme ('Taiwan Chair')
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Overview of other formats of agreements

Country	University	Type of agreement
China	Industrial Technology Research Institute of Zhejiang University	MOU on Strategic Partnership on Technology Transfer, Innovation and Entrepreneurship between Industrial Technology Research Institute of Zhejiang University and Ghent University
China	East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST)	TechTransfer

Joint PhD at Ghent University

Evolution of the numbers of Joint PhD – period 2006 – 2021

(source, Joint PhD co-ordination 08/10/2021)

The 1st defense of a joint PhD with China was on 31 May 2006 with Tongji University
Out of 1290 entries in joint PhD database à 117 with a Chinese partner institution (9 %):

- 55 Joint PhD candidates were granted a Joint/double diploma
- 48 Joint PhD candidates have not concluded their Joint PhD research yet
- 14 Joint PhD candidates cancelled their joint PhD activities

	Research agreement	TW07 – Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Telecommunications and Information Processing
	Exchange Program Agreement	TW07 – Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Telecommunications and Information Processing
	Service contract (Dienstverleningscontract)	GE32 – Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Department of Diagnostic Sciences
	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	TW05 – Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Information Technology
	Research agreement	BW25 – Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Department of Green Chemistry and Technology

	Duration	Faculty	Promoter
	5 yrs	institutional	

	5 yrs	Faculty of Arts and Philosophy	
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	Duration	Faculty	Promoter
	5 yrs	TechTransfer	Wim Van Camp
	5 yrs	FEA	Kevin Van Geem

IX. Our collaboration in the spotlight: success stories from our faculties

1. Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

The Taiwan Studies Programme ('Taiwan Chair')

Prof. Dr Bart Dessein, Department of Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University

In 2016, the following partners signed the agreement to establish a 'Taiwan Chair' programme, coordinated by Ghent University: Ghent University, the University of Groningen and the Georg-August Universität Göttingen/ Georg-August Universität Göttingen Stiftung Öffentlichen Rechts as two of the U4-partners, and the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. This initiative was the result of emerging awareness of the need for more academic knowledge on Taiwan.

The China Platform of Ghent University was responsible for the administrative co-ordination of this programme, meaning that it was in charge of the launch and follow-up of all the calls for applications, the organisation of the selection, the annual reporting and communication with the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium.



In the past five academic years, a Taiwan Chair fellow has been teaching the course of 'EU – East Asia Relations' at Ghent University. These fellows have respectively been Li Wen-Liao (2016-2017), Yeh Kuo-Chün (2017-2018), Liao Hsien-Hao (2018-2019), Chen Yi-Ling (2019-2020), and Lee Yu-Ting (2020-2021). In the second term of each of these academic years, a Taiwan Chair fellow was appointed for scientific research and the organisation of a thematic workshop at one of the collaborating universities in Europe. This position has in chronological order been taken up by, Hwang Yih-Jye at Ghent University (2016-2017), Yeh Kuo-Chün at the University of Groningen (2017-2018), Liang Kung-Yan at the University of Göttingen (2018-2019), Chen Yi-Ling at the University of Groningen (2019-2020) and Hsiung Ping-Chen at the University of Göttingen (2020-2021).

In the course of the 'Taiwan Chair' programme, the respective chair holders have organised the following workshops: 'Maritime Territorial Disputes In The Asia Pacific Region: A Critical

Appraisal' (Gent, 20-21 April 2017); 'EU Foreign Policy and the Response from East Asia' (Groningen, 30 May-2 June 2018); 'Towards a New Global Order? Ambitions, Scope and Challenges of China's Belt and Road Initiative' (Göttingen, 19 June 2019), and 'Post-Pandemic World and Global Studies Education in Asia' (Groningen, 14 January 2021 (online)). Several online talks on Taiwan's ways of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic have been organised by Prof. Hsiung Ping-Chen at Göttingen University in the spring of 2021.

This scientific collaboration has also resulted in contributions to the edited volume *Maritime and Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea. Faces of Power and Law in the Age of China's Rise*, edited by Hwang Yih-Jye and Edmund Frettingham, and published with Routledge Publishers in 2021 in the series 'Rethinking Asia and International Relations', and a special issue of the Journal *Zhengzhi kexue luncong, Taiwanese Journal of Political Science* 80 (2019): 'Normative and Economic Dimensions of EU-East Asia Relations' (guest editors Bart Dessein and Jan van der Harst).



Chinese Language and Culture in the Contemporary Period ("China Semester")

Prof. Dr Bart Desein,

Department of Languages and Cultures, Ghent University

In International Relations studies, role theory has recently become an increasingly used theoretical framework within which foreign policy is analysed. Processes of self-identification and alter-casting are central to this approach. To put it simply, the way countries behave in their international relations is determined by the way they perceive themselves in relation to other countries. Interestingly, already back in 1965, the French-born American cultural historian Jacques Barzun had stated: "To see ourselves as others see us is a rare and valuable gift, without a doubt. But in international relations what is still rarer and far more useful, is to see others as they see themselves. The two talents, the double *giftie*, would, if generalised, abort many preconceptions that delay or obstruct agreement, and would also reduce that sterile indignation on which the newspaper-nurtured peoples feed" ('The Man in the American Mask.' *Foreign Affairs* 43(3), 1965: 426).

With this statement, Jacques Barzun may have primarily pointed to the importance of cultural knowledge. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that at the beginning of the third millennium of the 21st century, an era in which Europe is, among others, confronted with an increasingly powerful China – it can even be stated that without China, the contemporary world hardly seems conceivable – and in which the question what Europe is, is not only determined in Europe itself, but is also subject to global forces and determinants. Furthermore, being able to read and to speak 'the language

of Confucius' is more than ever necessary to objectively and efficiently communicate with the Chinese citizens, and so is understanding the historically determined complexities of the country.

Commenting on the reality that Europe is confronted with the need to redefine itself in the new global world order, Ralph Weber states: "In a sense, whereas the Other of Europe has been a constant topic for Europeans and non-Europeans alike throughout the ages of discovery and colonialism, Europe has seldom been fashioned as the Other itself, not to itself, but to others; Europe as the Other of its Others" (*All about Fiction: European Global Studies, Chinese Studies and Sinology*. Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective, University of Basel Institute for European Global Studies, No.111, 2016, p.6).

The phrase 'Laissez donc la Chine dormir, car lorsque la Chine s'éveillera le monde entier tremblera' attributed to Napoleon I, may therefore well be an apocryphal quote, invented for the release of the film 'Les 55 jours de Pékin' of 1963 (a film about the 'Boxers' Rebellion' of 1900), it in retrospect appears to have been prophetic in nature. As a 'languages and cultures' programme offers the irreplaceable aspect that it equips students with the skills to interpret primary sources and to enter into a dialogue with Chinese citizens on that basis, the questions of how Europe can position itself in the new world order enforced by China, and how

Europe should deal with China, bestow education in 'Chinese Language and Culture' with an important contemporary meaning. Reading and speaking Chinese and interpreting text and speech in their own cultural context is primordial for acquiring independent knowledge and for avoiding the 'sterile indignation' referred to in the above quotation.

Educating students to read and speak Chinese is not only necessary to create independent knowledge on China (and not to depend on those accidental sources that someone else happened to consider important and has translated into a European language), but it is also necessary to approach and understand the 'Asian century' and the 'rise of China' from the Chinese perspective. In this light, the organisation of the 'China Semester' within the BA programme 'Chinese Language and Culture' since the academic 2005-2006 is an important asset in training a China-knowledgeable future generation. For this programme, the Department of Languages and Cultures has opted for Liaoning University in Shenyang. This university has an excellent language training centre which trains both foreign students and Chinese students whose aim is to become Chinese teachers to non-native Chinese learners.

Additionally, since the academic year 2019-2020, the Department of Languages and Cultures has engaged in the 3+1+1-structure. Within this framework, Chinese students combine their 4th BA year at a Chinese university with the 1st MA year of the programme at Ghent University. Optionally, these students can take up their 2nd MA year at Ghent University. The first Chinese university to have engaged in this programme is Shanghai University. Starting from the academic year 2021-2022, more Chinese universities will be involved in this programme. The people-

to-people relations that such a joint study programme involves for Chinese and Belgian students is another asset in improving language skills, enhancing mutual understanding, and getting acquainted with different scientific traditions.

For Chinese students, coming to Ghent University often is their first foreign experience. For students in Chinese Language and Cultures, staying in Shenyang, a big, albeit not 'international' city of the likes of Beijing and Shanghai where foreigners are easily indulged in expat-communities, has the following advantage: globalisation of the end of the 20th and the 21st century does not rule out that there is no single, universal context for all humanity. To the same extent that globalisation intensifies, so does the acknowledgment of the particularities of life conditions, and the awareness that there are two ways of knowing things: universal and contextual. It is the awareness of the particularity of phenomena and the diversity of China, the possibility to understand these peculiarities and this diversity within a universal academic framework, and the ability to communicate about this relation in the language of the country studied that characterises a 21st-century graduate in Chinese Language and Culture. Moreover, through the current staff of the Department of Languages and Cultures, a friendship relation with Liaoning University exists that goes back 35 years. As everyone who deals with China knows, friendship is the key.

2. Faculty of Law and Criminology

A Fruitful Exchange of Views on Chinese International Arbitration – a case study of the Lin-gang Framework Plan

Prof. Dr Maud Piers, Department of Interdisciplinary Study of Law, Private Law and Business Law and Dr Jie Zheng

At the Centre for the Future of Dispute Resolution, we study a broad range of issues that relate to the way in which dispute resolution is evolving as a result of a series of social developments. Arbitration plays a key role in international dispute resolution and is, precisely because of its 'comparative-law-in-action' nature, a highly suitable and relevant subject for comparative research. And this is exactly what was intended with the research collaboration set up between myself and Jie Zheng from the Shanghai University of Economics and Finance.

The story of Jie Zheng and myself started in 2014 when she decided to pursue a doctoral dissertation under my supervision. In her doctoral research that was at the forefront of innovation, she had dealt with the legal framework for dispute resolution in the digital environment. Even back then, Jie Zheng opened up parts of China to us 'outsiders' and served as an excel-

lent bridge between the legal culture of the People's Republic of China and that of Europe. She earned her doctoral degree in 2019 and then returned to China to pursue an academic career at the Shanghai University of Economics and Finance where she is now an assistant research fellow at the Shanghai Institute of International Organizations and Global Governance. Sharing a keen interest in international dispute resolution mechanisms, we vouched that we would explore opportunities for collaboration and in 2020, we decided to embark on a comparative law research project which is the subject of this contribution.

Our joint research concerned a scientific analysis of a commendable judicial experiment that the Chinese government embarked on through the Lin-gang Framework Plan for the new Lin-gang Special Area in Shanghai Free Trade Zone (FTZ). We call this an 'experiment' since the idea





behind it is that once the measures taken in the FTZ have proven to be effective and operational, they will be applied to the whole country. More specifically, this Framework Plan provides that foreign arbitration institutions that meet certain criteria could register with a local judiciary authority in Shanghai FTZ and administer arbitrations on international commercial disputes. This is a substantial departure from the traditional Chinese policy that does not allow foreign arbitration institutions to have any other presence than through representative offices set up merely for liaison and marketing purposes and not for the actual administration of an international arbitration. Although the people's courts had already somewhat cracked the door to foreign-administered arbitrations, this new development could definitively open up the Chinese arbitration services market in the coming years. We indeed suspect that the Lin-gang Framework Plan's experiment is only the first in what will probably be a series of initiatives of liberalisation of the Chinese arbitration market, with, for instance, Beijing following suit. Jie Zheng and myself thought it was important to highlight this praiseworthy initiative given that it is a necessary step to boost confidence and to enhance the attractiveness of China for foreign investors.

At the same time, our research gave us a reason to have a closer look at China as a seat of

international arbitration and to point out some challenges. Our critical evaluation of Chinese arbitration law led to the conclusion that quite some work still needs to be done to foster the credibility of China as an international arbitration forum. We concluded that the Lin-gang Framework Plan will only live up to its ambitions and reach its full potential on the condition that Chinese arbitration law is further reformed and we made some proposals in this regard. These proposals have to do, for instance, with the adoption in Chinese arbitration law of a worldwide accepted uniform standard for defining the nationality of arbitral awards and exerting judicial supervision, with court reform, and with an utmost respect for the parties' freedom to organise the proceedings. For those that want to read more on this topic, we refer to our upcoming publication in the *American Review of International Arbitration*.

To conclude: Comparative arbitration law related research is highly relevant in the context of international arbitration. It allows us to address the difficult and complex task of bringing the PRC Arbitration Law, at least for international and foreign-related disputes, in alignment with the international arbitration practice. We have and will continue to embrace the opportunity for comparative law research as a powerful tool to deal with legal challenges.

3. Faculty of Sciences

Plant biotechnology and bioinformatics

Prof. Dr Frank Van Breusegem, Department of Plant Biotechnology and Bioinformatics

The Ghent University Department of Plant Biotechnology and Bioinformatics (Faculty of Sciences), embedded in the VIB Centre of Plant Systems Biology performs curiosity-driven research on basic cellular mechanisms in plants. Core missions are to educate the next generation of plant biotechnology and bioinformatics researchers and to translate excellence in basic research into benefits for society. Much of the research is related to sustainability and climate change. Over the past decade, strong bonds between the department and Chinese researchers and institutes were established and presently almost 50 Chinese researchers (i.e. PhD students and post-doctoral researchers), hence entailing 1/5th of the entire research team, are hosted by the Department. This strong presence of Chinese researchers at the department has formed the cornerstone of multiple collaborations between the department and research teams all over China. These collaborations are strongly reflected in more than 100 joint publications in high profile scientific publications, joint PhDs, guest lectures and appointments of faculty members at Chinese Universities.

Since 2011, more than 20 Chinese students have successfully graduated as PhDs in Biotechnology and Biochemistry, after researching at least four years. Their research topics studied plant metabolism, growth and development, plant interactions with the environment and Bioinformatics and integrative biology. In recent



years, formal collaborations have been put in place with for example Shanghai Jiao Tong University (Prof. Alain Goossens and Prof. Kexuan Tang), the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology in Beijing (Prof. Dirk Inze and Prof. Yunhai Li), College of Life Science, Nanjing Agricultural University (Prof. Tom Beeckman and Prof. Frank Van Breusegem and Prof. Wenbiao Shen), the National Center of Protein Sciences PHOENIX in Beijing (Prof. Jing Yang and Prof. Frank Van Breusegem), College of Life Sciences, Shandong University (Prof. Tom Beeckman and Prof. Zhaojun Ding). The bioinformatics team headed by Prof. Yves van de Peer has collaborations with The National Orchid Centre and the Beijing Genomics Institute in Shenzhen. Since 2020, Prof. Van de Peer, who is head of department, has been part-time Professor at the Academy for Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies and College of Horticulture, Nanjing Agricultural University where he supervises research on genome duplications and sequencing of medicinal plants.

My Ghent University experience

Dr Huang Jingjing

In 2013, I first got in touch with Ghent during a four months exchange in the Frank Van Breusegem lab in VIB-UGent during my PhD in the university of Verona, Italy. I immediately loved the city of Ghent, it impressed me as a small, beautiful, and historic town, but so creative and dynamic since it is full of young students. Being the only Chinese at that time in Frank's lab, I felt very welcomed by the group, but also importantly the large Chinese community in Ghent on which one can rely. Personally, I often found Belgian citizens to be more reserved at first compared to Italian or Chinese's warm hospitality. However, after getting slowly familiar with each other, reliable and strong personal relations can be developed. In terms of conducting research and working, I enjoyed the open communication and brainstorming with colleagues and the many networking opportunities (e.g. workshops, conferences). When I was later offered a postdoc opportunity in Belgium in the Messens lab (VIB-VUB) after my PhD in 2014 and eventually the Van Breusegem lab, I did not hesitate.

In these years working as a postdoctoral researcher in Belgium (2014-now), I have developed my research skills from a freshly graduated PhD to a senior postdoc, and now towards to a more mature scientist. This all thanks the scientific opportunities and resources offered by the Van Breusegem lab and the collaborating labs nationally (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, University of Liege) and internationally (United States, China). There are plenty of training courses and workshops offered both by Ghent University and and VIB, next to more

personalized help such as career guidance or psychological support if required. Meanwhile, the open-minded science attitude that applies here also motivated me to always think "sharing is more important than competing" in scientific research. More importantly, I enjoyed the freedom to design my own research project and pursue own research interests here a lot, this allowed me to develop myself as an independent researcher.

In regard to my personal life, I would say that Ghent or Frank played Cupid in my life by setting the stage for meeting my husband in 2013, who did his PhD and now is a postdoctoral researcher in Van Breusegem lab. Our life is settled with three little kids in a small, Flemish town between Ghent and Brussel. As a prospective mother performing research at Ghent University, many safety considerations are in place and a necessary maternity (and optional breastfeeding) leave is granted. In terms of work and family balance, UGent and Frank really offered us great support, especially during the COVID crisis. There is no doubt that performing research at Ghent University was a determining step forward in my academic and personal life. My husband and I are actively working on collaborative projects with Chinese collaborators, while we are also searching for long-term opportunities to perform research and spent time in both China and Belgium.

Studying in VIB-UGent: Opportunity and Challenge

Mr Duan Xingliang, Joint PhD Student (Oct 2017–2019) – Nanjing Agricultural University

Ghent University's China Platform and China Scholarship Council (CSC) were providing me tremendous support and help, allowing me to live in Ghent and to study at the VIB-UGent Department of Plant Biotechnology and Bioinformatics. I was fortunate to be a joint PhD student between Ghent University and Nanjing Agricultural University under the supervision of Prof. Frank Van Breusegem and Prof. Wenbiao Shen. For me, this was a great opportunity and a challenge. I would like to share my own feelings on studying and working in Ghent.

Since I have moved back to China, more than one year ago, and since I had obtained a joint PhD degree last month, I am still having dreams of going back to Ghent. I still remember the first day that I arrived at the VIB-UGent Department of Plant Biotechnology and Bioinformatics. As I was not familiar with the enrolment procedure, Ms Sophie Maebe took us to the UFO department for completing the administrative tasks. Moreover, the colleagues in Prof. Van Breusegem's lab gave me a warm and kind welcome, and this really left a deep impression. As I was studying abroad for the first time, my biggest challenge was how to cope with the totally different living and working environments.

Luckily, everything went well for me. During my time in VIB-UGent, I have joined numerous activities and training programmes, most of which require students' participation. My working experience in VIB-UGent was unforgettable. The professional and academic environment have impressed me the most. The colleagues



shared their working progress and experiences during the group meetings every week, and all the participants were welcomed to give feedback and suggestions. Furthermore, VIB-UGent also provided me with an opportunity to give a public presentation in CEITEC Masaryk University (Czech Republic). This was really helpful for the studies to improve my research, and it helped a lot to improve my English.

I really enjoyed my time living in Ghent, and everyone was very kind to me. My supervisor Prof. Frank Van Breusegem got up early and cooked breakfast for us during the team building. Mrs Inge Mangelschots, an old China hand from Ghent University China Platform, helped me a lot. I was deeply touched by her kindness and wonderful personality. Overall, I hope that somewhere in the future we can meet up again.

At last, I would love to convey my best wishes to the Ghent University China Platform for sustaining a fruitful cooperation between China and Belgium and I wish the platform a glorious future.

4. Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Collaboration with China in the field of the Medicine and Health Science from 2016 to 2021

Prof. Dr Kristiane Van Lierde, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and Chairman Faculty Committee Internationalisation

Prof. Dr Olivier Degomme and Prof. Dr Zhang Wei-Hong, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, ICRH

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, as the beating heart of Ghent University, has been and continues to be active in China for more than 20 years now. From 2016 to 2021 (year of Monkey to year of the Ox), the goals established in 2016 by the faculty have been fully achieved through Ghent University the following various activities, including joint research projects; establishment of sustainable partnerships; exchange of academic and scientific staff, students, and co-organisation of the EU-China Health Forum.

Joint Research Project: An EU-funded FP7 project (2012-2017) *INPAC* 'Integrating Post-Abortion Family Planning services into China's Existing Abortion Services in a Hospital Setting', was launched in 2012 and successfully completed in 2017. During this project, the International

Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH-GHENT UNIVERSITY) has worked together with two European and four Chinese consortiums during four and a half years. The significant impact of this project includes a cluster of randomised controlled trial (RCT) which was performed with 90 hospitals from 30 Chinese provinces. The participants include 350 hospitals, seven teams of national coordinators, 30 province coordinators, more than 3500 hospital collaborators as well as more than 100,000 women and their family. Moreover, a Chinese national Regulation Guidance on the Post-abortion Services has been developed and implemented since 2018. *INPAC* outputs also included thirteen common scientific public publications, presenting at 28 international conferences, holding seven national dissemination meetings, having one joint PhD dissertation, one master's dissertation



INPAC's meeting in Beijing



INPAC's meeting in Ghent

and publishing one INPAC book. The INPAC project has strengthened the existing relationship and has enlarged Ghent University's network in China from local/region levels to national level

Sustainable partnership between universities:

The sustainable partnerships among Ghent University and universities in China have been developed by signing different collaboration agreements. An agreement of collaboration between Ghent University and the Hebei Medical universities was first signed on 29 April 2015 in the presence of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Guy Vanderstraeten and was extended in 2020. Since a Letter of Intent has been concluded in May 2016 between Tsinghua University, the Research Centre for Public Health and GHEENT UNIVERSITY-ICRH, our faculty has held three editions of an annual one-week course in Ghent for incoming Tsinghua master's students of Public Health. An agreement of medical bachelor student work placement has been signed between Ghent University and the Peking Capital University in 2017 which includes three exchanged students each annually.

Exchange of academic and scientific staff,

Post-doc and PhD students: Each year, Our Faculty receives over 10 Chinese academic visitors including post-doc, PhD students and PhD exchange students for long or short-term programmes at Ghent University. Prof. Wei-Hong Zhang has held the position of adjunct profes-

sor at several Chinese institutions including the National Research Institution for Family Planning (NRIFP), Chongqing Medical University, Tsinghua University, Research Centre for Public Health where she has been giving regular annual teaching in the field of Epidemiology since 2016 to date.

EU-China Health Forum. The annual 'EU-China Health Forum' was initiated by the Ghent University and Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in 2017, that aims to offer an opportunity for sharing expertise, strengthening existing collaborations and for developing new proposals in the field of reproductive health and public health. To date, there have been four successfully held editions in Brussels (2017, 2019), in Beijing (2018) and a fourth edition in 2020 which was online due to COVID-19. Since the second edition, Ghent University has co-organised this event with three Chinese institutions: Tsinghua University, China; National Research Institute for Family Planning (NRIFP), Beijing and China Family Planning Association (CFPA).

Our Faculty is convinced that the collaboration with China will continue and further strengthen and expand in the upcoming years, which will not only benefit the development of this important field of medicine and health science at the University of Ghent and Chinese institutions, but also the people and society in the two countries.



Prof. Dr Wei-Hong Zhang at Tsinghua university

My post-doctoral Research Experience in Ghent University

Dr Jiayue Wu, Post-doctoral fellowship from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai
From May 2017 to April 2018

It has been three years since I came back from ICRH, Ghent. How time flies! I work as a post-doctoral researcher in ICRH under the supervision of Professor Wei-Hong Zhang, and my research topic was about the pregnancy outcome of SLE women and its risk factors. Though I had experience studying in Europe before, it was quite different conducting research rather than just participating in a student exchange programme. Luckily, I met Professor Wei-Hong Zhang, who is a very patient and nice supervisor. Prof. Zhang gave me a lot of training opportunities and suggestions, and with her help, I successfully published five SCI articles during my one-year Post-doctoral fellowship.

Speaking of help, I have to mention everyone in ICRH. ICRH is a really warm family. The first day I entered in this department, I could feel their hospitality and enthusiasm. Cindy, Olivier, Dirk, Sara, Emi, Anna and many others; they helped me not only in the research work, but also in daily life. Cindy is a such a friendly and

kind person who helped me solve the accommodation and all kinds of trivia; Dirk and Olivier gave me useful comments and suggestions for my research proposal. What has benefited me a lot was the Scientific Lunch Meeting (SLM) in ICRH every week. During the meetings, ICRH researchers would share their recent research progresses or research ideas, usually followed by a brainstorm. Through the SLM, I acquired knowledge of different aspects, for example, using appropriate statistic tools, how to do a systematic review and even out of my study field. SLM expanded my knowledge and benefited me a lot.

ICRH and Ghent University provide an outstanding platform for Europe and China. The EU-China Health Forum gave great opportunities for academic exchange between two sides, and I felt very honoured that I attended once during my stay in Belgium and it impressed me a lot and I believe that this kind of communication will continue forever.



The experience in Ghent and ICRH was such a great treasure for me that I will never forget. In this 15-year anniversary of the Ghent University China Platform, I would love to express my best wishes to you for building a more meaningful cooperation between China and Belgium.

Jiayue Wu, Post-doctoral fellowship in Ghent University-ICRH

My Learning Experience in Ghent University

Mr Rongxin He, Exchange PhD student (Sep 2019-Aug 2020), Xi'an Jiaotong University & ICRH, Ghent University



As an exchange PhD student from China, I studied at the International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH), Ghent University for a year (from Sep 2019 to Aug 2020). During this whole year, I have learned a lot from my supervisor professor Zhang Wei-Hong, and spent a good time with all colleagues. In ICRH, I have gained a lot of new experience which will definitely benefit my future study. For example, there was an interesting Scientific Lunch Meeting in ICRH every week. During the meetings, researchers exchanged their ideas, which inspired my research. Moreover, ICRH provided rich academic resources for me to conduct my research. I appreciated the opportunity to work with my motivating and inspiring mentor, Prof. Zhang Wei-Hong. I have published four papers under her supervision.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Belgium in March 2020. It messed up my exchange plan to some extent as I was stuck in my apartment during the lockdown, like many others. There is no doubt that this was quite a hard time for all of us. Even so, I got a lot of support from professor

Zhang Wei-Hong, ICRH and Ghent University. Every day, professor Zhang checked out my situation, and together we followed the situation closely since the beginning of the pandemic, and shared it with other people. We also published two papers based on these data and materials we collected. I received some medical equipment from her and ICRH. Thanks to their kind help, I got some mask and disinfectant to protect myself during this period. I also received many emails from university reminding me of the situation and the measures were taken in Ghent and at the university. Even though I could not meet my friends or colleagues face to face, we could still talk each other by using apps. By the way, due to the pandemic, I got enough time to do something that I had been wanting to do. I improved my cooking skills and lost weight by doing some exercise. I was also using this time to focus on bicycle trips and enjoyed the great scenery in the countryside of Ghent.

It has been an extraordinary year for me. This exchange experience has benefited me a lot in both scientific research and life attitude. I have enriched my research experience and learned how to maintain a good attitude in difficult situations. I believe we can go through the pandemic together. At last, in this 15-year anniversary of the Ghent University China Platform, I sincerely wish that the Ghent University China platform will keep growing, and bring more fruitful projects for the researchers from China and Belgium in the future.

Cooperation between ICRH, Ghent University, and our different partners in China – some highlights

Prof. Dr Marleen Temmerman, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ghent University.

Thirty years ago, I travelled to China for the first time, together with the late professor André Meheus, epidemiologist at the University of Antwerp, who had invited me for a mission to Guangdong Province for a training course of HIV/STI for family planning providers. Needless to say that I was not only fascinated by the country, the friendly people, the food and the hospitality but also very impressed by the efficiency and the organisational structure of the course, the discussions, the Family Planning (FP) services and the fact that HIV/STI screening was integrated in the FP services in a very short period of time. Once the policies were approved, the strategies developed, implementation took off and was running; processes that took years in Belgium, and much longer in the African settings where I had worked until then.

It was the beginning of a great adventure that would last for many years through great collaborations between ICRH, Ghent University, and several partners in China, and is now

extending through collaborations between Ghent University, Tsinghua and Fudan Universities in China, and the Aga Khan University in Kenya where I have been based since 2015. Over all these years, the pillar of our successful collaborations in research and academic scholarly work in Women's Health was, and is my good friend and colleague, Wei-Hong Zhang, who has joined ICRH in 2007 and is currently professor of the Public Health at Ghent University, with whom I wrote many grant proposals, co-authored 28 peer-reviewed publications and mentored several PhD students .

In 2001, our *Integrating HIV/STI prevention & management into Family Planning* project, was awarded by EU FP6, with Fudan University and the State Family Planning Commission of China. Between 2005 and 2017 we received EU funding (FP7) for four large projects, including INPAC: Integrating Post-Abortion Family Planning services in a hospital setting in China, the YOLAMI project on young labour migrants in



Chinese cities and the CHIMACA project (China Maternal Care in rural areas) and PAFP on the Post-Abortion Family Planning care The INPAC project led to the first China Obstetrics & Gynaecology Hospital President Forum on 'Post-Abortion Contraception' (PAC), co-organised by UG-ICRH and the Chinese Society of Family Planning (CSFP), Chinese Medical Association (CMA), in 2010 in Shanghai.

Later, collaborative agreements were developed between ICRH and Hebei Medical Universities, with Tsinghua University, as well as with the Shanghai Institute of Planned Parenthood Research.

Both, Prof. Wei-Hong Zhang and myself held positions of visiting professor/adjunct professor at several Chinese universities. In 2015, I was honoured with an Honorary Professorship from the National Institute Family Planning Research China and a Concurrent Professorship from Fudan University in 2017.

I have very much enjoyed the collaboration and the friendship with our Chinese colleagues, I am thrilled about the current expansion and networking in research, capacity building and co-creation of think tanks in global health, where we need strong partnerships and innovative approaches to face the current and futures global health and climate challenges.



5. Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Exchange between East China University of Science and Technology and Ghent University

Prof. Dr ir. Kevin Van Geem, Department of Materials, Textiles and Chemical Engineering

The exchange between the East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST, founded in 1952) and Ghent University (UGent) began at the beginning of China's reform and development: Prof. Gilbert Froment was one of the first foreign experts to visit ECUST, and since then the two sides have exchanged visits many times. Since the 1980s, Ghent University has accepted a number of excellent graduates from ECUST, such as Xu Jianguo, Chen Qi, Yu Zhang and many others, to pursue their doctorate under the guidance of Professor Froment, Prof. Guy Marin, Prof. Van Geem, Prof. Saeyns and Prof. Galvita.

The in-depth cooperation between the two universities began in 2007, when the 111 Project entitled 'Chemical Reaction Engineering Science and Technology' of ECUST was approved by the Ministry of education of China. As the academic master of the project, Prof. Guy Marin of Ghent University has made great contributions to

promote the cooperation in research and education between ECUST and Ghent University, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Queen's University of England and MIT.

In addition to the joint doctoral training, Ghent University and ECUST have carried out comprehensive and in-depth cooperation on the simulation and optimisation of ethylene cracking furnace. Ghent University's cracking kinetic model developed under the guidance of Prof. Van Geem and ECUST's optimal control algorithm have been closely combined into the software for the design, control and optimisation of ethylene cracking furnace, which has been widely used in more than ten petrochemical companies of Sinopec and PetroChina, creating remarkable economic and social benefits.



Application of the ethylene cracking software developed jointly by ECUST and GU



Prof. Guy Marin giving a lecture in Shanghai

Cooperation experiences of the Photonics Research Group

Prof. Dr ir. Roel Baets, Department of Information Technology

The Photonics Research Group of the Department of Information Technology has a long and rich history of collaborations and connections with China. Up to 2006, there was only an occasional Chinese PhD student in the group. Today we typically have 15-20 Chinese PhD students and postdocs at any point in time. The numbers got boosted when in 2006 we founded the joint Ghent University-VUB European Master of Science in Photonics, originally an Erasmus Mundus MSc programme. The programme has attracted several dozens of students from China. Quite naturally, some of them were offered PhD positions at UGent. It is gratifying to see that many of our Chinese alumni manage to secure permanent positions in academia and photonics companies worldwide. Noteworthy is that one of our Chinese alumni, Dr Yanlu Li, has recently been appointed tenure track professor at Ghent University and will start the position in September 2021. His research focuses on biomedical applications of integrated photonics.

In the past five years, we have geared up collaboration with China in the rapidly growing field of silicon photonics. The Photonics Research Group coordinates ePIXfab, the European Silicon Photonics Alliance. ePIXfab (<http://epixfab.eu>) has a mission of advocating the field of silicon

photonics across Europe and to organise a variety of trainings in this field, in an effort to reduce the shortage of researchers and engineers in this field. In 2018 we decided to broaden our reach and to involve the Chinese silicon photonics community in this mission. This led to the organisation of the first China-Europe International Silicon Photonics Course and Symposium in 2019. The event was hosted by Prof. Mingshan Zhao (a former alumnus of Ghent University) at Dalian University of Technology, with which Ghent University has a collaboration agreement. This was the start of an annual event, which is rotating across China. In 2020, the event was hosted by CUMEC, the China United Microelectronics Center in Chongqing, with great help of its Deputy General Manager, Dr Jin Guo, also an alumnus of our group. In August 2021, the third edition will be organised at Zhejiang University, another university with which Ghent University has a collaboration agreement. Once more we build on our alumni-network in China to make this meeting happen. In this case Prof. Liu Liu, a former postdoc of the Photonics Research Group, will co-chair the meeting. The preparations for this meeting started during the visit of a Ghent University delegation to Zhejiang in November 2019.



First China-Europe Silicon Photonics Course and Symposium at Dalian University of Technology, 2019



West Lake in Hangzhou at walking distance from one of the campuses of Zhejiang University, Nov 2019.

Experiences in Shanghai – five students from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture in Ghent University share their story

ir. Vincent De Sutter, ir. Anton Gabriels, ir. Hannes Penninck,
ir. Thomas Mertens, ir. Pieter Van de Putte

*Old enough to know better, young enough
to do it anyway*

With this proverb in mind, in 2015 five students from the Ghent University Faculty of Engineering and Architecture submitted an application for master studies at Tongji University in Shanghai, P.R. China. And what an adventure it has turned out to be! Without knowing what we were getting into, we left friends, family and partners behind in Belgium to live, study and work together in China for one year.

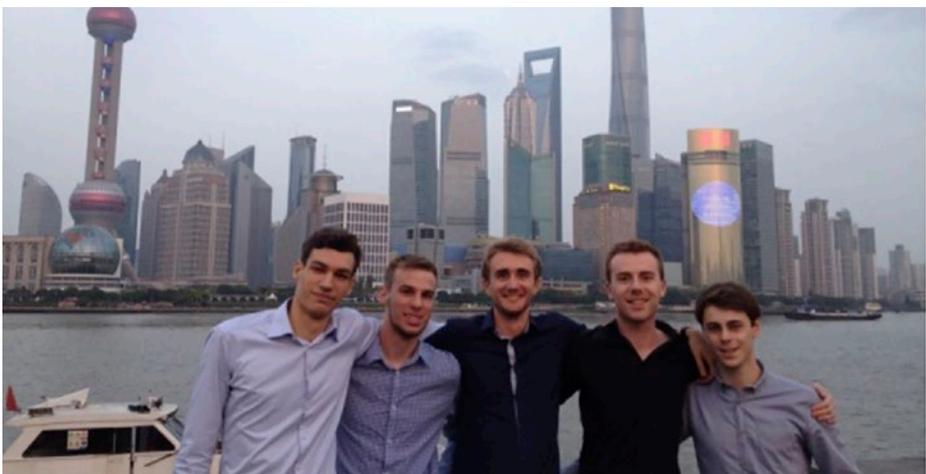
Hereby we were lucky enough to be introduced to some very interesting fields of study that are less well known in Belgium (such as earthquake engineering and high-rise buildings), as well as to the very rich culture and history of the (developing) economic superpower China. All this surrounded by countless colleagues, professors/co-students and acquaintances from almost all over the globe.

孤掌难鸣 gū zhǎng nán míng

*One cannot clap hands with one hand – It is
difficult to reach achievements by counting only
on oneself*

To start the adventure there was fortunately the advice, good counsel and support of professors and staff on the home front UGent. In particular, Prof. Luc Taerwe shared his knowledge of China and Tongji University with us, and explained the procedures for studying at Tongji. With the help of Prof. Taerwe, Prof. Caspeele, Prof. De Schutter, and the staff of the China Platform of the International Relations Office, we gained the necessary confidence and encouragement to take the leap.

In China as well, we could count on the knowledge and help of the professors and fellow students of our respective departments of Bridge Engineering and Tunnel Engineering.



滴水穿石 Dī shuǐ chuān shí

Dripping water can eventually even bore into stone – Perseverance will yield results

Arriving in Shanghai was a bit of a shock. With no telephone, internet access, bank account and especially without knowledge of the language, we had to arrange our residence, registration at the University and other practical matters amidst a few hundred other arriving students.

Tongji, however, turned out to be a university where we – as we quickly learned – were well introduced by some very enthusiastic professors, helpful staff and sympathetic Chinese and international fellow students. Soon we became part of the University's soccer and basketball teams, and some of the students from Ghent University were accepted into the Bridge Engineering and Tunnel Engineering departments at Tongji. The association 'Flemish people in Shanghai' also welcomed us with open arms. We all learned basic Chinese and soon found our way around the campus and beyond.

As engineering students, we looked for and found several interesting 'engineering excursions'. These included attending a lecture in Shanghai by the founder of Studio JADE + QA in connection with the Shimao Wonderland Intercontinental Hotel, visiting a new subway line under construction up to the working tunnel boring machine, and visiting the SOM offices in Hong Kong.

发愤忘食 Fā fèn wàng shí

*To work hard but to forget to eat
– Do not forget to enjoy once in a while*

Tongji does not have a dedicated study period prior to exams, so there was a lot of studying and working to be done throughout the academic year. The professors forced the students to master the material early in the semester with many projects and midterm evaluations. In addition, two students wrote their master's dissertation at Tongji U.

Nevertheless, we regularly tried to steal time and enjoy our adventure in P.R. China. Modern and historic cities, mountains, rice plateaus, oceans and beaches, China proved



to have it all. We visited the misty Yellow Mountains, busy Hong Kong as well as some neighbouring cities and hot springs around Shanghai.

Of course, the splendour of Shanghai itself did not escape us. All five of us being big fans of the skyscrapers, we regularly headed out into the inner city. The Bund Area (with view on the high-rise buildings), the financial centre and the culinary neighbourhoods such as the French Concession soon became our regular hangouts on Friday evenings.

Thanks to the help and support of professors, friends, fellow students and Ghent University and Tongji staff, we could start this beautiful adventure, and during one year Shanghai and China slowly but surely revealed their secrets to us. It turned out to be an adventure never to forget.



6. Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Prof. Dr Alex Vanderstraete, Department of Marketing, Innovation and Organisation

For more than 10 years, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration has been working together with the National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Kaohsiung is the second largest city in Taiwan with a population of more than two million inhabitants. The city is located on the southern part of the island. The university itself is located at the beach on the one side, and the tropical jungle is on the other side. Students sometimes encounter monkeys and snakes on campus, but without any risk of being attacked. Everything remains safe.

Our co-operation started in 2008, when Prof. Alex Vanderstraeten was teaching at a Summer University in Ohrid, North Macedonia. He met Professor Jason Huang from the National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung in Taiwan. He invited Alex to work together in a research project, and invited him to teach in Taiwan. This was the start of a fruitful co-operation. Alex went to Kaohsiung several times, and every time, the cooperation was enlarged with new initiatives. The faculty signed a bilateral agreement to stipulate exchange of teaching staff and students. In the framework of this agreement, exchange of academic staff, PhD students and bachelor/master students have taken place during the last 10 years.

The co-operation became even more intense with the introduction of a joint course in International Human Resource Management. Students from both universities worked together in teams to prepare an assignment on comparative industrial relations between Taiwan and Europe. Other students of other EU countries were also part of this international course in International HRM. This has led to some interesting insights in different cultures of management in Asia and Europe. It becomes clear that industrial relations and socio-economic negotiations are organised in a different manner.

In the research area, PhD Candidate Ms Shaoying Wang stayed on our campus to work on her doctorate for six months in 2020, under joint supervision of Prof. Shin I, and Prof. Alex Vanderstraeten. Another PhD candidate is preparing his doctorate in the Faculty of Psychology.

One of the highlights of our cooperation was the visit of a group of Belgian students in the context of the course in International HRM. We went to the Fo Guang Shan Monastery and Buddha Museum in the Dashu District, near Kaohsiung. We were invited by a delegation and the Head of the Monastery, and the visit was broadcasted on national television in Taiwan.

All this led to a very fruitful co-operation. The exchange of students is still ongoing. In the academic year of 2021/22, some students plan to go to Taiwan for one semester. The teaching will continue, and we expect more students to come to Ghent University. It is our ambition to continue working together, and to be an active part of the presentation of academic work in economic and managerial topics in the biyearly visits.



Visit to the Fo Guang Shan Monastery & Buddha Museum

7. Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

China Cooperation – Ghent University

Prof. Dr Hans Nauwynck,
Department of Virology, Parasitology
and Immunology

The Ghent University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has a long history of scientific cooperation with veterinary sister faculties/institutes in China.

Prof. Hans Nauwynck made two big scouting tours in China in 2008 and 2019, visiting different putative collaborators for mainly research purposes. As a result of these tours, several scientific collaborations were arranged. This has led to (i) EU projects with Ghent University as coordinator/partner and China Agricultural University in Beijing (PoRRSCon) and Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute (PoRRSCon and Saphir) as Asian partners, (ii) the launch of a Joint International Research Laboratory of Animal Health and Food Safety with Nanjing Agricultural University and (iii) the training of many PhD students. More recently, initiatives were taken for education exchanges (e.g. with North West A&F University in Yangling).

In the future, the purpose is to strengthen the existing cooperation. The input of Chinese Ghent University alumni who have received their PhD at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine will be extremely important in this context.



Visit of Prof. Hans Nauwynck and alumnus Xiaobo Duan to the Lanzhou Veterinary Research Institute in 2008



PhD defense of Jiexiong Xie at Ghent University in 2019 with Prof. R. Ducatelle as chair of the jury



Teaching activity of Prof. Geert Opsomer at North West A&F University in Yangling in 2017



Meeting at the South China Agricultural University discussing research and education opportunities (Prof. Hans Nauwynck, Pieter Pauwels, Jiexiong Xie)

[Our collaboration in the spotlight](#)

8. Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Growing collaboration the field of Psychology and Educational Sciences: key characteristics of recent growth in the collaboration

Prof. Dr Martin Valcke, Department of Educational Studies and Sung Yu-Hsien, student

The last five years reflected a growth in the collaboration between Ghent University and Chinese Universities. Though this growth has been a consistent picture for a decade, especially the last years reflected a broad collaboration in a large number of scientific subdisciplines. Next to the consistent presence of Chinese research collaborations in the field of psychology and education, collaboration in the field of social work has resulted in already successful collaborations and successful finalisation of PhD research. The latter is a significant achievement since social work is – in the Chinese context – a rather recent scientific field. The result of this recent growth is that in nearly every single department of the faculty, there is a close collaboration with Chinese universities and or researchers.

The case of the research collaboration with Taiwanese universities

Though a structural collaboration with Taiwanese universities is rather recent, the cooperation has proven to be swift and productive. A key factor that proved to be a catalyst in this process was the concerted visit of Taiwanese universities to Ghent University in May 2016. During this visit, especially delegates from the National Sun Yat Sen University (NSYSU) insisted on getting touch with representatives of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. This resulted in a return visit to NSYSU in November and a subsequent formal signing of a collaboration agreement between the related faculties in both Universities.

During the November visit, the start of a joint PhD project was discussed and a research plan was developed to involve the Taiwanese researcher Yu-Hsien Sung. He was accepted as a PhD candidate at Ghent University in April 2017 and the joint-PhD agreement was signed in June 2017.

Research about school bullying: Yu-Hsien Sung

Under the joint supervision by Prof. dr Chen Li-Ming (also called Raymond), the research study of Yu-Hsien Sung tackled the worldwide problem of school bullying. Taiwanese schools share with many developed countries the problem of school bullying resulting in serious short-term and long-term problems in adolescents. Why is the case of this PhD so important when discussing the collaboration with the Taiwanese universities? The example of this PhD study exemplifies a shared approach to research and its role in a society. From the start, the colleagues from the NSYSU agreed with setting up high quality research that found its publication outlets in ISI-indexed journals and international conferences. But at the same time, the research team has agreed to anchoring the research in the local society and to cater for urgent society needs, problems and demands. This approach towards society-relevant scientific research helped a smooth planning of the research to include an intervention in local Taiwanese schools to tackle school bullying. The research resulted in a number of unique findings that help to ground a more effective approach

to train teachers. Key is e.g., that Yu-Hsien Sung found out how teachers neglect the fact that bullies very often had a history of being a bully victim. This resulted in a better understanding of teachers' cognitions about school bullying. It also helped to design a 'script' to guide real-life handling strategies when bullying occurs. This is a unique contribution to the literature since most bullying related research looks at prevention strategies or curation after an incident occurred (e.g. restorative justice approaches). In this collaborative research, an innovative road was taken: tackling bullying heads-on while it occurs.

This new 'script' – comparable to scripts medical doctors use to guide their consultation sessions – was subsequently linked to a series of clinical simulations. These simulations put student teachers or in-service teachers in real life school settings and invoke their perceptions, interpretations and decision-making skills.

Below is a screenshot from one of the video-based clinical simulations. That online simulations were being used was an innovative approach to involve participants in sensitive and delicate situations, while nevertheless confronting them with their reactions. These online clinical simulations were highly appreciated and experienced as a safe way of developing related bullying handling competences. Moreover, the empirical studies helped underpinning their efficacy and efficiency in developing the bullying



Screenshot Clinical Simulation from the PhD intervention study of Yu Hsien Sung, (2019).

handling competencies of student teachers (Ba and Ma students) from four Taiwanese universities. The extent to which different universities were involved in the empirical part of the research was another positive side-effect of the actual PhD research project.

An interesting fact is that the clinical simulations reflected real-life incidents collected from Taiwanese secondary schools, but that the actual recording of the videoclips was done in collaboration with Taiwanese students and colleagues in Brussels.

The research of Yu-Hsien Sung, set up in this joint-PhD undertaking was highly successful. He successfully defended his PhD – online due to the corona restrictions – on August 19, 2020 at the National Sun Yat Sen University following a shared protocol with Ghent University. Moreover, next to his PhD, his research activities resulted in 47 entries in the Ghent University academic bibliography. This is rare achievement of a PhD researchers and a good indicator of the academic spirit and approach that was adopted during this PhD-research trajectory.

Already in 2019, the successful collaboration resulted in the start-up of a new Joint PhD project, now involving Ms Meng-Huey Su. We look forward to a comparable successful collaboration with the highly appreciated team of the National Sun Yat Sen University. Her research adventure focuses on a very different topic: the development of global competencies in teachers. The topic of her research looks like a sounding board for the worldwide discussion about international collaboration and fits perfectly in the growing shared research programming of both Ghent University and NSYSU. We look forward to a further successful collaboration with NSYSU and all Taiwanese universities.

9. Faculty of Bioscience Engineering

History of Ghent University cooperation with PR China in the field of aquaculture

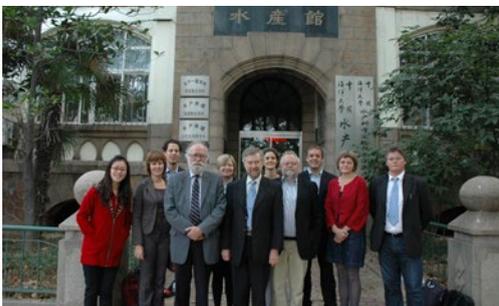
Prof. Dr Patrick Sorgeloos, Department of Animal Sciences and Aquatic Ecology, Aquaculture

The story of the aquaculture collaboration between Ghent University and China is a remarkable example of how a partnership based on mutual benefits can lead to unprecedented progress.

The story starts in the mid-eighties. While China is generally considered as the cradle of fish farming with a history that goes back more than 2000 years, farming practices remained unchanged and hardly allowed for any significant progress. While modern aquaculture modestly had started to evolve towards a highly technology driven bio-industry, Chinese fish and shrimp farming remained very artisanal. Prof. Cai Yaneng, researcher at the Shandong College of Oceanography in Qingdao somehow got word of the groundbreaking developments obtained by a (then) obscure research group at Ghent University, led by Patrick Sorgeloos. He had proven through projects in Thailand and the Philippines how the use of brine shrimp, *Artemia*, could markedly improve salt produc-

tion while at the same time producing live food allowing an astonishing improvement of fish and shrimp fry production. Patrick Sorgeloos was invited to spend four weeks in Qingdao to deliver a course in brine shrimp production and its use in aquaculture. While his Chinese colleagues acquired the *Artemia* skills that would improve the quality of traditional salt production and boost local shrimp farmers, he quickly observed the tremendous potential for modern shrimp and fish farming in China. But more importantly, his visit marked the beginning of a professional friendship based on mutual trust and respect.

Soon the collaboration was formalised through a series of successful projects starting with a UNDP funded project on 'Biotechnology of solar saltfields' (1986-1992) coordinated by the Salt Research Institute in Tanggu, followed by several EU and Belgian funded projects with an increasing number of different Chinese universities and institutes, and on an expanding





variety of aquaculture-related topics, involving other colleagues from the Ghent University Aquaculture R&D Consortium and abroad.

Through his good contacts with virtually every Chinese aquaculture institute of importance, Patrick Sorgeloos gradually became the glue between partners that previously only competed. Together with colleagues from Wageningen University (the Netherlands) and Trondheim University (Norway), he facilitated the establishment of CAFnet (Chinese Aquaculture & Fisheries Network), a formal network of Chinese aquaculture research institutes (Ocean University of China, Qingdao; Chinese Academy of Sciences – CAS Institute of Oceanology, Qingdao; Chinese Academy of Fisheries Science – CAFS Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute, Qingdao; Shanghai Ocean University; Dalian Ocean University; Jimei University; CAS Institute of Hydrobiology, Wuhan; Guangdong Ocean University). CAFNET, as representative body, has been instrumental in connecting Chinese partners with European partners and involving them in European research projects. CAFnet also became partner in the ASEM Aquaculture Platform, a EU-FP7 funded project that aimed to build bridges between the European and Asian aquaculture sector. This project culminated in a study trip organised by our Qingdao colleagues in May 2013 for a group of 15 European aquaculture industry representatives. This trip impressed the participants with a selection of Chinese

aquaculture know-how and paved the way for new international collaborations.

Meanwhile, Ghent University has continuously welcomed Chinese students for MSc and PhD training in aquaculture with a dozen students from diverse Chinese institutes (i.e. Salt Research Institute, Tanggu; Ocean University of China, Qingdao; CAS Institute of Oceanology, Qingdao; Nankai University; CASF South China Sea Fisheries Institute, Guangzhou; University of Hong Kong; Dalian University; and about 7 PhD graduates from China with scholarships of VLIR and China from Ocean University of China; Shanghai Ocean University; Salt Research Institute).

In recognition of his efforts to support and promote Chinese aquaculture in the world, Prof. Sorgeloos has received several awards such as the International Cooperation Award of the Ministry of Light Industry, PR China (1992), Honorary Life Member China Society of Fisheries (2003), the Qilu Friendship Award of Shandong province (2010), the Qingdao International Science and Technology Cooperation Award (2011) and ultimately, the China National Friendship Award (2014) which is the highest award bestowed to non-Chinese citizens.

The Laboratory for Aquaculture and Artemia Reference Centre at Ghent University will continue to maintain excellent contacts with its many Chinese MSc and PhD alumni, new joint projects will be launched, promising Chinese researchers will always be welcomed for study or research stays. Currently, joint papers are in progress with the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IOCAS) and Ocean University of China (OUC), joint projects are running with Tianjin University of Science and Technology (TUST).

Testimonials students of the Agrozoology Lab at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering

Yang Qun, Liu Dongdong and Xue Qi, 3 doctoral students from the Department of Plants and Crops, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, Ghent University
& **Dr Chen Pengyu and Dr Li Weidong**, who recently graduated from Ghent University with a doctoral degree.

We have a big Chinese family in our Agrozoology lab at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering. There are already so many Chinese students who have received scientific research training and who have obtained a doctorate degree from Ghent University. We are proud of them. Today, they have returned to China as scheduled and have obtained positions in different schools or research institutes. You can see them in almost all major labs in China. Now, some of them have already become professors and have made outstanding contributions to the understanding of pest control in China.

Duck together in the garden with professor Guy Smagghe just because we miss the flavour!

All of these memories at Ghent University will exist in our hearts. Many thanks to the Chinese government and CSC!

This year the China platform is celebrating its 15th anniversary. We have great memories from our time at Ghent University. Last year we had dinner together in one of the Chinese restaurants to celebrate the Chinese National Day and Mid-autumn Festival in 2020; we annually celebrate Christmas and organise a summer barbecue; we watched football together during the European football championships this year; we ate Beijing



10. Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

As the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences is already well represented in this book in the chapter about the Joint Laboratories and International Thematic Networks, they preferred to give the floor to some of their partners to share a short testimonial about their former experience in Ghent University.

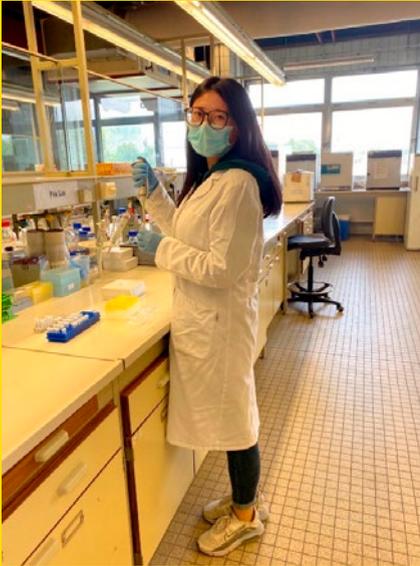


Prof. Dr Zhang Zhiyue

Institute of Pharmaceutics
School of Pharmaceutical
Sciences
Shandong University

I am Zhiyue Zhang, and I studied at Ghent University from October 2012 to May 2016 to obtain a PhD, and worked as a post-doc

from October 2016 to September 2018, both at the group of Prof. Bruno De Geest. Now I am a professor at Shandong University in China, where I obtained my bachelor's and master's degree. I contacted Prof. Bruno De Geest to start a PhD position at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and he agreed. My stay was pretty friendly, especially in the big group of the Department of Pharmaceutics. I published several papers in reputed journals which were of great help to start my own independent academic career. I will always remember my boss, my friends, and my experimental issues.



Pan Sun

PhD Researcher
Centre of Excellence in Mycotoxicology and Public Health
Department of Bioanalysis, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ghent University

I am a PhD student at the College of Veterinary Medicine in China Agricultural University (CAU). I started my joint PhD at the Centre of Excellence in Mycotoxicology and Public Health (CEMPH) headed by Prof. Sarah De Saeger and Prof. Marthe De Boevre in January 2021. My work focuses on the 'in vitro and in vivo interaction

between mycotoxins and antibiotics in broiler chicken'. I decided to do a joint PhD in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (FFW) specifically at the CEMPH for its well-known expertise in the analysis of mycotoxins. My passion lies in this field and the FFW offers a great opportunity for starting a successful researcher career. During my stay in the FFW I gained a lot of experience in techniques of analytical chemistry as well as the impact of mycotoxins on public health. Moreover, I have had the opportunity to meet and interact with researchers from different fields and cultures which has improved my knowledge on various subjects, both scientifically and socially. My ultimate wish is to follow a successful academic path and become a bridge between Ghent University and CAU. I will always be grateful to my supervisors Prof. Sarah De Saeger and Prof. Marthe De Boevre for their vision and guidance through this journey. In addition, I made a lot of friends from all over the world, which made my stay even more pleasant and created bonds I will always cherish.

11. Faculty of Political and Social Sciences

Ghent University students at the University Immersion Programme of Sichuan University

Prof. Dr Jan Orbie, Department of Political Studies, Ghent University

The Centre for European Studies at Sichuan University (Chengdu) and the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University have a longstanding cooperation. Over the past decade, we have exchanged several researchers and lecturers and engaged in a number of joint projects and conferences related to European Union Studies.

In the framework of our excellent relationship, each year a group of students of our master programmes in EU Studies and International Politics have had the opportunity to participate in the University Immersion Programme (UIP) at Sichuan University. This is an international Summer School that is organised by Sichuan University and that takes place on its new campus in Chengdu. The UIP offers course units in various disciplines as well as activities and trips relating to Chinese culture. Since 2013, more than 100 students from Ghent University have attended the two-week Summer School. For many of them, this was their first experience outside of Europe and also their first encounter with Chinese peers.

In times of harshening political and economic relations between European countries and China, such people-to-people contacts may be all the more important. Despite the brevity of the Summer School, many students indicate that they felt 'immersed' into a different culture and indicate that they have learned a lot on many levels. In this regard, the 'buddy' system has been particularly appreciated.

When I talk to our alumni who attended the UIP, even many years after graduation they often refer to it as a major highlight of their trajectory at Ghent University. While the hot-pot and mountain trips are always quickly mentioned as nice cultural experiences, former students also witness a deeper intercultural understanding and a more profound (although also more confused) insight into Chinese politics, economics and society.

Below you find five short testimonials from former Ghent University students and also one from a Chinese student who participated in the first edition back in 2013 and who now works as a lecturer at the Centre for European Studies at Sichuan University.

Anissa Bougrea

The Summer School at Sichuan University in China has broadened my political perspective and strengthened both my language and social skills. The highlight of my academic experience was learning about the Chinese banking system and its technological advancements. Interacting with the Chinese students both in and outside of class was incredibly educational. In addition, the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for rural development and then visit a local village really put theory into practice. The disparities between rural and urban life were immense. The classes and field experience have definitely contributed to my interest in development economics,



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in which I am now pursuing a PhD. Although I have academically advanced thanks to this exchange, my confidence level has increased as well. The language barrier was frightening. I could not communicate properly with anyone outside the university. I was forced to use the (few) Chinese words we had learned to get around. Despite the exchange being too short to learn much Chinese, the experience gave me the confidence in speaking out when learning a new language. The Summer School further opened me up to different ways of living. I have definitely become more open-minded and truly believe that this is an asset that distinguishes me from people who have not experienced a study experience abroad. Still, the best part about the Summer School were the people. Studying abroad in China was not just about the classes and learning the language, but it was about immersing myself in the culture and connecting with the people. In my career as a (former) journalist, having Chinese friends has helped me create a better understanding of China and its people. Sichuan university assigned each of us a buddy who really took the time and energy to make sure we were comfortable and enjoying our stay. Thanks to the buddy-system, I got to experience genuine Chinese culture, traditions and even hidden gems in the city and nature. The highlight of my travel experiences was surely climbing Mount Qingcheng, something that would not



have been possible without our buddies. Even today, I am still in touch with buddies who have now become friends.

Glen De Waele

Wow, what a blast it has been! I highly recommend the Summer School at Sichuan University (China). The programme has not only taught me a lot about Chinese culture, economics and politics, but it was also one of the most amazing trips abroad I had made in a while! China is known for its megacities, but do not be fooled by those mental pictures. Beyond the outskirts of the city, there is a sea of unspoiled nature to discover.

Sichuan University has warmly welcomed us during our visit in 2019. We were fully immersed in the Chinese education system, and by assigning each of us to a Chinese student, we learned a lot about their cultural habits and how they perceive the world we live in. This is perhaps one of the biggest eye-openers of the Summer School. The confrontation with the fact that there are people on this planet who view things in a completely different way: more traditional, based on their religion or culture, through a different view of history. The one-on-one interaction with the students allowed us to immerse ourselves in everyday life in China much faster. By doing so we could see how they experience their workdays and their



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weekends and that this was very different from us in the West. We got to know local cuisine like traditional Sichuan hot-pot, which was way too spicy for me, and the local BBQ, which at first sight would not meet the hygiene standards of Benny Bax, but which was extraordinarily tasty! In addition to discovering the local catering industry they also helped us with planning our trips to nearby landmarks like the Leshan Giant Buddha, a 1500 years old 71-metre tall stone statue of Buddha carved out of a mountain. Without their help and translations, the whole 'Immersion Programme' certainly would not have been the same.

Besides the tourist added value, the lessons at our University were of great quality. I took the course units 'Globalization and EU-China's foreign investment relationship' by professor Haiyan Zhang, 'Cross-Cultural Management' by professor Maggie Wang and 'Great Poems and how they become world literature' by professor Pieterella Broomans. These lectures did not only teach me a lot, but the group projects with our Chinese colleagues also introduced us to their way of thinking on investing, culture and world literature.

Hence I highly recommend future students to follow this programme. It is a unique opportunity to visit China. The trip will be an intense experience that you will remember for a lifetime and with some luck you will end up with a foreign friend for life. Just do it!



Kaat Teerlinck

During my master's year, China already interested me. China was part of every paper or assignment I did, even my master's dissertation. I studied its climate policy, or the discourse of the European Union in response to China as an emerging superpower. But what are all those theoretical findings without being immersed in it?

So the summer school was the icing on the cake. What I particularly remember are the conversations and discussions with our Chinese buddies and other students. We shared our future dreams and world views, which could be very different from each other, but at the same time contained many similarities. It was fascinating to try to understand another culture and even to try to be part of it for a moment. This contributed to an attitude of non-judgement, which I still carry with me. It has even given me the ability to scrutinise and question myself and my own culture.

Even though it has been several years now, not a month goes by without me going back to my memories and experiences of those weeks in China.

Ward Claerhout

I am incredibly thankful that I was able to participate in the Immersion Programme at Sichuan-University in 2019. For me, it was the first time that I visited China and Sichuan University gave us a warm welcome. I got to know many Chinese students and learned a lot about our different cultures and worldviews. The students guided us around the campus and around Chengdu very well. We went out to eat the traditional Sichuan hot-pot, and visited nice parts of the city. This really lifted my experience to the next level. Chengdu is a vibrant city with lots of interesting things to do. I especially liked the friendly atmosphere in the city. The Chinese students helped us with planning trips to nearby landmarks. We went to see the Leshan Buddha, and we climbed Mount Qingcheng. Without the friendly students, the trip would not have been the same. The Immersion Programme does live up to its name!

At the University, the course units that were available were also very interesting. I got to expand my knowledge by taking the Foreign Direct Investment class, I would recommend this course unit to anyone who is considering doing the Summer School in the future. It was also an interesting experience to complete group projects together with Chinese colleagues. I would recommend all students to take part in the Immersion Programme. It really enriches your worldview, and it is a really unique chance to discover China.

Clara Thiry

When you visit a foreign country, you actually get the chance to experience a culture from within. No matter what I write, words cannot describe the impressions and memories I made during the Immersion Programme at Sichuan University in Chengdu.

The university offered a wide range of course units of which we could choose the ones we liked. The classes gave a different perspective on international relations and how the world looks at the EU from the outside. I learned a lot about the history of the Silk Road and EU-China relations. We got the opportunity to go on a field trip to a nearby village. To me, this impressive experience was the highlight of the Summer School.

The Chinese students introduced us to Chinese traditions and customs. They showed us all the hidden gems and restaurants in the city. Together, we enjoyed a lot of very spicy hot-pots followed by lots of bubble teas. My buddy introduced me to the art of Chinese calligraphy, paper cutting and Confucianism. He also taught me some Chinese words. When I came back to Belgium, I chose to take Chinese language classes to properly learn the language. This has been a great asset to my professional career. The experience at Sichuan University opened my eyes to the world around me. This is a lesson that in my opinion cannot be learned in a classroom. It requires exposing yourself to new situations filled with new people and new experiences. But most importantly, I learned how to live in the moment and appreciate the small things.

YAN Tianqin (严天钦)

While Sichuan University carried out the University Immersion Program (UIP) in July 2013, we hosted 14 students from Ghent University, Belgium. They were able to come to Sichuan University because Professor Jan Orbie, the director of EU Studies Centre of Ghent University had advised them to participate in the UIP. Professor Orbie has been cooperating with the Centre for European Studies (CES) of Sichuan University (SU) for many years. It was the first time for most of the 14 Belgian

students to come to China, and it was even the first time for some of them to leave Europe. While staying at Sichuan University, these students participated in a variety of activities which enabled them to learn more about Sichuan University and Chinese culture. With their help, we held a series of 'Belgium Day' activities, in which the Belgian students introduced Belgian history, culture, food, geography, the political system as well as living habits to all Chinese participants. As a doctoral candidate whose research orientation was related to European cultural studies, I, with Dr LU Zheng, organised "China-EU Youth Dialogue" in the morning of July 11, 2013. 14 Ghent University students and 16 young Chinese students and young scholars from ESC of SCU were invited to join and for the sake of adequate communication, all the participants were divided into four groups, and each group had participants from both sides. We had a frank and in-depth exchange of views on the Sino-EU relationship, European sovereignty debt crisis, Belgian culture, Chinese culture, China's rise and current Chinese hot topics.

I was very glad to have this opportunity to communicate with the Belgian students, and I was deeply impressed by their passion, frankness and curiosity. Such heart-to-heart discussion greatly broadened my horizon and helped me to learn more about the cultural diversity of Belgium, as well as the differences between Belgian culture and the cultures of other European countries. At the forum, some Belgian students asked me many questions about Chinese culture, and they showed great concern to how Sino-EU relations would be affected by the rise of China. I tried my best to answer their questions very patiently. With the rise of China, more and more young European people begin to show interest in China, but due to the differences between Chinese culture and Western culture, as well as the differences in political system, their knowledge about China is limited. If they want to know more about the reality of China, they are welcome in China to either study or travel and talk with the local Chinese. That kind of people-to-people exchange is the best way to enhance mutual understanding and bilateral

relationships. I hope that I can make more contributions to that kind of people-to-people exchange between Sichuan University and our European partners in the future.



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Summer in Beijing

Prof. Dr Sven Biscop, Department of Political Studies, Ghent University

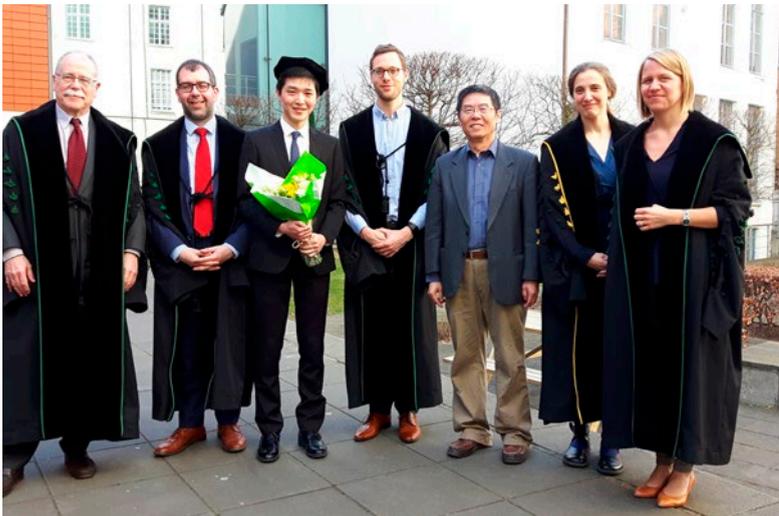
Summer is probably not the best time of the year to visit Beijing. It is so hot that even a Belgian starts longing for a refreshing rain shower to clear up the sky. Yet since 2013 already, and until the pandemic interrupted our lives, I have been spending a couple of weeks there every July. When the academic year in Ghent finishes, I leave for Beijing to teach a course on the foreign and security policy of the European Union in the annual summer school at the Ren Min (or People's) University of China (RUC).

Created by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1937 as the Shanbei Public School, the institution became Ren Min University in 1950. Today, it is considered one of the top universities in political science in China. Many students aspire to a career in government or party structures. For a political scientist like myself, they

are a most interesting audience, therefore – the future leaders of China, as it were.

The aim of my course is not, obviously, to convince my students that EU policy is 'correct' or even successful. The objective is rather to explain how the EU itself sees its own role in the world, what its grand strategy is, and why.

My aim is not just to teach, though, but very much also to learn. How do my Chinese students see Europe and the EU? How do they understand China's role in the world? Every year in early July when I leave for Beijing it is, I will confess, with a somewhat heavy heart: just when all my academic colleagues start leaving for their holidays, I start another 32-hour course. But every year again, once I start lecturing, I am quickly enthused by the avid desire for knowledge that the students manifest.



Most of all, it is the interaction with the students that gives me energy. It does take a while to gain their confidence and get them to speak. In that regard, Chinese students are actually not that different from their Flemish counterparts. Once you do draw them out, however, fascinating and usually very open but also very nuanced discussions follow, about topics ranging from European integration, to human rights, to grand strategy.

Living on the RUC campus also provides ample opportunities to exchange with Chinese professors and PhD students. Furthermore, wearing my hat of director at the Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations (Brussels), I always use the chance to visit the main Chinese think tanks in Beijing, such as the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), the China Institutes for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), the China Foundation for International Strategic Studies (CFISS), and the Europe Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Mobility also operates the other way around, as students from RUC have obtained CSC-scholarships to write a doctoral dissertation in Ghent under my supervision. Keeping in close touch with those who have obtained their PhD gives me yet another avenue for insight into contemporary China.

In 2020, RUC was forced to cancel the summer school, like so many other initiatives around the world. In 2021, it was organised online. Nothing can replace the intensity of live interaction, but even so I was glad to have the chance to exchange with Chinese students again, especially at a time when relations between China and the EU are becoming ever more complex.

Exchanges between academics and students is the one channel that ought never to be closed. Even when relations between states are sometimes fraught, it would be decidedly un-strategic to deprive one's scholars from the chance to gain a deeper understanding of the other.



x. Closing Word

Prof. Dr Guido Van Huylbroeck

Director of Internationalisation, Ghent University

Already 15 years of China platform and a third book! As Director of Internationalisation, I am very pleased to see that the China Platform, being the oldest of the five regional platforms at Ghent University, has established this very fine tradition of highlighting the cooperation of Ghent University with all its close and renowned partners in the specific region – in all its different formats and disciplines – by publishing a book every five years.

With this third publication, we have indeed come a long way. In this respect, we owe a great debt of thanks to all the Ghent University professors who were or still are active in the respective region; to the staff of the China Platform, Prof. Luc Taerwe, Director of the China Platform, Mrs Inge Mangelschots, coordinator of the China Platform, as well as our Representative in Beijing, Mr Zhang Chi; to the members of the steering committee of the China Platform and to all the members of the administrative staff of Ghent University involved in each step of the process of setting up concrete collaboration or enabling a smooth mobility for the students, researchers and visiting professors. But of course, an equally warm expression of gratitude should go to all the colleagues, students and alumni from our partner universities as well! The fundamentals of international cooperation lie in a two-way approach and commitment and mutual understanding.

Having read all the interesting and valuable contributions in this book, I can but conclude that these accomplishments are a true reason to feel proud. Many of these academic initiatives and achievements can be framed in the objective of the second integrated policy plan for internationalisation (2019-2023) of Ghent University. They fit into Ghent University's ambition to take a leading role in Europe as a university that excels internationally in education and research, where all members of the Ghent University community, regardless of their background, feel at home and where students are optimally prepared for the challenges of today's globalized society and labour market, across national borders.

This new publication also clearly shows that in more challenging times the close and fruitful scientific cooperation between academics and scientists could only be continued due to their strong motivation and commitment and the close friendly ties that often form the basis for extensive research and/or educational cooperation. The COVID-19 situation has indeed emphasized the importance of international scientific cooperation. It is now not only clear that viruses do not have borders but also that humans will only find solutions to tackle global challenges and problems by closely working across borders. In other words: cross-border cooperation is key more than ever!

As the Rector and Vice Rector of Ghent University emphasize in the preface of this book, at Ghent University, we strongly believe in scientific exchange. This requires the necessary openness, transparency and respect for the core principles of our modern universities: academic freedom and respect for each other's values. Open dialogue and academic freedom should be considered of paramount importance in this world that is more and more impacted by polarisation. I would like to repeat that it is important to continue to strengthen and extend our international academic cooperation both in research and education, in full transparency and with respect for each other's interests as we, at Ghent University, are convinced that international collaboration can indeed be an important tool to improve the world.

Or to phrase it with two famous Chinese proverbs: "You cannot clap with just one hand"¹ or even more explicit: "Only when all contribute their firewood, they can build a strong fire."²

So let us with all our partners, alliances and networks further explore ways to internationally work together and continue to strengthen our cooperation towards a brighter future. Up to 20 years of collaboration and of the China Platform!

1. "You cannot clap with just one hand" 孤掌难鸣 (gū zhǎng nán míng)

2. "Only when all contribute their firewood, they can build a strong fire." 众人拾柴火焰高 (Zhòng rén shí chái huǒ yàn gāo)

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