

## **Concluding remarks by Jean-Pierre De Greve, Vice-Rector for International Relations Vrije Universiteit Brussel, member of the UNICA Steering Committee**

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At academic level, a lot will happen between China and Europe in the coming decade. A lot more than what happened in the past. Evidence? The willingness of the Chinese government to invest very strong in mobility going both ways, as was shown by Mr Li in his presentation. It is also clear that this must happen taking into account the different views on how to govern a society, and how to work together as sovereign states. But one thing is clear: both in China and in Europe, high-level knowledge workers with transnational experience are needed to jointly investigate global and regional problems and come up with solutions.

Some buzzwords popped up during this meeting, and I'll address them in no particular order.

- Reciprocity: Reciprocity is the word for the next decade. It popped up at the speech of Mr Li. It surfaced in analysis we heard as well as in several of the practical cases. Partnerships with mutually balanced contributions are necessary for success, with input from both sides, including staff, students and resources for research and for education.
- Quality, or better quality enhancement, is a second buzzword. Not only related to education (we all want good programmes with good students, and content delivered by good educators, don't we?), but even more related to research. Truly integrated research projects on global issues, and research interacting with industry and society must be developed at the highest possible level of quality. Only this will assure continued support from governments and university authorities on both sides.
- From the vivid discussions two other notions emerged:
  - o The first notion was that sino-european collaboration must serve local needs, and that it must be based on the strong competences of the partners. This is about creating economic value for the regions through knowledge transfer. A relationship of trust built up over years is a necessary condition to achieve the desired objectives. But there is more needed on the road to success. Make sure that there are benefits for each partner. Keep the lines of communication intense, using diverse channels. Have tangible output in mind and have the intention to move from the bilateral to the multilateral level.
  - o The second notion is that internal hurdles should be removed. Create the conditions inside the universities to enable people to move. Sufficient offering of courses in a common language, or matching curricula are a part of that. But perhaps more needed are the enthusiastic encouragement from the academic staff, and a centrally supporting platform, as the one shown by Mrs De Coen from Ghent. They will certainly help a lot. Such a platform must be embedded in a central strategy that is based on an internationalization policy that is carried by the whole university. The central approach must be felt as supportive and encouraging by the faculty, and it should involve all stakeholders.  
This becomes more important in a time where both China and the European Commission put more emphasis on collaborations at an institutional level. But never forget, knowledge creation and knowledge transfer is a bottom-up process, coming from individuals.

Finally, to conclude, I express my gratitude to the leading officers of the three networks for working out an initiative that I think was well received. I also sincerely thank the local people, such as Xiaohong Tong and Alastair Ross with his team of the Brussels branch of the University of Kent.

And to my colleagues Maurits Van Rooijen of the Compostela Group, and John Tuppen of the Santander Group I say: "We must do this more". It serves our member universities very well.