

# Towards a Sino-European Institute of Advanced Studies

News >

General

**China is fast developing into an economical and political superpower. Its buying spree and voracious markets underpin the new economic growth in Asia. Its enormous potential is not only attracting foreign investment, but also adding to its political weight. China has the allure of the new and an affinity is developing between the once-feared China and the rest of Asia, and European political leaders are also courting the dragon. What is academia going to do?**

Although many new leaders in China have an American college background, they realize that the American unilateralist paradigm is standing in the way of a sustained and balanced global development. They are much closer to the European multilateral paradigm, which is based on an analytical and critical approach of the world. Furthermore, they share with the Europeans a profound historical awareness rooted in their millennia-long civilization. They are destined to consider the long term, while the Americans thrive on short-termism. While China is clearly leaping forward, Europe too is redefining its role in the world. Europe is far more hesitant than China to become a leading power in the emerging trilateral world order of the twenty-first century. However, it will only be a matter of time before Europe will have to act upon its own concept of effective multilateralism, which is based on using its policies on trade, aid, and migration in a politically targeted and conditional way (for example, the steel crisis with the US).

This concept is both appealing and recognizable to the Chinese leadership. The convergence of the Chinese and European way of viewing the future of the world should not only be seized upon with both hands, but also be strengthened at economical, political, and scientific levels.

The establishment of a Sino-European Institute of Advanced Studies (SEIAS) in Beijing can give this rapprochement a sound scientific basis and a focal point by studying problems of relevance to both continents, such as water management, welfare systems, migration, religious tensions, disease control, genomics, influence of the media, and information technology, to name but a few. Without an analysis of the problems facing both China and Europe, a consensus on how to tackle common problems is unattainable. To facilitate the process of establishing this institute the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the IIAS are in the process of establishing the Asia-Europe Academic Network

The main characteristics of the institute could be described as follows. Situated in Beijing in the vicinity of other scientific institutions in a campus-style environment, SEIAS will be headed by a director with proven skills in scientific management, who is a mediator bringing research interests together on a Sino-European scale. The director will be supported by a small secretariat which will also assist the staff, consisting of twenty researchers working in five groups each composed of four institutionally well-connected young postdoc researchers (two from Europe and two from China). The duration of the research programmes is four to five years and the researchers will be working in a laboratory-style environment with all possible means of communication and a (electronic) library at their disposal. Working together on interrelated research programmes in a multidisciplinary and border-transcending manner, they will be able to tap into the existing resources of their extended scientific network.

At a relational level this will lead to long-lasting (scientific and personal) friendships among all participants, which will ensure a high degree of continuity in the Sino-European research endeavour. The research results are to be made public regularly through updates and electronic newsletters, while yearly high-profile

state-of-the-art reports of an applied nature will be at the heart of seminars and conferences, organized around the respective research topics. Participants of these meetings will come from all professional layers of society, thus ensuring a spin-off of SEIAS research endeavours at all levels.

The institute aims to achieve high visibility, primarily through its high-quality research and publications output and its presence at international conferences of a disciplinary or regional nature, thereby becoming a natural partner of advanced study centres and think tanks throughout Europe and China. The institute's trademark will be its analytical problem-solving, based on Sino-European scientific concepts of *longue durée*, which distinguishes it clearly from the ad hoc problem-solving media-driven American scientific approach.

Those institutions or persons who feel affinity with our project should not hesitate to contact us. We strongly believe that Eurasian cooperation is a precondition for the success of this project. ◀

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