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University of Nottingham awarded €1 million grant to establish EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy

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The [University of Nottingham](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk) has been awarded a €1 million grant by the European Commission to establish a EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy. From 2011 until 2013 the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies through its think tank [China Policy Institute](http://www.chinapolicyinstitute.org) (CPI) will foster durable and sustainable links between European and Chinese civil society stakeholders in eight policy areas. The policy areas include 1) Climate Change and Corporate Social Responsibility, 2) Environmental Health, 3) Labour Relations, 4) Community Building and Service Provision for Vulnerable Groups, 5) Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, 6) Participatory Public Policy and Freedom of Information, 7) Government Finance Reform, and 8) Civil Society and The Rule of Law. "We believe that intercultural dialogues are more likely to promote policy change when participants in our eight EU-China Civil Society Dialogues can engage in conference-based learning and apply their new knowledge in follow-up activities", Program Manager Dr Andreas Fulda states. "Our dialogue program allows European and Chinese participants to identify areas of common interest, followed by the design of joint follow-up activities which improve public participation at one or more phases of the experimentation-based Chinese policy cycle."

According to the [European Commission](http://ec.europa.eu) (EC) "Europe has a major economic and political interest in supporting China's sustainable development and successful transition to a stable, prosperous and open country". In China's EU Policy Paper the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic states its objective "to expand China-EU cultural and people exchanges under the principle of mutual emulation, common prosperity and complementarity, and promote cultural harmony and progress between the East and West". Civil society researcher Dr Nora Sausmikat at the German Asienstiftung asserts that the needs of both Europe and the PR China can be met through cross-cultural collaboration of civil society stakeholders: "NGO's should not only work on but with China." Such calls for an extended European China engagement are also being echoed on the Chinese side. Wu Baiyi, Professor at the Institute of European Studies (IES) argues that "China and EU should add more substance to their political ties. While overcoming institutional and ethical differences, both need to deepen their mutual confidence by building a multi-tier political dialogue to bridge the gaps not only between top leaders, but also among grassroots level officials, non-government activists and the general public."

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University of Nottingham awarded €1 million EU-China Civil Society grant

By supporting the EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy the European Commission is deepening its China engagement as an active promoter of Chinese civil society. The University of Nottingham is coordinating a ten-member consortium which includes research institutes, universities, and non-profit organisations:

- (1) The [China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics](#) (CCCPE), one of the research institutes affiliated with the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.
- (2) The [University of Nottingham Ningbo, China](#) (UNNC), the first Sino-Foreign University in China with approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education.
- (3) The [Institute for Civil Society at the Sun Yat-sen University](#) (ICS), a non-profit organisation engaged in research, experiment and advocacy.
- (4) [Shining Stone Community Action](#) (SSCA), a non-profit civil society organisation dedicated to the promotion of a participatory approach to community governance.
- (5) [The World and China Institute](#) (WCI), an independent non-government, non-profit research institute dedicated to the mutual understanding of the world and China.
- (6) The [NGO Research Center](#) (NGORC) at the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University, the first research center on NGOs in China.
- (7) The [School of Contemporary Chinese Studies](#) (SCCS) and its think tank [China Policy Institute](#) (CPI) at the University of Nottingham.
- (8) The [Great Britain-China Centre](#) (GBCC), a non-profit organisation which promotes mutual understanding between the UK and China and aims to build long-term connections between decision-makers in the two countries.
- (9) The [Global Links Initiative](#) (GLI), a non-profit organisation which aims to foster practical links among social entrepreneurial people around the world.
- (10) The [German Asia Foundation](#) (GAF) which aims to promote a dialogue with Asian countries and Asian people living in Germany.

All partners of the consortium have specific expertise in substantive policy fields and include target groups such as community-based organisations, consumers, disabled, educational organisations, local authorities, migrants, non-governmental organisations, women, and young people in their work. They reach out to final beneficiaries such as reform-minded cadres, civil society practitioners, public intellectuals, educators, journalists, lawyers, community residents and rural migrants. Expert facilitators from [Leadership Inc.](#), a facilitation consultancy based in China and focused on applying participatory change processes will bring European and Chinese civil society stakeholders together to design and work out realistic and innovative initiatives for civil society participation in public policy, tested and implemented in a local area after each of the eight EU-China Civil Society Dialogues. In the future all project information will be found on the website www.eu-china.net as well as on individual websites of consortium partners.

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