



New Paths in Alumni Cooperation:

Chinese and German Alumni join forces for new expert cooperations within and across their research disciplines

The first multidisciplinary network meeting of Chinese and German expert alumni, united under the umbrella of the Sino-German Alumni Expert Networks (DCHAN), has proved a success. Led by seven universities/research institutions in Germany with a proven record of longstanding research cooperation in China, the Chinese and German network members engaged in constructive talks on how to deepen their cooperation and expand the network in China and Germany. They discussed joint research interests not only within their own disciplines, but also on a multidisciplinary level, across their disciplines. The event also resulted in the recruitment of further Chinese Germany alumni, who will bring their experiences and expertise to the network.

The event was held at the premises of the Sino-German Center for Research Promotion (CDZ) in Beijing on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th May, and hosted by the Alumni Section of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Bonn, in cooperation with the DAAD China Office in Beijing.

DCHAN was launched 18 months ago by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and is supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Project funding is being managed by the DLR Project Management Agency (DLR-PT).

The importance of alumni for research and innovation, as well as for society as a whole, has been recognised by both, the Chinese and the German decision makers. Germany and China have a 40-year history of fruitful academic and research cooperation, with thousands of scholars travelling back and forth. What role can these alumni play for academia and for society? This was one of the leading questions behind the networking event.

Around 50 scholars and alumni experts from China and Germany made full use of the opportunity to discuss common interests and current issues in innovation, knowledge and technology transfer, as well as exchange views and experiences on how to expand the expert network.

Two panel discussions set the scene for fruitful talks chaired by Dr. ZHANG Baiyu of the Sino-German Center for Research Promotion (CDZ) and Ruth Schimanowski of the German Center for Industry & Trade Beijing. While a genuine interest to learn from one another was palpable at all times, being aware of the differences in mentality and approach was regarded as an asset that helps rather than hinders the way towards innovative and sustainable cooperations.

Among the overall topics discussed were a number of legal questions, for instance on how intellectual property rights are applied to artificial intelligence in China and in Germany, or what general conclusions can be drawn from the two fundamentally different systems of liability in the work place.

The event closed with a public conversation between DU Shengyong of the German and Austrian Section of the Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA) and Dr. Heidi Wedel, Head of Alumni

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Section at DAAD Bonn, who presented and compared their respective alumni concepts and discussed possible measures of further involvement and cooperations. Participants were invited to join in the conversation, and as more and more alumni engaged in the open discussion, the conversation ended in lively large-scale cross-networking event.

Most of the thematic exchange between the Chinese WRSA alumni and the members of the DCHAN network focused on the areas of Urbanisation, Engineering, and Logistics. However, DCHAN expertise also includes the areas of Entrepreneurship, Neurosciences, Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, Philosophy and further Humanities and Social Sciences with an interest in the notion of *Good Life*. It is this multidisciplinary approach that bears the potential for a fresh view on Sino-German alumni involvement and the capacity for synergy building.

By means of peer networking and joint events such as this one, as well as strategic recruitment of new alumni and stakeholders, the network is designed to build a dynamic platform of leading minds in their areas. In the long term DCHAN aims to establish a sustainable network that will be able to respond to important questions in research and society and initiate new and lasting ways of Sino-German cooperation.

The next public network event is a high-level DCHAN conference in Berlin in summer 2020, where some of the outcomes of the joint cooperations will be on display. To find out more about the network, please join our newsletter mailing list and the DCHAN online community via: www.dchan-projekt.de

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