



**Lead2**



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## **LEAD2 Kick-off meeting & Workshops**

**Brussels, 20-22 March 2019**

### **Dissemination Report**

WP4 Dissemination, LEAD2

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The LEAD2 project is a Capacity Building in Higher Education project supported by the Erasmus+ programme. The LEAD2 project is built on the results of the LEAD project, but with several additional innovative contributions. This project is a partnership of 6 European partners and 6 Chinese partners focusing on university governance and academic leadership capacity building. To that end, the 3-year initiative supported by the Erasmus+ High Education Capacity Building programme started from January 2019.

The LEAD2 project has successfully organised its launch conference & workshops in Brussels from 20-22 March 2019. The kick-off conference of the LEAD2 project took place at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Brussels, Belgium. The meeting hosted more than 30 participants representing 11 LEAD2 partners (over the total number of 12) and important stakeholders such as the European Commission, China Mission to the EU. Participants included vice-rectors, deans, vice-deans and other academic and administrative staff of faculties and schools from both European and Chinese Higher Education Institutions.

On 20 March 2019, Prof. Chang Zhu, the LEAD2 project leader, facilitated the preparation and consultation meeting. The consortium meeting consists of three main sessions: 1) Preparation and consultation meeting with Chinese partners; 2) Preparation and consultation meeting with European partners; 3) The partners meeting.

During the first two sessions, Prof. Chang Zhu welcomed all participants. The structure of the LEAD2 project and the work plan were presented to all participants. Then all participants introduced each other and especially some participant pointed out several key issues that they were concerned or interested in university governance and academic leadership. Two effective sessions helped participants to understand the background of the LEAD2 project, to get to know each other better, and to obtain some important ideas that are relevant for the participants.

The third session organised in the afternoon involved all participants from Chinese universities and European universities. The meeting focused on optimizing the work plan and arranging & planning project activities. During this session, participating institutions shared their personal and institutional impact of the LEAD

project activities and presented their goals and expected roles in the LEAD2 project. The preparatory meetings enabled participants to fully understand the project work plan in details. Furthermore, participants had the opportunities to know other partner institutions and their roles in the LEAD2 project. This is essential for the cooperation among the Chinese and European universities.

The meeting on 21 March includes three main activities: 1) Project kick-off ceremony: 2) keynote speeches and 3) Round table meetings.

The welcome session was chaired by Dr. Jacqueline Counder, Director of International Relations Office at VUB. Prof. Romain MEEUSEN, Vice-Rector International Policy of VUB, gave an opening speech on behalf of the VUB Delegation. He emphasized the importance of building strong bones regarding academic leadership within Europe and China. Prof. YU Jingtian, Vice President, National Academy of Educational Administration (NAEA) extended his honor to present at the kick-off event. As the NAEA representative, he highlighted the importance of the LEAD2 project for leadership capacity building. He stated that NAEA will provide full support for the implementation of the project. Dr. Che Weimin, Minister-Counsellor, China Mission to the EU extended his pleasure to attend the meeting. He indicated that LEAD2 is not only a capacity building and research project but also a project for utilisation for more Chinese and European universities to benefit from the outcomes. Dr. Gianpaolo SURIANO, the representative from DG EAC, European Commission, expressed pleasure to attend the conference. He presented EU-China cooperation under Erasmus+ programme. His speech provided insightful information related to the new Erasmus+ programme and future cooperation between the EU and China.

The kick-off conference was followed by a keynote speech session with four keynote speakers (Prof. Gulser Koksall, Prof. Joao DE MATOS, Prof. Susanne Weigelin-Schwieedrzik, Prof. Miguel Pina e Cunha). The lecture presented by Prof. Koksall addressed the importance of incorporated analytics in decision making. With regard to the future cooperation between Chinese and European Academic leadership, Prof. Joao DE MATOS clarified significant similarities and differences between two educational systems. It leads to potential collaboration opportunities between European and Chinese universities on academic leadership. He highlighted that “the future depends on our cooperation and understanding”. Regarding research effectiveness in HEIs, Prof. Susanne Weigelin-Schwieedrzik shared a case study in China. She analysed six specific strategies, which help China to rise to excellence in research. The fourth keynote speech, lectured by Prof. Miguel Pina e Cunha, focused on the new approach for leadership “leadership as paradox”. He especially stressed the importance of practical mindset in order to develop talent and competence for leaders and staff members in the institutions. Presentations and discussions in the keynote speech session increased the understanding of the academic leaders on new trends of educational leadership, old and new challenges that leaders are facing within their institutions and the importance of collaboration in higher education capacity building between the EU and China.

After the keynote speech session, LEAD2 round table meeting was organised focusing on three themes:

The first theme was about training and learning for Academic leaders and workshops sessions including MOOCs (blended training). Dr. Lucas Zinner, University of Vienna, chaired and guided participants regarding training and learning for academic leaders. Meiyong Jing from NAEA presented a work plan for the 1<sup>st</sup> series of LEAD2 training & EU-China advanced conference on academic leadership in Beijing. Participants discussed and also gave some recommendations on the proposed work plan. This round table meeting was productive as it enhanced understanding of blended training including the MOOCs. It also strengthened the specific work plan of the 1<sup>st</sup> series of training and workshops which is essential for the implementation of the LEAD2 project.

The second theme was comparative research plan on university governance and academic leadership in Chinese and European universities. Prof. Susan Wright chaired this session. Dr. Merve Zayim-Kurtay presented comparative research plan regarding university governance and academic leadership. The presentation was accompanied by some potential topics and methodologies. Participants discussed what topics they are interested to implement and actively formed cross-national research teams. The second round table meeting was fruitful as it provided participants specific information to generate ideas for comparative research. It also enhanced

understanding of why comparative study in academic leadership is emphasized in the LEAD2 project. Furthermore, the session provided a good opportunity to facilitate collaboration among the partner universities.

The third theme was building an Online Knowledge Base for Academic Leaders, LEAD journal plan, online network, and publishing. This session was moderated by Prof. HU Rui from BNU. Kai Wang, researcher at VUB, presented the needs, objectives, and methodologies to build an Online Knowledge Base for academic leaders. During the discussion, participants stressed that the target groups for this platform should be leaders at the junior and the middle levels, not at the senior level. The session enabled participants to optimize the general work plan and discuss strategic directions to implement the LEAD2 project. Participants also obtained more information regarding the Online Knowledge Base platform. It was acknowledged that Online Knowledge Base is a kind of online depository rather than a course.

The meeting was concluded by summaries made by Prof. Chu Zhuwang from China University of Geosciences. Prof. Jan Cornelis, former Vice-Rector International Policy of Vrije University Brussel gave the final concluding remarks. He looked forward to seeing achievements on which the LEAD2 project will contribute regarding academic leadership.

The workshop on 22 March started by a keynote speech presentation of Prof. John Taylor on “Continuity and Challenge; Old and New Challenges for Leaders in Higher Education”. The key message is university leadership is not simply a favourable position. He pointed out that pressure for change in HEIs causes a change in leadership styles. The lecture increased understanding of old and new challenges that higher education institutions are currently facing due to the radical change of modern society. It also enhanced understanding of basic knowledge and skills on leadership which should be developed in higher education institutions.

The keynote lecture was followed by the workshop focusing on perceptions and practices of academic leadership. Three main questions were discussed: (1) What is academic leadership? (2) What do you think is a good academic leader? (3) what are the motivations to become an academic leader? The workshop was facilitated by Prof. Yasar Kondacki, Prof. Rita Costa, and Dr. Zhang Mengqui. The workshop was organized in an interactive way. The participants discussed the issues at their group round tables, then the summaries and insights were shared at the plenary sessions. What was very valuable was that the academic leaders shared their personal experiences or stories in their institutions. The experience sharing is a very important medium of learning for academic leaders, especially those who may face similar challenges or issues. Furthermore, some insightful comparisons toward perceptions and practices of academic leadership were discussed by the European and Chinese participants.

The workshop was concluded by summaries made by Prof. Koksai, Prof. Ye Beibei, Prof. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, and Prof. Chang Zhu.

The three days of the LEAD2 kick-off meeting and workshops created a fundamental foundation for the project implementation, and aimed series of work plan and research results. These exchange activities have strengthened the current cooperation, implementation of the project, as well as the discussions and establishment of future new cooperation amongst the partners and all actors involved. All participants reported that the meeting and workshops were very useful and insightful. Especially the sharing among Chinese and European participants has brought added value to the conference.













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