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*The Chinese Cultural Diplomacy
in Eastern Europe*

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Abstract

In the era of globalization cultural diplomacy seems to be the fundamental tool for national determination at the international level.

The former Chinese President Hu Jintao, on the occasion of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party, stressed the importance of promoting the national image outside the country through cultural diplomacy. Did this decision have relevant outcomes? How much did it affect the relationship between China and Europe?

The aim of the paper is to try to answer these questions, with a particular focus on the Eastern European Countries, also considering those “on the border” of the European Union.

For a better understanding of the actual relations in socio-political-economic terms among China and the European Union, the first part of the article deals with their diplomatic relationships along the main steps: 1995 EU-China Dialogue, 2003 EU-China Strategic Partnership; 2004 Memorandum of Understanding; 2012 EU- China High Level People – to- People Dialogue; 2013 the EU- China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation.

Differences in approaching the respective interlocutor are noticed. The same differences brought the western community to theorize the Chinese concept of cultural diplomacy. Its peculiar understanding is linked to what is defined as Chinese identity: What happened in the past and what accumulated as experience. Therefore, a state with superior cultural achievements is entitled to esteem and influence.

How much does the peaceful development influence interlocutors of the Chinese government in Eastern Europe? The aim of the second part of this article is to give an answer to this question through an analysis on the Chinese presence in Eastern Europe- in terms of regular and irregular migrants on the old continent- on the European perception of China and on the social repercussions of the Chinese presence considered to be a result of the Chinese cultural diplomacy.

Keywords

Cultural Diplomacy, China, Europe, Economics, Politics

Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to try to understand in what the Chinese cultural diplomacy consist of and to which extend it influence the perception central and eastern Europeans have in regards to China, taking into account also the economic aspect of the Chinese presence in that area. The paper will be divided in two chapters.

The first chapter deals with the EU – China relations and the concept of cultural diplomacy. It will be shortly analyzed which the diplomatic relations between the two international actors are and how they influenced each other in its development. The analysis starts from the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations in 1975, but the focus of attention is concentrated to the most recent events deeply changing bilateral relations. In particular is highlighted the importance of the 2003 EU – China strategic partnership; the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding; the 2006 Helsinki joint statement; the 2011 People – to – People Dialogue and the 2013 EU – China 2020 Strategic agenda for cooperation.

The following paragraph of Chapter 1 will deal instead with the central topic of the paper: Cultural Diplomacy. This part's aim is to try to give a comprehensive definition of it also making use of short examples from different countries in different periods of time. Hence, we will see how and to which extent cultural diplomacy can be applied to the Chinese foreign policy and which are the tools employed towards Central and Eastern Europe countries.

The second Chapter is instead divided in three paragraphs: Chinese presence in Eastern Europe, European perception of China and social repercussions of the Chinese presence.

The Chinese presence in Europe and in particular in Eastern Europe is not new phenomena. It has to come back to the XVIII century to find the first relevant communities in the region that were anyway concentrated in Western Europe. Chinese people flow over Central and Eastern Europe break in particularly from the 1980s as the Hungarian

government decided to eliminate barriers to their entrance and permanence in the country and Europe was perceived as an important and attractive destination for Chinese migrants.

Due to a lack in official statistic data concerning the presence of migrants from China into Central and Eastern Europe, it was not possible to delineate a comprehensive sight for each country, but data on the current situation in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Serbia are given. While talking about Chinese presence it was not thinkable to ignore the push and pull factors determining Chinese migration over Europe. First of all, in order to understand it, it had to be taken into account the growing of international trade between China and Europe, possible thanks to the inclusion of it in more comprehensive political agreements among the two actors. Investments are also analyzed. They represent in fact the main motive to the Chinese presence and it is also an opportunity not to be missed for the recipient countries.

The European perception over the Chinese population and government actions in Europe changed particularly, but it is mainly path-dependent. Still problems of study-data were found. In fact, in depth scrutiny of the social perception are available just for the United Kingdom, France and Germany, but through indirect evidence – public statements, China – Central Eastern European countries Forum, Chinatowns presence- it was possible to delineate an overarching understanding of the state of affairs. Nevertheless, when turning to the human rights question, opinions are all expressing negative judges.

The last paragraph of this paper is social repercussions of the Chinese presence. It is seen with suspect the take-off of Chinese interest coinciding with the European economic instability. The main concerns on the social impact are both in the field of economics as in the field of political cohesion of the European Union. To this regard, it is analyzed the relationship between Serbia and China. The reason behind it resides in the status of Serbia as possible future member of the European Union. The relations between China and Serbia are indeed very good also on topics of concerns inside the European Union and that could cause frictions for a future Serbian joining in the Union. Impact on the political sphere is also highlighted as hostile intent by the Chinese government to become more and more relevant and pervasive in the European Union by entering the back door of Central and Eastern European countries.

Chapter 1

1.1 – EU - China relationship

The EU- China diplomatic relations experienced a long and troubled pathway, which began in 1975. At that time their diplomatic relations were mostly affected by the logic of the Cold War and were mainly drove by economic relations. As stated by Xinning Song¹, the reform and opening-up policy putted in place by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, aimed to integrate the Chinese economy into world economy and learn from the outside to better reform the internal system.

After the breaking-off of the EU-China diplomatic relations, resulting from the Tiananmen massacre in 1989, the Strategic Partnership with China was launched in 1995 by the European Union.

This partnership as well as including trade and cooperation agreement, regarded also foreign affairs, security matters and international climate and economic challenges². What is important to note, is that for the first time from 1975 the EU asked conditionality over human rights in exchange for economic interests³. At that time the EC/EU faced an internal debate on the relations to be entertained with China. The main concerns were on the failure of the Chinese government to comply with the international provisions on the matter of human rights⁴. It was clear however that China and the member States of the EU couldn't ignore themselves, whereas their respective geopolitical influence and the Chinese permanent seat at the United Nations' Security Council since 1971.

1 Xinning Song (2010) European “models” and their implications to China: internal and external perspectives, *Rewiew of International Relations*, Vol.36, 755-775: 758-

2 European External Action Service, accessed on 29th July 2014: http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index_en.htm.

3 Möller K. (2002) “Diplomatic relations and Mutual Strategic Perceptions: China and the European Union”, *The China Quarterly*, vol. pp.15-16.

4 *Ibidem*.

In order to enable China to meet the European standards and requests, three different summits took place in 1997-1998. In that occasion China agreed – in principle – to strengthen the rule of law and promote civil, political and economic rights, through the training of lawyers and judges⁵.

The EU, the biggest and most effective promoting body for human rights, criticized the People's Republic of China through resolutions in the UN's Geneva Human Rights Commission. China, even if doing concessions⁶ and having bilateral dialog twice annually on the topic⁷, never fully implemented human rights international requests, appealing to the non-interference principle, first recalled at Bonn in 1992⁸, according to which behind the border questions are neither accepted nor implemented.

2003 represents a turning point year. In fact, the EU and China agreed on the new EU – China Strategic Partnership, based on closer coordination on a wider range of issues, on evolved political dialogue and on new sectoral agreements⁹; they agreed on the validity of shared international principles, as well as on new international threats and the tools to counter them in multilateral organizations, such as the U.N. However, the main relational problem between the two actors is that the EU and China have different expectations of each other.

On the one hand the EU, according to the objectives of the founding treaty of the European Union, wants China to follow its standards for development – democracy, rule of law, human rights, international law principles – providing support and expertise to achieve them through cooperation at local, regional and global level¹⁰.

On the other hand China is willing to follow its own model for development, sponsoring the principles of *peaceful coexistence*, against any form of interference in its internal affairs. It follows that the coun-

5 *Ibidem*: 25-26.

6 *Ibidem*, p.21.

7 European External Action Service, accessed on 29th July 2014: http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index_en.htm.

8 Möller K. (2002) "Diplomatic relations and Mutual Strategic Perceptions: China and the European Union", *The China Quarterly*, vol. p.21.

9 PE494.557v03-00.

10 COM(2003) 533.

try of the Dragon prefers political dialogues and sectoral cooperation instead of binding comprehensive agreements¹¹.

Nevertheless, took into account the reciprocal regional and global importance and development degree, the fifth and last part of the 2003 EU – China Strategic Partnership deals with the mutual consciousness of the two actors. Consciousness is of great importance: it may change the social perception European and Chinese people respectively have on each others and on the policies adopted in order to easily develop stable relations and partnerships with reciprocal strategic benefits and easily enable internal and external reforms to be implemented¹².

In order to enable that, High-Level dialogue steadily increased and a Joint Declaration on Non-proliferation and Arms Control was signed during the 7th EU – China Summit at the Hauge in December 2004. The two partners recognized each other as major strategic partners in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, deepening a comprehensive strategic partnership¹³.

On economic issues, the European Union conditioned its engagement in finding new co-operational projects on the subject, with the aim of facilitating the Chinese conformity to the WTO standards and requests.

In this occasion, the EU member states reaffirmed the importance of operational cooperation between the two international actors on combating illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, as well as on minority rights protection. During that meeting China had undertaken to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in a reasonable time. Notwithstanding, that did not yet happened¹⁴.

Furthermore, the Leaders welcomed new co-operation projects: the EU – China Information Society Project, the EU – China Managers Exchange and Training Programme, the EU – China Social Security Reform Project, and the Erasmus Mundus China Window project.

It has also to be taken into consideration that 2004 was a critical year for the European Union. May 1st 2004 the biggest enlargement from its set-up took place toward Eastern European countries. As a

11 College of Europe (2011), *EU-China Observer*, Issue 4: 3-5.

12 COM(2003) 533.

13 Council of the European Union, 15065/04 (Presse 337) 8 December 2004.

14 Human Rights Watch: <http://www.brw.org/news/2013/10/08/china-ratify-key-international-human-rights-treaty> accessed on 27th August 2014.

consequence the EU has become the largest trading partner of China, and China the second largest trading partner of the EU after the United States of America¹⁵.

The Union consisted than of 25 member states and new issues – a part the economic one – became of central importance, like the people movement and access in the European area.

In order to define the legal boundaries inside which Chinese citizens could enter the Union, the two partners signed the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on visa and related issues concerning the movement of people. Facilities on visa were conceded, enabling both embassies and consular offices to collect and share their visa catalogs to monitor people travelling over the two actors. Besides, the MoU do not apply to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, in accordance with the respective positions on the matter¹⁶.

During 2005, the 30 years anniversary of diplomatic relations between the EU and China, new Memorandums of Understanding on labor, employment, social affairs, energy and transport strategies became part of the whole set of agreements and settlements outlining their diplomatic relations. In that occasion different further questions were putted on the ground, as the lifting of the European embargo on armies in power from 1998 or the necessity to delineate their cooperation by taking advantage of regional fora¹⁷.

Steps forward had been continually made in the economic sphere since the establishment of diplomatic relations, but little progresses on human rights issues determined differentiation on the single European states' relations with China. China, in fact, does not consider the European Union as a single interlocutor, even on economic matters.

This can be seen by the following Figure 1, showing the different rates of export to China entertained by France, Germany and the United Kingdom during the period 1981-2005. This three examples show three different "European" approaches to China: since 1955 – year of the establishment of the first German trade office – Germany has deep economic ties with China and supported its development pro-

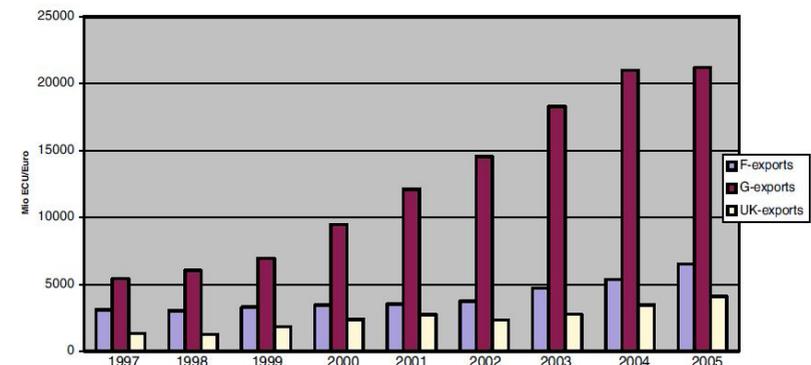
15 Chinese Government's Official Web Portal, China, EU deepen strategic partnership in 2005, http://www.gov.cn/misc/2005-12/23/content_135107.htm.

16 Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione Europea, L.83/14 del 20.03.2004.

17 Joint Statement of the 8th Eu-China Summit. Brussels 05 September 2005. IP/05/1091: 1-2.

viding the highest European 1995-2004 FDI's percentage, backing-up the Chinese entrance in the WTO in 2001; France and the UK went to a different way during the period considered. Even if with differences in the degree of involvement, the two EU member States entertained less export towards China then Germany did. The reasons behind it are mainly historical for the UK, who tried to democratize its former colony, but his answer resulted in closing the door for economic exchange and investment. The tensions between France and China instead are related to the French willingness to send special jets aircraft to Taiwan. However, since late 1990s France improved its economic relations with China¹⁸.

Figure 1 Individual state exports to China



Source: Glen C., Murgu R. (2007): 341

The year later the 30th anniversary of Sino-European diplomatic relations, was based on climate issues and sustainable development. They agreed to further strengthen the dialogue and cooperation in this regard, binding their actions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and committing themselves to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism, in addition to the start of cooperation on *near-zero emission technology*¹⁹.

18 Glen C., Murgu R. (2007) EU-China relations: balancing political challenges with economic opportunities, Springer-Verlag: 340÷ 343.

19 Council of the European Union, Ninth EU-China Summit Helsinki 9 September

In the Helsinki joint statement, the EU – China leaders smoothed the way for a future cooperation in education and exchanges agreement, through the establishment of the Chinese Government Scholarship Program (EU Window) to develop a greater exchange of young people to encourage future deeper cooperation between the two partners²⁰.

In May 2011, President van Rompuy, President Hu and Premier Wen agreed to establish a third pillar of EU – China cooperation on “*People - to - People*” issues, setting-up 2012 as the *People - to - People* intercultural *Dialogue* year to be implemented through a high level dialogue to enhance education, cultural contacts and expand people – to – people exchanges and relations for a mutual partners understanding²¹.

The background of this Dialogue was communicated through the 2007 Joint Statement to enhance cooperation in the cultural sector, having seen the “strong convergence of views on the role of culture in our societies and in a globalizing world”²². The High Level People- to - People Dialogue (HPPD) is the overarching mechanism for all the EU – China joint initiatives, from foreign language teaching initiatives, to scholarships and conferences and meeting at high level.

Dialogue on culture, after those on economy and trade and strategic issues, represents the third pillar of the Sino- European high level dialogues; including also cultural matters in the diplomatic relations meant to show the grade of (questionable) responsible partnership achieved.

The last meaningful summit entertained by the two actors was held in November 2013. During the 16th EU – China summit, the leaders agreed on the adoption of the EU – China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, covering peace and security, prosperity, sustainable development, and people- to- people exchanges issues²³.

Under the topic of peace and security, the crucial importance of multilateralism to coordinate effective responses to new global threats was stressed. The EU – China High Level Strategic Dialogue became

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2006 – Joint Statement. 12642/06 (Presse 249): 6.

20 *Ibidem*: 10-11.

21 European Union –Factsheet: EU–China Summit, Beijing, 14 February 2012: 2.

22 Council of the European Union, tenth EU–China Summit Beijing, 28 November 2007–Joint Statement.16070/07 (Presse 279): 11.

23 EU–China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation: downloadable at <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/documents/news/20131123.pdf>.

a further tool to strengthen cooperation in multilateral fora, such as consultations on regional strategies to be implemented in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America, or to counter transnational crimes and terrorism. In this issue was then underlined the importance to strengthen cooperation on police training.

On prosperity, the two actors agreed to include investment protection and market access to a wider, simpler and more and comprehensive EU – China Investment Agreement. The agreement replaces the bilateral investment treaties existing between China and single EU Member States²⁴ that represents one of the reasons why China perceives Europe not as a single actor. Under the investment section was agreed upon the research on new method to financially cooperate and to facilitate Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) foundation. In particular, the European Union and China agreed to try to bring the volume of trade between them to one trillion dollars. Intellectual property rights, transparency, fairness and financial stability are entrusted to the ongoing WTO programs²⁵.

The third macro issue on sustainable development constitutes the biggest one. This section comprehends ten subsections: Science, technology and innovation; space and aerospace; energy; urbanization; climate change and environmental protection; ocean; regional policy; social progress; public policy and cooperation on global development. In each of the subsections the two partners agreed to strength cooperation in order to reach the requested standards by multiple International Organizations and fora.

In the space and aerospace subsection, EU and China reached the agreement on satellite information exchange, which could affect security matters. Security concerns are also expressed in the follow subsection, the energy one. The European invitation to China to join the Energy Charter Conference on the topic of nuclear energy, denote the will by Europe to bind the country of the dragon in an international cooperation for the relative legislation. For that purpose the European – Chinese Clean Energy Centre was created²⁶.

On the issue of climate change and environmental protection the

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24 *Ibidem*: 5.

25 EU–China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation: 5÷7.

26 *Ibidem*: 10.

parties agreed to implement with effectiveness the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol through complementary initiatives. The EU will also try to facilitate the Chinese cooperation on low carbon emission for sustainable development by means of market mechanism and dialogue and exchange of experience on regulatory matters, standards and research.

Turning to the public policy question, the EU – China Public Policy Dialogue Mechanism entered into force. This is considered to be a meaningful and long-term platform to enable the public policy exchange promotion on the topic of sustainable development.

As already mentioned, the last section of the EU– China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation deals with the People - to - People Exchanges. Exchanges are considered to be *an essential vector for peace* with clear subsequent positive implication for the economic sphere. The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the EU – China High Level People – to – People Dialogue are intended to be the basic frameworks within which preserve and promote cultural understanding and cultural differences simultaneously. China and the single member States of the European Union are strongly encouraged to further establish cultural centers to give a boost in this sense. Cultural understanding on a long term period is reachable particularly if cultural exchanges involve young people and it is for this reason that EU and China decided to work together on the EU – China Youth Policy Dialogue and the EU – China Symposia on Youth Work Development. Students exchange is facilitated under different programs such as the Erasmus+ and the Overseas Programs²⁷.

2011 the European Union and China signed a joint declaration on youth, for the mutual recognition of degrees and diplomas, the support of language teaching and the preservation of the diversities among a deeper understanding of the two cultures. Visible results in the higher education sector created the basis for a further cooperation in jointly run flagship schools, like the China – EU School of Law. This high level School consists of a consortium of fifteen European and Chinese top universities, with specialization opportunities in the fields of specialized European programs for development, international and comparative law. In the field of economics the China – EU International Business School ranks 17th in the top business universities worldwi-

27 *Ibidem*: 15.

de. Reflecting the high degree of economic exchanges and path on the Renewable and Clean Energy, an institute for specialization on the topic was then created after the two former schools²⁸. The willingness of the Chinese people to go abroad and learn other culture, while letting know their own, is evident if looking at the data concerning students' participation in the Erasmus programs. China became the first country in terms of students' participation to the Erasmus Window and second in university participation for the organization of joint masters and doctoral programs²⁹.

On people mobility, the EU – China Mobility and Migration Dialogue was launched in 2013. It is the continuation and the evolvement of the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding; It represent the tool through which facilitate the exchange of citizens. In addition to this cooperation, visits with touristic intents are managed by the 2013 decided upon EU – China Tourism Dialogue, which contemplate regular meeting to ensure a safer protection of growing flows of tourists³⁰.

This first paragraph briefly dealt with the diplomatic relations between the European Union and China. By the end of the Cold War that influenced the relations between the two actors – before the starting of the Nixon Triangular Diplomacy there were no official relations between the European major Countries and China – great strides forward have been made. The European Union tried to make China comply with the internationally accepted standards for internal reforms as well as external cooperation on different and increasing number of topics during the nearly 40 years of diplomatic relations. Both actors are internationally bound by other multilateral organizations requesting compliance to international standards on varied issues. As stressed here, the first cooperation ever entertained between the two actors was on economic matters; nowadays it is so stressed to comprehend involvement at local – social level through the exchange of their own cultures.

The evolvement of the EU – China strategic partnership may also be understood as the willingness by the country of the Dragon to emulate

28 European Union cooperation section. Future European Education Strategies: 3-4.

29 *Ibidem*: 4.

30 EU–China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation: 16.

the European models for domestic political and social development³¹. Comparative regional integration studies were conducted by Chinese from the late 1990s, since the two partners have similar geographical characteristics: the European Union counts 28 member States with a population of more than 500 million and China has 30 provinces and autonomy regions and a population that significantly exceeds the European one. The European Union is perceived by the Chinese scholars as the result of an integration process for independent sovereign states to become a single sovereign or legal entity. The comprehensive political integration is understood as resulting by the economic integration; the political tools can be then utilized to further promote the economic advancement³². But even if the mode of some Nordic or Baltic European party politics models could be considered as examples for the Chinese internal reforms, there is still a long way to go.

Culture shall be considered as a strategic tool. It is indeed thanks to what is defined cultural diplomacy that China and the EU member States influence each other on their reciprocal perception.

1.2 – The concept of Cultural Diplomacy

According to Joseph Nye cultural diplomacy is *the ability to persuade through culture, values and ideas, as opposed to 'hard power', which conquers or coerces through military might*³³.

Cultural diplomacy is therefore a fundamental political tool through which a central government forwards to the international arena an image of the country or nation. In the era of globalization, cultural diplomacy is of central importance and a harmony among different cultures is to be achieved by international dialog and promotion, without

31 Xinning Song (2010) European “models” and their implications to China: internal and external perspectives, *Review of International Relations*, Vol.36, 755-775: 758.

32 *Ibidem*.

33 Institute for Cultural Diplomacy: http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_culturaldiplomacy.

forgetting national political- economic interests. It may be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio- cultural cooperation or promote national interests.

In practice, cultural diplomacy is the application of all models practiced either by individual, community, state or institutional actors with the aim to facilitate and improve relations and collaboration between cultures. In the models can be included cultural exchange programs, international delegations and sports competitions. However, cultural diplomacy is not new in the field of diplomacy. Its intrinsic value is reflected by the implementation of 5 principles: respect and recognition of cultural diversity and heritage; global intercultural dialogue; justice, equality and interdependence; protection of human rights; global peace and stability³⁴.

Having said that, it is important to underline that thanks or due to an increasing globalization, studies on cultural diplomacy evolved just by the last twenty years³⁵; the facilitations of information technologies permitted indeed an easier and pervasive share of the aforementioned principles even by the increasingly accessible Social Networking Services (SNS) all around the world.

Turning back to Joseph Nye definition and thought on cultural diplomacy, it is of central importance in the soft power of Public diplomacy. The concept of public diplomacy was first defined by Edward Murrow in 1963. More than defining it he gave instead a description of what it does: public diplomacy is the interaction with both governments and non- governmental individuals and organizations³⁶. It could be understood as the purpose to influence opinion in target countries to make it easier for the national Government, companies or other organizations to achieve their aim³⁷. In an ever more globalized world the perception others have on one country is fundamental, if considering the international consensus over international policies or matter of international concern. Former communist states and developing

34 *Ibidem*.

35 Hwajung Kim (2011) Cultural Diplomacy as the means of soft power in an information Age: 7.

36 Foreign Policy Centre.(2002) Leonard M. et al. Public Diplomacy: 1.

37 Leonard M. (2002) Public Diplomacy, London, The Foreign Policy Centre: 1.

countries are learning how to better perform public policy, since it was not part of their national- international policy. They did not pay much attention neither on the way stories are received abroad or on the building of long – term relations between the government (or embassy) and international (non) state actors. To implement this aspect of public diplomacy a national government should work through foreign correspondents to make them highlight the national engagements³⁸.

Public diplomacy is composed by three dimensions – political/ military, economic and societal/ cultural. The *modus operandi* is the same in all three spheres, but the implementing time between them is different. The last dimension of public diplomacy is the most long-term one. It results in news management on daily basis, strategic communication and relationship building³⁹; it can have different forms, governmental and non-governmental and can have positive or negative effects on the aim it is directed to. Not only, some of the activities related to culture generate, additionally, an analogous economic impact to the one produced by other sectors of the economy. Culture is, besides an indispensable element for social cohesion and the reconstruction of an identity, an economic sector important than any other productive sector of society. The economic transactions that take place in the deepest heart of culture generate positive economic effects such as learning and knowledge. That is, the cultural sector contributes to development from the social and identity sectors, such as from the economic ones, at both national and international levels.

The kind of diplomacy of interest in this paper makes particularly use of scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, and conferences in order to aloud people to share their personal understanding in what the foreign culture consist of.

Cultural diplomacy requires special planning and administration and is a topic of special interest not only for developing countries, but also for developed ones. For example, the U.S. made a large use of cultural diplomacy particularly during the Cold War era, when the promotion of the western values was one of the primary objectives of the American foreign policy. The promotion of values was carried out thanks also to the creations of American Centers and library in strate-

38 Foreign Policy Centre.(2002) Leonard M. et al. Public Diplomacy: 2-6.

39 *Ibidem*: 12÷ 18.

gic sites, i.e. Ankara, Belgrade, and Islamabad⁴⁰.

Another example of cultural diplomacy is the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme. 1987 Japan lunched this program, which is administered in concert with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Its aim is to promote grassroots exchanges between Japan and other 40 nations worldwide and represents one of the largest exchange programs. The participants in the project are offered to serve in local government organizations, as well as private junior and senior high schools and positively succeed to integrate in the local communities⁴¹.

The High Level People - to - People Dialogue described in the previous paragraph is a concrete example of strategic coordination soft power in cultural diplomacy initiatives. Nevertheless, activities like this are not enough to develop an effective national Cultural Diplomacy Strategy.

The promotion of one country's culture has to be carried out not only outside its own borders via bi-multilateral agreements, but also inside it; Copyright, censorship law, education, media policy should all be part of the cultural strategy⁴².

The creation and updating of national's and embassy's websites are manifestations of the culture of a country. Being in a world "without borders" it is easy for one person to lose his sense of belonging to one national cultural identity. Thus, creating national websites, events, offering advance training and professional development opportunities and so on, enables people to meet and understand their culture and subsequently share their own identity with a third foreign actor⁴³.

China is fully aware of the importance of soft power and in particularly of cultural diplomacy. Over the past years and partly still nowadays, the People's Republic of China was in fact a victim of ideological estrangement and mistrust.

In order to better understand what the Chinese culture and subsequently its cultural diplomacy consist of, it is important to first understand the Chinese identity. The Chinese national identity is closely

40 Finn H.K. (2003) The case of Cultural Diplomacy: Engaging Foreign Audiences. Foreign Affairs, vol. 82/6: 1-2.

41 ET Program: <http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/introduction/index.html>.

42 Hwajung Kim (2011) Cultural Diplomacy as the means of soft power in an information Age: 12-13.

43 *Ibidem*: 14-15.

linked to its past experience. What happened in the past and what accumulated as experience shape the identity of China. National pride certainly has its place in the Chinese identity. According to the Chinese people, a country's cultural greatness determines its power in the world. Therefore, a state with superior cultural achievements is entitled to esteem and influence⁴⁴.

During the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese President Hu Jintao stressed the need of promoting the Chinese cultural creativity as part of the Chinese soft power in order to guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests and inspire the enthusiasm of the Chinese people for progress⁴⁵. In other words, China, according to Yiwei Wang⁴⁶, is seeking the road for its peaceful development, that is to get the outside world accept its rising power⁴⁷, by cultural attraction. A new Division for Public Diplomacy was founded in 2004 under the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the same year the Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister became operative. The strategy of China in the promotion of national cultural diplomacy makes use of different tools in different fields of interest.

First, China undertook the process of White Papers released on a wide range of topics, as energy and defense policy, human rights, rule of law, in order to make Chinese policies more transparent and understandable to an English speaking audience, to contrast the alienation in which the country was.

Second, China is spreading music, movies, religious forums, Chinese cultural products in general, exchange programs and cultural institutes and university all over the world. In 2002, the Chinese government started to think about setting up institutions to promote Chinese language teaching abroad. From 2004 – year of the establishment of the ever first Confucius Institute in Seoul – China have nowadays more than 500

44 BICCS ASIA PAPER (2007) In the eyes of the Dragon. Chinese Perceptions of the EU as a global actor. Vol.1(4): 6.

45 Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on Oct. 15, 2007 accessible at: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm#7>.

46 Yiwei Wang is associate professor in the Centre for American Studies and assistant dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai.

47 Yiwei Wang (2008)Public diplomacy and the rise of chinese soft power. ANNALS, AAPSS, 616: 264 -267.

Confucius Institutes in 108 countries around the globe⁴⁸. The importance of these institutes resides in the formation of important platforms for direct interpersonal communication and exchange. Besides, China, with more than 1.3 billion people population is potentially able to send out an incredible number of Chinese language teachers and expand the number of the Confucius Institutes over a narrowed period of time⁴⁹.

As already stated, cultural institutes are a special representation of China's soft power which is an important contribution to enforce the good image of China internationally; the support these institutes give to the economic Chinese presence in Europe is evident if the teaching of the Chinese language to French employers to the Chinese telecoms company ZTE in Poitiers is taken into consideration. Moreover, the readings utilized are those which reflect the Beijing's perspective and the language thought is that chosen by the Beijing's government and not by Taiwan⁵⁰. All over the world HSK, the Chinese TOEFL language certification, increased of about 40 – 50 per cent. Language attractiveness is understood as the way to access the cultural attractiveness of the country. Furthermore, the Chinese academic training is promoted by official statistics revealing that former students in China cover now ministerial level position and that a great number of foreign students in China covered primary positions in embassies in China or are now experts of the Chinese external relations⁵¹.

A further example of the effectiveness of the Chinese cultural diplomacy can be represented by the European edition of the most relevant Chinese newspaper China Daily or the establishment of dedicated editions and sections on China by the most considerable European newspapers⁵².

Third, China hosted cultural mega-events, like the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. The function of

48 Confucius institute: http://www.chinesecio.com/m/cio_wci/.

49 Wang (2008)Public diplomacy and the rise of chinese soft power. ANNALS, AAPSS, 616: 264.

50 Survival (2006) Gill B., Huang Y. Sources and limits of the Chinese soft power Vol.48 no.2, pp. 17-36: 2.

51 Survival (2006) Gill B., Huang Y. Sources and limits of the Chinese soft power Vol.48 no.2, pp. 17-36.

52 ECFR Godement F, Parelo-Plesner J., Richard A. Policy brief "The Scramble for Europe" 2011/37: 2.

these events is clearly that of showing the advancement of the capability of the country. For the first time, China agreed to let foreigners see its internal organization. As direct consequence, it implies that the international recognition of the country would benefit from it.

Fourth, the country of the Dragon's experience of a rapid economic and political development makes China attractive for foreign investments. Moreover, the huge presence of Chinese policemen involved in humanitarian peacekeeping missions under the United Nations mandate, promote the image of China as a helping country to rely upon in situation of emergency⁵³. In the first part of the 2000s china has dispatched more peacekeepers than any other permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council and more than any other member of NATO⁵⁴.

Furthermore, China posed itself as promoter of international regional organizations, like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The multilateral body, funded in 1996, focuses on common political, economic and security issues among the following Asian countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and China⁵⁵.

One problem for the Chinese government to make a long term strategy to practice public diplomacy is the deficiency of a single national framework working on public diplomacy. The national diplomatic system is indeed fragmented and composed by many overlapping departments and groups, each deciding its own way to put it in practice⁵⁶. The national government attempt is to be looked at as a stable, reliable and responsible partner in internal and external policies, as in the economic sphere.

The presence of Confucius Institutes – the national leader in expanding the national cultural influence – in the entire Europe is impressive. After America with 531 centers, the European continent is the second with the major concentration of Confucius Institutes: 298. In every single state of the European continent there is at least one Confucius institute like in Albania, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Norway, Macedonia, Slovakia

53 *Ibidem*.

54 Survival (2006) Gill B., Huang Y. Sources and limits of the Chinese soft power Vol.48 no.2, pp. 17-36: 22.

55 *Ibidem*.

56 ECFR Godement F., Parello-Plesner J., Richard A. Policy brief “The Scramble for Europe” 2011/37: 5.

and Iceland. Among Western European Countries the highest concentration of institutes is in the United Kingdom with 115 centers. Further centers are present also in Serbia (2), Ukraine (6) and Belarus (6).

The considerable number of Confucius Institutes in every single country in Europe, being it part of the European Union or not, is not surprisingly if we consider that the Chinese presence and investments in the Old Continent are among the highest in the world. This is the topic of the following first paragraph of Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

2.1 Chinese presence in Eastern Europe

The Chinese presence in Europe and in particular in Eastern Europe is not anew. Even if the first official document regulating the movement of Chinese travelers in Europe is the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding signed by the parties in 2003, informal exchanges and visits were a common practice by the late 19th century and by the beginning of the last century there were recognizable Chinese communities characterized by the home culture. People coming from China came particularly by the provinces of Hong Kong, Guandong, and Zhejiang; while the first province was one of the most advanced in the 19th century China, the last two were among the poorest⁵⁷. At the beginning the communities were concentrated in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and their support to these European societies and economies were relevant, particularly during the First World War when people were recruited to dig trenches. Furthermore, their distribution reflected in the beginning the former colonial ties: people coming from the province of Hong Kong were mostly concentrated in the United Kingdom; people coming from Indo-China in France⁵⁸.

The 2013 analysis of the European China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN) highlights that Europe has become an important and attractive destination for Chinese migrants particularly since the end of the 1980s. The concentration of the Chinese presence trend accelerated in a positive way both inwards and outwards Europe, making of Europe the second region for the faster rate growth after Africa.

The presence is also high variegated in relation to countries and

57 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 7.

58 *Ibidem* 16.

sub-regions, as for statistic accuracy, as for different opportunities in investment sectors and political ties on site.

The push and pull factors determining Chinese migration over Europe are diversified. First of all it has to be taken into account the growing of international trade between China and Europe, possible thanks to the inclusion of it in more comprehensive political agreements among the two actors. It has been shown in the first chapter of this paper how the European enlargement in 2004 determined also the implementation of extremely important facilitations on the matter of visa requirements in regards to China.

Other determinants regard internal Chinese factors, like the strong growth of income and consumption in an unequal distributive national economy or the ever more intensive internationalization of high education⁵⁹.

The Chinese internal economy was substantially reformed during the 1990s. These reforms modified not only the entire structure and dynamics of the national economy, but also the Chinese approach to the question of human rights respect on the labor place, thanks to the establishment of new industrial institutions and law⁶⁰.

Some small and medium size state-owned enterprises (SOE) became private or joint venture. Therefore, it has been experienced a rural – to – urban migration by the beginning of the new millennium; the inability to absorb this internal migration caused the increase of the international one. Interconnection and interdependence between EU and China remain high. China increased of 6.6 times its investment funds over Europe during the period 2005-2009 bringing the investments from US\$ 500 million to US\$ 3 billion⁶¹. In addition to pure investment funds, China had strong interest over the past few years to buy national bonds in European countries, like Hungary for Eastern Europe and Spain, Greece and Italy for Western Europe.

The number of Chinese students coming to Europe has substantially growth. Around 200.000 Chinese students were in Europe in 2010, but these data are however non accurate. It is more probable that youth

59 *Ibidem*: 20.

60 Gahan et al. The Diffusion of HR Practices in China on Workplaces and Organizational Outcomes. ILRRReview (2012) Vol. 65 Num. 3: 651-652.

61 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 22-23.

students who experienced a study period in one European country will come back to invest or work there⁶².

The next part of the paragraph will deal with the presence of China in the Central and Eastern Europe, in terms of people present in the sub-region and of investments that China has and propounds. Chinese presence over these countries dates back to the beginning of the 1990s and reached impressive data, thanks to facilities in transportation – migrants made particularly use of the Trans – Siberian convoy – and in job opportunities⁶³.

When dealing with the Chinese presence in South and Eastern Europe, it has to be reminded what the countries of new entrance in the European Union and those of possible future memberships represents for them an economic opportunity to develop their economy without conditionality – instead imposed by the EU- and for China a solution either a way to circumvent the anti-dumping regulations posed by Europe and a potential unexploited Eurasian area for business⁶⁴. The top three host countries in Central and Eastern Europe are Romania, Serbia and Hungary. Together these three countries have attracted 80 per cent of the Chinese firms in the whole Europe. Generally Chinese investors prefer to concentrate their enterprises or shops in a small number of cities⁶⁵.

In 2011 Bulgaria the concentration of 9.000 Chinese was distributed mostly in the capital Sofia and in the surrounding area, thanks to the wide economic opportunities the country offers in comparison with other more advanced European states. Due to the new Chinese interest on tourism in Eastern Europe, new opportunities in Chinese medicines and agricultural production were envisaged for the immigrants. Moreover, in February 2011 the Bulgarian Litex Motors company started a joint production with the Chinese Great Wall Motor Co in low cost cars. This joint production enables china to gain the expertise and technological sophistication to enter the Western car market⁶⁶.

62 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 25-26.

63 Eurozine: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/1999-10-18-nyiri-en.html>.

64 CSIS: China's new balkan strategy, Central Europe Watch, Vol. 1(2) August 2011: 1-2.

65 The Antwerpen Forum. Euro – China Investment Report 2013/2014: 2.

66 *Ibidem*: 2.

The Romanian government in the 2000s strongly encouraged Chinese entrepreneurs and workers to come to work in Romania and set up new economic opportunities. The internal situation of the country showed shortages in labor workers, due to emigration over other European countries. China answered to the Romanian request with 2.6 billion of bilateral trade and the opening in 2011 of the largest Chinatown in the Balkans, with some 1240 stores trading exclusively Chinese products⁶⁷.

Hungary represented a top destination for the Chinese migrants. Its pivotal role is a consequence of the visa control relaxation policy of the late 1980s and the historical political links between them⁶⁸. From 1989 to 1991 the Chinese population in Hungary grew from zero to around 40.000 and the migrants directed to Hungary came from the urban – coastal zones, were educated above average and motivated to better their social status⁶⁹. Due to difficulties in receiving so an high number of people facilities on visa were restricted and in 2011 Chinese presence in Hungary reached 18.000 people involved in 30 markets and with an annual income of \$200.000⁷⁰. The social spectrum of the migrants is variegated and so the business entertained in the EU country. The giant in Chinese telecoms equipment Huawei opened in 2009 a European supply centre with the prospective to open a new EU logistic center in the country⁷¹. Even if Hungary is member of the European Union since 2004 the standards for the monetary integration and the adoption of the single currency have not been reached yet. The subsequent monetary independence permitted the Prime Minister Orban to accept a € 1 billion loan from China for the constructions of dedicated cargo railroads crossing Hungary and circumventing Budapest⁷².

The concentration of Chinese people in the Baltic is overall under the thousand for each country and the economic activities carried out

67 CSIS: China's new balkan strategy, Central Europe Watch, Vol. 1(2) August 2011: 2.

68 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 19-20.

69 Eurozine: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/1999-10-18-nyiri-en.html>.

70 Migration Dialogue: https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=878_0_4_0.

71 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 33- 34.

72 EIR (2013) Andromidas D. China Develops Balkan Infrastructure that the European Union won't build: 39.

have not a significant impact in the local economies.

Even if in Poland there is not such a high concentration of Chinese migrants – it reached just 2.000 people – the national government putted into force measures to encourage people inflow. In fact the government announced plans for illegal migrants' amnesty to Chinese people who have continuously been in the country from December 2007 to January 2010⁷³.

Facilitations to the Chinese permanence in a European country are not new phenomena. Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom offered amnesty to illegal Chinese migrants in the past. The particularity of the polish Government decision to facilitate Chinese permanence in the country resides in the benefits Poland and other countries can gain from it. Since the start of the economic crisis and even before China proposed itself as investor in different economic fields- infrastructures, new technologies and renewable energy – in order to diversify its exports and safeguards its national budget reserves estimated to be at around € 3 trillion against a loss of value due to volatile currency markets⁷⁴.

The 2012 China-Central Europe-Poland Economic Forum held in Warsaw had the purpose for China to looking for new investment opportunities- of maximum \$ 10 billion of credit line stretching- in the Central European region. Prime ministers of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovakia and Hungary, alongside around 800 delegates were given the opportunity to correct imbalances of trade between Europe and Asia's strongest economic power⁷⁵. A year later the second economic cooperation forum took place. The forum can be understood as an example of the Chinese soft power. China founded its economic investments opportunities in the region, particularly in Poland, since this country has a special internal regulation for investors which other countries lack. In the short time span of one year of investments, China, offering the prospect of future possible investments in the homeland in the building market, is considered to be by the polish government an excellent partner, even if the framework inside

73 Latham K., Wu B. ECRAN 2013 Chinese Immigration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications: 36;

74 ISPI Giusti S. China: an emerging stakeholder in Eastern Europe. January 2013, No. 153: 3;

75 Spiegel online: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/with-10-billion-dollar-credit-line-china-deepens-presence-in-central-europe-a-833811.html>;

which the Chinese – European cooperation on economics is far more difficult⁷⁶.

In the field of clean energy, in order to address the European objectives of ensuring affordable access to energy, sustainable development and security to supply, Central and Eastern European countries were asked to meet the regulatory standards of the European Union by 2015. The problem inside these Countries is that the infrastructures utilized for the transformation and distribution of energy are obsolete and the needed refurbishment costly. Investments in this sense would be highly rewarding, i.e. Albania uses just 35% of the national hydro-potential to furnish the 90% of its internal electric demand⁷⁷.

Chinese investors proposed themselves in the region. In Romania different plans on green energy investments were formulated for a total investment of € 2.3 billion. €1 billion was laid out by the China National Electric Equipment Corporation to thermal power plant; the remaining € 1.3 billion is direct to the construction of a hydroelectric power station. In the plans is not included the fund to make operational two nuclear reactors at the Cernavodă nuclear power plant. Other projects involve also Bulgaria. China promoted talks between Bulgaria and Russia for the creation of a second Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), so that China can subsidize it. Further action in Bulgaria will comprehend a solar power plant. These are just few examples of the investments proposed by China in the field of green energy production.

Wondering why China is investing so much in renewable energy one could arrive to the strategic gains that in so doing the country of the Dragon would make. China is building up huge green energy projects; what the major Western powers are not doing so intensively. In a future possible case in which the gas-prone market will not be convenient anymore, China can propose themselves as major producer and exporter of green energy⁷⁸. Chinese investments and proposals in the European area do not stop here.

In occasion of the Meeting of Heads of Government of China and the Central and Eastern Europe countries held in Romania in November 2013 China offered the those countries increased investment and

76 European Economic Congress 2014: <http://www.eecpoland.eu/news/2nd-economic-cooperation-forum-european-union-china,194043.html>.

77 CSIS: China's new balkan strategy, Central Europe Watch, Vol. 1(2) August 2011: 4.

78 *Ibidem*: 7.

trade volumes, as well as increased cooperation in the fields of science, technology, people to people exchanges and infrastructure development as stated in the Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation⁷⁹. One of the highlights of the document is the designation of 2014 as the China – Central and Eastern Europe countries Investment and Business Promotion Year⁸⁰.

In order to increase commercial exchanges with this European region, China is currently involved in infrastructural projects that could provide control over the distributional channels. The sites individualized for this purpose are the port of Piraeus in Greece and the port of Rijeka in Croatia, which is the deepest Adriatic and Mediterranean post that would permit the docking of 18.000 containers ships⁸¹.

For the first one plans agreements for € 3.4 billion to upgrade and run part of the port in Greece were signed in 2008. The Chinese aim was to cut to one third the shipping time from Shanghai to Central and Eastern Europe, avoiding in this way the risks related to piracy in the Gulf of Aden. The shipping time dropped to 12 days from the initial 36 employed and the sailing costs also dropped from 167 US\$ to US\$ 111 per tons. The gains from the port can be of greater extent if a dedicated railroads use from Greece to the rest of Europe would be possible. Plans for *Priority Corridors* were already made by the European Union in 1994 during the second Pan European Transport Conference, but the economic restraints and political instability in the region, set it aside. The original project was made up by five corridors that would have traversed the entire Balkans and reached Bulgaria, as well as Vienna and Prague^{82 83}.

The intrinsic advantages from the construction of these corridors are huge not only for China, but also for Greece itself. The Greek agricultural sector is currently underdeveloped, because of a lack in tran-

79 For detailed further infos: <http://gov.ro/en/news/the-bucharest-guidelines-for-cooperation-between-china-and-central-and-eastern-european-countries>.

80 EIAS EU_Asia at a glance. Turcsáni R. January 2014 Central and Eastern Europe's courtship with China: Trojan horse within the EU?: 3.

81 EPRS - Chinese investment in the EU. Briefing 140512REV1.

82 CSIS: China's new balkan strategy, Central Europe Watch, Vol. 1(2) August 2011: 2-3.

83 EIR (2013) Andromidas D. China Develops Balkan Infrastructure that the European Union won't build: 33÷35.

sportation facilities permitting to send fresh products within a range of 24/ 48 hours. Willing or not, the Chinese proposal represent the only possible for low interests rate loans at the moment of writing.

The reasons why China is investing so much and with a so high rate in Central and Eastern Europe lies in different factors, such as low taxes, military technologies and well educated workforce with far lower wages in comparison to those in Western Europe. Furthermore, Chinese enterprises are interested to invest in the European zone, to acquire brands and know-how of the companies to use them at the time of sale of the products. Besides, it is not of small deal the opportunity to easily access the palatable single market of the European Union and the 2010 established Custom Union among Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

2.2 European perception of China

The European perception over the Chinese population and government actions in Europe changed particularly in the last decades⁸⁴, but it is still mainly path- dependent. Problems in the past were particularly concerned with the fairness of investments by private companies thought to be controlled by the Chinese Government⁸⁵. According to the European Institute for Asian Studies, European politicians are just suspicious over China, due to a lack of information about the Chinese public statements and approaches over the Europe zone⁸⁶.

An additional problem for the European countries was- and still is in part- the far limited access opportunity to the Chinese market: according to the WTO Chinese accession in 2001, foreign investment in

84 Interesting polls on the evolution and state of the European perception over China at available on PEW Research Institute and BBC Global SPAN/PIPA Institute websites. Data were not included in the paper due to a lack of statistics on the countries concerned in this paper.

85 ECFR Godement F, Parello-Plesner J., Richard A. Policy brief “The Scramble for Europe” 2011/37: 5.

86 EIAS (2014) EU-Asia at a glance. Central and Eastern Eurioe’s courtship with China: Trojan horse within the EU?: 5.

Chinese strategic sectors were limited to the 20% of capital, percentage further limited by subsequent change in legislation. Moreover, sector like cinematography is almost closed to external influence: it is possible to import just 20 films per year produced by foreigners⁸⁷.

Chinese people were able to adjust their ethnic economy in order to meet demand of Chinese products and services by the growing tourist groups and delegations from China, as well as integrating themselves in the local societies. The Chinese population in Europe is nevertheless well known for its propensity to move from one country to another if it helps to improve business or employment opportunities and to be prone to fulfill any job opportunities. It is particularly true for Chinese people living in Europe, as there is no need of visa control inside the Schengen treaty area.

These positive trends can be further confirmed by the second- third-generation of Chinese people. They are educated by the European host communities and can understand and speak the local language; in addition they could feel themselves more as European than as Chinese. Even the average Chinese migrants are now far more educated in comparison with migrants of decades ago; they cover managerial positions and can speak different languages⁸⁸. From the Chinese point of view the growing partnership relations with China indicated the EU’s recognition of China’s growing economic and political impact in the world. Moreover, the fact that European Head of Governments receive their respective Chinese counterpart is understood by China to have reached the same level of diplomacy entertained with the United States, Russia and Japan⁸⁹.

Still there are some clashes in the field of international relations among the two actors. Criticism over Chinese foreign policy effects the overall European consideration in its regards. The long-standing problems of the respect of human rights and of the consideration for the interest of the economic aid recipient country, leave space for the worsening of the European perception⁹⁰.

87 *Ibidem*: 6.

88 Nagy D. Fiery Dragons: Chinese Communities in Central and Eastern Europe, with special focus on Hungary and Romania. Religions & Cristianity in Today’s China. Vol. 1, 2011, No.1, pp. 71-86: 72.

89 BICCS ASIA PAPER (2007) In the eyes of the Dragon. Chinese Perceptions of the EU as a global actor. Vol.1(4): 3.

90 D’Hooghe, I. the rise of China’s publis diplomacy. The Hague, NIIR. Clingendael Di-

A change on the European perception towards China at leadership level resulted from the 2012 China-Central Europe-Poland Economic Forum. The then representative of the German Council on Foreign Affairs stated that the returns from the economic partnership between China and Central European companies were relevant for both parties. European skepticism over China has no reason to be in the globalization era⁹¹.

However, divergent opinions were expressed after the 2013 summit between China, who aimed to increase its investments in the region to \$ 45.5 billion and 16 Central and Eastern European countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Concerns were expressed because in so doing China is putting some of these countries in a bad mood, since they are members of the European Union and have to respect economic and strategic lines reflecting that of the Union⁹².

China receives by the international community growing positive comments on its reliability on market, more than Europe can in this period of financial crisis and public austerity policy. Europe however has become the most favorite destination of the Chinese investments with more than 7.000 owned enterprises in the European continent.

From the other side of the coin most Central and Eastern European Countries' population still have a negative perception of the Chinese categorizing them as criminals, mafia member, human smuggling or yellow peril⁹³.

The arson in May 2010 of the Red Dragon Market Complex (Complexul Comercial Dragonul Roșu) situated in the outskirts of Bucharest represent a controversial example. The shopping centre, the second biggest in the whole Central and Eastern Europe area – the first is situated in Hungary – was part of a Chinatown project owned by the

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plomacy papers No. 12: 36.

91 Spiegel online: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/with-10-billion-dollar-credit-line-china-deepens-presence-in-central-europe-a-833811.html>.

92 Die Deutsche Welle: <http://www.dw.de/china-becoming-more-active-in-eastern-europe/a-17254708>.

93 Nagy D. Fiery Dragons: Chinese Communities in Central and Eastern Europe, with special focus on Hungary and Romania. Religions & Cristianity in Today's China. Vol. 1, 2011, No.1, pp. 71-86: 78.

Niro Group. The nature of this group is unclear. It seems to be related to local criminality and corruption and tensions over payment of taxes between Chinese entrepreneurs and the Niro leadership emerged during the investigations. Public media and opinion went against the Chinese presence in Romania that just subtracts funds and job places otherwise invested on the Romanian citizens. It is also true that the current Romanian economic situation is not of the best. While some Romanian are suffering from constraints some Chinese investors and workers improved their economic situation⁹⁴.

In Hungary instead the Chinese community is better integrated into the local society, due also to longer Chinese presence in the country. Many are the activities entertained by the government to enable Chinese integration in both economic and social spheres. Among the Central and Eastern European Countries Hungary was the first one to give permission for the opening of the Bank of China. The Chinese – Hungarian bilingual school is a success: of the two hundred pupils enrolled sixty per cent is Chinese. Chinese people are then perceived as respected people⁹⁵.

2.3 Social repercussion of the Chinese presence

Central and Eastern Europe represents a potentially strategic field for China. Recalling that China does not ask any conditionality over its investments and support in economic activities, the amount of money and political externalizations directed to Balkans countries not yet members of the European Union could affect their propensity to meet the European requirements for join. Examples in this direction are many and significant.

Sino – Serbian Relations are definite by the Sino – Serbian Strategic Partnership initiated in August 2009. The agreement is the result of more than 50 bilateral High-Level Dialogue and political initiatives like the Serbian decision in 2008 to refuse to join any EU initiative cri-

94 *Ibidem*: 71-72-79.

95 *Ibidem*: 78-79.

ticizing the state of human rights in China. So far, China is considered to be the fourth column of the state, at the same level of Brussels, Moscow and Washington. The strategic partnership is based on wider political exchange, higher rates of economic trade, cultural and military cooperation, i. e. the mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty⁹⁶. Investments in different sectors are on the ground. Serbia is dependent on China on the nationwide communication network upgrading and maintenance and the leading Chinese companies in information technology – Huawei and ZTE – already established a strong presence in the Country. The exchanges between China and Serbia are not limited to the economic and political spheres: many are the Sino – Serbian Statements on mutual cultural promotion. Sundry institutes for the Chinese culture promotion are present over the all territory of Serbia and scholarships to send Serbian students to China are paid by the hosting country⁹⁷.

All these are considered to be by academics intents of the Chinese government to build a positive self image in the Balkan country and potentially in the whole Balkans region over a larger period of time through the support for actions which are against the principles of the European Union. Discrepancies in the European area external action could have negative consequences for the European Union hardness and reliability as an international actor⁹⁸.

Chinese investments in the Europe zone have undergone a 102 per cent increase since the launch of the Chinese Going Out strategy began in 2010. From a macroeconomic perspective inflows of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) are always beneficial, since it allows firms to explore new markets, in addition to creating new jobs and demand, it has spurred innovation by introducing new technology, products and management methods. There are however also risks. FDIs bind the European economy to the upside and the downside of the Chinese economic circles and the small and medium enterprises still owned by the national government, could decide to asset back to China. In fact, interviewed Chinese migrants in Hungary- the hub of Chinese imports to Central and Eastern Europe - consider their staying in the country

96 China Policy Institute (2011) Pavličević. The Sino-Serbian Strategic Partnership in a Sino-EU Relationship Context. Briefing series – Issue 68: 1.

97 *Ibidem*: 8-9.

98 *Ibidem*: 11 ÷13.

as a transit period for entering the more affluent western European countries in a subsequent moment⁹⁹.

Also the European parliament expressed worries about the steady increase of the Chinese economic presence and investment without reciprocity in business relations¹⁰⁰. The general enormous increase in businesses between China and the recipient countries is the result of a good intermediation skill of the Chinese migrants. Ethnic Chinese networks undeniably facilitate information sharing through formal and informal networks, moving down the information costs. Nevertheless cultural misunderstandings decelerated investment opportunities. The role of culture and common perceptions in Sino- Central and Eastern Europe relations is indeed enormous. China's policies tend to be driven by both political and economic motives. In fact, rarely do the Chinese separate businesses from politics. The Beijing Government and enterprises took advantages of the global turmoil in economy, funding strategic place in sectors previously neglected¹⁰¹.

The Chinese interests are concentrated to the Central and Eastern Europe because of larger investments' opportunities and dynamic economies. The potential of these economies is in their capabilities to gain as much as possible by the economic intervention of China.

A further preoccupation vitiating the impact Chinese have on hosting countries in Central and Eastern Europe is the illegal migration. Has shown by the example in the previous paragraph by the arson of the shopping center in Romania, some Chinese migrants are involved in illegal affairs.

99 EEAS 31 October 2012 Cunningham G., EU Public Perception of China and Policy Implications: 5.

100 European Dialogue: <http://www.eurodialogue.eu/CEED%20Institute%20Report.%20Partners%20or%20rivals%3F%20Chinese%20investments%20in%20Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe.%20Partners%20or%20rivals%3F%20Chinese%20invest>.

101 Zhang H., The role of migration in shaping China's economic relations with its main partners, MPC Research Reports 2013/07, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2013: 2-3.

Conclusions

This short analysis dealt with the Chinese cultural diplomacy in Eastern Europe. In order to better understand the state of it in Central and Eastern European countries, a short overview on the diplomatic relations was needed. Some of the Central and Eastern European countries with which China entertained relations are indeed members of the European Union.

Diplomatic relations between the two international actors began in 1975 through the launch of EU strategic partnership with China. International logics of the Cold War embraced the relations between China and the European Union. 1975 represents also the year of the Helsinki conference. After that Heads of States Meeting the respect of human rights received ever more attention by the international arena and in particular by the European countries proposing themselves as the most engaged to enhance their respect. Obviously the European Union tried to make China comply with the internationally accepted standards for internal reforms as well as external cooperation on different and increasing number of topics including the human rights respect, even if, as stated before, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is still not ratified by China.

After the Tiananmen massacre the union found it necessary to bind China in international bilateral partnership to secure in some way their respect. As stressed in the paper, the first cooperation ever entertained between the two actors was on economic matters; nowadays it is so stressed to comprehend involvement at local – social level through the exchange of their own cultures.

The main steps in the China – EU relations are represented indeed by some partnership agreements, like the 2003 strategic partnership. It enhanced coordination on a wider range of issues, on evolved political dialogue and on new sectoral agreements. They furthermore highlighted the importance of cooperating also with multilateral organizations like the United Nations, inside which China proposed itself as

one of the most active country in the UN Security Council.

Due to increasing access of Chinese people inside the European Union, the 2004 memorandum of understanding, was signed giving facilitations to Chinese embassies all over the European territory on visa. It was due to the increasing collaboration on various topics that in 2006 the Helsinki joint statement found its ground. Indeed, it smoothed the ground for the 2011 people to people dialogue: a framework to enhance education, cultural contacts and expand people – to- people exchanges and relations for a mutual partners understanding. The 2013 EU – China 2020 strategic agenda for cooperation was the final result of China – EU diplomacy: dialogue became a further tool to strengthen cooperation in multilateral fora, such as consultations on regional strategies to be implemented in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America, or to counter transnational crimes and terrorism, as well as deepening cooperation on prosperity, sustainable development, space and aerospace cooperation, climate change and environmental protection.

The evolvement of the EU – China strategic partnership may also be understood as the willingness by the country of the Dragon to emulate the European models for domestic political and social development. It is in the field of public diplomacy that the European model can be mirrored. In this regard culture plays a central role. As the European countries gained consent by the international arena by the employment of Cultural Diplomacy, so China is doing nowadays in Europe.

We have seen which is the Chinese understanding of cultural diplomacy and through which tools it is utilized. The first time China expressed the willingness to employ this sophisticated political device was during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party, when the Chinese President Hu Jintao stressed the need of promoting the national image outside. From then on, China demonstrated to be highly skilled in its building up in and outwards its territory. The main problem was the language barrier. In order to avoid it the central government delivered an increasing number of White Papers – in English- on topics of international concerns. Part of its public diplomacy was the increasing and significant engagement in humanitarian missions under the UN mandate, the promotion of regional international organization as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the fulfillment of economic reforms after the Chinese decision to join the World Trade Organisation in 2001.

For what concerns the cultural diplomacy, from 2004 reviews and newspapers' section with focus on China and more than 500 Confucius Institutes were settled up all over the world. More than narrowing their action to the teaching of the Mandarin language, it has been shown how and through which tools they succeed in promoting the Chinese culture. The success of their action, in addition to several bilateral academic exchange programs, provides the proof of the accomplishment of cultural diplomacy: there is in fact an increase in interest of Europeans to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture. The popularity of university programmes and secondary school courses of Mandarin and Chinese culture in Europe has increased too. Also doing internships in China has become more popular over the last decades amongst European students surely thanks to the high ranking of some international Chinese University and of jointly run flagship schools, like the China – EU School of Law, the China – EU International Business School .

The first part of the second chapter deals with the Chinese presence in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular it was highlighted by official data of the European China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN) that Europe has become an important and attractive destination for Chinese migrants particularly since the end of the 1980s. The concentration of the Chinese presence trend accelerated in a positive way both inwards and outwards Europe, making of Europe the second region for the fastest rate growth after Africa. This was possible thanks to the growing of international trade between China and Europe and the inclusion of it in more comprehensive political agreements among the two actors, as well as internal reforms of the national economy. We have seen that the top three host countries in Central and Eastern Europe are Romania, Serbia and Hungary and that the social spectrum of the migrants improved and is variegated. So the business entertained in these countries. It was demonstrated the peculiarity of the Hungarian case: member of the European Union, but still with autonomy of the Central Bank, Hungary accepted a € 1 billion loan from China for the constructions of dedicated cargo railroads crossing the country and circumventing Budapest. Not only, the country is considered to be a good place to dislocate the Huawei's production, the second giant in telecoms equipment.

Noteworthy was the reported action of Poland in facilitating the stay of illegal migrants continuously been in the country from Decem-

ber 2007 to January 2010 by giving them amnesty. As demonstrated Poland had economic interests translated in the China-Central Europe-Poland Economic Forum held in Warsaw, at the end of which \$ 10 billion of credit line stretching were agreed upon and had to be divided among Croatia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovakia and Hungary for the realization of different projects.

Among the projects in place, the most profitable may be that on renewable energy and that on the construction of dedicated cargo railroads. This last one, as analyzed in the paper, would be part of a kind of bigger plan from China that involves also the Greek port of Piraeus. It will enable its economic exchanges to grow significantly, with lower transportation costs and lower delivery time, not only in Central and Eastern European countries that agree to the construction of the cargo railroads, but also for the western European ones.

Chinese investments in the Europe zone have undergone a 102 per cent increase since the launch of the Chinese Going Out strategy began in 2010. From a macroeconomic perspective inflows of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) are always beneficial, since it allows firms to explore new markets, in addition to creating new jobs and demand, it has spurred innovation by introducing new technology, products and management methods. We have seen however that related to such a wide economic Chinese presence in the region are also social implications.

The perception that Europeans have in regards to China is controversial. In some countries it is most negative like in Romania, but in others the Chinese presence is seen positively for both the economic aspect and the social one. Also the international community welcomed this increasing presence. Incredible steps forwards indeed have been made by China in the economic sphere inside the WTO. Nevertheless, the country proposes itself and is considered to be by the most part of international actors a reliable and fair economic partner.

But when turning to the social implications of the Chinese presence, is the illegal migration. Has shown by the examples in the paper some Chinese migrants are involved in illegal affairs, affecting the national security of the hosting country.

Turning to the human rights question a great advancement is still needed. Nevertheless very few are the actions undertaken by the international community and in particular by Europe, the greater and most effecting promoting body on human rights.

So far, having analyzed the evolution of the EU – China relations; having analyzed the social presence of Chinese in Central and Eastern Europe and their attempt to always try to get more economic power and relevance in the region, China succeed in what older affirmed international power maybe still not achieved. During the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Hu Jintao stressed the need of promoting the Chinese soft power.

China was seeking the road for its peaceful development, that is to get the outside world accept its rising power by cultural attraction. Has China succeeded in doing this?



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