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ESTABLISHING A RAIL LINK BETWEEN MANNHEIM AND CHONGQING THROUGH THE IUC COOPERATION

In May 2017, **Mannheim** was selected to participate in the EU-funded International Urban Cooperation programme. The German city was paired with **Chongqing**, one of the largest cities in the world and a highly influential and active partner. Within a very short timeframe, the first results can already be presented.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of their IUC cooperation, Mannheim and Chongqing have decided to establish a direct railway connection between their cities. Major companies have regularly expressed the need for such a railway, which would strengthen Mannheim as a logistics hub and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 8 ('Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all'), and Goal 9 ('Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation').

A series of reciprocal visits have taken place, which included political meetings and discussions with business representatives. From the beginning, concrete needs and common challenges were expressed by both parties at the meeting *China Round Table*, which gave a general direction for further cooperation. Both parties have agreed to

establish representative offices in each other's cities, which will last far beyond the scope of the IUC cooperation period.

Through the continuous support of the IUC team, the European Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of the People's Republic of China, quick progress has been achieved, aided by efficient exchange and reciprocal visits.

The IUC programme has also generated greater recognition of Mannheim's China-related activities, leading to greater media coverage on the topic. As a result, Mannheim has received wide-spread international attention, leading to a prominent position at the UN Habit World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur.



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Mannheim was one of five European cities paired with a Chinese city during the inaugural pairing activities of the IUC programme.

On 31 May 2017, the IUC team launched the programme within the 12th High Level Dialogue on Regional and Urban Policy Cooperation, which was held as a side event of the EU-China Summit at the headquarters of the European Commission.

During this event, all cities presented their local characteristics and strengths, but also their needs and major challenges. It was revealed that both Mannheim and Chongqing provide

“ As one of the largest Chinese cities, Chongqing is not only an important trading partner for our companies. The city is also the starting point of the Trans-Eurasia Express, the freight train line that connects China with Western Europe. ”

- First Deputy Mayor Christian Specht

a base for large industries and both cities are significant transport hubs for maritime transport, rail and road. These basic similarities provided a broad framework for the upcoming dialogues.

Following the event in Brussels, a delegation from Chongqing led by Mr OUYANG Lin, Deputy Director-General of DRC Chongqing, as well as delegations from other Chinese cities, visited Mannheim, where they were informed about the cities' existing networks (Network Smart Production/Industry 4.0), the strong and innovative start-up scene and possible fields of cooperation.

High-level representatives from companies such as Roche Diagnostics, Bombardier Primove, Fuchs Petrolub SE, and the private brewery Eichbaum outlined their experiences of operating within the Chinese market. Within the meeting they expressed a range of business needs, including: a direct train connection between Mannheim and Chongqing, better access to political decision makers in China, and



better (meaning joined and coordinated) city marketing in China.

As a follow-up to the Chongqing delegation's visit to Mannheim, Mr Christian Specht, First Deputy Mayor of Mannheim, and Mr David Linse, Head of the Department of Diversity, International Affairs and Protocol, visited Chongqing from 14 - 17 August as part of an 8-day programme in China. Based on the insights gained in Mannheim, three main goals for further cooperation were agreed:

1. Establishing a direct railway connection between Mannheim and Chongqing to reduce time and costs for freight transport between the two cities (contributing to the [Belt and Road Initiative](#), which supported by the EU and China).
2. The establishment of a Chongqing representative office in Mannheim, and a Mannheim representative office in Chongqing.
3. The organisation of urban development conferences in Chongqing and Mannheim to bring together policymakers and businesses for in-depth discussion on topics such as the impact of advanced manufacturing for cities and urban planning, industry 4.0, mobility, etc.



RESULTS AND IMPACT

Direct Railway Connection: In August 2017, Christian Specht and David Linse of Mannheim met Ms Zhang Rong, Deputy General Manager of Yuxin'ou (Chongqing) Logistics co. Established in 2011 with a 60 percent share of the German railway cargo carrier 'DB Cargo', Yuxin'ou is in charge of the train connection between Chongqing and Duisburg. The IUC programme supported this meeting and as a result this influential transport company agreed to send a delegation to Mannheim. Finally, in January 2018, Ms Zhang Rong visited Mannheim with her team, where she received a broad overview of the logistic advances of one of Europe's biggest inland ports, including the city's marshalling yards.



Visiting the control centre of the Mannheim marshalling yard.

After visiting the inland port and the marshalling yard, a political discussion with Mayor Dr Peter Kurz and other economic representatives underlined the urgent need for a direct railway connection between Mannheim and Chongqing. Such a dynamic and high level debate was only possible through the continuous support of the IUC team and from the European Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of the People's Republic of China.

Representative Offices: During the visit of an official delegation from Chongqing to Mannheim in November 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both cities, agreeing upon the establishment of representative offices in both cities to facilitate exchange in the fields of trade and business.

The dynamic development of the relationship between both cities put the cooperative activities in a very positive light. Media partners frequently covered the cooperation, which led to informative radio reports on the establishment of the railway connection, newspaper articles about Chongqing and an international spread on the various cooperation activities between China and the City of Mannheim. Through the IUC programme, Mannheim is now internationally recognised for its active engagement in building economic relations with Chinese partners. Mayor Dr Peter Kurz presented Mannheim's IUC involvement together with Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, at the UN Habitat Conference - World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018.

Urban Development Conferences: The next step will be a high-level conference bringing together various players involved in EU-China relations. The event is scheduled for summer 2018 and will be held in Mannheim. Besides keynote speeches, discussions and informative presentations about urban planning, industry 4.0 and smart production, participants will have great opportunities to exchange and network. With the support of the IUC programme, the City of Mannheim will contribute to regional economic promotion and increase local and international political support for business cooperation.

All activities undertaken have had the effect of contributing to Sustainable Development Goals 8 ('Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all'), and Goal 9 ('Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation').

It can be concluded that already at an early stage the pairing between the City of Mannheim and the City of Chongqing has already provided significant benefits not only to the administrations of each city, but also to the business chambers and local companies.



LESSONS LEARNED

The IUC Programme achieved rapid progress thanks to assistance, guidance and financial support. However, what accelerates the city-to-city activities the most is the high-level background support of the European Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of the People's Republic of China.

The IUC pairing between Mannheim and Chongqing contains enormous potential, as both cities are major business locations as well as international, multimodal transport hubs. Having similar challenges and opportunities enabled the cities to achieve fast and long-lasting results.

From the start of the IUC programme, the City of Mannheim involved all parties interested in EU-China relations, namely: business chambers, research and educational institutions, federal organisations, companies, politicians, the city administration and the media. This led to great interest and support throughout the city.

During the 1st China Round Table in June 2018, companies from Mannheim expressed concrete opportunities and currently occurring problems with regard to German-Chinese trade relations. These very clear needs determined the upcoming cooperation and led to a focus on a few topics: logistics, fostering business exchange and a joint economic promotion.

The political support for the IUC programme, including all connected activities in Mannheim and China, is particularly high. Mayor Dr Peter Kurz as well as First Deputy Mayor Christian Specht regularly mention the programme during their speeches, informing the audience about its advantages. This also helps to generate broad support within the city administration.

At least one member of the IUC team always accompanied the delegation visits in Mannheim and Chongqing. This was a great help in the preparation and implementation of the visits.

THE IUC PROGRAMME

The International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme aims to enable cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in the IUC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international counterparts,

building a greener, more prosperous future. The IUC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.



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