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NEWSLETTER

<http://urban-intergroup.eu>

STUDY VISIT

Urban development and smart cities in China

URBAN Intergroup representatives took part in a successful visit to China in July 2018. During one week, the participants gained knowledge, exchanged views and shared ideas on many issues related to sustainability and urban development between European and Chinese cities.

Innovative solutions for urban management

Upon arrival in the city of Shenzhen, the first day was dedicated to the study of innovative solutions for urban management concerning water supply and transportation. Shenzhen lies along the eastern part of the Pearl River Delta megalopolis, bordering Hong Kong. The group visited the Shenzhen Integrated Transport Command Centre, a key unit responsible for controlling transport flow in the city of over 12.5 million inhabitants. MEPs saw a real-time data management on smart supervision platform. It allows Chinese authorities to supervise not only the whole fleet of busses (100% electric!) but also underground transport system, as well all available parking spaces in the city.

Moreover, participants met representatives of the Shenzhen Water Group, the company responsible for water produc-



Real-time monitoring of traffic in Shenzhen Integrated Transport Command Centre.

tion, supply and sewage treatment services in the area. They explained to them the strategy for the coastal line management and comprehensive control over water circulation in urban areas. "Both the size and the speed are striking in China. Shenzhen grew from an insignificant fishermen's town to a booming megacity. In two years' time, they managed to make the entire public transport system electric. You feel like you are in a different world. There are so many cameras around: 'Where is my privacy? Where is this going to?', I wonder..." - commented **Lambert van Nistelrooij** (EPP, the Netherlands).

Modern urban planning

The next day, the group was hosted by Huawei, one of the world's largest networking and telecommunication companies but also one of the biggest Chinese owned companies. Upon arrival to the headquarters in Shenzhen, the group saw two meaningful expositions. The first one explored company's R&D sector, which included a showcase of new mobile technologies (5G). The second exhibition of the Industry discussed key components of modern urban planning including Energy, Transportation, Finance and the concept of Smart Cities.

Huawei experts explained innovative technologies, which have been developed to increase efficiency of city's transportation systems including the management of civil aviation in the world's largest airports. This was followed by a visit to the so-called 'Road of Digital Transformation' in the Huawei Enterprise Business Briefing Centre and a workshop in which both sides exchanged views on how new technological discoveries can aid modern urban planning.

The revitalisation of the historic part of Shanghai

The following day, participants were transferred to Shanghai where they took a Maglev, this system of train transportation that uses magnetic levitation. It represents the new generation of environmentally friendly bullet trains. In the afternoon, the group had a guided tour over the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition which displays a remarkable multi-faceted transformation of the city over the past decades and discusses the many contemporary solutions for the modern planning of Shanghai.

Later on, the URBAN Intergroup representatives gathered on a meeting with local architects and inhabitants of Hutong renovation project to discuss revitalisation of the historic part of the megalopolis of 23 million inhabitants. The day was concluded by a visit to the Jin Jiang Tower in order to receive a hands-on experience about contemporary architectural solutions within modern urban aerial planning.

The next morning, the delegation visited the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Planning



Visit of the delegation to Huawei HQ in Shenzhen.



and Land Resources, which holds key responsibilities including establishing legal framework for town and country planning, managing the socio-economic development strategies, organising physical construction or carrying out administrative work. The aim of this visit was to attain valuable insights in the Pudong City development – the area at the heart of Shanghai, which constitutes the centre of finance and commerce in Eastern Asia.

Acting against air pollution

Subsequently, the day proceeded with a meeting at the Shanghai Environment Protection Bureau with authorities responsible for executing environmentally friendly policies acting against the proliferation of air pollution.

MEPs had as well the opportunity to discover Shanghai as one of the biggest world's transport hub by visiting the Shanghai Yangshan Deep Water Port. This world's biggest automated container terminal built in 2017 on two islands is connected with the mainland by the 32,5 km long Donghai Bridge, the longest sea bridge in the world.

EU-China Summit

Upon the arrival in Zhengzhou, the group took part in a side event of the EU-China Summit: 13th EU-China Regional Policy High-Level Seminar on Regional Innovation and High-quality Development of Regional Economy opened by Ms. Corina Cretu, the EU commissioner for regional and urban policy. The event was an occasion for representatives of Chinese and European cities to discuss regional innovation and cooperation.

Lambert Van Nistelrooij, Vice-President of the URBAN Intergroup, in his opening speech recalled longstanding support of the European Parliament for international urban cooperation. He stressed the importance of regional specialisation: "China has much higher speed in the conversion of knowledge into products and services. The electrification of public busses is the best example. We are also working on it, however our pace is lower. What can we



Skyline of Shanghai seen from Pudong.



Panorama from the Oriental Pearl TV Tower.



Discussion on the future development of Shanghai with urban planners.



Presentation of the real-time air quality reporting system in Shanghai.



Picture on the left: from the left, Joridi Solé (Greens, Spain), Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP, the Netherlands), Maria G. Zoană (S&D, Romania), Corina Crețu (EU Commissioner for Regional Policy), Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP, Slovakia), Jan Olbrycht (EPP, Poland). Picture on the right: MEPs with European cities representatives at the EU-China High Level Seminar.

learn from each other, without prejudice to the differences in our political systems?"

Jan Olbrycht, President of URBAN Inter-group, highlighted during the event that Chinese solutions attract European cities in multiple aspects. "What is happening in China right now is somewhat a unique experiment, which shows the great extent to which megacities can expand and still be able to maintain effective transportation system, healthcare, etc." - he said. Later, he added: "Regardless of the differences of size between European and Chinese cities, they can still learn from each other in order to promote optimal solutions for urban areas."

"How smart cities prosper"

On the final day, the European delegation travelled to Beijing and met with **Hans Dietmar Schweisgut**, Ambassador of the European Union to the People's Republic of China. Afterwards, MEPs discovered Be-

ijing's most known historical site: the Forbidden City.

In his conclusive remarks regarding the visit, MEP **Jordi Solé**, member of the URBAN Inter-group said: "During our visit, we had the opportunity to gain a first-hand experience about how smart cities, such as Shenzhen, prosper. There, we could observe the most modern technologies applied in the management of megacities. As a result, such places are centres of huge data, which can be used by others to achieve a more effective sustainable development."

However, Mr. Solé noted that: "On the other side of the coin, in China there is a level of control that no Western democracy would allow for, neither in the name of security nor the intelligent management of the cities. Therefore, the challenge is to apply technologies for sustainable urban development while respecting privacy and freedom."



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