# ALAIN HUBERT SIGNS COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS WITH CHINESE POLAR AUTHORITIES IN SHANGHAI



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HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium led a trade mission to China from the 19th to the 29th of October, celebrating the 40th anniversary of China-Belgium diplomatic relationships. As part of this visit, the Prince travelled to Shanghai to attend an official ceremony organized by the Consul Général of Belgium in Shanghai, Mr Bruno Georges, and the Director of the Polar Research Institute of China (PRIC), Dr Huigen Yang. The Prince was accompanied by the President of the International Polar Foundation (IPF), Alain Hubert, and the ceremony took place onboard the Chinese icebreaker, the XueLong ("Snow Dragon"), just hours before its departure for Antarctica.

During his speech, Alain Hubert presented Princess Elisabeth Station, as well as the work of IPF, and expressed the IPF's and the Belgian Polar Secretariat's joy at collaborating with China in polar research, logistics, and outreach. For his part, Dr Yang outlined the upcoming work and mission of the 28th Chinese National Antarctic Research Expedition (CHINARE 28) sailing onboard the XueLong, and presented the new Chinese icebreaker currently at the design stage. Dr. Yang further lauded the good cooperation between

China and Belgium on polar research and communication through initiatives such as the China-Belgium workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change held in Shanghai in October 2010, and the reporting work done by Jean de Pomereu of the IPF, during his participation in CHINARE 25.

Following these introductions, Alain Hubert, also Chair of the Strategic Council of the Belgian Polar Secretariat, exchanged signatures with Chinese representatives on two memorandums of understanding:

- The first memorandum was for cooperation between the Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration (CAA), represented by Director General Dr. Qu Tanzhou, and the IPF on Education & Outreach projects focusing on climate and the polar sciences.
- The second memorandum was for cooperation between the Polar Research Institute of China, represented by Dr. Yang, and the Belgian Polar Secretariat on Antarctic logistics, operations, and research.
- A third memorandum was signed by Dr Bogdan Van Doninck, Director General of the Belgian Science Policy Office, for cooperation between BELSPO and the Chinese State Oceanic Administration (SOA) in the fields of marine and polar science, as well as related technological development.

After the signing, Alain Hubert presented a copy of the book ‘China’s Frozen Quest’, a compilation of Jean de Pomereu's CHINARE 25 reportage to HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium, and Mr. Liu Cigui, Administrator of SOA. This compilation was specially published for the occasion thanks to sponsorship from Solvay. The delegations then visited the bridge, scientific laboratories and helicopters of the XueLong, before retiring to an informal lunch on the quay, also kindly sponsored by Solvay.

Following the Prince’s departure, Dr Yang hosted a dinner for Alain Hubert, and the two met again the following day to further discuss and strengthen future collaborations.