

## Main Activities of the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva in 2022 and Work Plan for 2023

In 2022, with the support of the University of Geneva, Renmin University of China and the Chinese International Education Foundation, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva endeavored to fulfill its mission in its core activity of Chinese language teaching and maintain its research-oriented characteristics, while facing many challenges. We insisted on the idea of steady, innovative and distinctive development, and we were able to carry out the work as hoped. The report of this year's work is as follows.

### I. Chinese Teaching

#### **1. High quality Chinese language university programs for the University of Geneva.**

This year, the Confucius Institute offered five Chinese language courses for the University of Geneva, with a steady increase in enrollment. Four of these courses were open to students of all majors and levels at the University of Geneva,

and one was exclusively for students of the Global Studies Institute undergraduate program in international relations. As the Covid epidemic was still relatively severe in Switzerland at the beginning of the year, the Confucius Institute used the university's Moodle platform to create and enhance a dedicated e-learning resource page for each course to strengthen resource support for the blended learning model.

In early February, the Confucius Institute created a special e-learning platform for Chinese courses called "Welcoming the Winter Olympics, Learning Chinese", which allows students to experience the atmosphere of the Winter Olympics while learning Chinese on the theme of snow and ice sports. In the fall semester, the Advanced Level Continuing Education course was reopened, offering advanced Geneva students from all backgrounds with a passion for learning Chinese the opportunity to continue their studies. Teachers at the Confucius Institute committed to combining classroom learning with after-class practice and strive to create a more immersive Chinese learning atmosphere for students. For example, activities such as watching Chinese movies, practicing ordering expressions in a Chinese restaurant, and

learning the rituals of a Chinese meal.

## **2. Community service through the introduction of the Chinese language in a high school in Geneva.**

On April 4, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva actively responded to the International Chinese Language Day initiative of the Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CELEC) by visiting a local public high school to organize three Chinese language workshops for high school students. These rich and exciting activities attracted over 60 student participants, breaking down language barriers and strengthening intercultural understanding and tolerance through learning and experiencing the Chinese language.

## **3. Restructuring of the teaching staff.**

At the end of June 2022, Mr. Bao Yinhui, who had worked at the Confucius Institute for over seven years, returned to China at the end of his term, and Mr. Hou Donghai was selected as new Chinese teacher. In order to synthesize teaching experience, share teaching tips with new teachers, and ensure a stable transfer of the curriculum, the Confucius Institute provided recording equipment and asked Mr. Bao Yinhui to

archive a semester's worth of demonstration lessons based on the textbook "Contemporary Chinese". This archive will be used in the future for the local teacher training program organized by the Confucius Institute in Geneva..

#### **4. Teaching, research, and teacher training.**

The Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva has always attached great importance to teaching and research, and in addition to regular teaching seminars aimed at solving practical classroom problems, the CI has also organized specialized teaching seminars. In addition, the training of local teachers has also been a long-standing activity of the Confucius Institute, enabling it to fully play its leading role in the field of Chinese language teaching and strengthen its function of service to the city. In the fall semester of 2022, the CI organized the thirteenth and fourteenth training courses for Chinese teachers in Switzerland and neighboring France, which included training on testing and evaluation criteria, organizing a thematic sequence - e.g. on the topic of climate change. More than 40 teachers from the University of Geneva, the University of Lausanne, the United Nations Language Center, the Chinese School of Geneva, the Geneva

Chinese Foundation, the Chinese School of Bern and the International School of Geneva attended these courses. We also organized two in-house pedagogical workshops for IC Chinese teachers on "The First Class and the First Lesson" and "Exercises in the Classroom". These workshops have played an important role in improving the quality of teaching at CI.

**5. Excellent results in the national Chinese language competition "Chinese Bridge" organized by the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland.**

On June 25, the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland organized the 21st Chinese Bridge Competition for university students and the 15th Chinese Bridge Competition for high school students. Alissa Noel and Josefine Reimer Lynggaard from the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva won first and second place in the university student category. Zhang Chen, our deputy director, was the competition judge, while two teachers, Bao Yinhui and Zhong Mei, helped coach and train the contestants. In addition, Fu Wenling, another student trained by the Confucius Institute, participated in the "Chinese Bridge" competition in Sweden and won the

championship. Mr Bao Yinhui gave special advice before the competition, and filmed and produced the contributions according to the organizers' requirements. In the end, both students won the prize for excellence in the Chinese Bridge competition. In addition, Olivia Rehnstrom, another student mentored by Mr. Bao Yinhui, won the prize for excellence for her short video "Talk Show: Learning Chinese in a Funny Way" in the Short Video Competition, and received the "Confucius Institute's Talent" Award for her outstanding performance. In addition, Olivia Rehnstrom, a student mentored by Mr. Bao Yinhui, won the prize for excellence for her short video "Talk Show: Learning Chinese in a Funny Way" at the second "Most Confucius Institute" World Short Video Competition. An Ruos also won the title of "Confucius Institute Talent" for her outstanding performance.

## **6. Successful organization of the HSK examination.**

The number of candidates for the spring 2022 HSK exams has reached over 160. After intensive preparation, the HSK -with six levels and eight rooms- was held at the University of Geneva on March 26. Many participants expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Confucius Institute

for its excellent organization and service. This has strengthened the good image of the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva in the field of Chinese language teaching in French-speaking Switzerland. During the winter holidays, the Confucius Institute also organized intensive preparation courses for HSK exam candidates.

## **7. Organization of various cultural activities.**

In the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva, we attach great importance to improving the effectiveness of Chinese language teaching through cultural activities. On June 16, 2022, the Confucius Institute organized a summer reception and Chinese cultural experience, and invited Xu Qin, a Geneva-based guzheng player, to play traditional Chinese music for the guests. During the performance, we interspersed the show with introductions to traditional Chinese music, instruments, and repertoire to provide a lively opportunity for participants to discover Chinese music and culture. During the academic year, Chinese teachers also integrated a variety of cultural activities into the classroom. For example, in response to the United Nations International Chinese Language Day initiative and to increase

the interest and confidence of Swiss Chinese students in learning Chinese characters, the Confucius Institute organized a Chinese character writing contest in April 2022 with the theme "Enjoy the ancient rhythms of Tang Dynasty poems, feel the charm of Chinese characters". Over 100 students from the Confucius Institute's undergraduate and graduate programs participated in the event. On November 22, a workshop on "Chinese Culture in My Eyes" was held in the classroom, where students developed PPTs and shared their interests in Chinese culture, such as traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, Chinese classics, calligraphy, and so on. Students carefully made PPTs and shared their most interesting topics in Chinese culture, such as Chinese medicine, martial arts, Chinese classics, calligraphy, etc. Bao Yinhui commented on the presentations and chatted with the students. These fun activities empowered the students, who showed great interest and participation.

## **II. Academic activities**

### **1) Academic conferences and lectures.**

In addition to the in-house doctoral seminar (chaired



by director Basile Zimmermann) and the translation seminar (chaired by vice-director Grâce Poizat\_Xie), the Confucius Institute organized a series of six lectures, "Regards sur la Chine", aimed at students and the general public and given by Swiss and French researchers in Chinese studies. The lectures covered the following topics: Buddhism and the State in China's socialist market economy, Sino-Swiss political and cultural exchanges between 1949 and 1989, Sino-Cuban relations, "Thirty-six stratagems" - Chinese intelligence, the hereditary system in China's Islamic tradition, and the tradition of Chinese comic strips. Over the past ten years, the "Regards sur la Chine" lecture series has organized nearly 100 lectures, which have proved very popular with Genevans wishing to learn more about China. It has become one of the most successful and influential lecture series on China in French-speaking Europe.

In addition, a lecture in the "China Tomorrow" series was streamed online on May 12, entitled "Immersive communication: the key to a meta-universe", given by Li Qin, Professor at the School of Journalism, Renmin University of China, and commented by Professor Tommaso Venturini, Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of

Geneva.

The Confucius Institute also organizes academic seminars in cooperation with university research institutes. For example, during the summer, the Confucius Institute supervised an architectural project entitled "Borrowed Landscapes", which aimed to apply Chinese architectural aesthetics to a Swiss environment. The project was initiated by the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the Confucius Institute, and included a series of courses, seminars and practical activities. Associate Professor Yu Leqi from the School of Art at Renmin University of China was invited to give an inspiring lecture on Chinese aesthetics as part of the project. On October 7, the Confucius Institute and the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Geneva jointly organized an international forum on "WeChat Ethnography - New practices and limits of an emerging research methodology". Several dozen young researchers from around the world actively contributed to and participated in the discussion, including some researchers and graduate students from the Faculty of Social Sciences.

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## 2. Doctoral training at the Confucius Institute.

Supported by former Hanban scholarships, the Confucius Institute has three doctoral students in the "New Sinology" program. This year, Pascale Bugnon defended her dissertation and received her doctorate..

### **III. Promoting inter-university cooperation between Geneva University and Renmin University of China.**

As a product of the cooperation between the University of Geneva and Renmin University of China, and as a platform for exchanges and cooperation between the two institutions, the Confucius Institute continued to put the promotion of cooperation between the two institutions at the forefront of its work in 2022, and promoted a series of in-depth cross-institutional projects. In terms of academic exchanges, we have organized seminars for teachers from both universities as part of the "China Tomorrow" lecture series; and we have invited a number of Renmin University teachers in the fields of international relations and Chinese aesthetics to

participate in courses at the University of Geneva, thus promoting teaching exchanges between the two universities. On the administrative front, we have held several meetings to promote the construction of an academic exchange center. In addition, as 2022 is the 85th anniversary of Renmin University, our Confucius Institute produced a congratulatory video to express the sincere wishes of teachers and students on this occasion, and the Rector of the University of Geneva, Mr. Yves Flückiger, attended the International Education Forum organized by Renmin as a video guest and delivered a speech. We also strengthened the link between the Global Studies Institute in the University of Geneva and the School of International Relations in Renmin University, and between the Faculty of Economics and Management of the University of Geneva and the School of Finance in Renmin University.

#### **IV. University of Geneva Audit**

In 2022, more than 10 years after the establishment of the Confucius Institute, the University of Geneva conducted an inspection and evaluation of the Confucius Institute. We started by setting up a working group to prepare a

comprehensive report on the work done since its establishment, with a large number of appendices. The report focused on evaluating the following aspects: 1. The activities and impact of the Confucius Institute are in line with the expectations of a science diplomacy platform; 2. The Confucius Institute is a center of excellence in science diplomacy; 3. The organization and operation of the Confucius Institute protects it from any form of interference by entities other than the University of Geneva and Renmin University of China. 4. The Confucius Institute respects the quality criteria established by the University of Geneva.

On September 20 and 21, the Rector of the University of Geneva, the Vice Rector in charge of the Confucius Institute, and an expert group of four scholars visited the Confucius Institute for two days of interviews with the faculty, students, and staff of the Institute, as well as scholars who have worked with the Confucius Institute in the past. The panel of four scholars was led by the former rector of the University of Basel Switzerland. After the interviews, the panel wrote a report and submitted it to the University of Geneva. After receiving the report, we answered some questions and clarified others. The panel then revised the

report and submitted the final version.

Based on the conclusions of the final report, our Confucius Institute proposed various options, which were then discussed by the rectorate of Geneva University. In the end, the university decided to maintain the Confucius Institute and its original functions, while reforming and optimizing it, such as setting up an advisory board to oversee the development of the institute.

Overall, the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva has fulfilled the tasks initially set out in the work plan drawn up at the beginning of 2022. Its development is stable and it is achieving its goals.

## **V. Main work programme for 2023**

### **1. Chinese teaching**

The Confucius Institute offers Chinese language courses to meet the Chinese learning needs of the University of Geneva and the French-speaking community of Geneva. The Chinese language programs include credit courses (Chinese for students of all disciplines and for students of the

Global Studies Institute), continuing education courses, intensive summer courses and intensive HSK preparation courses. In 2023, the Confucius Institute plans to continue its Chinese teaching program as usual to meet the needs of the University of Geneva and the Swiss public for Chinese language learning.

## **2. Chinese teacher training and seminars**

In order to promote Chinese language teaching and Chinese studies, the Confucius Institute plans to continue its usual programs in 2023, including 1-2 training courses for local teachers, 2 Chinese language pedagogy workshops (one in the spring semester and one in the fall semester), translation workshops, and monthly doctoral seminars (6-8 sessions throughout the year). In addition, the Confucius Institute will play a leadership role for Chinese educational institutions in Geneva by organizing two round tables with all partners (April and May).

## **3. Perspectives on China academic lecture series.**

The "Perspectives on China" lecture series offers 6 to 8 academic lectures per year on Chinese culture, history,

economy and other topics. Aimed at the general public, Swiss and French sinologists and researchers are invited to give the Swiss public a comprehensive and objective introduction to Chinese studies. In 2023, the Confucius Institute plans to continue this regular program and resume the face-to-face lectures in their entirety, with 8 lectures planned.

#### **4. "China Tomorrow" conference series.**

The aim of this lecture series is to invite Chinese researchers in their respective fields to present specific topics on the development and trends of contemporary China to a Swiss and international audience. It opens a dialogue in English and online between Chinese and Swiss researchers. In 2023, the Confucius Institute plans to organize two conferences within this framework.

#### **5. China in One Day.**

This program is an integral part of the work of the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva, its aim being to introduce the Swiss public to China through lectures and cultural events. In 2023, the Confucius Institute plans to continue this program, with a summer hospitality project



planned for the start of the summer vacations, during which Chinese cultural experiences will also be organized.

## **6. Academic workshop and conferences.**

We hope to make the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva a renowned institution for Chinese studies in Europe by organizing high-level academic conferences. The major academic workshops and conferences planned for 2023 are (1) The Third International Symposium on Comparative Religion. (2) A symposium on "WeChat Ethnography". (3) The first European Forum for Researchers in Contemporary Chinese Studies.

## **7. HSK examination organization.**

The HSK exams are a regular activity of the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva and take place every spring. In 2023, the Confucius Institute plans to continue this program, with all tests for all six levels in one day, on March 18.

## **8. Swiss "Chinese Bridge" competition.**

Every year, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva encourages and supports students to participate in

the Swiss Chinese Language Competition by providing them with intensive and varied coaching prior to the competition. The competition takes place in May.

## **9. Academic research.**

The main new research projects of our Confucius Institute in 2023 are as follows:

(1) French translation of everyday Chinese vocabulary. In 2017, the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva published at the publishing house L'Asiathèque in Paris its *Manuel du vocabulaire chinois courant*, which contains French translations of 5,000 common Chinese words included in the HSK2.0 edition curriculum. After its publication, the book was widely acclaimed by Chinese learners in French-speaking regions. We also negotiated with the Parisian publisher to put the book on the website of the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva ([https://www.unige.ch/ic/files/7915/4272/2792/HSK\\_VOCABULARY\\_.pdf](https://www.unige.ch/ic/files/7915/4272/2792/HSK_VOCABULARY_.pdf)), so that students can download it for free. In 2021, the Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CELEC) published version 3.0 of the HSK, which means that the HSK test will soon enter the version 3.0 era. The new standard

will soon be fully applied in the HSK examination from 2024. Under the new standard, the number of commonly used words will increase significantly, reaching a total of 10,992. Therefore, at the request of Chinese learners in the French-speaking community, the Confucius Institute has decided to implement a new textbook development project to translate and annotate a total of 10,992 words from HSK version 3.0 into French. We also aim to publish it in book form. The Parisian publisher L'Asiathèque has agreed to publish the book. The project will be carried out by Grâce Poizat-Xie, senior lecturer in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Geneva and vice-director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva, and François-Karl Gschwend, PhD student and assistant in the same department at the University of Geneva.

(2) Media depolarization: a comparative study of China and the West. The research will focus on substantial differences in media operations in China and the West, and whether and how these differences can be better understood holistically and presented in a balanced way. The project will employ two master students from the University of Geneva's Innovation and Human Sustainability Program (IHDS)

as interns, as well as a postdoctoral researcher with a background in geopolitics and international law, and will collaborate with relevant professors and experts at Renmin University. Two research reports are expected. During the research period, a "China Tomorrow" seminar will be organized to identify similarities and differences between Chinese and Western media. The project will last 18 months, from the second half of 2023 to the end of 2024.

#### **10. University of Geneva - Renmin University exchanges and cooperation.**

The cooperation planned for 2023 includes promoting exchanges between the Faculty of Economics and Management of the University of Geneva and the School of Finance of Renmin University, between the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Geneva and the School of Social and Demographic Sciences of Renmin University, and between the Global Studies Institute of the University of Geneva and the School of International Relations of Renmin University; The organization of the Board of Directors of the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva; and, in accordance with audit requirements, the constitution of the Advisory

Board of the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva  
and the drafting of the Ethical Statute of the Confucius  
Institute, and so forth.