



CHINA IN CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVE

CCP-linked professional associations in France and their role in technology transfer

René Bigey

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Summary of findings

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has developed a sophisticated strategy to transfer knowledge and technologies from abroad. Its implementation includes recruiting scholars and entrepreneurs for short-term or permanent positions in China or from overseas. As has been documented elsewhere, talent recruitment programs are often associated with misconduct and intellectual property theft.

This study — the first devoted to PRC talent recruitment in France — has identified extensive networks within the French science and technology ecosystem with close links to the PRC party-state and its technology transfer bureaucracy. These networks may create channels for China (including its military) to obtain technology key to France's innovative edge and national security. In some cases, these channels may also be used for political influence purposes.

Our research focuses on a sample of 20 French-based associations active in transferring knowledge and technology to China. Members of these associations (claimed to number over 10,000) work for top French companies and research institutions.

We have also identified 71 talent-recruitment “work stations” run by French-based entities — including associations in our sample — on behalf of PRC united front agencies, local governments, companies and universities. The leaders of some of those associations simultaneously hold permanent posts in French research institutions.

These organizations assist China's talent recruitment bureaucracy to facilitate the transfer of scientific knowledge and technology to China — including its defence system — in ways that evade France's economic security policy tools, such as export controls and foreign investment screening. Some have targeted dual-use technologies. In one case, an association in our sample introduced laser specialist and Nobel Prize winner Gérard Mourou to a Peking University advisory committee which includes He Xiantu, who designed China's first neutron bomb.

All the associations studied maintain significant links with China's party-state, notably united front agencies. However, their status as French associations has allowed them to gain acceptance as legitimate partners of French institutions and access to senior officials. One association in our sample has run the official China program of Station F, France's largest start-up incubator, for several years, while its president was invited to join Prime Minister Edouard Philippe's 2018 delegation during a China visit.

As partners of PRC agencies, these associations could serve the CCP as political influence instruments. Highlighting this potential, 4D China, a group linked to our study's associations that seeks to fight “misconceptions” about China in French society, was co-founded by a senior expert at France Stratégie, a French agency advising the prime minister.

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0 Introduction: Technology transfer through CCP-led talent recruitment initiatives

Foreign governments have long identified forced technology transfer from Western companies to Chinese ones and cyber theft of technologies as a major problem to be addressed. Yet, China's technology transfer efforts do not only target mature technologies at the industrial or pre-industrial stage. Since the 1950's, indeed, the Chinese party-state has been creating a comprehensive and sophisticated national "science and technology open-source system", with the objective to systematically acquire, process and distribute "intangible" technologies in the form of scientific and technological materials.¹ In the same vein, "bringing back" overseas Chinese student and scholars, attracting foreign scholars to China, or — more recently — making them "serve in place", has long been utilized as opportunities to channel technologies into China.² It follows that technical exchanges, invitations of scholars for seminars or short-term missions in China, recruitment through programs such as the Thousand Talents Plan, the creation of a joint research center, incubation programs for startups etc. all can be venues for such technology transfer. Some of those initiatives are motivated by commercial or scientific interests. Yet, others — although perfectly legal most of the time - are indeed mandated or incited by the Chinese party-state to attain national developmental objectives.

0.1 Technology transfer "through various means": The CCP's talent recruitment apparatus

As China still sees itself as lagging behind in the field of basic research, the recruitment of high-level scientists has become a priority for the central leadership.³ Seeking to address this issue, the Chinese party-state has assigned the task of recruiting foreign-trained talent to a vast bureaucracy.

0.1.1 Talent plans

In 2002, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council — respectively the top organs of the party and the PRC government — mentioned the need to devise and implement a strategy to "strengthen the country through human talent" (人才强国战略). An Overseas High-level Talent Recruitment Working Group was established in 2008 by the Organization Department of the CCP to oversee the implementation of the Thousand Talents Plan, the CCP's flagship recruitment program. According to official Chinese sources, by the end of 2016, more than 6000 scholars had been recruited through it.⁴

The Thousand Talents Plan is only the best known member of a system of similar programs, that together account for far more recruitments. These include both talent

¹William C. Hannas, James Mulvenon, Anna B. Puglisi, *Chinese Industrial Espionage: Technology acquisition and military modernization*, Routledge, 2012, pp. 18–51.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 163–185.

³See, e.g., "Recommendations to Address Structural Problems in China's Basic Research", Consultation Group of the CAS Academic Divisions, *Bulletin of the Chinese Academy of Sciences* 34:2, 2020.

⁴"新中国成立以来最大规模海归潮形成达 265 万人", 人民日报, 12th April 2017.



plans ran at the central government level (the Hundred Talents Plan⁵, HOME⁶, Chang Jiang (or Cheung Kong) Scholars⁷ etc.) as well as by local governments — down to the district level.⁸ All together, plans run by local governments had successfully recruited more than 53,900 scholars and tech entrepreneurs by the end of 2016.⁹

Many of those programs have become less advertised amid growing tensions between the United States and China and greater scrutiny from foreign law enforcement agencies, but they have not been discarded. Quite the contrary: as technological self-sufficiency has emerged as a top priority for the Chinese leadership, new programs have emerged, such as the Qiming Plan, which seeks to recruit both Chinese and foreign talents in critical fields such as semi-conductors and, sometimes, classified research areas.¹⁰

As Alex Joske’s research has shown, talent recruitment stations are used to identify and pursue talent abroad and promote research collaboration in alignment with central guidance on talent-recruitment work. Stations can be paid as much as 18,000 EUR per year, and benefit from bonus payments for each successful recruitment.¹¹

0.1.2 The united front system

Some of those efforts to collect scientific information and recruit scientists to work for China involve the united front system, a component of the party-state bureaucracy that seeks to enlist extra-party forces (from business to the diaspora) as instruments of CCP policy. A key agency coordinating this bureaucracy is the United Front Work Department (UFWD) under the party’s Central Committee.

In May 2015, on the occasion of the Central conference on United Front Work, Xi Jinping stated that overseas Chinese students and scholars had to be encouraged to “come back to China and work or help the country through various means” (以多种形式).¹² The phrase originates from a 2001 document endorsed by five ministries and detailing the “various means” in question, which include conducting research in your

⁵The Hundred Talents Program was initiated in 1994 by the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It targets “young” scholars aged below 45 who have worked in prestigious foreign universities.

⁶The HOME program (“Help our Motherland Through Elite Intellectual Resources from Overseas”), also called Haizhi Plan (海外智力为国服务行动计划), was launched in 2004 by the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST).

⁷The Chang Jiang (or, in Cantonese, Cheung Kong) Scholar Program has been initiated in 1998 by the Ministry of Education with funding from Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing. It mostly targets scientists with foreign experience.

⁸For a non-exhaustive list of such programs, the reader may refer to the first appendix of Alex Joske, “Hunting the phoenix: The Chinese Communist Party’s global search for technology and talent”, *ASPI Policy Brief* 35, 2020; or to CSET’s Chinese Talent Program Tracker. See Emily S. Weinstein, “Talent Program Tracker”, CSET, November 2020.

⁹“新中国成立以来最大规模海归潮形成达 265 万人”, 人民日报, 12th April 2017.

¹⁰Julie Zhu et al., “Insight: China quietly recruits overseas chip talent as US tightens curbs”, Reuters, 24th August 2023. One can independently confirm that some postings on LinkedIn and other platforms indeed mention some opportunities in fields involving classified information and in the defense industry, and invite applicants to apply through SASTIND. See, e.g., Chen Chen, “2024 年度国家人才项目正式申报”, LinkedIn, 8th April 2024.

¹¹Joske, *op. cit.*

¹²王亚萍, 周鑫, “习近平讲话在海内外引起热烈反响 学子信心增强”, 人民日报, 28th May 2015. France ranks among the ten most attractive countries for Chinese students. According to some Chinese sources, about 5% of outbound Chinese university students (about 27,000) were sent to France in 2021–2022, representing about 7% of the overseas student cohort. About 40% of them study arts and language. See “中国留学发展报告蓝皮书 (2023-2024)”, Center for China and Globalization, 26th February 2024.



host (or home) country's organization on behalf of a Chinese organization, joining professional associations etc.¹³

Indeed, the goal is not necessarily to entice the targeted "talents" to come back to China.¹⁴

To facilitate such efforts, a mosaic of associations has been established around the world, to gather ethnic Chinese coming from the same localities (diaspora organizations), the same Chinese universities (alumni associations) or working in the same industries (professional associations). A 2021 research article counted 95 professional associations across Europe, with 47 of them publicly stating on their website being involved in transferring technologies to China.¹⁵ Those associations are mobilized by the United Front bureaucracy to collect information on technological development going on in the host or home country, help identify technologies and talents (sometimes at the request of their principals¹⁶), sensitize new recruits to the needs to "serve the motherland", set up databases of scholars whose knowledge or know how may match the needs of PRC-based organizations, and help recruit some of them. Some of them also act as "work stations" or "talent recruitment stations" and, as such, are paid by Chinese public entities to conduct such work.¹⁷

The "overseas Chinese" targeted by such initiatives are defined in such broad terms so as to include *huaqiao* 华侨 (Chinese citizens living overseas), *huajuan* 华眷 (their dependents and relatives), *huayi* 华裔 (their descendants) and *huaren* 华人 (ethnic Chinese who may never have set a foot in China). But, as we will see, non-ethnic Chinese may also be recruited through those channels or, in rarer cases, participate in recruitment efforts.

0.2 PRC talent recruitment efforts as a policy challenge

In most cases, the talent recruitment and technology transfer activities of CCP-linked organizations abroad are legal. Yet, they raise issues of integrity and principle. This is, for instance, the case when a member of an association acting as a work station for a local government lobbies their employer, a company or research institution of their host country (France in our case), to engage in scientific cooperation with the said government. Other problematic instances detailed in this report include researchers invited to carry out scientific seminars with a Chinese scientific institution which

¹³“人事部教育部科技部公安部财政部关于印发《关于鼓励海外留学人员以多种形式为国服务的若干意见》的通知”, 国务院, 14th May 2001.

¹⁴As early as 1996, the official slogan of "returning to serve the country" (回国服务) evolved into "serving the country" (为国家服务), as the Ministry of Education started to encourage overseas scholars to return for short visits to "serve the country" from abroad. Mette Thunø, "China's new global position: Changing policies towards the Chinese diaspora in the twenty-first century", in Bernard Wong, Chee-Beng Tan, eds., *China's Rise and the Chinese Overseas*, Routledge, 2017; David Zweig, "Competing for talent: China's strategies to reverse the brain drain", *International Labour Review* 145:1-2, 2006.

¹⁵Didi Karsten Tatlow, Hinnerk Feldwisch-Drentrup, Ryan Fedasiuk, "Europe: A technology transfer mosaic", in William C. Hannas, Didi Karsten Tatlow, eds., *China's Quest for Foreign Technology: Beyond Espionage*, Routledge, 2021.

¹⁶The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese reportedly gave the Association of Wenzhou PhDs USA a list of US-based PhD students and graduates from Wenzhou to recruit as members. See Joske, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹⁷*Ibid.*



has appointed them as visiting scholars, without disclosing this relationship to their French employer.¹⁸

Moreover, as has been documented for other geographies, such professional associations have been used for the recruitment of spies.¹⁹ Some have also been directly involved in economic espionage, as shown by the Cao Guangzhi and the Yang Chun-lai cases studied by Alex Joske.²⁰ As the Charles Lieber and Song Guozheng cases — to name only two — have shown, recruitment plans such as those promoted by some of the associations described in this study are also frequently implicated in economic theft and espionage.²¹ These links are so pervasive that, in the United States, the FBI officially warns scientists against participating in talent programs.²²

0.3 Previous research on China’s technology transfer policy

The present report builds on an increasingly rich scholarship on the subject.

Chinese Industrial Espionage, by William C. Hannas, James Mulvenon and Anna B. Puglisi (2012) provided the inspiration for our work and has proven an important reference guide to better understand some of the concepts and mechanisms it seeks to analyze.²³

Alex Joske’s “Hunting the phoenix” (2020) introduced the concept of “work stations” and featured many detailed cases showcasing the often-problematic nature of those recruitment efforts and their overlapping with political influence initiatives.

Other recent works include an edited volume by William C. Hannas and Didi Kirsten Tatlow (2021) which features two articles on technology transfer from Europe, and a 2020 report by the Center for Security and Emerging Technology that analyzed the webpages of 208 professional associations, mostly based on keywords.²⁴

Yet, no work has yet focused on France, where Chinese technology transfer strategies are still poorly understood.²⁵

¹⁸ Aruna Viswanatha, Kate O’Keeffe, “China’s Funding of U.S. Researchers Raises Red Flags”, *Wall Street Journal*, 30th January 2020.

¹⁹ Didi Kirsten Tatlow, “The Chinese Influence Effort Hiding in Plain Sight”, *The Atlantic*, 12th July 2019. In another case, a Chinese scholar suspected of trying to recruit a Belgian scientist was married to an employee of the Chinese Professional Association in Belgium (Andrew Rettman, “China suspected of bio-espionage in ‘heart of EU’”, *EUObserver*, 6th May 2020).

²⁰ Joske, *op. cit.*

²¹ See, e.g., “Threats to the U.S. Research Enterprise: China’s Talent Recruitment Plans”, Staff Report, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, US Senate, November 2019. On the Lieber case, see “Former Harvard University Professor Sentenced for Lying About His Affiliation with Wuhan University of Technology; China’s Thousand Talents Program; and Filing False Tax Returns”, US Attorney’s Office, District of Massachusetts, 26th April 2023. On the Song case, “University Researcher Sentenced to Prison for Lying on Grant Applications to Develop Scientific Expertise for China”, US Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, 14th May 2021.

²² “The China Threat — Chinese Talent Plans Encourage Trade Secret Theft, Economic Espionage”, FBI.

²³ Hannas et al., *op. cit.*

²⁴ Tatlow et al., *op. cit.*; eidem, “Technology Transfer from Germany”, in Hannas & Tatlow, eds., *op. cit.*; Ryan Fedasiuk, Emily S. Weinstein, “Overseas Professionals and Technology Transfer to China”, CSET, 21st July 2020. While not focusing in France, the report wrongly traces the establishment of the France-based Europe-China Investment Association (ECIA, 欧中投资协会) and Association Holiharmo (法中整和协会) back to 1901, and refers to them as the oldest groups of the studied sample. ECIA and Holiharmo were in fact set up in 2015 and 2012, respectively, as non-profit organizations. Such associations are commonly called “1901 Law associations”, in reference to the Law of July 1st 1901 which created their status.

²⁵ Sinopsis has published several reports on the broader topic of Chinese technology transfer efforts in Europe, including: Ralph Weber, “Unified message, rhizomatic delivery: A preliminary analysis of PRC/CCP



As the People’s Republic of China is increasingly turning towards European countries as a source of knowledge and technologies to offset the consequences of growing wariness on the part of the United States, Australia and other close partners, our paper shows that France is not insulated from risks of unwanted technology transfer to China.²⁶

Our research has identified a total 71 talent recruitment “work stations” (i.e. associations contracted by China-based public organizations to usher in talents and technologies in accordance to their developmental needs) established in France, a higher figure than previously reported. Knowledge and technologies targeted by the associations running those work stations include dual-use ones.

Our paper also explains how those associations’ entanglement in party-state networks tasked to acquire talents and technologies to boost national power make them unlikely partners for sound and transparent scientific cooperation aimed at increasing global knowledge. This situation is all the more problematic as China has been labeled a “strategic rival” by the European Commission.

influence and the united front in Switzerland”, Sinopsis, 18th December 2020; Filip Jirouš, “Nothing of interest in a small country? Czech-Chinese academic exchange in the age of military-civil fusion”, Sinopsis, 22th September 2020.

²⁶See, for instance Ling Xin, “Chinese science officials tour Europe in bid to strengthen ties amid growing US sanctions”, *South China Morning Post*, 29th October 2023.



1 France-based overseas Chinese associations and technology transfer to China

We analyzed 20 associations whose role is to initiate or facilitate knowledge and technology transfer by gathering information on research institutions, individual scholars and their research, and by inviting them to cooperate with Chinese organizations on scientific or innovative projects or even relocate to China to “serve the country” - according to the terminology used by some of them.²⁷ Together, they claim to gather more than 10 000 members, for the most part professionals working in French universities and businesses. At least 26 associations and individuals (some of them outside our core sample) have been established as talent recruitment work stations and, as such, have been receiving funds from Chinese public organizations to spot and pursue talents and technologies matching the strategic needs of their Chinese patrons.

This sample includes all 15 France-based members of the Federation of Chinese Professional Associations in Europe (FCPAE), an umbrella organization whose website profile clearly states its status as a platform for overseas Chinese scholars and students to “come back to the country and serve the country” and which carries out many activities to implement this mission (see Section 2.1). The sample also includes five associations which are not FCPAE members. Of these five, three (ASSOGES, AIFC and AEFC) operate talent recruitment “work stations”. As for the remaining two: AFCE is led by a Thousand Talents Plan participant and compiles databases of experts for the benefit of Chinese organizations; DFC, which was profiled in a previous report, regularly organizes recruitment events for local governments (Guangzhou’s Tianhe district, Hangzhou etc.).²⁸ All 20 associations in our sample are thus linked to the PRC’s talent recruitment efforts.

1.1 Key associations gathering together ethnic Chinese working in science and technology in France

Table 1 presents our sample of 20 associations.

1.1.1 A typology of associations

Our research has identified 15 **professional associations** bringing together scholars of Chinese descent working in the same industry (automotive, aerospace, IT etc.) active in technology transfer toward China.

In addition to those professional associations, **diaspora organizations** or **Chinese university alumni associations** may also be involved in promoting technology transfer to China. In France, this is for example the case of the French chapters of the Alumni Associations of Xiamen University, Beihang, Tongji, Wuhan University etc. We include two such associations in our core sample.

Other associations have also been established by what we may call “**technology transfer entrepreneurs**”. More generalist in focus, these seem to have sensed the business

²⁷See, e.g., for ASICEF: “协会介绍”, ASICEF; for AICF: “中国旅法工程师协会 2016 年 20 周年年会及换届选举在巴黎成功举行, 宋劲松当选新一届会长”, AICF, 2nd June 2016; for AACF: “学会历史”, AACF.

²⁸DFC’s importance also lies in its connections to political influence activities, previously discussed in René Bigey, Alex Joske, “The tea leaf prince: Chinese Communist Party networks in French politics”, Sinopsis, 2nd March 2022, pp. 8 sq.



opportunity behind the talent recruitment efforts laid out by local PRC governments and spontaneously decided to target this “market”. Their leaders nonetheless maintain at least loose contacts with the united front bureaucracy and may be sensitive to the “guidance” and rewards it provides. Our sample includes three associations of this type.

Out of these 20 associations, 13 were set up after 2010, against a background of increased party-state attention placed on diaspora work and innovation-led economic growth.

1.1.2 Membership

The sum of the 20 associations’ claimed memberships (Table 1) adds up to more than 10,000 members. These figures may be inflated or refer to different periods; membership may also overlap between associations. We note that some of the associations claiming the largest number of members — such as ACISFC (1200 members) or ACECE (500) — appear to be less active as of 2024 than they have been in the past.²⁹

While we have little visibility on the exact numbers and profiles of the associations’ general membership, the leaders of those associations are usually “experts” with first-hand knowledge of the latest international developments in their field and of the actual research being conducted in their laboratories.

Association leaders include current and former staff of industry leaders such as Airbus, Alstom, Areva (Orano), Atos, Cryohemt, Engie, Faurecia, Renault, Safran, Servier and Thales, and research institutions and organizations such as the French Academy of Science, École Normale Supérieure, INRIA, Nantes Thermal and Energy Laboratory, École Polytechnique, Paris Saclay, France Stratégie, Sorbonne University.

While the level of endorsement of their objectives and the degree of participation in their initiatives may vary greatly across members and sympathizers, these associations cover a large part of the French science and technology ecosystem. Beyond their own membership, this network of associations has also developed cooperation with other, more generalist associations, such as the Association of Chinese PhD students in France (Association des Doctorants Chinois en France, 全法中国博士生联谊会). Established in 2012, this association aims at gathering Chinese PhD students studying in France. It has drawn up a list of regions and corresponding universities and research institutions and appointed 11 of its members as contact points for Chinese PhD students studying at these institutions. Through joint events or the promotion of initiatives organized by professional associations studied in this report, it acts as an active recruiting ground for the latter.³⁰

²⁹Some of those associations, such as AFCDUD and AACF, have not been very active in recent years. AACF, which evolved from the Association des étudiants chinois en France pour le développement des échanges agricoles sino-français (AECDEA), established in 1985, mentioned difficulties in recruiting members as early as in 2015. See “中国留法人员农业学会举行特别年会 选举新理事会”, China News, 16th December 2015.

³⁰See “全法中国博士生联谊会巴黎高校及外省地区负责人信息汇总（2024年4月更新）”, 全法中国博士生联谊会 via WeChat, 18th April 2024. Although not a work station itself, it participates in talent-spotting events (for example: “2023 青岛招才引智推介会在巴黎举行”, 欧洲时报, 23th October 2023) and its leaders share the same official brand of “patriotism” (see “看到祖国的从容自信, 留法学子为北京冬奥会开幕式骄傲”, WRSA, 11th February 2022) as most of the associations studied in this report. It cooperates regularly with some of these associations, including by promoting or participating in their events. See, e.g., “北京市侨联与北京市人才工作局都来了! 法中孵化器协会成功举办 HICOOL 2024 海外宣讲会!”, AIFC via Wechat, 16th April 2024.



Table 1: Overview of the main French-based diaspora associations engaged in technology transfer

| Association ^a | Est. | Type | Membership | Work stations | Level of activity ^b | FCPAE member |
|---|------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Association of Chinese doctors and biologists in France (Association des médecins et biologistes chinois en France, AMBCF, 中国旅法生物医学协会) | 1986 | Professional | Unknown | 2 | High | Yes |
| Association of Chinese Scholars and Engineers in France (Association des scientifiques et des ingénieurs chinois en France, ASICEF, 全法中国科技工作者协会) | 1992 | Professional | 600 | 3 | High | Yes |
| Association of Chinese Engineers from France (Association des ingénieurs chinois de France, AICF, 中国旅法工程师协会) | 1996 | Professional | 1,000 | 10 | High | Yes |
| France–China Association of Business Leaders and Management Professionals (Association franco-chinoise des chefs d'entreprises et des professionnels en management et en sciences de gestion, ASSOGES, 法国法中企业家与管理者协会) | 2002 | Professional | 6,000 | 5 | Low | No |
| France–China Young Business Leaders Association (Association des jeunes chefs d'entreprises France Chine, AJCEFC, 中法青年企业家协会) | 2006 | Professional | Unknown | 15 | High | Yes |
| Information Communication Association of France-China Companies (Association des communication des informations des sociétés franco-chinois, ACISFC, 中欧企业信息交流协会) | 2007 | Professional | 1,200 | Unknown | Low | Yes |
| France–China Association for Sustainable Urban Development (Association franco-chinoise du développement urbain durable, AFCDUD, 中法城市可持续发展协会) | 2008 | Professional | 380 | 1 | Low | Yes |
| Overseas Chinese Association for Entrepreneurship (Association des Chinois à l'étranger pour la création d'entreprise, ACECE, 法国海外留学人员创业者协会) | 2010 | Professional | 500 | 5 | Low | Yes |
| Association Holiharmo (法中整和协会) | 2012 | Professional | Unknown | Unknown | Low | Yes |
| France–China Aerospace Association (Association aero-spatiale franco-chinoise, AASFC, 中国旅法航空航天协会) | 2013 | Professional | 200 | 2 | High | Yes |
| France–China Association for Information Science and Engineering (Association franco-chinoise en sciences et ingénierie informatiques, AFCSII, 中法信息科学与工程协会) | 2014 | Professional | Unknown | 2 | Low | Yes |
| Europe–China Investment Association (ECIA, 欧中投资协会) | 2015 | Professional | Unknown | Unknown | Medium | Yes |
| Association of Chinese Agronomists in France (Association des agronomes chinois en France, AACF, 中国留法人员农业学会) | 2015 | Professional | 50 | Unknown | Low | Yes |



Table 1 (cont.): Associations engaged in technology transfer

| Association | Est. | Type | Membership | Work stations | Activity | FCPAE |
|--|------|---------------|------------|---------------|----------|-----------------|
| Association of Chinese Automotive Engineers in France (Association des ingénieurs chinois de l'automobile en France, AICAF, 法国华人汽车工程师协会) | 2016 | Professional | 300 | 2 | High | Yes |
| France-China Incubator Association (Association d'incubateur franco-chinois, AIFC, 法中孵化器联盟协会) | 2018 | Professional | Unknown | 4 | High | No ^c |
| Tongji University Alumni Association (同济大学法国校友会) | 2008 | Alumni | 70 | Unknown | Medium | Yes |
| Xiamen University Alumni Association (厦门大学法国校友会) | 2015 | Alumni | 130 | 1 | High | Yes |
| Développement France-Chine (DFC, 欧洲华创会) | 2015 | Entrepreneurs | Unknown | Unknown | Medium | No |
| France-China Energy Association (Association franco-chinoise de l'énergie, AFCE, 法中能源协会) | 2017 | Entrepreneurs | Unknown | Unknown | High | No ^c |
| French and Chinese Experts Association - Association des experts français et chinois (AEFC, 法中高级人才交流协会) | 2017 | Entrepreneurs | Unknown | 2 | High | No |

^a The French names of many of those associations are grammatically incorrect. To facilitate further research, we have chosen not to correct them and cite them instead as they have been officially registered.

^b To assess their activity as of 2024, we examined the public communications of the associations and some of their members. Those assigned a "low" level of activity are typically those that have only been organizing social events (as opposed to scientific seminars, talent recruitment events etc.) in the past year or that have only been communicating on events organized by other associations or partners.

^c Although these two associations are not FCPAE members, representatives of both have attended FCPAE events.

1.2 Work stations: Associations contracted by Chinese public authorities

Table 2 in the Appendix shows 71 France-based work stations identified in the course of our research. While it appears likely that more work stations exist, the figure presented here is already higher than had been previously reported in publicly available studies.³¹

A possible result of the COVID-19 crisis and of greater caution on the part of Chinese authorities in their communication following public reports on this topic, most of the work stations identified have been established before 2020. Activity seems to have resumed in recent months, though, with at least 5 of them having been set up in 2023 and 2024 alone.

1.2.1 French entities running work stations

The 71 work stations in this study are run by 26 associations and individuals.

Of these 26 entities, 13 are associations (or their leaders) included in the sample in 1, seven are student associations or diaspora organizations, and the remaining eight are companies, individuals or unspecified organizations (see Table 2).

³¹Joske's 2020 report (*op. cit.*) uncovered more than 600 stations globally, including 46 in France. At the same time, these 71 work stations may not all be active as of 2024.



Trusted people, often association leaders, can also be nominated as “talent attraction ambassadors” (引才大使) in an individual capacity.³²

1.2.2 Partners in China

Confirming their central role within the France based Chinese professional associations landscape, ASICEF and AICF were among the first batch of work stations accredited by the State Council’s Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (subsumed by the United Front Work Department in 2018³³) in 2014. Both also act as work stations for the UFWD’s Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA) at the national level.³⁴ Together with AMBCF and UCECF³⁵, they have also become work stations for one specific recruitment program: the HOME program (« Help our Motherland Through Elite Intellectual Resources from Overseas” or 海智计划), which is run by the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST).³⁶

Most of the other work stations address the needs of local governments at the provincial (17), city (21), or district (13) levels and, sometimes, individual institutions (WRSA, Belt and Road International Talent Fund), universities (Beihang University, Southwest University, Wenzhou Medical University) and even companies (AICAF was indeed appointed by the Wuhan-based car manufacturer, Dongfeng to act as a talent recruitment work station for the group).³⁷ Most associations have been acting as work stations for various “clients” at the same time. AJCEFC and its president, Zhu Yueqiu (who has himself received united front appointments), acts as a work station for as many as 15 local governments, most of them located in the Yangtse Delta.³⁸ AICF (which has been working as a work station for at least 10 China-based public contractors) and ACECE (five, at the very least) follow.

³²This is the case of, e.g., Jia Zixian (honorary president of the French chapter of the Xiamen University Alumni Association, also involved in the leadership of several associations including ACECE, ASICEF, UCECF etc.), Gong Dusheng (a former director for international development of Paris & Co., the Paris economic development and innovation agency, who has been active in the leadership of many associations including ASICEF, UCECF, AICF etc.), Ni Jincheng (on whom more below) and Alain Labat (president of the Federation of France-China Associations and vice-president of the Lyon-based New France-China Institute).

³³Alex Joske, “Reorganizing the United Front Work Department: New Structures for a New Era of Diaspora and Religious Affairs Work”, *China Brief* 19:9, 2019.

³⁴For AICF, see: 焦龙, “科技桥梁, 文化纽带——中国旅法工程师协会”, Shanghai Overseas Returned Scholars Association, 24th October 2018. For ASICEF, see: “马燕生公参出席欧美同学会法国联络工作站授牌仪式”, Ambassade de la République populaire de Chine en République française, 1st November 2016.

³⁵UCECF (Union des Chercheurs et des Étudiants Chinois en France) is the local CSSA (Chinese Scholars and Students Association). It was established in 1986 and, as is the case in many other countries, is closely coordinated by the Chinese embassy in France (some of its brochures even mention the phone number of the education department of the Chinese embassy as its own). It can be mobilized for political occasions such as counter-protests (it was the case in 2019 when a group of sympathizers of Hong Kong protesters organized events in Paris: “雨中展激情 留法中国学生自发抵制香港激进分子示威”, UCECF via WeChat, 20th August 2019) or official visits by a party or state leader.

³⁶“海智计划联系的海外科技团体名单”, Zhongshan City Association for Science and Technology, 1st June 2017.

³⁷“法国华人汽车工程师协会与东风公司签署战略合作意向书”, AICAF, 5th November 2017.

³⁸Zhu was appointed as advisor to the 6th committee of the Jiaxing Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese in 2012, an overseas member of Suzhou’s Wujiang District Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese the same year, and an executive member of the Jiangsu Overseas Exchange Association in 2013. See “部分荣誉”, “合作城市”, AJCEFC.



1.3 Methods and industrial priorities

Targeted collection of data on research institutions and academics to share with Chinese organizations and connecting them to China's ubiquitous recruitment programs is one of the main methods used by the studied associations to achieve their aims.

For instance, the France-China Energy Association (Association franco-chinoise de l'énergie - 法中能源协会), set up by a former employee of Areva while he was still working for the nuclear energy group (since renamed Orano), openly advertises on its website building up a database of European energy experts for the benefit of Chinese authorities and companies.³⁹

Actual recruitment of the targeted scientists is often carried out through official recruitment programs, which offer extremely attractive packages to the targeted scientists (see, for instance, the Lieber case mentioned above) and may in some cases be akin to poaching. Many of the past and current leaders of those associations are themselves awardees of the recruitment programs they promote. This is for example the case of the following:

- Chemist Chen Yong 陈勇, former president of ASICEF and current professor at Ecole Normale Supérieure (Thousand Talents, Changjiang, China Academy of Science overseas evaluation expert, member of the advisory committee of Wuhan National Optoelectronics Laboratory),⁴⁰
- Jonathan Zhang Zhicheng 张志成, former employee of nuclear company Areva (Orano) and current president of AFCE (Thousand Talents),⁴¹
- Bai Jinbo 白晋波 (materials scientist) former vice-president of ASICEF and current research director at Laboratoire de Mécanique Paris-Saclay (Thousand Talents);⁴²
- Yang Guanghua 杨光华, the first president of ACECE (Thousand Talents),⁴³
- Li Hao 李皓, a former vice president of ASICEF and a member of AICF, AJECF etc. and currently a researcher at INRIA / Laboratoire interdisciplinaire des sciences du numérique (HOME, Chang Jiang, China Academy of Science overseas evaluation expert).⁴⁴

Some of those associations have also been instrumental in initiating cooperation between French and Chinese institutions. ASICEF's website mentions that its members have been active in many France-China joint laboratories and research programs recognized by the two governments.⁴⁵ Some of those research programs may benefit the two countries, although it is unclear if those members have notified their home institution about their ASICEF membership and provided all the necessary details about

³⁹“法中能源协会”, AFCE. We do not know if Jonathan Zhang notified his employer of his parallel venture. Our email to Areva (Orano) on this subject (April 2024) was left unanswered.

⁴⁰“陈勇: 学而优则创”, Wuhan Institute of Biotechnology, 25th June 2015; “Yong CHEN”, Département de Chimie, ENS; 种林, “代表学人服务学人——记全法中国留学人员团体联合会”, 神州学人, 10th February 2010.

⁴¹“清华大学人工智能与人因工程课题组招聘博士后与科研助理”, 时代学者, 15th June 2023.

⁴²“西北大学 5 位教授入选第十四批国家“千人计划”, 高层次人才项目办公室, 19th April 2023.

⁴³“喜讯: 昆山小核酸基地人才引进再获丰收”, KSRI, 1st September 2014.

⁴⁴“2019 欧洲华人十大科技领军人才”, FCPAE; 种林, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵“航协 (AASFC) 协办并参加 2021 国际航空航天产业人才大会 (IAITC)”, AASFC, 8th August 2021.



ASICEF's links with the United Front bureaucracy as well as its role as a work station.

The list of technologies targeted by those associations may be influenced by China's industrial priorities as laid out by its many industrial plans. Yet, it is also dependent on the "supply", i.e. the fortes of the existing French science and technology ecosystem and the field of specialty of their most enthusiastic members. A few professional associations are specialized in industries in which France is traditionally strong: aerospace (AASFC); car manufacturing (AICAF); medicine and biology (AMBCF); agriculture (AACF); information technology (AFCSII). Others are more generalist, some focusing on technology startup projects (ACECE, AIFC) they seek to introduce in China, others on scholars themselves.

1.4 Activities linked to the Chinese defense industry

As the examples below will show, sensitive technologies and knowledge may also be targeted through seemingly mundane events. Most of the associations in our sample organize visits to China for their members, especially on the occasion of talent recruitment events in which matching sessions may be organized with recruiters. For example, in 2017, AEFC organized Alain Priou, former vice-president of Paris Nanterre University and expert in new materials for the aerospace industry (he conducted publicly-funded research for defense suppliers such as Dassault, EADS, INEO Defense etc.), to speak at a talent recruitment event organized in Hangzhou.⁴⁶ In September 2021, AASFC co-organized the International Aerospace Industry Talent Conference in Chengdu, Sichuan. The vice director of the provincial United Front Work Department attended the event, as well as the chief engineer of the provincial Commission for the development of military-civil fusion, an engineer of the Russian defense and aerospace company Tupolev, and the defense-oriented Sichuan Academy of Aerospace Technology. The event specifically discussed grooming talent for the Chinese defense sector and included a matchmaking session.⁴⁷

In some other cases, cooperation relationships have been established with Chinese organizations specialized in technology transfer or linked to the defense industry. In 2019, OuiCrea (ACECE) acted as a go between to strike a partnership between the SATT Network (a network of French agencies organizing technology transfer between research laboratories and the industry) and the Shanghai University of Science and Technology, a university supervised by the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense. The partnership officially aimed to "create conditions for the emergence of an international network of technology transfer".⁴⁸

1.4.1 Case study: AEFC as China advisor to Nobel Prize winner and laser specialist Gérard Mourou

In January 2020, AEFC's president, Claire Li, organized laser specialist and Nobel Prize winner Gérard Mourou's visit to China and accompanied Mourou to some of its main

⁴⁶"Des avions équipés d'antennes plus petites et moins nombreuses", ADIT, 19th June 2008. In his introductory speech, Alain Priou mentioned that this Hangzhou trip was perhaps his "25th trip" to China. See "7 membres d'AEFC sont invités à Hangzhou", AEFC, November 2017.

⁴⁷"航协 (AASFC) 协办并参加 2021 国际航空航天产业人才大会 (IAITC)", AASFC, 8th September 2021.

⁴⁸"协会介绍", ASICEF.



Figure 1: Gérard Mourou (front row, sixth from left), Claire Li (second row, fifth from left), Zhang Jie (front row, second from right), He Xiantu (front row, fourth from left). Source: [Peking University](#).

events. During this visit, the laser specialist met and talked with then premier Li Ke-qiang⁴⁹ and was appointed to an expert advisory committee set to advise Peking University in the establishment of national scientific facilities for laser-driven multi-type beams. In November the previous year, Gérard Mourou had been appointed to the Chinese Academy of Sciences.⁵⁰

In France, he has been a director of the Applied Optics Center set up by CNRS, Polytechnic University and ENSTA ParisTech, which conducts research for the French ministry of defense. In 2018, when he received his Nobel Prize in physics, Gérard Mourou was congratulated by then minister of defense Florence Parly.⁵¹

As Figure 1 shows, and as can be expected from Chinese laser physics specialists as well, most of Mourou’s fellows in that Peking University committee (a large majority of whom are members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences) conduct research with dual use applications or even weapons. For instance: CAS vice-president, Zhang Jie 张杰, has been an active promoter of military-civil integration in the research field,⁵² while He Xiantu 贺贤士 is credited with having developed China’s first neutron bomb and worked on its hydrogen bomb program. More interestingly, He Xiantu is also the director of the Peking University–CAEP New Structure Center for Applied Physics and Technology (北京大学-中国工程物理研究院新体制应用物理与技术研究中心) established in 2017, where research on lasers for atomic physics applications, laser plasma physics and other fields is conducted. When the center was launched, Peking University’s official communiqué stated the center had to “take the path of military-civil fusion” and that it was “an important realization to better serve the needs of China’s national defense”. It also called it the university’s “window” and “brand” for

⁴⁹“李克强同在华外国专家举行新春座谈会”, Xinhua, 17th January 2020.

⁵⁰“关于公布 2019 年中国科学院院士增选当选院士名单的公告”, Chinese Academy of Sciences, 22nd November 2019.

⁵¹“Florence Parly félicite Gérard Mourou pour sa récompense au prix Nobel de physique”, Direction générale de l’armement, 3rd October 2018.

⁵²钱思文, 滕潇焯, “加快建立军民融合创新体系研讨会在北京召开”, 上海交通大学, 党政办公室, 10th April 2017.



military-civil fusion.⁵³ CAEP refers to the Chinese Academy of Engineering Physics, which conducts R&D and tests for China's nuclear weapons program.⁵⁴

G rard Mourou's collaboration with Peking University seems to have been vetted by the French authorities as French defense contractor Thales, Polytechnique University (to which Mourou belongs) and Peking University signed a research agreement in 2019 during French President Macron's visit to China.⁵⁵ A year later, it resulted in Peking University and Thales signing a contract to develop a very high peak power laser system (2 PW) at 1Hz in China. In 2024, the cooperation is still ongoing, with G rard Mourou still an active participant.⁵⁶ It is unclear if the French side is fully aware of the military orientation of the research carried out by their partners and if measures have been devised to mitigate risks of misappropriation of the technology by defense oriented research teams of the university.

1.5 The impact of associations on technology transfer

Assessing the efficiency of the work of such associations / work stations, whose missions are manifold and not easily quantifiable nor always observable, is not an easy task. Yet, some of them still communicate on their achievements.

This is especially the case of those more focused on introducing more mature technologies, such as startups projects, into China. AJCEC thus claims to have been able to initiate the establishment of more than 50 technological companies in China since 2013, while AIFC claims to have introduced more than 400 "high quality foreign projects" to China and coordinated the implementation of 56 of them.⁵⁷ Besides, 36 high-level overseas talents and 12 innovation projects were apparently "introduced" in Jiaxing's Xiuzhou district in June 2023 on the occasion of an event co-organized by OuiCrea (ACECE).⁵⁸

⁵³“北京大学—中国工程物理研究院”新体制应用物理与技术研究中心”启动会在京顺利举行”, 北京大学工学院, 28th September 2017.

⁵⁴“Chinese Academy of Engineering Physics”, China Defence Universities Tracker, ASPI.

⁵⁵“Peking University and Thales sign a contract to develop a very high peak power laser system in China”, Thales, 29th July 2020.

⁵⁶“诺贝尔奖获得者 G rard Albert Mourou 教授访问北京激光加速创新中心”, 北京激光加速创新中心, 15th March 2024.

⁵⁷“协会简介”, AJCEFC; “万侨同心, 筑梦未来—法中孵化器联盟协会受邀参加第 22 届华创会”, AIFC, 29th July 2022.

⁵⁸“秀洲打出服务留学生 创新创业“组合拳””, 嘉兴日报, 12th June 2023.



2 Proxies of the party-state

Forming diaspora professional associations is a legitimate way for otherwise potentially isolated people to gather and discuss common topics of interest. However, the associations studied in the present report have little to do with spontaneous creations of autonomous actors in French civil society. Through their membership in a CCP-linked federation, their relationship with the united front bureaucracy and their dealings with the Chinese embassy in France, all of them have been sponsored or coopted by, or are at least linked to, the party-state. These links help explain why even associations that have not been contracted to officiate as “work stations” may still be receptive to official guidance as to how best to “serve the motherland”. Their entanglement in party-state networks also helps explain why some of their members have engaged in some sort of political influence (see section 4 below).

From 2009 to 2017, at least, the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO, a state agency later absorbed into the CCP United Front Work Department) convened the heads of those professional associations to China on a yearly basis to provide such guidance. Organized in partnership with provincial analogues of the OCAO (e.g., Sichuan in 2016, Jiangxi in 2017), the Overseas Chinese Professional Association Leaders Conference (海外华侨华人专业协会会长联席会) served as an occasion for government officials to provide professional associations abroad with updates on preferential policies for returnees, remind their leaders of their mission “for the motherland”, but also to sign cooperation agreements with industrial zones dedicated to returnees (侨梦苑).⁵⁹ Public reports indicate about 200 leaders including those of AASCF, AICF and AFCDUD participated in the 2016 and 2017 editions, respectively.⁶⁰

The conclusions drawn from this section apply to all 20 associations in our sample. 15 of them are members of the Federation of Chinese Professional Associations in Europe (FCPAE), whose links with the Chinese party-state are detailed in Section 2.1 below. Among the remaining five associations, one (AEFC) is led by a leader coopted by the united front bureaucracy. Two (AIFC and DFC) have established formal links with this bureaucracy: AIFC has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Liaoning province Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, while DFC draws part of its Chinese name from the the “Conference on Overseas Chinese Pioneering and Developing in China” (华侨华人创业 发展洽谈会), co-organized by the OCAO. AFCE has participated in FCPAE events.⁶¹ It has also signed cooperation agreements with local governments.⁶² As for ASSOGES, its website explicitly mentions its status

⁵⁹“第七届海外华侨华人专业协会会长联席会在蓉开幕”, 四川日报, 13th September 2016.

⁶⁰“旅法航协参加第七届海外华侨华人专业协会会长联席会”, AASFC, September 2016; “第七届海外华侨华人专业协会会长联席会在蓉开幕”, 四川省人民政, 13th September 2016; “第八届海外华侨华人专业协会会长联席会南昌举行”, State Council OCAO, 27th November 2017. During her speech at the 2016 edition, the director of the State Council OCAO, Qiu Yuanping 裘援平, emphasized that the event aimed at “utilizing the patriotic feelings of overseas Chinese professionals to realize the China Dream”. She went on to explain that “it is entirely possible for overseas Chinese to realize their own value and at the same time help upgrade their motherland’s economy in different ways (...) such as by introducing talents and ‘international scientific and technical exchange and cooperation’”. We have not identified public records of the conference after the 2017 edition. It is unclear whether it has disappeared following the State Council OCAO’s takeover by the UFWD, gone underground after facing greater scrutiny from Western governments, or something else.

⁶¹“第九届 FCPAE 欧洲论坛“智慧城市·绿色生活”在巴黎成功举行”, 欧美同学会, 16th October 2017.

⁶²“2022 年太原能源低碳发展论坛硕果累累”, 中国网生态中国, 5th September 2022.



as the representative in France and Europe of various (unspecified) Chinese government departments.⁶³

2.1 Coordination through the Federation of Chinese Professional Associations in Europe (FCPAE)

As shown in Table 1, 15 of the associations studied in this report are also members of the Federation of Chinese Professional Associations in Europe (FCPAE). As noted above, at least two more associations in our sample have participated in FCPAE events.

Set up in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2001, FCPAE gathers together 60 such associations across Europe, claiming to represent 20,000 members on the continent.⁶⁴

Ostensibly an independent professional organization, FCPAE acts as a liaison between Europe-based associations and the PRC political system. An analysis of FCPAE's broader membership throughout Europe yields a broader picture of professional associations' linkages and functions. While aspects of this broader profile — such as links to intelligence activity — are so far only documented outside France, the similarities and connections between French associations and their fellow FCPAE members outside France indicate a potential for this pattern to be reproduced in France as well.

2.1.1 FCPAE's mission and political linkages

FCPAE's website profile clearly states its status as a platform for overseas Chinese scholars and students to “come back to the country and serve the country”.

FCPAE's nationalistic orientation is also underlined in its 2001 mission statement which describes its members as “sons of the motherland” who “have to shoulder the mission of our times and the expectations of the nation and contribute their intelligence and strength to the power and prosperity of the motherland and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”.⁶⁵

The context of the federation's founding points to a concerted effort by Beijing to set up a structure capable of coordinating European professional associations. Indeed, despite his status as an obscure IT professional then based in Germany, Zhou Shengzong 周盛宗, the founder of the FCPAE, appears to have had the opportunity to meet several members of the CCP Politburo including then general secretary Hu Jintao, in the months preceding and following the creation of the FCPAE.⁶⁶ Moreover, in April 2002, only months after its establishment, the federation was already recognized by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council (now UFWO), which invited

⁶³ 协会活动, ASSOGES.

⁶⁴ “Federation of Chinese Professional Associations in Europe (FCPAE)”, LinkedIn.

⁶⁵ “联合会简介”, FCPAE.

⁶⁶ Sabine Kinkartz, 当远, “德国高科技企业多受间谍威胁”, DW, 5th November 2007. He also met then-deputy premier Li Yanqing and the head of the United Front Work Department in 2002: “李岚清会见海外留学人员”, 人民日报, 30th September 2002. In 2000, a delegation of the German Association of Chinese IT workers (Zhou was vice-president of the association) also allegedly met with Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Hu Jintao, Li Huihuan and others at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing: “首次德国 IT 博士代表团访华汇报”, Huali IT, 2000.



the FCPAE to recommend experts to participate to a science and technology “cooperation and exchange meeting”.⁶⁷

Today, FCPAE entertains close links with the China Association of Science and Technology (CAST), with which it has set up two joint “innovation bases” (in Belgium and Switzerland, respectively) to “absorb European technical teams and scientific organizations to carry out R&D for Chinese companies or send innovation teams — especially overseas Chinese innovation teams — to China to innovate”.⁶⁸

Nominally an NGO, CAST is a party-controlled organization and a constituent unit of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

CAST is also linked to the PRC intelligence apparatus. It maintains institutional and operational links with the China International Culture Exchange Center (CICEC), a front organization of the Ministry of State Security (MSS), China’s main civilian intelligence agency.⁶⁹ CAST was involved in at least one known industrial espionage operation: CAST’s Jiangsu branch was used as a cover for Xu Yanjun, a MSS officer who tried to steal technologies from Safran Aircraft Engines and GE Aviation.⁷⁰

In addition to indirect connections through FCPAE, CAST has direct links to some of the French-based associations analyzed in this study. Four of these associations act as work stations for a CAST-run talent plan, the HOME program (“Help our Motherland Through Elite Intellectual Resources from Overseas”, 海智计划; see Section 1.2).

As discussed below, the China Belgium Technology Center (CBTC) entertains intimate links with the Association of Chinese Professionals in Belgium (ACPB), which shares all the characteristics of the associations studied in the present report. Louvain, the city where it is being built, has long been a target of Chinese industrial espionage (including by the spouse of an ACPB member). FCPAE also organizes yearly “European forums” with the participation of the Chinese Ambassador posted in the host country (Germany in 2022, France in November 2024).

2.1.2 Case study: A FCPAE member organization and its links to industrial espionage

A fuller profile of FCPAE’s network of associations emerges from an analysis of that network’s main Belgian node.

Based in Louvain-la-Neuve, the China Belgium Technology Center (CBTC), launched during Xi Jinping’s 2014 visit to Belgium, is closely intertwined with efforts by Chinese professional associations in Europe to bring European talents and technologies into China.

⁶⁷“全欧华人专业协会联合会大事记”, FCPAE.

⁶⁸“创新创业基地介绍”, FCPAE. Besides, CAST leaders often participate to the main events organized by FCPAE (which CAST sometimes coorganizes). Zhou Shengzong himself has been inducted into the “HOME program” run by CAST.

⁶⁹CAST vice-presidents have acted as directors of CICEC (“中国国际文化交流中心第五届理事会名单”, CICEC; “第四届理事会理事名单”, CICEC). CICEC has participated in programs led by CAST (“CAST history”, USA Chinese Association for Science & Technology).

⁷⁰Jordan Robertson and Drake Bennett, “A Chinese Spy Wanted GE’s Secrets, But the US Got China’s Instead”, Bloomberg, 15th September 2022. Xu was sentenced to 20 years in prison in November 2022.



In 2016, FCPAE set up a “CAST-FCPAE Europe (Belgium) Base for Innovation and Entrepreneurship” on the premises of CBTC.⁷¹ The base’s representative was (and still is) Song Zhiwei 宋志伟, a computer scientist who arrived in Belgium in 1986 and, at that time of the base’s establishment, the president of the Association of Chinese Professionals in Belgium (ACPB), itself headquartered on CBTC’s premises. Song is an enthusiastic promoter of technology transfer to China.⁷² Song’s efforts have been acknowledged in Beijing. In 2013, Song was invited to the 12th session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Committee as an overseas Chinese delegate.⁷³ Song Zhiwei has now been recruited as business director of UI International, the Chinese state-owned company in charge of coordinating the CBTC project.⁷⁴ The CAST-FCPAE base he helped set up still organizes talent recruitment competitions and acts as a recruitment station for various local governments, such as Hainan province.⁷⁵ In 2018, it the base was credited as having helped identify and introduced a new dual-use system-on-a-chip (SOC) for China’s satellite navigation system, which contributed to the progress of China’s indigenous innovation efforts.⁷⁶

Louvain has long been a target of industrial espionage by China. In 2005, media reports cited suspicions that the Leuven Chinese Students and Scholars Association was involved in an economic intelligence network.⁷⁷ Besides, between 2010 and 2016, the Belgian Homeland security services (VSSE) also alerted the authorities of risks of espionage.⁷⁸ They namely alerted on the fact that two Chinese companies (Beijing ZGC Science Park and Shenzhen European Office) with links to the Ministry of State Security (MSS) set up subsidiaries on the campus of the Université Catholique de Louvain, in the same building as the one hosting the Centre de Technologies Moléculaires Appliquées (CTMA), a Belgian military-private joint venture that conducts research on bioweapons. The wife of a Chinese citizen working for the Association of Chinese Professionals in Belgium (the same association Song Zhiwei once presided) was also suspected of targeting Martin Zizi, a former bioweapons inspector for the Belgian military.⁷⁹

We note that contractors working for CBTC include civil works company CIT Blaton. CIT Blaton also participated in the refurbishing of the Embassy of Malta in Brus-

⁷¹“开启中欧科技交流与合作的新篇章”, GreenPost.SE, 9th September 2016.

⁷²In 2014, in an interview with the *China Daily*, he declared that his greatest wish was to “bring advanced European technologies back to China”. See 刘歌, “比利时留学生: 我们是中国的一面镜子”, 中国日报, 3rd December 2014.

⁷³“比利时侨胞宋志伟: 中国 IT 服务业需要发展世界级企业”, 共产党员网, 11th March 2013. The CPPCC carries little decision-making power within the Chinese political system but is the premier forum of the united front system. Currently chaired by Wang Huning, the CCP Politburo Standing Committee member responsible for united front work, the CPPCC is a microcosm of the party’s efforts to co-opt representatives from outside the party, bringing together party officials, intelligence officers, industry leaders, religious figures, academics and so on as a delegate. See Bigey & Joske, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴Gilles Bechet, “CBTC — Un point de passage entre la Chine et l’Europe”, *WAW Magazine* 38, 2017.

⁷⁵“海南新设 3 家海外高层次人才联络站”, *Xinhua*, 4th August 2018.

⁷⁶“自动驾驶、AR 技术…海南首届海外创新项目路演抢先看”, 南海网, 21st August 2018.

⁷⁷Jean-Pierre Stroobants, “Une université belge pourrait abriter un réseau d’espionnage industriel chinois”, *Le Monde*, 10th May 2005.

⁷⁸« Un réseau d’espionnage économique chinois en Belgique », AFP, 10th May 2005.

⁷⁹Andrew Rettman, *op. cit.* 5th May 2020. The Chinese embassy in Belgium reacted to the Euobserver article claiming it was unsubstantiated: “驻比利时使馆发言人就法国有关媒体涉华不实报道的声明”, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Kingdom of Belgium, 17th May 2020.



sels, which has been suspected of conducting espionage activities on behalf of the PRC.⁸⁰

2.2 Coordination through the united front system

At their own level as well, a large majority of those associations also maintain direct relationships with agencies in the united front system. Many of those relationships go through the Overseas Chinese affairs bureaucracy at the central or local level. For instance: two of the studied associations (ASICEF and AICF) were among the first batch of work stations accredited by the State Council's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (now UFWD) in 2014 and are still referenced on its website.⁸¹ As early as 2002, ASICEF's director met with the head of the fourth department of the Chinese Overseas Exchange Association (COEA, 中国海外交流协会) in Beijing to pledge support for developing "the motherland".⁸² COEA — in 2019 merged into the Chinese Overseas Friendship Association — was a key united front agency that cultivated contacts with overseas Chinese to attract talent and technology and conduct external propaganda.⁸³

Such relationships are often entertained with the united front bureaucracy at the local level. For example, in a 2018 letter to the Sichuan provincial Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, a united front agency, AASFC stated that, thanks to the "encouragement, support, guidance and help" of the federation, the association had been able to "make outstanding contributions to the economic development of the motherland" and that it would continue to contribute to the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese people".⁸⁴

Others have signed formal cooperation agreement with such local-level united front agencies as is the case of the Lyon-based AIFC, which signed a "strategic MoU" with Liaoning province's Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese in November 2023.⁸⁵

In France, another major conduit is the Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA, 欧美同学会). The WRSA is a primary organ liaising between the CCP united front bureaucracy diaspora Chinese scientists and scholars and professional associations. Ostensibly a non-government organization, the WRSA operates under the leadership of the CCP's Central Committee Secretariat and is administered by the United Front Work Department, with a UFWD cadre as its secretary-general.

⁸⁰Jacques Follorou, "Espionnage : les ombres chinoises de l'ambassade de Malte à Bruxelles", *Le Monde*, 15th May 2020.

⁸¹"侨团信息—科技侨团", 国务院侨务办公室.

⁸²Hannas et al., *op. cit.*, p. 81. Staffed with OCAO personnel, the COEA's fourth department was tasked with liaising with overseas Chinese professional groups, helping build innovation centers in China with the help of returnees etc.

⁸³"中国海外交流协会", 中国侨网; Joske, "Reorganizing...".

⁸⁴"Letter to the Sichuan provincial Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese by AASFC's President, Ye Weiming, Sichuan Province Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, 6th September 2018.

⁸⁵李睨, "辽宁省侨联与法国法中孵化器联盟协会签署战略合作协议", *China News*, 6th November 2023.



(a) AIFC President Sun Xueguang 孙学光 and Yu Jianming 于建明, deputy chief of the tenth bureau (Overseas Chinese Affairs) of the UFWD in 2021. Source: AIFC.
 (b) 1Kubator co-founder Joe Sun 孙桥瑜 with then WRSA president Chen Zhu 陈竺, displaying a signed version of Xi Jinping's book *The governance of China*. The picture was taken on the occasion of the 4th edition of the France-China Cultural Forum (Nice, 2019) co-organized by the WRSA and the Fondation Prospective et Innovation. The later is led by former prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, well-known for his coziness to China. Source: 1Kubator's WeChat page.

Figure 2: Partnering with the United Front Work Department.

The WRSA is active in both political influence and technology transfer efforts.⁸⁶ On the technology transfer front, it runs the official association for participants in the Thousand Talents Plan.⁸⁷ The WRSA once organized a talent spotting competition, called “Overseas Scholars Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition” (海外留学人员创新创业大赛).⁸⁸

In 2014, AICF was made a “liaison work station” of WRSA by its president, Chen Zhu 陈竺, a France-trained doctor who went on to become minister of health, member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and deputy chair of the National People's Congress.⁸⁹ ASICEF became WRSA's second “liaison work station” in November 2016, on the occasion of a ceremony held at the Chinese Embassy in France.⁹⁰ Several association leaders are members of WRSA local chapters.⁹¹ The WRSA has also co-organized multiple talent recruitment events alongside the associations studied in the present report (AFCSII, AFCDUD, AICF etc.).

The WRSA was also linked to 1Kubator, another startup incubator based in France (Lyon) that shut down in 2023. One of the co-founders of 1Kubator, Joe Sun (孙桥瑜), was an overseas member of the Chongqing chapters of WRSA and the Zhigong Party,

⁸⁶ A 2016 document issued by the CCP's general office set forth various missions for the WRSA: to become a pool of scholars dedicated to serving the nation (and promote technology and knowledge transfer), a think tank offering advice to political leaders and a new force in “people to people diplomacy” (i.e. political influence). See “中共中央办公厅印发《关于加强欧美同学会(留学人员联谊会)建设的意见》”, Xinhua, 3rd August 2016.

⁸⁷ Alex Joske, “The party speaks for you: Foreign interference and the Chinese Communist Party's united front system”, *ASPI Policy Brief* 32, 2020.

⁸⁸ Alex Joske, Jeffrey Stoff, “The United Front and technology transfer”, in Hannas & Tatlow, eds., op. cit. The contestants were mostly identified by the “liaison stations” set up over the world by the WRSA (such as AICF and ASICEF in France). Their projects were appraised by the Thousand Talent Expert Association.

⁸⁹ 焦龙, op. cit.

⁹⁰ “马燕生公参出席欧美同学会法国联络工作站授牌仪式”, Ambassade de la République populaire de Chine en République française, 1st November 2016.

⁹¹ This is for instance the case of Ye Fei, AMBCF, honorary overseas director of the Shanghai Chapter of the WRSA: 种林, op. cit.



one of the minority parties affiliated with the CCP-controlled United Front.⁹² In 2019, the inauguration by 1Kubator of a startup acceleration program in Chongqing was presented as a success of the WRSA's role as a "reserve of talents dedicated to serving the country" (留学报国人才库).⁹³

2.3 Coordination through the Chinese Embassy in France

PRC embassies provide an anchor for party-state officials to promote and coordinate technology transfer efforts carried out by local organizations. In Germany, for example, the Chinese embassy incentivizes scholars and students to take up leadership roles in professional associations, on occasion offering them a stamped certificate supposed to help their career if they chose to return to China.⁹⁴ In the UK, it has been observed that some Chinese consulates hold annual training sessions for new leaders of student federations within the consulate's districts, as well as "work seminars" (工作座谈会) to discuss their progress.⁹⁵

In France, most of the associations studied in this paper are similarly coordinated and supported by the Chinese embassy. A 2013 article published on the embassy's website mentions the organization of a meeting with various professional and student associations to better "unify and attract large numbers of scholars and students and utilize their professional advantages to serve the country". The students and scholars associations attending the meeting were also congratulated by the education counselor for their "patriotic enthusiasm" and their "outstanding contributions to serve the country".⁹⁶ The Chinese embassy has hosted or participated in several inauguration ceremonies of talent recruitment work stations. Many of the associations studied in the present report acknowledge on their website that they operate "under the guidance" or "with the support" of the cultural and scientific department of the Chinese embassy in France.

Within embassies, science and technology sections play an active role in identifying entities of interest to technology transfer efforts. According to a 2021 study, science and technology diplomats' roles include actively assessing foreign companies, universities, research institutions and individuals "who are pioneering technology products in a variety of fields" to see "how likely they would be to partner with Chinese firms, share intellectual property, or establish joint ventures in China". "[W]hen vetting potential partners, [science and technology] diplomats tend to recommend investment positions that advance Chinese equity in supply chains relevant to the

⁹²"重庆欧美同学会(重庆留学人员联谊会)第二届理事会", 重庆欧美同学会, 17th October 2018; "渝中举行留学青年大讲坛", 重庆政协报, 22nd July 2016. The Zhigong Party is especially active in technology transfer to China. See, e.g., Pär Nyrén, "The CCP's United Front Network in Sweden", *China Brief* 20:16, 2020.

⁹³See "重庆欧美同学会常务理事孙桥瑜携法国企业成功落户九龙坡区", 重庆欧美同学会, 19th November 2019. The French Consul General in Chengdu attended the event.

⁹⁴Didi Karsten Tatlow, "China's Influence Efforts in Germany Involve Students", *The Atlantic*, 12th July 2019.

⁹⁵William C. Hannas, personal communication, 30th May 2024.

⁹⁶"教育处召开留学法学生专业团体负责人座谈会", Ambassade de la République populaire de Chine en République française, 12th June 2013. Leaders of the following associations attended the meeting: ASICEF, AMBCF, AICF, AACF, AJECF (Association franco-chinoise pour le droit économique, France-China Association for Economic Law — not studied in this paper), UCECF etc.



Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) stated development objectives", including military technologies.⁹⁷

According to our research, 26% of the public events attended by the counselor for education and science between 2016 and 2018 (and 38% between 2014 and 2016), as publicised on the website of the Chinese Embassy in France, were related to talent recruitment to the benefit of Chinese entities.⁹⁸

2.4 The overlap between talent recruitment and political influence: The case of the Changzhou Friendship Association

The identification of professional associations' exchanges with the Chinese party-state bureaucracy and its affiliates uncovers their broader role in support of PRC policy. In addition to their most visible mission recruiting talent abroad and promoting cooperation, some associations are asked to assist China's external influence efforts by projecting a positive image of China toward French society. The following example illustrates how associations' united front and embassy contacts link them to political influence activities, a topic discussed in detail in Section 4.

In October 2014, Changzhou, a city of 5.4 million inhabitants in the rich province of Jiangsu, neighboring Shanghai, established the France–Changzhou Friendship Association in Saint-Rémy-l'Honoré, in the Paris region. The association was tasked with several missions, including political influence and talent recruitment. Indeed, the head of Changzhou's United Front Work Department, Shi Qiaofang 石巧芳, was appointed honorary president of the association, which itself was asked to "make efforts to act as a "civil ambassador", i.e., to promote China's official diplomatic agenda toward French society at large.⁹⁹

In the meantime, an agreement was signed with the "relevant departments" of the Changzhou government to set up a talent recruitment work station within the France–Changzhou Friendship Association. The whole ceremony was attended by the political counselor of the Chinese Embassy in France, Jin Xudong 金旭东, a cadre from the CCP's International Liaison Department (ILD).¹⁰⁰ The ILD's role is to build support for the party and its international agenda. The Mayor of Saint Rémy L'Honoré, Toine Bourrat (who later became a Senator), also delivered a speech on this occasion.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Ryan Fedasiuk, Emily S. Weinstein, Anna Puglisi, "China's Foreign Technology Wish List", CSET, May 2021.

⁹⁸"科技处", Ambassade de la République populaire de Chine en République française.

⁹⁹"法国常州联谊会成立典礼在巴黎举行", 中国侨网, 21st April 2021. This case is also briefly mentioned in Joske, "Hunting the phoenix...", p. 20.

¹⁰⁰"Charhar Newsletter", 2018 Vol. 1, p. 11. As Czech intelligence service BIS pointed out in its 2015 annual report, the ILD's "remit includes, besides foreign relations, intelligence activities." "Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2015", Security Information Service (BIS).

¹⁰¹"法国常州联谊会...".



3 Passing off as legitimate partners: CCP-linked professional associations and France's science and technology ecosystem

In spite of their affiliations with the party-state bureaucracy and of the objectives they seek to achieve, CCP-linked associations such as the ones described in this study have become deeply embedded in the French science and technology ecosystem. Some of them seem to have received the backing or at least the tacit endorsement of French public authorities, in France or in China.

As this section will show, some associations leaders have been invited to the Elysée presidential palace or joined the prime minister's delegation on an official visit to China. Despite their role as party-state sanctioned instruments for technology transfer to China, some of those associations have also managed to be recognized by respected institutions of the French science and technology ecosystem (members of the Academy of Sciences, SATT network, Station F etc.) as legitimate door-openers in China. Some have even benefited from the support of French consulates general in China during their missions in the country.

3.1 Case study: ACECE running France's largest startup incubator's China program

A striking example is OuiCrea, a startup incubator operated by the Association of Overseas Chinese for Entrepreneurship (Association des Chinois à l'étranger pour la création d'entreprises, ACECE).¹⁰² The group has simultaneously worked in concert with Chinese authorities while acting as a bridge to China for French institutions.

Founded in 2010 "to answer the Ministry of Education's call to encourage overseas students to come back to China for entrepreneurship", ACECE started up organizing the French component of the "Spring Light Cup", a startup contest co-organized by China's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology.¹⁰³ Its inauguration ceremony was attended by the director of the education department of the Chinese embassy in France.¹⁰⁴ That same year, ACECE's first president, Yang Guanghua 杨光华, seemingly had the opportunity to meet with Li Yuanchao, then director of the Central Committee's Organization Department (the agency ultimately in charge of the Thousand Talents Plan), and then CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao.¹⁰⁵ ACECE's official mission statement is imbued with the usual patriotic rhetoric, referring to China as "the motherland" and mentioning the "strong national pride" felt by over-

¹⁰²As of 2024, OuiCrea seems to have little activity.

¹⁰³The Spring Light Cup is the "startup" sister program of the Spring Light Program launched in 1996 by the MOE and which typically paid overseas Chinese scientists and engineers up to five times their normal salary to "return for short periods of time and render services to the country". The cup focuses on technology startups. See Hannas et al., *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁴"海外留学人员创业者协会"在法国巴黎成立", 中国新闻网, 5th June 2010.

¹⁰⁵"2012 欧洲华人十大科技领军人才", FCPAE, 2012.



Figure 3: Li Tianlun (first from left) and then prime minister Édouard Philippe (second from right) at the official residence of the French ambassador to China during Philippe's official visit in June 2018. Source: BFM TV.

seas Chinese students.¹⁰⁶ The association has also hosted several delegations led by the Overseas Chinese Affairs bureaucracy, part of the united front system.¹⁰⁷

In 2015, ACECE established OuiCrea, an incubator which made most of its turnover thanks to “success fees” granted by local governments for recruiting startups for their innovation contests, open subsidiaries, or even relocate to an industrial zone under that government’s jurisdiction. ACECE and OuiCrea have operated as a talent recruitment “work station” for government agencies in cities such as Hangzhou, Dongguan and Wenzhou.¹⁰⁸

OuiCrea was so well introduced in the French science and technology ecosystem that, in May 2019, it managed to bring France’s SATT network (of publicly funded technology transfer acceleration organizations) to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Shanghai-based National Eastern Tech-Transfer Center as well as with the defense-affiliated University of Shanghai for Science and Technology.¹⁰⁹

OuiCrea also partnered with Station F, France’s largest startup incubator, where OuiCrea’s office was located. OuiCrea was also entrusted by Station F’s general director as the

¹⁰⁶“协会成立背景”, ACECE. A specialist in gene and cell therapy, Yang Guanghua was recruited by various talent programs, including the Thousand Talent Program, and returned to China to set up a company. See “2012 欧洲华人...”. Li Tianlun, a biology PhD currently working for French energy company Engie, then took over the helm of the association.

¹⁰⁷For example, a representative of the Chengdu Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Chengdu in 2015: 王远, “成都海外引才专题推介会巴黎举行”, 人民网, 13th October 2015; the director of the Shanghai Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (FROC) in 2019: “上海海外联谊会代表团访法 倾听旅法侨界心声”, Sohu, 24th September 2019. ACECE participated in an event organized by the Shanghai FROC the following year: “地区侨联、高校侨联、校友会三级联动举办创新创业分享会”, 上海交通大学, 20th November 2020.

¹⁰⁸“杭州下沙区赴欧洲引才建海外留学人才巴黎联络处”, 出国留学吧, 20th February 2020; “东莞市委常委、组织部部长白涛率党政代表团赴欧洲开展招商引智系列活动”, 东莞日报, 22nd October 2015; “2021 年度单”, 温州市科学技术局, 2021, p. 62.

¹⁰⁹“Le Réseau SATT signe deux accords de partenariat pour développer la coopération internationale entre la France et la Chine”, SATT Nord, 17th May 2019. Shanghai UST is supervised by the State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.



exclusive operator of its official “China Program”.¹¹⁰ Station F was inaugurated in 2018 by President Emmanuel Macron, who once dreamed of transforming France into a “startup nation”. Although privately funded, it has somehow become a symbol of this ambition and of France’s efforts to promote entrepreneurship in new technologies.

OuiCrea’s role in CCP-led technology transfer efforts seems to have been overlooked or dismissed by French authorities. In 2018, the president of ACECE and director of OuiCrea, Li Tianlun 李天伦, was invited to join the official delegation of then Prime Minister Édouard Philippe during his official visit to China (see Figure 3).¹¹¹

3.2 Case study: AEFC’s network in the French Academy of Sciences

Another example is the Association of French and Chinese Experts (Association des experts français et chinois, AEFC), set up in Paris in 2017.

Key features distinguish AEFC from other associations studied in this report. Firstly, the scholars it seeks to recruit are not primarily ethnic Chinese. Secondly, partly thanks to the help of its honorary president, French biologist and academician Yvon Le Maho (who was awarded the Chinese Friendship Medal in 2023), it targets very high-level scientists such as Nobel Prizes and academicians.¹¹²

AEFC typically organizes for those scholars to come to China to participate in seminars, teach for short periods in Chinese universities, or work for a Chinese company for a period of time. Beside Nobel Prize Gérard Mourou, other high-level scholars sent to China by the association include Jean-Louis Monin, then head of a research program at the French National Center for Space Studies (Centre national d’études spatiales, CNES)¹¹³ as well as air and space academician and longtime CNES researcher Alain de Lefte and physicist and astronaut Jean-Jacques Favier.¹¹⁴ Biochemist and academician Eric Westhof is another frequent participant in AEFC missions.¹¹⁵ In 2019, he signed an agreement with Southwest University to help upgrade its State Key Laboratory on Silkworm Biological Genomics. The 2019 signature ceremony was presented as an important event of the 2019 edition of the Chongqing Talents Conference and had reportedly received “the strong support of AEFC”.¹¹⁶

Married to CNRS researcher and dynamic meteorology specialist Laurent Li, himself an occasional participant to AEFC’s events, AEFC’s president Claire Li (Shao Hui 邵

¹¹⁰Roxanne Varza, “OuiCrea: the France-China Program at Station F”, Medium, 16th February 2018.

¹¹¹Édouard Philippe’s diplomatic counselor was then Emmanuel Lenain, a former French Consul General in Shanghai who was instrumental in setting up the France China Foundation. The latter had links with both the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, indirectly, the Central Military Commission, and counts many former members of French President Emmanuel Macron’s government and intelligence professionals among its (French) members. See René Bigey, “France’s ‘influence diplomacy’ under CCP influence”, Sinopsis, 11th May 2023.

¹¹²樊巍, 邓孝慈, “这位欧洲”双料院士”为何获中国政府友谊奖? 专家: 致力中法科学合作”, 环球网, 7th February 2024.

¹¹³He participated in the second international symposium on the peaceful applications of space technologies in 2018. 闫金久, “世界航天领军人物聚焦”太空技术+健康应用”, 国防部网, 16th May 2018.

¹¹⁴何章艺, “我校与太空研讨会代表团举行座谈会”, Hainan Medical University, 14th May 2018.

¹¹⁵See “法国科学院院士 Eric Westhof 教授一行访问我所”, First Institute of Oceanography, 6th June 2018; “校党委书记康骞会见法国科学院 Eric Westhof 院士一行”, Chongqing University of Technology, 5th January 2024. In 2023, Eric Westhof was also appointed guest professor at the College of Life Sciences of Shihezi University in Xinjiang. See 孙辉, “法国科学院院士 Eric Westhof 来石河子大学座谈交流”, 22nd August 2023. He was accompanied by AEFC’s president, Claire Li.

¹¹⁶“人才引进, 聚力高质量发展”, The Paper, 12th November 2023.



Figure 4: AEFC president Claire Li (left), Olivier Lyon-Caen (seventh from left) and a team from Beijing Tiantan hospital, one of China's most renowned neurosurgery institutions. Source: AEFC website.

晖) is also the vice-president of the French Chapter of the Nanjing University Alumni Association and was once appointed to the executive council of the Jiangsu Overseas Exchange Association (江苏省海外交流协会).¹¹⁷ The Jiangsu Overseas Exchange Association is the provincial chapter of the China Overseas Exchange Association, a key United Front group that was taken over by the China Overseas Friendship Association (COFA) in 2019 after its parent agency, the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office itself fell into the remit of the United Front Work Department the previous year. As of 2024, AEFC acts as a talent recruitment work station for at least one local government (Nanjing's Jiangning district), while its president was formally appointed a "talent recruitment ambassador" for Wuxi's Liangxi district in her personal capacity in May 2023.¹¹⁸

Proportional to the level seniority of the scholars the association is in touch with, its access to the highest spheres in both China and France seems unparalleled. A picture on AEFC's website shows AEFC president Claire Li, then health advisor to President François Hollande Olivier Lyon-Caen and a team from Beijing Tiantan hospital, one of China's most renowned neurosurgery institutions, posing in front of the Elysée presidential palace (see Figure 4). Fourth from left is Dr. Liu Song 刘松, who graduated from Shanghai's Naval Medical University (海军军医大学) and worked at China's Naval Medical University (supervised by the People's Liberation Army) before completing his training in France (Rouen), working at Hôpital Bicêtre (Paris) and conducting research in neurosurgery at INSERM (National Institute for Health and Medical Research). In 2010, he was appointed as a "distinguished expert" to the Beijing Tiantan hospital after being inducted into a talent recruitment program, the

¹¹⁷“法国科学院院士埃尔韦·莱·特鲁 一行访问复旦大学大气与海洋科学系”, Fudan University, Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, 20th September 2018; 扬眼, “做大海外引才”朋友圈”, 梁溪首个欧洲人才工作站揭牌”, 扬子晚报, 22nd May 2023; “江苏省海外交流协会第五届理事会副会长、常务理事、理事名单”, 江苏省海外交流协会, 26th November 2018.

¹¹⁸“首届全球菁英人才节开幕 近 2000 名领军人才齐聚金陵”, 南京日报, 24th June 2019; “做大海外引才”朋友圈”, 梁溪首个欧洲人才工作站揭牌”, 扬子晚报, 23rd May 2023.



Beijing Overseas Talent Aggregation Project (北京海外人才聚集工程) initiated by Beijing municipality the year before.¹¹⁹

Probably for the same reason (and also possibly due to ignorance about the background and objectives of the association), many of AEFC's missions to China have received the support of the French Consulates General in China.¹²⁰

4 Political influence efforts: The other side of the coin

Although their primary mission is to identify talents and technologies and link them up with various conduits through which they can be absorbed by Chinese organizations, those associations are deeply embedded in the party-state nexus. Many of these associations have developed under the auspices of the united front system, with (engineered or spontaneous) “patriotism” as one of the main engines for mobilization. Therefore, they are often also used as conduits for political influence towards the overseas Chinese (scientific) community as well as French society at large.

This is not a recent phenomenon. As early as 2011, at the occasion of the All-China Conference on Overseas Chinese Work, then State Councilor Dai Bingguo 戴秉国 articulated a vision to turn all overseas Chinese into “public diplomats”. He invited them to promote an “objective” image of China to their host governments and societies, to act as “good messengers” (好使者) to promote cooperation, and to give up their business-minded mentality to actively take part in politics.¹²¹

Some of the leaders of the professional associations analyzed in the present report have been sensitive to this call — repeated many times ever since, most recently in 2023 by Xi Jinping — and have taken on activities that can be described as political influence.¹²² Their actions in this domain are often modest, sometimes carried out at the individual level, but are nonetheless characteristic of the CCP-engineered “patriotism” that may have served as one of the motives behind some of these associations’ leaders’ mobilization into technology transfers initiatives. They are also representative of the breadth of the population segments targeted by the United Front Work Department.

4.1 Targeting political elites: 4D China

Some of leaders of the France-based Chinese professional associations discussed in this paper have established 4D China (四维中国协会), an informal group set up to fight against the “misconceptions” linked to China’s rise among the French public. Its

¹¹⁹“刘松”, 导师风采, 北京市神经外科研究所.

¹²⁰See the photo gallery on AEFC’s website: “Embassy, UNESCO”.

¹²¹“全国侨务工作会议首提“侨务公共外交””, China News, 21st October 2011.

¹²²In October 2023, on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA), CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping asked the association to “play its role as a talent pool in serving the country, a think tank of good ideas and proposals and a vital force in people-to-people diplomacy”. Xi’s message to the association was read by the head of the United Front Work Department, to which the WRSA reports. See “Xi calls on returned scholars association to pool talent, strengths for development”, Xinhua, 21st October 2023.



founding members include Ni Jincheng 倪金城, a project director at France Stratégie (an institution in charge of advising the French Prime Minister) and a central character among Chinese professional associations leaders in France, as well as Zhou Suyan 周苏燕, an institutional director at French electricity giant EDF.¹²³ Herself familiar with the Center for China and Globalization,¹²⁴ a think tank linked to the United Front Department of the CCP (see below), Zhou is an enthusiastic promoter of technology transfer to China.¹²⁵

4D China focuses its efforts on French members of parliament, diplomats and defense professionals.¹²⁶ In June 2011, it organized its first conference — on “China’s rise” — on the premises of the National Assembly, the lower house of the French parliament.¹²⁷ It was followed by similar seminars (on China’s urbanization, the CCP’s 18th Party Congress etc.) organized on the premises of the French lower and upper houses, at the National School of Administration (ENA, where a large part of French political elites graduated) etc. Some of those seminars have been organized in partnership with the Institut du Pacifique, a think tank founded by former students of IHEDN (a national defense academic institution) and former diplomats.¹²⁸ Although it has been more low-key in recent years, the association is still active in so-called “people to people” diplomacy in France.¹²⁹

4.2 Instilling Chinese “patriotism” in the youth: AEFC’s other mission

AEFC president Claire Li is active in organizing “root-seeking” summer camps in China for younger generations of Chinese immigrants to France. The 2019 summer camp she participated in in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, brought together 120 young people from 20 different countries, including France, Spain and Switzerland.¹³⁰

The summer camp’s inauguration was presided by the party secretary of Wuxi’s Overseas Chinese Federation, who is also the deputy head of the municipal United Front Work Department. Activities organized during such summer camps include drawing, music and calligraphy classes, which may seem benign. Yet, those are infused with officially-sanctioned “patriotic” content aimed at instilling a sense of “national” belonging. For instance, during their calligraphy classes, children were made to draw the Chinese characters for “China Dream”, a concept closely associated with Xi Jinping who routinely equates it with the idea of the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese

¹²³Ni Jincheng is associated with the leadership of AICF (president from 2014 to 2016, now honorary president), AFCDUD and AEFC (external relations director), has taken leadership roles in the French chapters of the South West University Alumni association and the Association of Chinese professionals from Sichuan and once was a vice-president of UCECF.

¹²⁴She was one of the “brilliant representatives of the Overseas Chinese” invited to meet with Wang Huiyao in Paris in July 2022, alongside Xu Bo, president of the “Friends of Wu Jianmin Association” (吴建民之友协会) and France-trained energy specialist Xavier Chen Xinhua 陈新华. See “CCG 欧洲行 (二十三): CCG 智库代表团与在法优秀华人华侨会面交流”, CCG, 19th July 2022.

¹²⁵In a 2017 interview for the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, she stated that: “we have all learned advanced knowledge from overseas (...), we are longing for bringing it back to our motherland as a modest contribution to its prosperity and development” See 郭外, “牢记嘱托 为同圆共享中国梦作出新的更大贡献”, 侨务工作研究, 国务院侨务办公室, 2017.

¹²⁶史晓帆, “喜看旅法华人“新势力”崛起”, 人民日报, 28th November 2011.

¹²⁷“旅法华人“新势力”崛起 创立组织到法国议会聊中国”, 海外华人互助中心.

¹²⁸周苏燕女士: 四维中国协会为加强法中交往做努力”, RFI, 10th February 2015.

¹²⁹“法华人公益组织、知识界和企业家发出“6月18日中法友谊日”倡议”, 欧洲时报, 20th June 2022.

¹³⁰“江苏无锡营第二期在江阴隆重开营”, 江苏侨联, 24th July 2019.



Figure 5: AEFC president Claire Li (in red, fifth from left) at a "root-seeking" summer camp organized by the Jiangsu Province Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese in 2019. Source: [Jiangsu FROC](#).

nation".¹³¹ At the camp, they are also asked to become the "good messengers" of Chinese culture overseas and bridges between China — referred to as "the motherland" — and their home country — referred to only as their "country of residence". Such efforts are characteristic of the party-state's efforts to nurture transnational loyalty among the overseas Chinese, regardless of the citizenship of each individual.

4.3 Quietly reforming global governance: CCG and the Alliance of Global Talent Organizations

The reform of global governance is another target of influence efforts by United Front-affiliated actors. The Center for China & Globalization (CCG), a "think tank" supervised by the Western Returned Scholars Association, operating under the United Front Work Department, plays an active part in these efforts. Henry Wang Huiyao, CCG's president, himself has numerous affiliations with the United Front Work Department.¹³² He is also one of the architects of China's first talent development plan (2010-2020).¹³³

As the official representative of the think tank in France, CCG picked Jean-Louis Xing (邢宾), a former Dassault and Atos employee and a well-known figure in Chinese professional association circles.¹³⁴ Wang Huiyao is well connected in France, which he visits regularly. He has been appointed a member of the steering committee of the Paris Peace Forum, which was established in 2018 at the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron to make concrete recommendations to improve multilateralism

¹³¹ "“寻根之旅”夏令营—无锡二营很嗨，看看大家怎么说？", 中国侨联, 31st July 2019.

¹³² His posts have included: member of the Central Committee of the Jiusan Society (a minority party affiliated to the United Front); member of the State Council OCAO's expert advisory committee; member of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese's expert advisory group; member of the United Front Work Department's expert advisory group; senior director of the China Overseas Friendship Association (run by the UFWD).

¹³³ The plan advocated replicating recruitment programs at the local level, creating databases of overseas talents for targeting and recruitment, and promoted "technology transfer using overseas talent". See Jeffrey Stoff, "China's Talent Programs", in Hannas & Tatlow, eds., op. cit.

¹³⁴ "全球化智库 2020 年报—CCG Annual Report 2020", p. 103. Jean-Louis Xing has been a leader of AICF, the secretary of the FCPAE, is active in the Sino-European Association of Science & Technology, and has been appointed a counselor for overseas talent attraction by the Organization department of Chongqing's CCP committee: "重庆市海外高层次人才交流洽谈会在巴黎成功举办", Xineurope, 28th October 2015. Besides representing CCG in France, he also has been appointed a counselor of the Overseas Chinese Federation of Mianyang (Sichuan), in 2016. See "四川绵阳市第七次侨代会召开 聘任海内外顾问", 绵阳日报, 10th March 2016.



and global governance.¹³⁵ CCG's proposal, formulated at the 2018 edition of the Paris Peace Forum, to establish an Alliance of Global Talent Organizations (国际人才组织联合会) was accepted by the organizers.¹³⁶ In 2021, the Alliance set up its headquarters in China (Hangzhou). It has been active ever since.

4.4 Former French MP Buon Tan and technology transfer

At least one French politician has been involved in technology transfer and united front networks. Former French parliamentarian Buon Tan (2017-2022), who has been identified as holding numerous links to the CCP's overseas influence agencies, has also been a promoter of technology transfer to China. He was listed as the "chief advisor" of Développement France Chine (DFC, 欧洲华创会), an association founded by his brother-in-law, which is involved in promoting China's talent recruitment and technology transfer efforts in ways similar to the organizations described in the present paper.¹³⁷

Tan has been an active supporter of such recruitment efforts: in June 2021, for instance, he delivered a speech during a recruitment event called "Online Competition of (sic) the Return of a Thousand Oversea (sic) Talent (sic)" co-organized by DFC, ACECE and ASICEF on behalf of the city of Huzhou. Flyinstinct, an AI-powered drone solutions provider for airport inspection in which French public bank Bpifrance invested, won the first prize.¹³⁸

DFC's website was taken down in 2022 following the release by Sinopsis of a paper detailing Tan's links with the United Front Work Department, but the association is still active. In March 2024, DFC participated in an innovation event organized in Station F on the occasion of a visit by a delegation of Wuxi High Tech Zone. Buon Tan, Jérôme Courmet, the current mayor of Paris's 13th arrondissement, as well as representatives of AICF and the Chinese embassy participated.¹³⁹

¹³⁵"The Secretariat — The Paris Peace Forum Team", Paris Peace Forum.

¹³⁶"World Talent Organization Alliance", Paris Peace Forum, 2018.

¹³⁷Bigey & Joske, *op. cit.*

¹³⁸"中国·湖州全球高层次人才创新创业大赛欧洲赛圆满落幕", 财报网, 24th June 2021.

¹³⁹"无锡高新区在巴黎展开创新合作交流活动", 中国新闻网, 18th March 2024.



5 Conclusion

France's position on scientific cooperation with China has evolved in recent years, in ways that partially counter the actions of the PRC's technology transfer apparatus.

On a strategic level, signs of this evolution can be observed in the changing priorities of the scientific cooperation between the two countries. In 2019, these priorities included strategic fields with obvious potential dual use applications, such as space, advanced materials and artificial intelligence.¹⁴⁰ By 2024, they have been circumscribed to common goods such as climate change, environment and biodiversity, as well as to elderly healthcare and theoretical chemistry.¹⁴¹

On the ground, conversations we had in the course of the present research with French scientists and officials in charge of international scientific cooperation confirmed it has become much more complex to initiate cooperation programs with China than was only five years ago. As for Business France, the French trade agency, it has recently canceled a yearly program (once sponsored by Huawei) that brought technology startups to China to find cooperation partners and investors.

While these measures may have reduced the exposure of France's sensitive technology to unwanted technology transfer, little has been done regarding "insider risks" created by associations such as those studied in this report. A 2021 report by the French Senate on foreign state-led interference in French universities¹⁴², and the work of a handful of journalists¹⁴³ have broached the subject of CCP-led foreign technology transfer efforts, but the variety of the mechanisms used and the sheer scale of this effort, are still poorly understood in the country.

As we have shown, the Chinese party-state has managed to build an extensive network of scientists and scholars active in France's science and technology by gathering them into associations that can be mobilized to facilitate information collection and technology transfer to China. While the success of those efforts is difficult to assess, the risks they pose are clear: unwanted leakage of information and technology to commercial competitors, as well as loss of competitiveness to a country officially labeled a "strategic rival". When dual use technologies are targeted, as we have shown is the case in France (as in many other countries), the stakes are even higher.

Although the scope of the network studied in the present report is already extensive, one needs to keep in mind that those associations are only one aspect of Chinese technology transfer efforts targeting France. The latter also involve French subsidiaries of Chinese companies, consulting firms, "cooperation" partnerships with French research institutions etc. Each conduit entails different types of risks and any form of response need to be adapted accordingly. Currently, talent recruitment efforts seem to fall outside the purview of export control and inbound investment screening regimes.

¹⁴⁰"Visite en Chine de Mme Frédérique Vidal, ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation", Ambassade de France en Chine, 30th January 2020.

¹⁴¹"Déplacement de Sylvie Retailleau à l'occasion du 15e Comité mixte franco-chinois pour la science et la technologie", Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, 19th March 2024.

¹⁴²André Gattolin, "Influences étatiques extra-européennes", Sénat, 5th October 2021. The report broached the subject of PRC-led talent recruitment efforts but is short on details regarding France.

¹⁴³Jérémy André, "Comment Pékin profite de nos chercheurs", *Le Point*, 19th March 2021.



As China increasingly turns to Europe to find technologies it can no longer obtain in the United States, Australia, and other like-minded countries, public policies in France and other European Union Member states should be adjusted to address this loophole.
¹⁴⁴

Moreover, probably by fear of antagonizing Beijing, the decisions leading to France's more cautious approach to scientific and technological cooperation with China have mostly been taken in the *entre-soi* of a few ministerial cabinets. Indeed, unlike in Australia, the United States, the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, a public debate on those issues has yet to take place in France. However, such a debate may be necessary. Indeed, transparency by researchers, regarding their affiliations to some recruitment programs or leadership roles in professional associations promoting technology transfers; by cooperation partners regarding the actual tentative applications of the research program, their relationship with the military etc. is necessary to address foreign interference in scientific research. Pedagogy towards French research institutions and scholars, who need to grasp the exact nature of the challenges to deal with them effectively, is the second main pillar of any effective response to it. We hope the present report can contribute to this debate.

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René Bigey is a former China analyst based in France.

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¹⁴⁴Various countries and organizations have set to address this issue. Lists of proposed remedies may be found in Joske's "Hunting the phoenix..."; William C. Hannas & Huey-Meei Chang, "Proposed legislative and institutional remedies to mitigate unwanted foreign transfers of U.S. technology", CSET, 10th September 2021; and other studies. Studying the Australian response to foreign interference in the country's universities may also be helpful.



A Appendix: List of talent recruitment work stations run by French entities

Table 2: Talent recruitment work stations in France

| Association and number of stations | Station name (English) | Station name (Chinese) | Administrative level |
|---|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>1. Professional associations and their leaders</i> | | | |
| AFCSII (中法信息科学与工程协会) (2) | Tianjin Overseas Talent Work Station | 天津市海外人才工作站 | Province-level city |
| | Nanjing (Xuzhuang High Tech Zone) Talent Work Station in France | 南京 (徐庄高新区) 法国人才工作站 | City |
| AJCEFC (Association des jeunes chefs d'entreprises France Chine, 中法青年企业家协会) (15) | Suzhou Talent Work –Overseas Cooperation Entity | 苏州市人才工作海外合作组织成员单位 | City |
| | Hangzhou Returned Overseas Chinese Federation - Overseas Talent Work Station | 杭州市侨联海外人才工作站 | City |
| | Zhejiang Province –Overseas Talent Introduction Work Station | 浙江省海外引才工作站 | Province |
| | Hangzhou Overseas Talent Work Consultant (Zhu Yueqiu) | 杭州市海外人才工作顾问 | City |
| | Hangzhou Xuhang District Overseas Talent Work Consultant (Zhu Yueqiu) | 杭州市余杭区海外人才工作顾问 | District |
| | Hangzhou Xiaoshan District Specially Designated Organization for Talent Introduction | 杭州市萧山区特定引才机构 | District |
| | Jiangsu Province OCAO Overseas Intellectual Resources Introduction Consultant (Zhu Yueqiu) | 江苏省侨办海外引智顾问 | Province |
| | Suzhou Talent Work Overseas Cooperation Organization | 苏州市人才工作海外合作组织 | City |
| | Pinghu City Intelligence Introduction Ambassador (Zhu Yueqiu) | 平湖市引智大使 | City |
| | Wenzhou Talent Work Station in France | 温州市法国人才工作站 | City |
| | Tongxiang Talent Search and Intelligence Introduction Liaison Station | 桐乡招才引智联络站 | District |
| | Suzhou Wujiang District Talent Search and Intelligence Introduction Liaison Station in Paris, France | 苏州市吴江区法国巴黎招才引智联络站 | District |
| | Jiaxing Overseas Talent Work Station | 嘉兴市海外人才工作点 | City |
| China –Taizhou Talent Introduction Work Station | 中国·台州引才工作站 | City | |
| Suzhou Talent Work Overseas Cooperation Organization | 苏州市人才工作海外合作组织 | City | |
| AICAF (Association des ingénieurs chinois de l'automobile en France, 法国华人汽车工程师协会) (2) | Wuhan Economic & Technological Development Zone (France) Talent Work Station | 武汉经济技术开发区 (法国) 人才工作站 | District |
| | Dongfeng Automotive Group HR Department–Strategic Cooperation MoU | 东风汽车公司人事部 - 战略合作意向书 | Company |



Table 2 (cont.): Work stations

| Association | Name (English) | Name (Chinese) | Level |
|---|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| AASFC (Association aéro-spatiale franco-chinoise, 中国旅法航空航天协会) (2) | Southwest University High Level Overseas Talent Introduction Work Station | 西南大学引进海外高层次人才工作站合作协议 | University |
| | China International Talent Market-Overseas Talent Attraction Consultant (Ding Li) | 中国国际人才市场海外引才顾问 | Central-level organization |
| ASICEF Association des Scientifiques et des Ingénieurs Chinois en France, 全法中国科技工作者协会) (3) | HOME Program Overseas Technology Contact Organization | 海智计划联系的海外科技团体 | Central-level recruitment program |
| | State Council's OCAO Overseas Talent Recruitment Liaison Station | 国务院侨办海外海外人才引智联络站 | Central-level organization (UFWD) |
| | WRSA France Liaison Station | 欧美同学会法国联络工作站 | Central-level organization (UFWD) |
| ACECE (Association des Chinois à l'étranger pour la création d'entreprise, 法国海外留学人员创业者协会) (5) | Dongguan Overseas Talent Work Station | 东莞海外人才工作站 | City |
| | Wenzhou Talent Work Liaison Station | 温州人才工作联络站 | City |
| | Hangzhou Economic and Technological Development Zone Overseas Students Talents (Paris) Liaison Office | 杭州经济技术开发区海外留学人才巴黎联络处 | District |
| | Zhejiang Province Overseas Students Work Station (Zhejiang Expert and Overseas Students Service Center) | 浙江省留学生工作站 (浙江省专家与留学人员服务中心) | Province |
| | Qinhuai District (Nanjing) - Technological Innovation Overseas Station | 科技创新海外联络站 (秦淮区科技局) | District |
| AMBCF (Association des médecins et biologistes chinois en France, 中国旅法生物医学学会) (2) | Wenzhou Medical University Talent Introduction Europe Work Station | 温州医科大学人才引进欧洲工作站 | University |
| | HOME Program Overseas Technology Contact Organization | 海智计划联系的海外科技团体 | Central-level organization |
| AEFC (Association des experts français et chinois, 法中高级人才交流协会) (2) | Nanjing Jiangning District -Overseas Talent Work Station | 南京江宁区开发区- 海外引才工作站 | District |
| | Liangxi District Overseas Ambassador for Talent Search and Intelligence Introduction (Claire Li) | 梁溪区海外招才引智大使 | District |
| AICF (Association des ingénieurs chinois de France, 中国旅法工程师协会) (10) | State Council's OCAO Overseas Talent Recruitment Liaison Station | 国务院侨办海外海外人才引智联络站 | Central-level organization |
| | Shanghai HR department -International Talent Exchange Center -Cooperation Agreement | 上海市人事局国际人才交流中心签订合作协议 | Province-level city |
| | Zhejiang Province Overseas Talent Introduction Work Station | 浙江省海外引才工作站 | Province |



Table 2 (cont.): Work stations

| Association | Name (English) | Name (Chinese) | Level |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Chongqing Overseas Talent Introduction Liaison Station | 重庆市海外引才联络站 | Province-level city |
| | Ningbo Yinzhou District Overseas Talent Work Station | 宁波市鄞州区的指定海外人才工作站 | City |
| | Southwest University High Level Overseas Talent Introduction Work Station | 西南大学引进海外高层次人才工作站合作协议 | University |
| | Shandong Province Overseas Chinese Affairs Office Work Station | 山东省侨办海外工作站 | Province |
| | WRSA Overseas Liaison Station | 欧美同学会海外联络工作站 | Central-level organization (UFWD) |
| | Meishan Overseas Talent Attraction Consultant (Ni Jincheng) | 眉山市海外引才顾问 (2016, Ni Jincheng) | City |
| | HOME Program Overseas Technology Contact Organization | 海智计划联系的海外科技团体 | Central-level organization |
| AIFC (Association d'incubateur franco-chinois, 法中孵化器联盟协会) (3) | Tianjin (Binhai) Overseas Talent Offshore Innovation and Entrepreneurship Base – France Work Station | 天津 (滨海) 海外人才离岸创新创业基地驻法国工作站 | District |
| | Beijing Daxing International Airport Economic Zone (Langfang) Overseas Work Station | 北京大兴国际机场临空经济区 (廊坊) 海外招商工作站 | District |
| | Wuxi High Tech Zone –France Work Station | 无锡高新区法国工作站 | District |
| ASSOGES (法国法中企业家与管理者协会) (5) | Guangdong Province High Level Talent Work Station in Europe | 广东省驻欧洲高层次人才工作站 | Province |
| | Overseas Students and Scholars –Xinjiang Liaison Station | 海外留学人员新疆联络站 | Province |
| | Jiangsu Province Overseas Talents Liaison Office in France | 江苏省海外人才法国联络处 | Province |
| | Fujian Province Talent Exchange Center –France Work Station | 福建省人才交流中心法国工作站 | Province |
| | Xinjiang Autonomous Region –France Talent Work Station | 新疆自治区驻法国人才工作站 | Province |
| AFCDDUD (Association franco-chinoise du développement urbain durable, 中法城市可持续发展协会) | Hubei Province Xiangyang Talent Work and Liaison Station in Paris, France | 湖北省襄阳市法国巴黎人才工作联络站 | Province |
| 2. Student associations and community guilds | | | |
| UCECF (2) | HOME Program Overseas Technology Contact Organization | 海智计划联系的海外科技团体 | Central-level recruitment program |
| | “One Belt One Road” International Talent Fund (BRITF) –Work Station in France | “一带一路”国际人才专项基金”法国工作站 | Central-level organization |
| Wuhan University Alumni Association (武汉大学法国校友会) | Wuhan City and Wuhan University Alumni Association Service Work Station in Paris | 武汉市在海外 - 武汉校友 (巴黎) 服务工作站 | City |
| Xiamen University Alumni Association in France (厦门大学法国校友会) | Wenzhou Medical University Talent Introduction Work Station in Europe | 温州医科大学人才引进欧洲工作站 | University |



Table 2 (cont.): Work stations

| Association | Name (English) | Name (Chinese) | Level |
|---|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| France Changzhou Association (法国常州联谊会) | Changzhou Friendship Association in France –Talent Work Station | 法国常州联谊会 - 常州驻法国人才工作站 | City |
| France Shandong Association (法国山东协会) | Zibo Overseas Talent Introduction Work Station | 淄博市海外引才法国工作站 | City |
| France Five "Yi" Association (法国五邑青年联合会) | "Liaise the Five Yi" –Overseas Service Work Station (France) | "联络五邑" 海外服务工作站 (法国站) | City |
| Zhejiang Friendship Society in Europe (欧洲浙江华人联谊会) | Xi'an Overseas Chinese Affairs Work Station | 西安市海外侨务工作站 | City |
| 3. Other organizations, individuals and undefined partners | | | |
| Association franco-chinoise d'échange international (法中发展国际交流公司) | Hebei Province Overseas Intelligence Introduction Work Station | 河北省国（境）外引智工作站 | Province |
| ICI Consulting (3) | Sichuan Luzhou Overseas Talent Work Station | 四川泸州海外人才工作站 | City |
| | Chengdu Overseas Talent Work Station | 成都市海外人才工作站 | City |
| | Sichuan Overseas Students Service Center – Paris station | 四川留学人才服务中心巴黎站 | Province |
| Alain Labat | Jiaxing Xiuzhou District Talent Introduction Ambassador | 嘉兴秀洲区引才大使 | District |
| Gong Dusheng 龚笃晟 | Wenzhou Medical University Talent Introduction Ambassador | 温州医科大学引才大使 | University |
| Jia Zixian 贾子先 | Wenzhou Medical University Talent Introduction Ambassador | 温州医科大学引才大使 | University |
| Unknown | Beihang University Overseas Talent Work Station | 北航海外人才工作站 | University |
| Unknown | Shanghai International Talents Exchange Association –Paris Liaison Station | 上海市国际人才交流协会巴黎联络处 | Province-level city |
| Unknown | Jiangsu Province Overseas Chinese Affairs Office Liaison Station for Overseas Chinese Professional Talents | 江苏省人民政府侨务办公室 华侨华人专业人才联络站 | Province |