

# Foreword

Since the Joint Declaration on “The EU-China Partnership on Urbanisation” in 2012, there has been a rapidly growing number of systematic joint research activities on sustainable urbanisation between European and Chinese partners. The “EU-China Sustainable Urbanisation Flagship Initiative” identified four priority areas of mutual interest for EU–China research and innovation collaboration, i.e., sustainable development and urban planning, nature-based solutions for cities, green urban mobility and sustainable energy solutions for cities.

Within this framework, the TRANS-URBAN-EU-CHINA research and innovation action started in 2018 with two parallel objectives. On the one hand, it aimed to support policy makers, urban authorities, real estate developers, public service providers and citizens in China to create socially integrative cities in an environmentally friendly and financially viable way. On the other hand, it aimed to help urban stakeholders in Europe to reflect and eventually reconsider their own approaches towards sustainable urbanisation. Real-world methods, instruments and good practice examples from Europe and China, e.g., in terms of social inclusiveness, cultural dynamics, environmental friendliness and economic viability, constituted a basis for comparative analysis.

Fourteen project partners of excellence conducted the project. With eight European and six Chinese expert organisations on socially integrative cities, TRANS-URBAN-EU-CHINA combined the best of both worlds to create new insights, practices and role models in sustainable urban development. The Chinese team of partners from government agencies and academia were able to exert a direct impact on society through their national responsibilities for regional and urban planning, research and education. The European partners played a similar role through their positions among European knowledge organisations.

The project started from the fact that cities are places of social innovation and engines of economic growth. They attract dynamic groups of society; they provide vast opportunities of interaction, communication and exchange of knowledge; and they thereby lay the foundation for attracting large shares of R&D investment and an innovative service sector. Social integration plays a special role here, as it is directly linked with the economic prosperity of cities, fair access to infrastructure and services, and the fair distribution of wealth and its amenities. This is true for urban development in general, but especially relevant for China as, promoted by various levels of government, the country is transitioning from a less urban to a more urbanised society with increasingly intensified land use and higher quality of life.

This book shares the impactful original research results of the project. It is the collaborative product of many stakeholders. It is also among the project’s

main comprehensive academically oriented results. All partners participated in its elaboration in a joint initiative. Mixed author teams, involving European and Chinese experts, are responsible for the individual chapters. Texts were internally reviewed by the editors, as well as further coordinated with the help of the respective work package leaders, who secured additional quality control. In this regard, special thanks go to Michele Bonino and Maria Paola Repellino from Politecnico di Torino (POLITO), Turin, Italy; Hans-Martin Neumann from the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT), Vienna, Austria; Stefanie Rößler from the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IÖR), Dresden, Germany; Andrea Ricci from the Institute of Studies for the Integration of Systems (ISINNOVA), Rome, Italy; as well as Annemie Wyckmans and Wang Yu from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway. All papers underwent an external peer-review process, organised by the publisher before final acceptance. We would like to thank the publisher, MDPI, for supporting the editors, and more than thirty reviewers for their critical reviews of the different chapters and useful comments.

We are confident that this online open access book provides new insights into recent urban development trends in China and Europe, and contributes to further discussions about ways to manage the transition towards urban sustainability through socially integrative cities. We would like to thank all concerned parties who made this book possible. Special thanks go to the European Commission, which supported the activities of TRANS-URBAN-EU-CHINA through the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 770141. Of course, the material presented in this book reflects only the authors' views. The European Union is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

Bernhard Müller, Dresden, March 2021  
(For the editors of the book)