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The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) signed an agreement in April to establish a SASS-IIAS Centre for China Studies in Leiden, and an IIAS-SASS Centre for China Studies in Shanghai. The cooperation will relate not only to developments within China, but also to relevant topics in other parts of Asia and beyond. The agreement was co-signed by Leiden University.

The agreement provides for the exchange of researchers between IIAS and SASS and their partners and cooperation in projects. Moreover, SASS

and IIAS agreed that the two representative centres should be made fully available to the researchers and members of Leiden University, IIAS's umbrella structure. Philippe Peycam: "This ceremony is not just celebrating the long-standing SASS-IIAS partnership, but also one that includes Leiden University". The agreement was signed during a festive signing ceremony at the Faculty Club of Leiden University in the presence of a broad group of interested parties from, among others, Leiden University, NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) and the Chinese Embassy. The signatories were Prof. Wang Zhen (王振), Vice-President of SASS, Dr Philippe Peycam, Director of IIAS, and Prof. Carel Stolker, Rector Magnificus of Leiden University.

IIAS-SASS partnership

The present agreement constitutes a new chapter in an already long-standing and active partnership between IIAS and SASS. In 2005, in Shanghai, the two institutes jointly organised the fourth edition of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 4). This was the first ever major international event of this kind in the People's Republic of China, attended by 1,400 participants from all over the world. From that time on, IIAS forged collaborations with many PRC institutions, including of course, with SASS.

Another important step in the collaboration between SASS and IIAS was in 2011, when the two organisations joint thirteen other institutes from Asia, Europe and the USA to operate in the IIAS-coordinated interdisciplinary and trans-sectorial research platform of the 'Urban Knowledge Network Asia' (UKNA), under the theme of 'Human Flourishing in Asian Cities'. Among the over 120 researchers that were exchanged between all the UKNA partners, several researchers from the two institutes spent time in both Shanghai and Leiden.

This year, also under UKNA, SASS and IIAS are organising, in collaboration with Fudan University and New York University Shanghai, a major conference on port cities, taking place in Shanghai in November 2018. In addition, also this year, SASS will be participating, and partnering with IIAS, to support the second edition of the international conference 'Asia-Africa: a New Axis of Knowledge', which will take place in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 20-22 September 2018.

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