ITALIAN RESEARCH DAY 2019

Report by Antonino Marciano

The 15th of April is the date that corresponds to the birth of Leonardo Da Vinci, celebrated genius of the Italian Renaissance. The Italian researchers active in China gathered also this year during that day, for the second and consecutive time, at the Institute of Italian Culture in Beijing, part of the Italian Embassy. The recurrent event, known as Italian Research Day, was launched in 2018, to either maintain or reestablish links with Italian researchers emigrated to China while carrying out their research activities in social, human and natural sciences. It is therefore strategical the role that the Academic Association of Italian Scholars in China (AAIIC), as structured scholars entity close to the Italian Institutions, may retain at this purpose. This was emphasized in the inaugural speech by the Ambassador Ettore Sequi, who was further stressing that this strategical outlook may reckons in China on the capillary distributions and presence of the AAIC affiliates, with whom a fruitful collaboration is envisaged.

The moderator of the event, Prof. Roberto Pagani, Scientific Counselor at the Italian Consulate in Shanghai, introduced the speakers of the first morning panel, and invited to relate Prof. Lorenzo Gonzo, Scientific Counselor at the Italian Consulate in Chongqing. Prof. Gonzo commented on the status of the scientific and technological inter-activities involving China and Italy. From a wider European perspective, Dr. Philippe Vialatte (European Delegation Representative) introduced the next Horizon 2021-2027 projects, specifying the opportunities of joined and equal participation to calls, and the fruitful boost for Chinese-European collaborations.

A salutation by Prof. Ivan Cardillo, President of the AAIIC, was then delivered. The history of the association, its current role in linking researchers, institutions and enterprises through educational and professional activities, the opportunities to establish links among the community of the associates and the most relevant academic institutions in China and Italy, were emphasized, within the wider framework of the collaboration between cultures. The Vice President of the Italian Commerce in China, Guido Giacconi, then intervened. Addressing as examples the performances of other European and Western Countries, he emphasized the current and prospected unbalance between commercial relations among China and Italy, and future strategies to overcome present shortcomings.
The second morning panel, devoted to the Italian Research In China in the year of Leonardo, started with a presentation Prof. Pagani of the Xu Guangqi Award, the evaluation’s methods that were adopted, and the proclamation of the winners. Indeed, from the 2019 edition on, the Xu Guangqi Award will be two-fold, one honor being assigned to a researcher active in Natural Sciences and Engineering, the second one being granted to a researcher active in the field of Human and Social Sciences. The awarded researchers, Prof. Antonino Marciano, from the former research field, and Prof. Ivan Cardillo, active in the latter, related on their research topics, emphasizing respectively the power of analogy in cross-fertilizing analyses in sciences, and the social, economical and political relevance of juridical reforms in modern China. As a guest speaker, the Italian Research Day 2019 enjoyed the multidisciplinary and inspiring lecture by Prof. Luisa De Cola, from the University of Strasbourg/ISIS, who was elaborating “From Leonardo’s Machine to nanotechnology”.

After a refreshment during which collaborations among researchers and institutions were confirmed and established, the afternoon was devoted to the Researchers and Scholars Networking Roundtable, with discussion organized and moderated by the AAIC through the President Prof. Cardillo. Several different topics were discussed, ranging from the European and Chinese fundings, the new Visa policies in China and the academic collaborations agreements.

There was a fruitful and constructive dialogue among Halldor Berg, leading a delegation from Euraxess, a European Country Representative, and the Italian Scholars who were present during the afternoon activities.

Finally the event culminated, in a crowded room filled with hundreds of people, with the seminar by Prof. Plinio Innocenzi, former Scientific Counselor at the Italian Embassy in China, who presented a popular lecture on “Leonardo Innovator”.

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