
EUCCC Southwest Chapter – 2015 Elections

Motivation Letter

Position: Chairman of the Southwest Board

Candidate: Ulrich O. Birch

Company: Consenec Ltd / ABB Group



China today

China is undergoing a major transformation, and in the age of the “New Normal, ”many of the “old rules” don’t apply anymore. The GDP growth rate, which used to be in the 2-digit range in the past, dropped to 7.4% in 2014, and the target for 2015 is 7.0%. Coming years might see even lower rates. After many of the large companies and multinationals (MNC) established in China, more and more SMEs follow suit and often need to be locally present in order to fulfill the demand of their traditional MNC customers.

In view of the slowdown in the own country, Chinese companies increasingly invest overseas. ChemChina’s acquisition of the Italian tire manufacturer Pirelli is just the most recent example, which was probably a wake-up call for many Europeans. While many Chinese companies have enough cash in their war chest, the weak Euro makes acquisitions nowadays particularly attractive.

However, the lower growth of the Chinese economy may also lead to more nationalism and protectionism. Despite the uncontested improvements thanks to the anti-graft campaign, the reform program from the 3rd plenary session, the commitment to the rule of law, the facilitation of foreign investment regulations, and the increasingly important Free Trade Zones, there are also tendencies for further protection of domestic companies, often using national security as an argument. For instance, the blockade of all Google services is definitely a welcome support for local internet companies like Baidu, even if it was not implemented primarily for this objective. The planned cybersecurity law, new regulations for ICT equipment in the financial sector, and the general tightening of rules over information technology, have at least the side effect of boosting local IT companies. Such support is questionable, and European companies have good reasons for concern.

On the other hand, deteriorating environmental conditions, the pollution of air, water, and soil, and the ageing population are not only threats, but equally offer new opportunities for European businesses and their technologies.

The European Chamber in Southwest China

I believe that the present challenges will last for an extended period and make the activities of the European Chamber in China even more important. Our mission “As the independent voice of European business in China, we seek greater market access and improved operating conditions for European companies” is valid more than ever.

On local and regional level in Southwest China, we want to support European businesses to deal with the less developed infrastructure compared to coastal regions, as well as in the communication with the local governments. As an organization of European companies, we want to address unequal or unfair treatment. The Southwest Chapter of the EUCCC shall be a platform for exchanging business intelligence, own experiences and learning from each other. Our social events complete the activities and offer networking opportunities for business people.

My activities in the Chamber

I have been active in the EUCCC in Southwest China as from the beginning when it started to hold events in Chongqing, and since 2012 I am on the Board, first as the Chongqing Representative. Over the last two years I had the honor of leading the Southwest Board as its Chairman and to provide guidance to our Office Team. During this time, the Chapter has made a remarkable development, namely driven by the General Managers of the Chapter. The number of members has grown continuously and reached 140 by the end of last year. We also maintained a good balance of business events and social or networking activities.

My business background in China

Between 2005 and 2011, I was leading the ABB business unit "Turbocharging" in China, and the related joint venture company with head office and factory in Chongqing. Therefore, I am quite familiar with the challenges of doing business in the Southwest. I learned how to deal with a joint venture partner as well as with the government, and I know the related pitfalls and challenges. On the other hand, in my current activity as Senior Consultant for Consenec (an ABB company), most of my clients are SMEs. This helps me to understand the difficulties SMEs face when establishing or developing their businesses in China. Thanks to regular participation in the EUCCC ExCo meetings, I gained good knowledge and experience of the Chamber's goals, strategies, mission and vision. I am committed to provide further guidance to our team for successful implementation and creation of benefits for members.

My goals and ambitions for the Chamber in Southwest China

I submit my candidacy for Chairman of the Board now for the third term, and I would like to continue the development of the Southwest Chapter and guide our team to organize even more attractive events as well as a good number of effective meetings with government authorities. I am willing to contribute my good network locally and internationally. In general, I would like to further increase our professionalism and make the EUCCC in Southwest China more attractive for the senior management of member companies. On the other hand, we shall also organize practical seminars and workshops with hands-on information and advice for the operational level in our member companies. We also will organize a number of networking and social events, which shall normally be related to our business activities. The publication of the regional Position Paper for Southwest China is scheduled in the course of this year, and in order to make our position and our recommendations more visible, I would like to strengthen the cooperation with regional and local media.

The EUCCC is different from national chambers, and we focus primarily on advocacy, business intelligence and business community. Therefore, we complement the national chambers and work together, if this is of interest to our members. In joint effort with the other members of the Board, I want to make sure the EUCCC in Southwest China offers high value to its members. These values shall become even more visible and more tangible in the future. Provided there is enough interest, I encourage our members to form more sectorial Working Groups in Southwest China. Our Chapter will provide the necessary support, in particular for administrative and government matters.

I look forward to another successful year of the Southwest Chapter and I am happy to listen to your, our member's feedback. Thank you in advance for your support during the forthcoming elections at the Annual General Meeting on April 20, 2015 in Chengdu.



Ulrich O. Birch

Chairman of the Southwest Board
European Union Chamber of Commerce in China

Candidate for Southwest Chapter Chairman 2015

- Education** MSc Swiss Federal Institute of Technology
& education in Business Administration
- Positions**
- 1976-95 Positions in R&D, sales and marketing, business development
in Asia Pacific
- 1995-97 New Sulzer Diesel / Wartsila Ltd, Switzerland:
Senior Vice President International Division
- 1997-99 Leica Geosystems, Switzerland:
Vice President, Corporate Project
- 1999-02 Colfax Pump Group, Germany & Hong Kong:
President Asia Pacific Region
- 2004-05 ABB Turbo Systems Ltd, Switzerland:
General Manager Business Development China
- 2005-11 ABB Jiangjin Turbo Systems Co., Ltd, Chongqing/China:
President & Head of ABB Business Unit "Turbocharging", China
- 2012- Consenec Ltd, Switzerland & Chongqing: Senior Consultant
- European Union Chamber of Commerce (EUCCC)**
- 2011- 12 Member, Chongqing Advisory Board
- 2012- 13 Southwest Chapter, Chongqing Representative
- 2013- Southwest Chapter, Chairman of the Board



Mr. Ulrich O. Birch
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