

## Confucius Institute



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

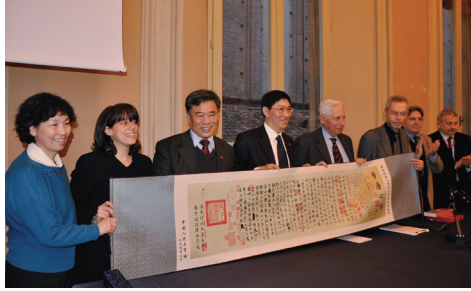
## 1. Establishment and Features

Confucius Institutes (皖慈学曷) are academic centres committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide. Confucius Institutes strive to meet the demands of foreign Chinese learners, contribute to the development of multiculturalism and help to build a harmonious world.<sup>1</sup> They are managed by the Chinese International Education Foundation and the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC).<sup>2</sup> The foundation is a non-governmental private and non-profit charitable organisation jointly initiated by 27 universities, enterprises and social groups which are dedicated to supporting Chinese international education projects worldwide. Meanwhile, the CLEC is a new institution affiliated with Chinese Ministry of Education, created to facilitate the teaching of the Chinese language abroad. CLEC is a non-profit professional educational institution for international Chinese language education established to build a platform for friendly collaboration for language education and cross-cultural learning.<sup>3</sup>

The very first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, South Korea on November 21, 2004. Afterwards, through the joint efforts of China and host country institutions, over 400 institutes have been established.<sup>4</sup> The Confucius Institute at the University of Bologna was established in 2009 following a cooperation agreement between Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna and Remin University of China (中国人民大学) of Beijing, with the support of the former National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language within the Chinese Ministry of Education.





Professor Roberto Grandi, vice-rector for International Relations of the University of Bologna and Professor Xu Lin, Director General of Hanban, sign the agreement for the establishment of the Confucius Institute at the University of Bologna in Beijing in 2008.



Opening ceremony of the Confucius Institute at the University of Bologna held in Bologna on March 9, 2009.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Bologna has been directed, since its establishment, on the Italian side, by Marina Timoteo, a full Professor of Private Comparative Law with a specialization in Chinese law. At present the Chinese co-director is Dr. Xu Difei, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Renmin University of China.

Dr. Xu holds a P.h.D. in logic from Beijing University and is author of numerous publications on philosophy of mathematics, logic, and language. She was visiting scholar at the Department of Philosophy at Stanford University and the University of London, as well as the Department of Mathematics at the University of Singapore, and at the Department of Philosophy and Pedagogy at the University of Padova in Italy.

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| <p>Professor Marina Timoteo,<br/>Director of the Confucius Institute<br/>at the University of Bologna.</p> | <p>Professor Xu Difei,<br/>Chinese director of the Confucius<br/>Institute at the University of Bologna<br/>from September 2021.</p> |

The Confucius Institute -Bologna is managed by a governing board composed of the representatives from the two partner universities (Rectors of the Bologna University and Renmin University of China), the Deputy-Rectors for International Relations of both universities, the Directors of the Institute and other officials involved in the development and management of the institute.

Since its foundation in March 2009, the Confucius Institute-Bologna has played an important role in promoting Chinese language and culture throughout the Emilia Romagna province. The Institute held numerous meetings, gatherings, seminars, forums and conferences in order to promote a better understanding of Chinese culture, language, history and society from ancient to modern times.



Conference on Traditional Chinese Medicine, held in May 2016 within the Medical Sciences festival, was an important international event that in 2016 was devoted to “The Ages of Life.”



Confucius Institute stand from the festival “Città dello Zecchino” held at the University of Bologna in Piazza Maggiore on September 30, 2018. Several cultural activities were organized throughout the festival.



International Conference “A Civil Code for 21st Century,” held at the Department of Legal Studies of the University of Bologna on May 22, 2015.

The Confucius Institute also supports scientific research initiatives and cooperation in a multidisciplinary and intercultural manner to facilitate cultural dialogue between China and Italy/Europe with special reference legal studies.



“AlmaMater meets China” initiative held on February 23, 2012. Dialogue of Professor Romano Prodi, former Italian Prime Minister, and Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Italy at that time, H.E. Ding Wei.

## **2. Language Courses, Certifications and Scholarships**

The Confucius Institute-Bologna has provided a forum for education in response to social needs from both Bologna and Emilia Romagna provinces. Chinese language courses have been delivered by native teachers trained at Renmin University of China who are specialized in teaching Chinese to foreigners.



Chinese Language Class, level C1, at the Confucius Institute-Bologna

In addition to the general Chinese language courses, the Confucius Institute-Bologna opened a Business Chinese language course in 2019, focusing on law, economics, business customs and corporate practices in China. Moreover, in order to certify the Chinese language level of students, each year, the Confucius Institute-Bologna organizes Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) language certification exams. The HSK exam is the only Chinese language test on the basis of the International Standard of Competence of the Chinese Language (国际汉语能力标准), and is the only exam approved by the Chinese government to certify the language ability of non-native Chinese speaker.<sup>5</sup> Also, the Headquarters of the Confucius Institutes established the “Confucius China Studies Program” which provides young fellows, Ph.D. students, and scholars in Bologna with opportunities to continue their China-related scholarship. Moreover, Renmin University of China has offered scholarships for students in Bologna and Emilia Romagna Province to stay in Beijing during summer vacation to learn the Chinese language.

### 3. Confucius Classroom and Teaching Points

Today, the Confucius Institute-Bologna has four Confucius Classes and 10 Teaching Points throughout the Emilia Romagna Province. In general, teaching points are delivered through universities, schools and institutes which are collaborating with the Confucius Institute-Bologna in relation to the specific needs of the individual teaching point, while the Confucius Classrooms are more stable cooperation established in primary schools.<sup>6</sup> The Institute supports the teaching and learning of the Chinese language in various ways in accordance with the teaching points, and conducts

structured collaborations to create the Confucius Classrooms. Meanwhile, the project called “Confucius Class” activates free Chinese language courses in elementary, middle and high schools with financial aid to allow school-age children to learn Chinese language and culture.

#### 4. Cultural Events

Since its establishment, the Confucius Institute-Bologna has organized cultural events such as conferences, workshops, open days, opera and ballet shows, concerts, etc. The following were prominent events:

Sichuan Ballet tour;

“Faust-A research on the language of Beijing Opera,” directed by Anna Peschke in cooperation with ERT-Emilia Romagna Theater;

Several seminars on *shufa*;

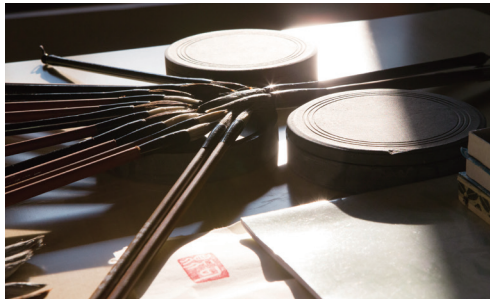
painting and photo exhibitions, such as “The Chinese Path. Pictures from China by Paolo Longo”; International workshops on “Contemporary Art Museums between Economy and Society. East/West Perspectives” and “One Belt, One Road: Strategy and Chinese Story Telling”; and Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes.



Sichuan Opera Tour. The show in Bologna took place on October 3, 2017, within the celebrations for the foundation of the People’s Republic of China.



Peony Pavilion Italian tour. The Confucius Institute-Bologna hosted a two-day performance of the Beijing Opera in June 2010. The tour was organized in cooperation with all Italian Confucius Institutes.



Calligraphy workshops for schools and Confucius Institute students.



June 2-7, 2013, the Confucius Institute at the University of Bologna hosted a Joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes. The Conference was an important occasion of dialogue and discussion between Confucius Institutes all over Europe. Several institutions attended the opening and closing ceremonies, amongst which the Italian Ministry of Education at that time, Maria Chiara Carrozza and the former Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi.



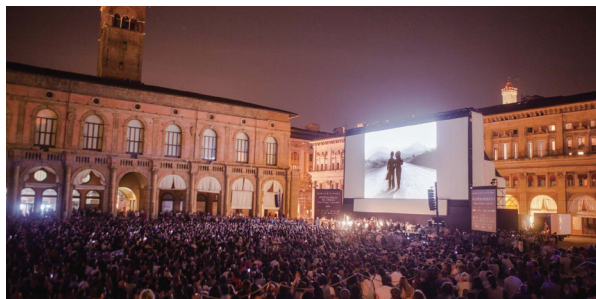
For the past two years (2020-21), due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Confucius Institute-Bologna hosted several online dialogues and workshops, with special reference to the new Chinese Code and the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the EU-China cooperation. These dialogues facilitated the communication of challenges and risks caused by the pandemic.

## 5. Core Collaborations and Networks

### *Cinema Festival.*

Among the numerous cultural initiatives organized by the Confucius Institute-Bologna over the past ten years, the cooperation with the Cineteca of Bologna stands out. With Cineteca, projections, retrospectives and reviews on modern and contemporary Chinese cinema have been organized for the first time in Italy. The most important initiatives were as follows:

- A retrospective of the director Fei Mu (1906-1951) in which the film restored by the Hong Kong Film Archive was shown in cooperation with the China Film Archive in Beijing;
- A film festival “Tribute to Xie Jin-a master of Chinese cinema” in cooperation with the Shanghai Film Museum; and
- “The rebirth of Chinese cinema (1941-1951)” in cooperation with the Center de documentation et de recherche sur le cinéma chinois de Paris, the Cineteca Film Festival “Il cinema Ritrovato.”



Movies are shown in Piazza Maggiore, the main square of Bologna in between June and August.

*Bologna Children's Book Fair.*

Since 2016, with the support of the Renmin Publishing House, the Confucius Institute-Bologna has been participating in the Bologna Children's Book Fair, a worldwide reputed reference event for those who work in the field of publishing and content dedicated to children and teenagers. The Institute was in charge of a stand for Chinese language textbooks, Chinese cultural reading materials, and Chinese children's picture books selected from the major Chinese publishers.



The stand of the Confucius Institute at the Bologna Children Book Fair in 2018. The event, known at international level, is attended by a large number of people each year, both experts and public. The Fair was held between 26 and 29 of March 2018 and this year China was the country guest of honour of the event.

*Italian Acupuncture Association.*

The Confucius Institute-Bologna works with the Italian Acupuncture Association for International Symposium (held online for the past two years). Moreover, the Institutes hosted seminars and workshops on Traditional Chinese Medicine.

**6. Focus on Law**

Since 2013, the Confucius Institute-Bologna and Renmin University of China have spearheaded an intense Chinese language course of law and economics.<sup>7</sup> The Institute also organizes workshops, conferences and seminars on these topics. Since 2018, it has supported the Law in Chinese project, coordinated by Professor Marina Timoteo. Core topics include the most recent developments in contemporary Chinese law; the dialogue between the law and the western legal tradition; and the

legal aspects of the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). In collaboration with the Law in Chinese project, a summer course entitled “Law in Chinese” (2018), a winter course entitled “Chinese for Business” (2019), an intensive course on Contract Law, a course on “Legal English & Legal Chinese” (2020), and a winter course for “Chinese for Business Along the New Silk Road” (2020) were organized. The courses are aimed at jurists, professionals and businessmen interested in developing their Language and communication skills in the field of civil and commercial law spoken in China. In addition, the Confucius Institute-Bologna has organized several international conferences and workshops on different aspects of Chinese law and legal system directed by Professor Timoteo.



October 3, 2017-International Conference “China and Codification in 21st Century-The General Part of Civil Law Entered into Force on October 1, 2017.” The event was organized in the main hall of the University of Bologna. The keynote speech was given by Professor Paolo Grossi, former President of the Italian Constitutional Court and Professor Emeritus at the University of Florence.

The topics covered by the events organized ranged from environmental law, climate change, and sustainable development to intellectual property right protection, legal terminology, e-commerce and the EU-China legal cooperation. In these conferences and workshops, the participants discussed the evolution of Chinese legal system from a historical and comparative law perspective, which, in turn, fostered a dialogue between Western and Asian legal systems. More recently, conferences have focused more on the development and implementation of the new Chinese Civil Code and the Belt and Road initiative.<sup>8</sup>

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2. The Foundation was established in July 2020, together with the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation. Before, the Institutes were managed by Hanban, the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language of the Chinese Ministry of Education. See New Developments for Global Confucius Institutes, Confucius Institutes Blog, <https://sites.gold.ac.uk/confucius-institute/new-developments-for-global-confucius-institutes>; the official website of the Centre, <http://www.chinese.cn/page/#/pcpage/publicinfodetail?id=164>.
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