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**Abstract**

This paper presents the main findings of an EU-China joint study that examines how the 'race for talent' faces the challenges of rapidly evolving skill sets needed in the EU and China. Relevance and responsiveness are considered important in higher education systems, although not the only aspects of quality of education, they are explored through comparison by investigating the differences in socio-economic and cultural realities in Europe and China. Specifically, the study explores similarities and differences in the profiles of college graduates in Europe and China against employers' real expectations and needs. The paper also analyses the strategies and measures that educational systems, institutions/organisations and employers are putting in place to enhance the alignment between education and professional life. The study employed a qualitative and exploratory research method that combined primary data collected from 162 interviews (half in Europe and half in

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China) and the use of existing research literature in Europe and China. All interviewees had direct experience in education and training systems in Europe and China through teaching and learning, research, or work experience involving European and Chinese graduates. The study was one of the outcomes of the 2009 high-level policy dialogue between the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and the Chinese Ministry of Education. The research for this study was carried out by a joint taskforce comprising from the Tsinghua University, Beijing, China and the ICF International (previously the GHK Consulting). (HRK / Abstract übernommen)