

Speech at the Chinese Government Friendship Award Ceremony

Rodrigo Martins, Wuhan University of Technology

Distinguished leaders, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a profound honour for me to speak today as a recipient of the “Chinese Government Friendship Award”. First, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Chinese government for this recognition, and to all sectors of China for their trust and support.

China and Portugal established diplomatic relations in 1979. Seven years later, I came to China for the first time. I witnessed the vitality brought by the reform and opening-up and built a deep friendship with the Chinese people. Since then, I have seen the remarkable progress in education, science, technology, and talent development in China.

I have always believed that China’s development is an opportunity for the world. China has made big progress, and also created broad prospects for cooperation with Europe and the world. Portugal, as an active supporter and participant of the Belt and Road Initiative, is moving forward with China. More and more young Portuguese are coming to China to study and work, indicating the friendship between our two countries.

As an honorary professor of Wuhan University of Technology, I have also participated in the international development of science and education in China. In recent years, through close collaboration with Chinese scientists—including Prof. Xiaoyu Yang, an outstanding member of the European Academy of Sciences—we have established strong partnerships in areas such as sustainable development. Furthermore, I serve as the Chief Scientist of the International Joint Laboratory on Near-Zero-Carbon Materials in Wuhan. I have seen China’s great efforts in advancing near-zero-carbon technologies, and I am deeply impressed by the remarkable breakthroughs of President

Fazhou Wang and his team at Wuhan University of Technology. They have developed innovative ways to turn carbon dioxide into advanced building materials. This is exactly the kind of progress I hope to see. I also wish to further engage in China's and the world's sustainable development.

As President of the European Academy of Sciences, I will keep promoting the scientific and technological exchanges between China and Europe.

I am the founder of the China-Portugal Advanced Materials Innovation Center, I promoted the visit of the Minister of Education and Science of Portugal to China, I nominated Chinese scientists for the first time to join the Council of the European Academy of Sciences, and initiated the "Chinese-European Academy Forum." Going forward, I will continue to promote cooperation among the academies of China and Europe.

And I will take advantage of Wuhan University of Technology's strong international platform to deepen our cooperation in science and education.

To this end, we are planning to establish an Asia-Pacific Centre in China, under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, engaging prominent innovation regions such as Wuhan, Hefei, Nanjing, Suzhou, Chongqing, and others, where we have outstanding Academicians.

Together, I am confident that through our joint efforts, we can elevate international cooperation and work toward building a community with a shared future for humankind.

Thank you very much.