

VISITORS experience VR technology at the 16th Western China International Fair in Chengdu.

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Intl fair attracts biz and high-tech projects

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Chengdu, a megacity in western China, is becoming a top destination for international events and high-tech projects from around the world.

The city held the 16th Western China International Fair, a State-level international exposition under the co-sponsorship of China's 16 ministries, 12 provincial-level administrative units and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps in western China, from Nov 3 to 14.

This year's event drew delegates from 91 countries and regions, including Guinea President Alpha Conde, Serb President Milorad Dodik, German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, and Afghanistan's second Vice-President Mohammad Sarwar Danesh.

In an exhibition area as large as 200,000 square meters, 16 countries set up their national pavilions — more than any previous 15 sessions of the fair, according to the organizers.

Some 9,027 firms from around the world attended the fair, including some of the world's leading firms, such as BMW, Daimler, METRO, DHL, Google and Huawei.

A total of 1,008 investment projects worth nearly 787.7 billion yuan (\$116.6 billion) were signed during the fair, according to the organizers. Chengdu brought in 135 investment projects, with total investment of 185 billion yuan.

Many of the projects attracted by Chengdu are high-end manufacturing projects.

Zhejiang Geely Holding Group signed three investment agreements worth 35.5 billion yuan with the city, to strengthen cooperation in auto manufacturing.

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One of the newly signed projects will be located in the Chengdu part of Tianfu New Area, China's 11th national-level development area approved by the State Council in October 2014.

It will produce high-performance, purely electric vehicles under the Volvo brand as well as local-brand purely electric vehicles.

The second project will bring in Volvo Scalable Product Architecture, a global full-sized unibody automobile platform developed and produced by Volvo, representing the future of the automobile industry.

The third project will produce Geely's BMA vehicles, using the latest modular architecture platform jointly developed with Volvo, and advanced hybrid and plug-in hybrid power systems.

The three projects will have an annual production capacity of 600,000 units. Geely started its investment in Chengdu in 2007 by setting up a manufacturing base. In 2010, the company purchased Sweden-based Volvo, and later built Volvo's first manufacturing plant on the Chinese mainland in the city.

Volvo's new luxury sedan, the S60 Inscription, has been manufactured in the Chengdu plant and exported to the

United States market since September, 2015.

Li Donghui, executive vice-president of Geely, said he expects the annual output value of the Chengdu base to reach 100 billion yuan after the projects are completed and put into use.

"We will build the Chengdu base into one of our most important strategic bases for new energy vehicles to serve the markets along the Belt and Road," he said.

The Chengdu city government also signed a strategic cooperation agreement with a group of leading new energy carmakers to establish a new energy vehicle industry alliance, helping to make the city a new energy vehicle manufacturing base with an international edge.

Germany-based Siemens AG signed an agreement worth one billion yuan with BOE Technology Group's Chengdu subsidiary to help the latter upgrade its production line.

According to the agreement, Siemens will transform BOE's production line in Chengdu according to the standards of the German Industry 4.0 strategy.

During the Western China International Fair in 2011, Siemens signed an investment agreement with the Chengdu Hi-tech Zone to establish the company's first modern digital factory in China.

In July, Siemens announced that it would increase its presence in Chengdu by setting up a subsidiary with registered capital of 330 million yuan.

"Choosing Chengdu was a wise decision," said Roland Busch, member of the managing board of Siemens, during the Western China International Fair.

He said the Chengdu factory will serve as a model for Siemens' digital factories, as well as a representative project of German Industry 4.0.

Friendships across Belt and Road grow in western China

By ZHUAN TI

Chengdu, an economic hub in western China, is facilitating cooperation with more countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

The 16th Western China International Fair held in the city earlier this month highlighted elements of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping.

Four halls featuring the initiative were set up. Exhibitors from 27 countries and regions along the Belt and Road attended the fair, with a total exhibition area of 35,000 square meters.

The fair also hosted activities relating to the Belt and Road Initiative.

During the event, Chengdu announced that it had expanded the Chengdu-Europe Express Rail, a cargo railway route that connects the city to European countries, now ending at Rotterdam in the Netherlands. A one-way trip takes about 13 days.

"The launch of the express rail to Rotterdam will further strengthen the ties between Europe and China, and boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation," said Maxime Verhagen, former Dutch vice-prime minister and former minister of economic affairs, at the fair.

The express rail began operation in April 2013, in line with the Belt and Road Initiative.

The route originally connected Chengdu to Lodz in Poland. It was then expanded to other European cities including Kutno in Poland, Nuremberg in Germany and Tilburg in the Netherlands.

To further expand its connection with Belt and Road countries and regions, Chengdu worked out a strategy called "Chengdu-Europe Plus".

According to the strategy, the city will open two more major railway routes to Europe: one to Istanbul in Turkey and another to Russia.

Chengdu achieved several large cooperative projects with countries along the Belt and Road.

A Sino-German innovative industrial cooperation park, covering a total area of 22 square kilometers, was inaugurated in Chengdu Tianfu New Area. It will be the main platform for Chengdu to conduct cooperation with Germany.

An industrial fund with total investment of 5 billion yuan (\$732 million) was also established to provide financial support to German companies that invest in Chengdu.

During the 11th EU-China Business and Technology Cooperation Fair, a major event of the 16th Western China International Fair, five memorandums of cooperation were signed between the EU Project Innovation Center and Italy, the UK, South Korea and Russia.

The EU Project Innovation Center is a nonprofit organization based in Chengdu, which aims to promote and support business cooperation between the EU and China.

Two of the five memorandums will take effect within the cooperation framework of the Enterprise Europe Network, which has a presence in 54 countries and aims to provide small and medium-sized enterprises with services involving technological innovation and trade support.



TOP: The first return train of the Chengdu-Europe Express Rail arrives in Chengdu in September last year. ABOVE: Businesspeople meet at the 11th EU-China Business and Technology Cooperation Fair. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY