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Executive Brief - Gilbert VAN KERCKHOVE (范克高夫)



*29 September 2005 - receiving the 2005 Friendship Award from then Vice Premier Ms. Wu Yi
It is the highest honor for foreigners in China from the Chinese Government*

Gilbert Van Kerckhove, is from Ghent, Belgium where he graduated with a master's degree in electronic engineering. He speaks Dutch, French, English, Portuguese, German, survival Spanish, and survival Chinese.

He first moved to China in 1980 where he has lived and worked for over thirty years, mostly in Beijing but also in Hong Kong and in Shanghai.

He is the president and founder of Beijing Global Strategy Consulting Co., Ltd., a Wholly Owned Foreign Enterprise in management consulting that provides strategy guidance, investment & development advice and lobbying to foreign and Chinese companies and entities.

Since early 2000 he has been assisting the Beijing Municipal authorities in the areas of economic studies and foreign investment promotion.

From January 2002 to late 2008 he was deeply involved in the preparations for the 2008 Olympics, directly assisting the Municipality in the fund-raising, the tendering process and economic planning. Major projects handled were the Bird's Nest and WaterCube.

He considers Beijing his home and has received the Chinese Green Card. Through his many years in China he has accumulated a deep understanding of the Chinese administration and its modus operandi, the "culture shock" between the Chinese and foreign business concepts and the methodology to build a constructive dialogue between the two sides.

He is a frequent speaker on a variety of topics related to the Chinese economy, business environment, the Chinese society, the development of Beijing and more. He gives briefings to executives, EMBA delegations and has given lectures in several Chinese universities.

His book *Toxic Capitalism* was published in August 2012 and is a study on environmental issues and overconsumption, calling for quality and durability in goods and services. His book "LAUGH AND GET WISER! Jokes and witty wisdom for adults" was published in 2018. Other books to be published soon.

For his exceptional contribution to the development of China and the local economy, Gilbert has received prestigious awards and appointments from the Chinese authorities:

- Friendship Award from the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, received from Vice Premier Wu Yi on 29 September 2005 and confirmed by Premier Wen Jiabao on 30 September 2005, the highest honor for foreigners in China.
- Senior Consultant for the Olympic Economy, appointment by the Beijing Municipal Government on 18 April 2005.
- Great Wall Friendship Award from the Beijing Government (9 December 2004 - by Mayor Wang Qishan), the highest award from the city of Beijing
- Magnolia Silver Award from the Shanghai Municipal Government (July 1999), after generating US\$700 million in contracts for ALSTOM in close cooperation with the Shanghai authorities.
- Advisor to the Beijing Investment Promotion Bureau (Beijing Municipality) and Advisor for Investment Promotion, Beijing Dongcheng District



Mayor Wang Qishan (now vice Premier) presents the Great Wall Friendship Award

Others:

- Rotating Chairman of Foreign Expert Committee, Belt and Road International Talent Fund, State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, September 2018
- Sr. Economic Advisor of the New District of Zhengpu Port, MaAnShan City, 1 Jan. 2017
- Senior Advisor of the China Asia Leisure Industry Promotion Association, 10 Jan. 2017
- Professor, Beijing Jiaotong University, School of Economics and Management, 2013
- Appointed as the only foreigner by Beijing Mayor Guo Jinlong, as "Committee Member of the Specialist Working Group for the Beijing 12th Five Year Plan". (2 July 2010)
- International Director, with the "The Managing Committee of the China Aging International Development Foundation" (entity under the leadership of National Aging Office and supervised by the Ministry of Civil Affairs) (May 2009)
- Statute of Foreign Expert in China; Chinese Green Card holder (2008 & 2012)
- Knight in the Order of the Crown - Belgium (21 November 2004 - by HRH Prince Philip)
- Advisor for Foreign Trade (Belgium) by Belgian Royal Decree in 1998 and 2003.

He has also worked in Brazil, Nigeria, Spain, Thailand, Indochina and Burma (Myanmar). For 25 years he has been with multinationals such as Alcatel, Alstom, Siemens and Rhodia in the areas of telecom, rail and metro transport, electric power generation, heavy industry and diversified engineering. He set up the offices for the Alcatel Group in Vietnam in the early nineties and started the first BARCO office in Asia in 1989, in Hong Kong. Since May 2013 organizing the monthly "Old China Hands Lunch", unique in China.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics and Beijing's modernization drive

He was involved in the Beijing 2008 Olympics since the early stages, consulting and working within several entities of the Beijing Government.

On 18 April 2005 he was officially appointed as Senior Consultant for the Olympic Economy by the Beijing Municipal Government. In January 2006 he delivered a 1,500 page report to the Municipality with detailed recommendations for the development of the economy in Beijing as well as in China for the 11th Five Year Plan (2006-2010).

In 2003/2004 he acted as Negotiation and Development Director with "Beijing State-owned Assets Management Co., Ltd." (BSAM). BSAM was in charge of the Bird's Nest and the WaterCube. He was involved in the complete tendering process for the Olympic venues, from the preparation of the tender documents up to the contract signing.

Previously he acted as Delegate Investment Promotion for the "Beijing Development and Reform Commission" (BDRC) for the Olympic Ownership Tenders, after delivering reports on PPP and post-Olympic use of sports venues. The studies showed the way for Beijing to attract private investment. He acted as a communication channel between the BDRC and the foreign business community, giving essential feedback on foreign concerns and also explaining in detail to the foreign community the goals, practical guidelines and interests of the Chinese government to attract foreign involvement in major projects. As a result, fund-raising for the major Olympic projects was successfully completed. He has worked as part of the Chinese team and organized study tours to Europe in November 2002 for the BDRC to visit Olympic cities, attend PPP and risk insurance seminars and contact potential investors.

He maintains a close relation with several Beijing Municipal and Central Government entities.

Gilbert successfully completed an assignment related to the Olympics with UNICEF. His team also was instrumental in realizing the "Athletes Alley" in the Olympic Forest Park, the monumental sculpture of Olivier Strebelle.

Other clients are from a wide range of countries such as Belgium, USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Israel, Australia, Greece and others.



*With Jacques Rogge, IOC President
Beijing, June 2005*

Active member of the following associations:

- Israel Chamber of Commerce (Beijing)
- Beijing Association of Enterprises with Foreign Investment
- ie-net (formerly KVIV - Belgium - Royal Flemish Association of Graduated Engineers)
- Beijing Rotary Club (since Jan. 2005) - previously member of the Board, webmaster, Fundraising Chair, Sergeant-at-Arms, twice elected President Elect; reverted to normal member due to professional reasons; active with the Beijing Rotaract Clubs.

Previously member of the following associations:

- European Union Chamber of Commerce in China (EUCCC)
May 2005 to April 2014: Chairman of the Public Procurement Working Group,
- Benelux Chamber of Commerce in China (Bencham)
- President of the Belgium Luxembourg Business Association in Shanghai (May '97 to Sept. '99); structured the organization, set up the office and increased exposure and activities.
- Former member of several Chambers of Commerce in Beijing and East Asia (USA, France, Australia, Canada, UK, Belgium, Switzerland).

Gilbert has run 6 full marathons since 2003 and is a regular at the gym. He bikes in Beijing. He is also webmaster of six websites and an active blogger and writer.