

Chinese Futures: Horizon 2025

3rd Task Force Meeting: China as Global Actor

Tuesday 28 March 2017

EUISS Conference room, Brussels Liaison Office

Justus Lipsius Building (JL 00-FG-10), 175 Rue de la Loi, 1048 Brussels

Programme

11:00 – 11:30 **Arrival and welcome coffee**

11:30 – 13:00 **Session 1: China and global powers**

Kick-off remarks **Frans Paul van der Putten, Clingendael Institute**

China's engagement with global powers has often been described in terms of strategic flexibility. While we can currently observe a clear preference for bilateral or loose multilateral frameworks, questions arise regarding the sustainability of those arrangements and their position within Beijing's long-term strategic calculus. To what extent are these bilateral engagements a function of Deng Xiaoping's policy of "crossing the river by feeling the stones", with a potential of gradual institutionalisation? Could this potential be nurtured even if China intended these relationships as pragmatic attempts to leverage its comparative strength in the long run? How reliable are China's linkages with its new 'circle of friends' - within and outside the BRICS setting – and how might they shape global strategic developments ten years from now?

13:00 – 13:45 **Lunch**

13:45 – 15:15 **Session 2: China and global governance**

Kick-off remarks **Mikko Huotari, Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)**

When trying to imagine the contours of China's future global policy, its intention to play within or outside the rules of the current system of international governance is key. To date, Beijing's selective participation in current governance structures has given rise to speculation: is it driven by gradual socialisation or self-interested motives? From financial to environmental issues, space and cyber security governance: which areas are most likely to attract Chinese active involvement over the next ten years and why? To what extent do Beijing's own institution-building and norm-creation efforts challenge the existing security order and how do international perceptions affect its future role within the system? In which areas are China's efforts most likely to complement existing global norms or constructively contribute to the creation of future frameworks?

15:15 – 15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30 – 17:00 **Session 3: China and the EU**

Kick-off remarks **Gudrun Wacker, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)**

EU-China relations have seen significant rapprochement over the past decade, mostly due to booming investments and economic ties. That said, principled divergences, as well as uncertainties regarding Beijing's strategic intentions, keep hampering deeper political and security cooperation. In which direction is the relationship going to evolve over the coming ten years and what will it depend on? With a proliferating number of Chinese-led overtures, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, likely to bring Beijing even closer to the European continent, Brussels will have to take a more proactive stance to safeguard its interests, including respect for its values and principles. What are the main obstacles that lie ahead in this regard and how can they be overcome?

17:00 **Wrap-up and conclusions**