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CALL FOR PAPERS

7th Workshop on EU-China Relations in Global Politics

“European and Asian Perspectives on China's Belt & Road Initiative”

Nazarbayev University*, Astana, Kazakhstan, 18-20 April 2018

Capitalizing on its four decades of economic growth, its political clout and the favourable international circumstances, China's President Xi Jinping announced the idea of constructing a Silk Road Economic Belt during his visit to Astana in 2013. Soon after, he announced the idea of the Maritime Silk Road during his visit in Jakarta. Ever since, what is now called the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) has gradually become a concept central to China's foreign policy, becoming enshrined in the Constitution of the Communist Party during the 19 National Party Congress.

The BRI offers a global vision: it actively involves at least sixty countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa, with an open invitation for others to join. It covers a long list of policy areas: infrastructure, logistics, trade, finance, investment, culture, environment, health care, people-to-people contact, education and others. It extends to different levels of government, and involves a myriad of existing as well as novel mechanisms, such as the one for Cooperation between China-Central East Europe (16+1) or Chinese-initiated institutions such as the Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank.

The BRI implicates the EU and Europe as a whole. Europe geographically is one of the areas where the BRI unfolds. The EU, its member states and other countries in Europe and in the European Neighbourhood are considered by China as partners in fulfilling the BRI vision. China has embarked on a pro-active foreign policy in Europe, reaching out to the EU, to national governments but also by creating new (sub)regional platforms for cooperation. As a result, Europeans debate the opportunities and challenges that arise from the advancement of the BRI.

In the current literature on the topic, authors still argue over the particular definitions of the BRI. Its meaning and ways it is referred to are multiple – it is used as a geographic, strategic, normative, politico-economic, organizational and symbolic concept.

On the policy level, the BRI is rapidly evolving into the most ambitious global plan led by any government in the history of humanity, often called a blueprint for a new way of globalization. In practice, however, the BRI is yet to overcome a number of challenges and obstacles. The fact that the BRI vision involves diverse regions and modes of cooperation – from economic development in turbulent political environments such as Pakistan to the investment in and operation of facilities in developed liberal democracies – makes strategic positioning challenging for external observers.

Envisioned as a China-led but ultimately shared and joint initiative, its success rests as much on the willingness of participant countries to commit to it, as it rests on China's diplomatic leadership. How will regional and global actors position themselves *vis-à-vis* BRI and will new strategic cooperation succeed? Will emerging players, such as India, Turkey or Kazakhstan emerge in centrefold of Eurasian cooperation or will China, Russia and European powers remain pivotal? And how can African nations, such as Kenya, manage to shape policy to their advantage?

Next to political considerations, infrastructure and connectivity investment will also spur economic development. Host countries welcome trade and investment but need to translate it into sustainable growth, conduct diligent environmental impact analysis, and ensure local and regional stakeholder involvement. The scale of the BRI means it will have a significant impact on the fulfilment of international objectives to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Given the challenges presented by climate change and other threats to the environment, only a sustainability-based approach can ensure success and prosperity of the BRI. On a global level, China plays an increasingly important role in setting the objectives for sustainable development. Domestically, China has already invested greatly in renewable energy, and green technologies. Internationally, a more constructive link between China's ambitious project and its intention to stay committed to sustainable development is yet to be defined. Creating co-ownership of BRI in Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia will be key to ensure successful implementation.

All of this makes the BRI a fitting topic for the seventh annual Workshop on EU-China/Asia Relations in Global Politics. After holding the workshop twice in Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Hong Kong and Taipei, we now head to Astana, Kazakhstan, the place where the BRI was formally announced, aiming to create a fruitful and thorough debate on some of the core questions for scholars and practitioners. We aim to bring together perspectives from different areas of the world, from various disciplines and approaches, on both macro- and micro-level of analysis, and make a contribution to the emerging debate on the topic.

What are the geopolitical and geo-economic implications of the BRI for China-Europe relations and Europe's global role? How does it affect Eurasian connectivity and integration? How does the BRI link China's domestic and foreign policy? What are the prospects in and responses from various regions and countries, in particular in Central Asia, the Middle East, and South- and Southeast Asia? What are the implications for other regional and global powers, such as Russia, India, Japan and the United States? What are the normative implications of the new China-centred institutions that accompany the BRI? What are the prospects for issues of energy security in the era of the BRI? How 'green' will the Belt & Road be and how to ensure that projects under the BRI will uphold and advance sustainability principles? What are the opportunities for businesses and social enterprises? These and other pertinent questions that the BRI raises will be discussed in-depth throughout our two-day workshop at Nazarbayev University*.

The event takes place in the framework of the UACES Collaborative Research Network on EU-China Relations (ESSCA School of Management at Angers / College of Europe at Bruges / Graduate School of Global Politics at Free University Berlin). The event is generously supported by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Regional Project Energy Security and Climate Change Asia-Pacific (RECAP), based in Hong Kong SAR.

Submissions

We invite applications by both senior and junior scholars, researchers, graduate students, practitioners and representatives of the private sector and the civil society of all nationalities to send us their paper proposals, case studies or posters on the following themes:

1. **China's BRI and the evolving global order: In search for theoretical and analytical macro-level approaches**
2. **Central Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian and Southeast Asian perspectives on the BRI at the regional, national and subnational level**
3. **BRI and China-Europe relations – on the regional, national and subnational level**
4. **Climate change, sustainability and energy security of a 'green' BRI**
5. **Innovation, technology, and digitisation in the context of the BRI**
6. **Meta level analyses: Case studies and micro-level analysis on particular projects of the BRI**
7. **Methodological approaches to comparative research in the Eurasian context**

Proposals should not exceed 500 words. [Please submit your proposals along with your short biographies via the submission form online](#). Deadline for submission is Fri., 12 January 2018. Accepted panellists will be informed on a rolling admissions basis. The full-fledged papers of 5000-8000 words or case studies will be expected by Fri., 2 March 2018.

Scientific Committee

- Dr. **Frauke AUSTERMANN**, Research Associate of the ESSCA EU*Asia Institute
- Dr. **Peter HEFELE**, Director of the Regional Project "Energy Security and Climate Change" at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Hong Kong
- Prof. Dr. **MEN Jing**, InBev-Baillet-Latour Chair of EU-China Relations at College of Europe
- Prof. Dr. **Klaus SEGBERS**, Director of the German Chinese Graduate School of Global Politics at Freie Universität Berlin
- Prof. Dr. **SHEN Wei**, Associate Dean for International Relations at Deakin University & Jean Monnet Chair in EU-China Relations at ESSCA School of Management.

For more information, please visit our [conference website](#) or e-mail assistant.shanghai@essca.fr.

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