REFLECTIONS

Magazine of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs – oilp

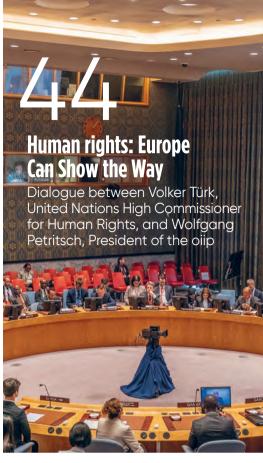
No. 01/June 2024

Why Europe matters!



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A Change of Season?

Turkish Foreign Policy in the Period of 'Strange New Multipolarity'







Bruno Kreisky and the Two-State Solution
Naïve or visionary?



Editorial

Dear Readers,

2024 marks the 45th anniversary of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs – oiip. Over these years, the oiip has established itself as a leading research institute in its field, a place for dialogue and discussions, a point of contact for diplomats and representatives of international organizations and for media. On the occasion of our anniversary, we are starting a new publication format: our magazine REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS aims to make our expertise available and accessible for people interested in the dynamics, trends, risks and opportunities that drive the world today. This first issue focuses on Europe and why it matters in an increasingly chaotic and unpredictable world. We are grateful to the experts, affiliates and trainees who have contributed to this issue. They highlight regions, crises, and topics where more European involvement, commitment and determination are needed. They also look forward to the future and make suggestions how to make Europe better and more resilient to the shocks and challenges of our time. We also showcase some selected activities of the oiip that aim to foster a diverse, active and impactful Europe. Our first issue also includes an interview with LSE Professor and oiip advisory board member, Kristina Spohr, who warns that the world is about to slide into World War III, but also emphasizes what could be done to prevent this danger. UN High Commissioner Volker Türk, in conversation with oiip President Wolfgang Petritsch, explains why it has become more difficult, but even more important to advocate for universal human rights in a conflict-ridden environment.

Enjoy reading REFLECTIONS. Visit our website for more policy analyses, articles, and events, and support our work through a membership at the oiip!

The Editorial Team

Preface

by Cengiz Günay



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he last few years have been tough for most of us. The world has gone through a pandemic 2020-2023, experienced the outbreak of conventional war in Ukraine in 2022, has been hit by heat waves, floods and storms related to climate change, and has witnessed the terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023 and the subsequent war in Gaza. Moreover, we observe the rise of populism and autocratization. Whereas the fall of authoritarian communist reaimes from 1989 on seemed to herald the beginning of a new liberal and democratic era in world history, today, 35 years after the end of the Cold War, the picture is not that bright. Democracy is in decline. Not only in countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, South and Central Asia where the erosion is particularly stark, but there is also a tangible decrease in the quality in established democracies such as the United States, Italy, and Israel. Freedom of expression, media freedom, civil society and elections are deteriorating in most countries. Meanwhile, according to the V-Dem project of Gothenburg University, most people in the world live in electoral autocracies. These are hybrid regimes which combine democratic institutions and procedures with an authoritarian logic of governing. They qualify as authoritarian despite regular elections.

The rise of populism and autocratization comes with the weakening of the liberal, rules-based world order. Multilateral organizations such as the UN or the OSCE are weakened by a growing trend towards bilateral transactionalism. Transactionalism is a business-oriented

pragmatic approach to international relations that aims at leaving normative, value-based aspects such as ideological differences, human rights issues and so on aside, to be able reach agreement in certain segments. Transactionalism favours short-term wins rather than a long-term perspective or a grand strategy. Rules, norms, diplomacy, international cooperation have been increasingly undermined by the strive for short-term gains, making joint solutions to the many problems of our planet more difficult.

The European Union itself is a product of liberalism, and a model for multilateral cooperation and economic interdependence. In a world which tends to be increasingly shaped by transactional bilateralism, the EU is challenged. Internally it has been challenged by member states' diverging interests and attacked by extreme right- and left-wing movements and nationalist forces which see the EU as a liberal / neoliberal corset. Externally, it has been attacked by revisionist powers such as Russia and China which defy Europe's liberal normative claim.

The EU has not been able to adapt to the changes on the international stage. It has not been able to gain a geopolitical and more strategic vision. International partners in the Global South highlight that Americans are faster and Chinese are cheaper, while Europeans are slow and expensive, and they attach conditions to their deals.

Whereas literature is full of accounts that criticize the EU and highlight Europe's declining role in world politics, we want to use the opportunity of the 45th anniversary of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs and stand for Europe. Therefore, the first issue of our new magazine REFLECTIONS is titled: Why Europe matters!

REFLECTIONS No. 01 features more than 13 articles and interviews which address different developments, trends, and crises in international politics, but also highlight why and how Europe matters in all of them. Our aim is to point out areas where Europe has options for action.

The interview with Kristina Spohr provides a historical perspective and explains why the liberal world order as we know it is endangered. I address in my article polarization around the current Gaza War and point out what Europe could do in this regard. Loic Simonet's paper in turn deals with the nowadays much discussed two-state solution

We work to advance an informed and unbiased view of world politics and we are committed to intercultural dialogue and exchange."

for the Middle East. Simonet highlights Bruno Kreisky's role in advancing and legitimizing the international recognition of Palestinian representation.

Paul Schmidt demands in his contribution EU reforms and further integration. Both are a necessity in view of the shifts and challenges on the international stage. Vedran Džihić in turn advocates in his article EU enlargement. He sees enlargement as a powerful geopolitical tool and warns in view of developments in Georgia and Moldova that the EU must not repeat the mistakes of the Western Balkans. Zeynep Arkan's paper titled A Change of Season deals with another forgotten EU-candidate: Turkey. Arkan analyses Turkey's foreign policy in a multi-polar world and addresses the potential impact of the opposition's victory on Turkish foreign policy and relations with the EU.

Anastasiia Soboleva emphasizes in her contribution that despite problems, Russia's attack on Ukraine has shown the Union's strength and its ability to react united to external shocks. And Thomas Eder explains why China's relations with Europe are of strategic importance and that this even prevents Beijing from delivering weaponry to Russia. Additionally, we feature the summary of our panel discussion "strange new multipolarity". Daniela Pisoiu and Annika Scharnagl present in their paper findings from their ongoing EU-funded PARTES (Participatory Approaches to protecting Places of Worship) project. Vito Morisco points out that the EU has increasingly become a counter-terrorism actor and what consequences this might have. This issue also features a dialogue between oiip-President, former High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Wolfgang Petritsch and UN High Commissioner Volker Türk on the challenges for promoting and protecting human rights and what Europe can do in this regard. And, Judith Kohlenberger criticizes in her contribution EU migration policies and advocates that instead of externalization of migration and border management the EU should rather stand for its values. Therefore, she calls for more rather than less Europe!

The themes in this magazine correspond with the research areas of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs – oiip: Security Politics, Europe's relations with the neighborhood

and the world; Democracy, Autocratization and Foreign Policy; Multilateralism and the World of Geopolitics.

In our 45th year, we remain committed to independent and critical research based on academic quality criteria. We work to advance an informed and unbiased view of world politics and we are committed to intercultural dialogue and exchange. Rather than International Relations Theory and the observation and analysis of mega trends in international politics, our research is guided by the question what impacts people's lives. We aim to make our research accessible and understandable, and present it straight to the point. REFLECTIONS is, besides our policy analyses, a new format that aims to embody this goal. With REFLECTIONS we address an interested European/international readership from all walks of life.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all authors and our great team for their support and for making this happen under a very tight time schedule. My special thanks go to Petra Podesser. Without your commitments and enthusiasm, it would never have been possible to realise this project. I would also like to thank Laura Green who has volunteered as a proofreader and who has done a fantastic job. Also, many thanks to all our supporters, donors and cooperation partners for their continuing trust in us and our work.

If you wish to support our mission and our research, become a member and receive all our publications. Visit our website for membership www.oiip.ac.at.

Happy 45th Birthday oiip and to many returns!

Cengiz Günay Director

On the Road into a New World War

IR Historian **Kristina Spohr** talks about the tectonic shifts in the world order, the dangers of World War III, and why Europe matters.

A dialogue with **Cengiz Günay**

The world is increasingly in conflict. This comes with the tendency against consensus building, against compromise, and against the application of rules and norms."

engiz Günay: Many of us have the feeling that we are in times of fundamental change, it seems as if the pillars of the world order are falling apart and the world descends into chaos. How did we get here?

Kristina Spohr: The current world order and many of its fundamental institutions emerged over the last one hundred years. The international system of the early 20th century was marked by multipolarity, by imperial and, from the 1920s/30s, also by ideological strife – all of which exploded into two world wars. After 1945, there was a strong desire to build a post-World War II global order in which states should interact bound by mutually agreed rules, ideally in a cooperative manner. The United Nations were founded to offer the institutional and normative framework for the new postwar "rules-based order", with the UN Charter containing crucial principles that relate to sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination, and human rights and explicitly prohibits the use of force. Most importantly, the UN-based system was created to prevent World War III. Indeed, despite ideological and nuclear rivalry throughout the "Cold War", there was no direct "hot" confrontation between the US and USSR (NATO and Warsaw Pact). So, some spoke of the "Long Peace". The UN and later the European Conference for Security and Cooperation (CSCE) guaranteed dialogue - even when tensions and the risk of nuclear escalation ran high. The postwar institutional network has outlived the Cold War and survived until today. And, while the Soviet-led bloc (and the USSR) collapsed and Eastern organizations such as the Warsaw Pact and Comecon dissolved, Western institutions - notably the European Community (EC) and NATO – were adapted and reinvented for the post-Wall world.



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The European Community deepened and became the European Union (EU); it opened its doors to the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and so did NATO. Together, they became central pillars of Europe's post-Cold War security architecture. Liberalism and multilateralism were seen as the new way forward. Conflicts were to be dealt with in a "civilian" manner, through normative regimes and institutions. The brief Gulf War in 1990 was hailed as a picture-perfect UN mission. The international community came together to safeguard the territorial integrity of Kuwait and to push out Saddam Hussein. All permanent members of the UN Security Council agreed that "force" could be used to end Iraq's military invasion. Yugoslavia' bloody breakup proved more problematic to deal with. What started as wars of secession descended into aenocidal civil war. The UN failed to intervene here; but it also seemed unable to prevent escalation in other conflicts such as Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Liberia, Haiti, and Sierra

Leone, to name but a few. Suddenly, the post-Wall world was much less peaceful and orderly than we had thought. Rather than a better world, underpinned by international law and with the U.S. as the unipole, we saw the emergence of more strife, conflict, and disorder in the post-Cold War era.

Cengiz Günay: What has happened since? How can we explain the return to outright conventional warfare in Europe in 2022?

Kristina Spohr: When Russia invaded Ukraine and started an old-style conventional "war of conquest", it broke the very rules and principles it had itself been a signatory of. To our shock, we see soldiers diaging and fighting in trenches, man-againstman, tank-against-tank. We see razed cities, scorched earth, bombed and pockmarked landscapes reminiscent of images from WW I and WW II. Ironically, it was the Russians who, since 1945, kept insisting on such principles as the inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, and non-interference in internal affairs. And post-Soviet Russia recognized Ukraine's independence and, notably, its borders in 1991 when the USSR disintegrated. Ukraine gave away its Soviet nuclear arsenal to Russia, signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and received in return security guarantees by Britain, the US, and Russia. Putin's actions on February 24, 2022 (if not already Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014) voided these agreements. That galvanized the international community. 30 years after the Cold War's end, it seems that engagement with Russia through institutions, arms control agreements, energy deals, and economic integration (G7/8, WTO) deals had not helped build a more secure continent. And there is more to grapple with than a revisionist

Russia still sits at the table. The institutional framework and the tools of governance are still in place despite the war in Ukraine. This institutional web, a post-1945 achievement, didn't exist in the 19th century."

Russia. We do also see the rise of an increasingly assertive and aggressive China, which took its own exit from the Cold War. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the PRC has become a global economic powerhouse, with Beijing aspiring to be the world's leading power by 2050. Worse, it aligns with Russia in an awkward, unholy alliance. This marks a major shift of the tectonic plates of global power. Both aim for a "multipolar" or "polycentric" international system; and having declared liberalism obsolete, they openly strive for a "post-Western" world order.

Cengiz Günay: Can we say that we have entered a post-liberal world order? Can we compare it with the big game of the 19th century and multipolarism of that era? Or is this something totally new?

Kristina Spohr: It is different from the power game of the 19th century for one important reason. Today, although

weakened, the United Nations exists, so do the EU, NATO, and the CSCE/OSCE in Europe, as well as the Arctic Council, which includes states and indigenous representation. And although rules have been broken and the institutions suffer from loss of credibility, Russia still sits at the table. The institutional framework and the tools of governance are still in place despite the war in Ukraine. This institutional web. a post-1945 achievement, didn't exist in the 19th century. In short, yes, there are similarities, and there's a danger of the world slithering into constant conflict and warfare, but so far we still have institutionalized for athat might help with ramping off, defusing, and allowing for opening diplomatic avenues.

Cengiz Günay: Many fear that the international order is too fragmented and that the institutional framework is too weak to prevent wars and conflicts.

Kristina Spohr: Well, I agree. Sadly, we are probably already on the road toward a kind of World War III. I don't mean something comparable to WW I or WW II in the conventional sense, or worse, in terms of nuclear escalation. But, I think that we have reached a point where different kinds of warfare - e.g., visible through attacks on financial and government computer systems (cyber), the destruction of communications and infrastructure (GPS, data cable, and gas pipeline), or pressure with migrant flows on borders – are already taking place at multiple levels in parallel to outright military conflict(s). The whole world is drawn into an antagonistic, conflictual situation with much uncertainty. Just think of the manipulations of democratic elections and societal polarization through social media. All of this is disruptive. Maybe it's not warfare in a traditional sense, but such stoked confrontation through hybrid warfare appears to be a new constant. All these things are part of a wider war. We see especially a Russian (and

Chinese) interest in mischief-making and disruption, and thereby, to divide and rule. When everybody is being pitted against everybody, we have a situation of non-linear warfare; and sadly, we are already engulfed in this. The world is increasingly in conflict. This comes with the tendency against consensus building, against compromise, and against the application of rules and norms. Cohesion in society is giving way to anarchic tendencies. There are notably dictatorial actors who have an interest in uncertainty and instability, as they seek to postulate and demonstrate that the "West" is ultimately weak and divided.

Cengiz Günay: And what would you say? What are these aggressions and tensions about? In the 19th century, it was about resources and economic and political power. In the 20th century, it was much about ideology. So, what would you say, what is it today that is creating this tension?

Kristina Spohr: So, Russia's attack on Ukraine is imperial. It is about territory, it is about the Russkij Mir – the Russian world. It's not so much about resources. For Putin it's about the old idea of a grand Russian Empire. It's an empire by imposition. That's why he also keeps abusing history. He is referring to particular moments in time that suit him to legitimize his brutal agenda. And that's also why in the West he threatens the Baltic States and even Finland. It doesn't cross his mind that long before Muscovy had expanded and St. Petersburg was founded in 1703, there was a Swedish Empire – a Swedish world, "Schwedskij Mir". That is not the moment in history he chooses to refer to. He chooses the times when Russia and the Soviet Union were at their largest. So, it is territorial and about personal power politics. Other European states today simply don't have such expansionist ambitions. That is the clear lesson of the two world wars! Nobody wants to revise borders

by war. China, however, pressing Taiwan – that is also territorial. The conflict between the United States and China is to a certain extent ideological, because it is about systems of governance and allies and the way states and societies function. It is about dictatorships versus democratically elected governments. And that is a clash of worldviews. Therefore, we have a mix of reasons, territorial and ideological, if you like.

Cengiz Günay: So we have all these clashes together, which makes things even more complicated also for multilateral organizations. They have failed to manage conflicts such as in Yemen, Israel-Palestine, or the Ukraine war. Why do you think the UN, or, with respect to Europe, the OSCE, are lacking the means and the authority to intervene?

Kristina Spohr: I think the trouble is that they were built on the foundation of "never again a World War" in the conventional way. There was a tacit agreement that "we may have differences when it comes to political systems and ideology, but we don't want war. And, if we change borders, we do so only by peaceful means". There are a number of examples for the peaceful change of borders recognized by all; the dissolution of the USSR, the re-establishment of independence of the Baltic states, the velvet divorce of Czechoslovakia, and, of course, German unification. I think the UN Security Council is suffering because some actors are striving for maximal solutions and are doing so by military force. Russia has walked away from the post-1945 consensus. And so, the UN has lost credibility because one of the permanent members of the Security Council has violated the most basic rule by violating the territorial integrity of another state. The USSR lost some 20 million civilians in WW II. There is a reason why, as part of the victor powers, Soviet Russia co-constructed the post-1945 order. Now, Putin's Russia has chosen to walk away.

As a veto-power Russia blocks decision-making in the UN Security Council. And on top, this is quietly supported by China, because Beijing harbours its own ambitions for Taiwan. China is moving in same direction as it did with Hong Kong-which was scooped up. Hong Kong is a small place. But in terms of political symbolism, the way the city was absorbed is very problematic. And let's not even talk about human rights issues. So now, you have two permanent members of the UN Security Council who are overtly playing the system. That sadly makes it largely unworkable.

Cengiz Günay: Has the traction of liberal democratic values decreased?

Kristina Spohr: I think it has decreased because people have taken it for granted. Just think of our students. I often talk to my students, I say, "On Twitter and other social media, you're mainly ,followers'. You ,follow' what other people say". I ask them: "When do you think critically for yourself? What are your key rights and responsibilities? Why don't you vote?" It's your right to vote!" Only 100 years ago, women fought for the right to vote. Just think of the suffragettes. Democracy only works when people buy into the democratic system, believe in its institutions, and understand that it's not just black and white. It is about forging compromises and coalitions. And it's very hard work. You have to accept that, even if you are on the winning side, sometimes you have to give a little. You can't always push for the maximal position. In a democracy, the winning majority also has the responsibility to protect the rights of the minority. In uncertain times, people seek simple answers. That makes dictators seem attractive and effective. And some of our "clown politicians", sadly, have gone in that direction too.... In democracies, it is difficult to give long term perspectives, because we go through electoral cycles, and also because we are lacking visionary leadership. If you



Yes, Europe matters!"

ask me or a younger person, "Where is the EU headed by 2050, what is its key idea?" nobody knows. It is not clear. Whereas if you would have been asked the same question in the 1990s, there was a commitment and a strategy. At that time, Germany and France were really pressing for a stronger Union. They pressed for the Euro and more political integration. We got a common currency and we got a real freedom of movement. All these were tangible results. They were not perfect; but they offered unique opportunities that you and I, our generation had – thanks to the Maastricht Treaty, we were able to study and work anywhere in Europe. Our grandparents born in the 1910s and 1920s could only have dreamed of that.

Cengiz Günay: Do you think the EU has lost its verve and its soft power?

Kristina Spohr: I think it's a question of aspirations. If you ask people in the world how they want to live, most of them aspire to live in peace and prosperity. Migrants from all over the world want to come to Europe for a better future. It has a lot of traction! But Europeans must not take their democracy and variety of welfare-social systems for granted. I believe it is important that leaders remember and communicate the attractiveness of democracy and peace. Here ideas can freely spark, too. If you think about where the long-term successful COVID vaccines were developed—at universities or with researchers in Europe - Oxford University (with Astra Zeneca) and research at BioNTech in Germany. We must not forget to effectively communicate these things. And we also have to remind ourselves that our freedoms have to be defended. But the political and socio-economic post-war gains must also be renewed. So, we might say that, yes, as an international actor, Europe has been losing influence, and we see that the developing world has a growing voice - look, for instance at the BRICs countries with support of

Russia, China, India. But I think that when you look at climate and economic migrant flows and people's aspirations, the West holds the main attraction and there is still strong soft power emanating from Europe and America.

Cengiz Günay: But Russia's war on Ukraine seems to have pointed out the limitations of soft-power and engagement?

Kristina Spohr: In the days before Putin went to war, Chancellor Scholz and President Macron both travelled to Moscow, because they said: "It's completely irrational. Why would somebody want to start a war?" I mean, look at all the destruction in Ukraine, and think of all the casualties - Ukrainians and Russians. Rationally and pragmatically, it doesn't make any sense to start a war, and yet, Putin did it. European leaders were thinking along the post-World War II ideals; they also thought if there is interdependence, there is less likelihood of war. But they were wrong. Putin had another agenda, and for him war is just another means to push through what he wants. But he also miscalculated big time. Nobody can easily control a war machinery, once it gets under way-there are many factors. He did not manage to conquer Kyiv within days. And to his chagrin, his aggression brought Europeans and the transatlantic community closer together-Finland and Sweden joined NATO. Yet now it's about the question of how do we come out of this reactive moment. We need to think of how to shore up our deterrence and defence for the future, how to get ourselves in the driving seat (from reaction to action), and to thus make clear what we stand for and where we want to go.

Cengiz Günay: Does Europe matter on a larger international scale? What should be its role?

Kristina Spohr: Yes, Europe matters! If you think of Europe as the European

Union, we have to harness our political attractiveness and our economic power. The EU could and should be a provider of security in areas such as cyber or societal resilience. It should help European industries build up European defence. However, military strategic decisions and operative aspects should be left to NATO. The EU no doubt will be involved in rebuilding Ukraine, and help it reach the necessary standards, so it can one day join the club. But we need to revive the OSCE, which looks like a paralysed paper tiger. Russia is still at the table. And we will eventually have to go through a whole new process of rapprochement and engagement, just like in the détente era, because Russia is a European power and it will not disappear. Just because the dialogue has to be frozen now, it does not mean that it is going to be frozen forever. We should remember that no hot conventional war is forever. But everybody needs to be quite clear about where the red lines are, what is tolerated and what not. And then we will need to find openings. Diplomacy is all about openings. Neither side can 100 percent maximize. It will not work. Each side is too big to fail. And yet, in all this, we must hold onto our principles.

Kristina Spohr is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She is the author and editor of a dozen books, most recently of Post Wall, Post Square: Rebuilding the World after 1989 (William Collins, 2019; Yale UP, 2020) which also appeared in Spanish, Russian, and the award-winning German version entitled Wendezeit: Die Neuordnung der Welt nach 1989 (DVA, 2019); and of The Global Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt and the Reshaping of the International Order (Oxford University Press, 2016). In 2023-24, she is Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington DC at the Polar Institute, where she is writing a global history of the Arctic.



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Why the Gaza War is another Test for Democracy

by Cengiz Günay

The Gaza war has not only coincided with growing political polarization between the political right and left, but it has also revealed the splits and divisions within the leftist, liberal and progressive camp."

n October 7, 2023, Hamas fighters took 1139 lives and more than 200 hostages, many of them visitors of a rave festival. Images of young women taken away on pickups and reports on sexual abuse, rape and the killing of women did not only traumatize Israel but left a deep impact on many people around the world. The bloodiest terrorist attack in Israeli history led to a huge wave of international solidarity. There was, at least in most Western democracies, consensus that Israel needs to react and defend itself. However, the "collateral damages" of Israel's military operation leading until June 2024 to more than 35.000 civilian casualties, the severe food and health emergency in Gaza and the destruction of almost the entire infrastructure have led to growing criticism.

In Germany and the United States, two key allies' public approval of the governments' support for Israel has dramatically decreased since October 2023. In the US the approval of Israel's military operation dropped between November and March from 50% to 36%.

In Germany, a growing number of citizens wish a more critical stance of their government against Israel (from 38% in November to 57% in April) and 87% of Germans think that the international community should put more pressure on Israel to stop its operations in Gaza.

Parallel to the general shift in public opinion, polarization between the pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel camp increased. In the US, polarization has overlapped with the drifting apart of the grassroots of the Republican and the Democratic parties. However, the Gaza war has not only coincided with growing political polarization between the political right and left, but it has also revealed the splits and divisions within the leftist, liberal and progressive camp.

The conflict in the Middle East has coincided and further deepened antithetical and irreconcilable conceptions of the social world and the world order. These divisions go beyond ideological differences, but rather build on different value and identity



Besides identity, there is also a growing generational divide in the leftist, liberal and progressive spectrum." conceptions, notions of history and threat perceptions. Societal divisions have further deepened in the pandemic and have been supported by social media bubbles. Polarization has supported solidarity with likeminded people and groups and enmity towards those who are perceived as the out-group. Information is filtered and absorbed according to in-group values and views and is hardly challenged but rather reinforced. This in turn, enforces the tendency to exaggerate differences with those who are perceived as the out-group. These developments have prevented dialogue, consensus, and compromise, instead they have supported mutually exclusive "absolute truths".

Arguments in support of Israel have often either foregrounded Israel's unique historical role as a refuge for Jews in the world and/or they have seen Israel as an outpost of Western civilization in an otherwise hostile Middle East and as a bastion against Islamist extremism. These discourses have largely ignored the injustice and

discrimination against Palestinians and have rather perceived Palestinians and Muslims not only as an overlapping but also as a homogeneous group prone to radicalism, extremism, and anti-Semitism. This view has been more prevalent in the right-wing segment of politics. It has also chimed in with Israeli right-wing rhetoric which has presented Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, settlements, and the war on Gaza as inevitable measures to keep Islamist extremists at bay and safeguard security not only in Israel but the Western world. Hence, rather often pro-Israel rhetoric and approval for the war has overlapped with anti-Muslim and anti-migration opinions. These are overwhelmingly - but not exclusively represented in right-wing, nationalist, and conservative echo-chambers.

Anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian voices in turn have tended to see Israel through the lens of Western colonialism. They have often ignored the historical context from which Israel emerged and the trauma of the Holocaust. Instead, they have rather

judged Israel by the discriminatory practices against Palestinians only, and have seen Israel as an oppressive, military apartheid state. While Israel's military occupation is depicted as the ugly face of Western imperialism, Palestinians are often collectively seen as subalterns and victims of an unjust international power order. These perceptions have strongly overlapped with the criticism of the racist nature of Western capitalist imperialism of leftist and liberal urban circles.

Whereas the political right ranging from the Austrian People's Party and Fratelli d'Italia to the French Front National and the Republicans in the US has been united in its support for Israel the picture is more complicated in the leftist, progressive camp.

In the US, President Biden's pro-Israel policies has increasingly alienated progressive and leftist voters. While the Republican electorate's support for Israel is still at around 64%, the support rate among Democrats has dropped to 18%. The most vocal critics of Biden's pro-Israel policies are Muslim constituencies, university students and liberal and progressive Jewish groups and organizations. The primary elections in Wisconsin are an alarm sign that Biden's pro-Israel policies could endanger his re-election in November 2024. Wisconsin is a swing state where Biden won in 2020 with a margin of only 22.000 votes over Trump. In the primary more than 48.000 Democrats casted protest votes as a warning for the President. Many of them are Arab Americans and committed Democrats. They have threatened to leave the party if there is no change in course.

In the UK, Keir Starmer, leader of the oppositional Labour Party was punished by voters in local elections in England on May 2, 2024 for his support for the government's pro-Israel stance. Labour's votes in areas with strong Muslim communities dropped by 18%, alarming the party leadership about the expected victory in the upcoming general elections. Besides identity, there is also a growing generational divide in the leftist, liberal and progressive spectrum. Young people have been increasingly sensitive for the Palestinian issue. On TikTok, the most used social media platform, pro-Palestinian posts have gone viral. The pattern of posts resembles a prolonged social movement as a study of the Northeastern University highlights. Pro-Palestinian youth activism did not remain limited to social media but erupted in universities across the US and Europe. The protests and camps on campuses were soon quelled by police under the accusation of disrupting public order, anti-Semitic slogans, and assaults on Jewish students. Dozens of protesters were arrested, and hundreds of students suspended from leading US universities. In many universities, pro-Palestinian peace camps were dissolved, Palestinian flags and symbols prohibited, and lectures or public discussions on the Middle East conflict cancelled.

University authorities' and leftist party elites' sensitivity for Israel as a post-Holocaust state has clashed with the students' growing awareness of intersectionalism, race, and the grievances and needs of subaltern groups. Moreover, the authorities' uncompromising and repressive policies have added an anti-authoritarian and pro-democracy dimension to pro-Palestinian protests.

In most Western societies democracy is under pressure. The ban of protest undermines democratic freedoms and also bears the potential to further radicalize some segments. Europe matters in the fight against the resurgence of anti-Semitism but also when it comes to address racism and Islamophobia. Conflicts such as the War in Gaza can easily polarize and destabilize societies. There is a tendency to turn

conflicts into a rivalry over sufferings with hardly any room for empathy, compassion, and solidarity with others.

The suppression of criticism and repression against protesters harms Europe's credibility, limits its options in the region and does no good to Israel.

In some countries of the MENA region, a growing number of young activists have even refused to cooperate with European countries, associations, and endowments due to their complicity in the Gaza war. To gain back legitimacy and credibility, Europe needs to free itself from this internal blockade. It needs to rely on its democratic foundations, allow for debate, protest, and criticism, stand up against anti-Semitism and racism and play the role of a force for peace as it has done in other conflicts.

Europe can put pressure on Israel to abide by human rights rules and international law and it can increase humanitarian aid for Palestinians. Pro-active policies which aim to settle the conflict will not only strengthen the EU's foreign policy identity, but also mitigate polarization within Europe.

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Bruno Kreisky and the Two-State Solution

by Loïc Simonet

he tragic events of 7 October 2023, the unprecedented death toll and destruction caused by the war in Gaza, and the high risk of regional and international conflagration recently brought the allegedly dead two-state solution to the agenda. The idea - a state each for Israelis and Palestinians - finds its roots in the partitioning of the British mandate territory. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, which proposed the establishment of two "Independent Arab and Jewish States". After decades of conflicts and occupation during which the idea of a Palestinian state laid mostly dormant, in 1993, the Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel endorsed the creation of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza. hence being interpreted as anticipating a two-state future. Cemented internationally as THE solution after Oslo, the two-state solution was consumed in the outburst of violence, the powerlessness of the Palestinian Authority and the expansion of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, which destroyed all hopes for reconciliation.

It is not widely known that a man defended this solution at a time when it remained marginal on the shelf:
Bruno Kreisky, Austria's long-serving social-democrat chancellor from August 1970 to May 1983, and founder of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (oiip). Kreisky, one of the most influential political leaders of the 20th century, made his mark on History as a

statesman whose international stature was disproportional to Austria's actual geopolitical limited status.

Born in 1911 to an upper-middle-class Jewish family, Kreisky endorsed the two-state solution long before it was adopted by Western powers. In 1973, during a conference in London, he called on Europe to play an active role in the Middle East and declared his support for the creation of a state for the Palestinians. "To put it in clear and precise terms: the Palestinian side would have to acknowledge as a reality the existence of the State of Israel and Israel would have to recognize as legitimate the national rights of the Palestinians", Kreisky hammered at the 34th session of the UN General Assembly on 29 October 1979, also referring to "a State solution" for the Palestinians. On 6 December 1981, addressing a press conference before leaving for Bahrain at the end of a two-day visit to Kuwait, he said that "the setting up of a Palestinian state alongside Israel represents a logical solution". As he wrote in his memoirs, Israel would risk degenerating into a "crusader state" unless it pursued a "good neighborly" policy with respect to the Palestinians. For the Austrian Chancellor, peace was only possible by including the PLO as the rightful representative of the Palestinian people. This is why, in 1979, Kreisky broke further ground by granting the PLO-representative in Vienna diplomatic status. This was the first official recognition of the organization in the Western world, and it was primarily



Kreisky was a pioneer. He was ahead of his times in his efforts to bring the Palestinian cause to the forefront of global politics. His declarations and political steps clearly persuaded some other Western European leaders to change their attitudes towards the Palestinians. Quite logically, "he was the most hated person during the 1970s in Israel" (D. Aschheim). His radical and controversial stance earned him Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's open hostility and made him the

who favored negotiation with Israel.





Bruno Kreisky and Yasser Arafat, Vienna 1986

regular target of the Israeli press, which labeled him a "self-hating Jew". "The devil knocked on the door, and the Austrians happily opened it," declared one newspaper. Years after, referring to the Oslo Accords, Shimon Peres came to believe that the Austrian's efforts "prepared the ground for what was to come later." The former President of Israel also believed that, despite Israel's wariness about his desire to act as a mediator with the Arab states, "Kreisky played an important role in bringing Egypt and Israel together."

Was Kreisky "naive", as Uri Avnery, the Chancellor's close friend, one of the most prominent Israeli left-wing activists and journalists, believed? Has the Hamas' monstrous assault definitely buried the two-state solution? On the contrary, it might paradoxically have confirmed the vision of the great Austrian stateman. Since 7 October 2023, U.S. President Joe Biden and his top national security officials have repeatedly and publicly reaffirmed their belief that it represents the only way to create lasting peace among the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the Arab countries of the Middle East. "When this crisis is over, there has to be a vision of what comes next, and

in our view it has to be a two-state solution," Biden said. And the United States is hardly alone: the call for a return to the two-state paradigm has been echoed by leaders across the Arab world, the EU member states, middle powers such as Australia and Canada, and even Washington's main rival, China. On 11 October 2023, an emergency meeting of the Arab League ended with a call for "serious negotiations" towards a two-state solution.

The two-state solution might well appear unrealistic and a consolidation of Israel's occupation over Palestinian territories, as Gideon Levy, journalist at Haaretz and author, assessed at a recent oiip's panel discussion on a new 'post-October 7' security architecture for the Middle East (13 March 2024). However, it remains on the table as a 'hollow mantra' for the 'day after' in Gaza, if only for the lack of any viable alternative. Europe, which has constantly reaffirmed its commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, could play a valuable role in endorsing responsibility and lead and press for dialogue on how the two-state solution could actually materialize.

Kreisky was a pioneer. He was ahead of his times in his efforts to bring the Palestinian cause to the forefront of global politics."

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European Integration – Changing the Game

by Paul Schmidt



uropean integration is complex, weak and boring, mainly preoccupied with itself and not known for its dynamism, some would say.

Others argue that European integration, as complex as it may be, was and is the answer to nationalism and war.

The European Union does have a special degree of complexity to it, but critics tend to forget that it is not a federal state and any comparison with other geopolitical actors, without mentioning the differences, is deemed to fail. While constructive criticism is very much needed, more-of-the-same assessments of the past do no justice to the current European political landscape. Present and future challenges require new approaches rather than a biased description of problems at hand. They demand more European cooperation, not less. One thing is for sure: old prejudices and stereotypes regarding the nature and potential of the European cooperation die hard.

Yet, in times of polycrises, they can be especially harmful and not helpful at all. When the stakes are high, the ability to adapt is crucial and change becomes a matter of political survival. Truth be told, so far external shocks have played out as a turbo boost for European integration. With the geopolitical landscape moving ever more into a conflict zone, the EU has no choice but to act. The question is: are we, as a Union, moving fast enough? Over the

last months and years decisions were taken, many times unanimously, which no adversary or critic had expected. Humanitarian, economic and military help as well political support of Ukraine, suffering from Russian aggression, has been underway since the war started. Prior to this, the EU had responded to the Covid-19 crisis, jointly procuring vaccines and initiating a comprehensive economic aid program unprecedented in its scale. Due to the multitude of simultaneously occurring crises, the EU is now forced to abandon illusions of Europe as a safe haven, and the long-lasting European security order is put upside down. It has shown that, no matter where the competences lie, where there is a will, there is a way. However bold, what we have done so far may not be enough and will be just the turning point of a new era.

There is no other choice but to stand our ground on the global stage, whose geopolitical environment is increasingly volatile. This task starts right from within, as solidarity and unity are challenged by the divergence in EU member states' views, in dealing with migration, the fallbacks regarding rule of law, differences on the war in Ukraine or the Middle-East, or the future of EU enlargement.

With US-isolationism and protectionism looming on the horizon, the EU is rapidly wandering into uncharted waters, where it needs to find its strengths on many fronts at the same time. From the rather unhealthy and unfair competition with China, old and new energy dependencies on Russia and the Arab region the fight against climate change, whose affordability is questioned and popularity decreasing, disinformation waves from external and internal actors alike, to a new insecurity landscape

and the overall need to redesign the European political architecture. The EU is ready to adapt. What would have been unthinkable before the Russian aggression on Ukraine more than two years ago, is now our new normal: Defense and security issues have become top priority and rank high in the European strategic outlook. The EU Heads of States agreed at the European Council meeting in March 2024 to "fulfil the shared commitment to substantially increase defence expenditure, to invest better and faster together, improve the European defence industry's access to public and private finance, and to incentivise development and joint procurement to address critical EU capability gaps", and allocated additional finances to the European Peace Facility in support of Ukraine. Finland and Sweden have joined NATO, while other neutral EU members Austria, Ireland and Malta together with Switzerland intend to deepen cooperation with the Western defence organization.

While hard power and military buildup are back at the center of attention, there is more to it. Defense and security have many cross-cutting, interdisciplinary elements ranging from economic to technological and climate security, from enlargement to migration and effective neighbourhood policies as well as education, resilience, and preparedness of all Europeans. The EU is building up its ability to counter cyber threats, and needs to prepare for drastic global developments as a consequence of climate change that potentially also lead to an increase of migratory movements, displacement or social unrest. It has to step up cooperation with potential candidate countries to mitigate the risk stemming from non-democratic players. The new European defense

Present and future challenges require new approaches rather than a biased description of problems at hand. They demand more European cooperation, not less."

and security perspective is manifold. It requires new mindsets, political leadership and engagement of all actors and political levels of society.

Yet, in order to play out its geopolitical trump cards, the EU will also have to consolidate and improve its internal functioning. It is still a Union of 27 member states, who in the end need to agree to move forward. The EU needs the capacity to tackle the problems at hand. Economic and social well-being of its people is a prerequisite for this. Continuing with the implementation of the green growth agenda while securing competitiveness will be essential. The EU must speed up with reducing its dependence on energy relying on trustworthy partners, strive to diversify supply chains and promote free trade with like-minded players. Cross-country investments to reap the full benefits of the single market are crucial. A big leap forward in building a truly Trans-European infrastructure, linking railways, connecting energy grids and massively investing in education would pay off. Convergence between member states should be made a top priority.

For all this to happen the EU will need additional financial means and an overhaul of its outdated income and spending structure and distribution of competences. The EU budget hitherto has been able to respond quickly to unexpected needs and crises through reallocations. However, its already limited scope has largely been exhausted. Additional revenue from emissions trading, resources from the CO2 border adjustment system and from residual profits of multinational companies are just some of the options to provide the Union with new own resources. Additionally, an intense debate of an increase of the EU budget and the potential overrepresentation of some policy areas in the EU financial framework - like the agricultural sector

- is paramount. With the right tools at hand the European Union can offer tangible value added to the public, and counter EU skepticism and democracy fatique. Completing the single market of services and capital while quaranteeing high social standards would add up to this, helping foster resilience and smoothing the green transition.

Striving for more strategic autonomy and self-sufficiency, while staying open, engaging, diversifying risks, and trading by high social and climate standards, will stay at the core of European efforts. Nationalism, on the other hand, will continue challenging this approach by looking inbound and opposing joint solutions - a struggle which cannot be sufficiently stressed in the months ahead. In this political infight, too much energy is still spent on criticizing and critically scrutinizing the EU, while positive developments do not seem worth mentioning. Good news on the European Union, the welcome scapegoat, are scarcely communicated. Yet, when the times get rough, a spiral of negative energy and self-fulfilling prophecies is counterproductive, to say the least.

Our way of life, our freedoms, and our democratic system are not a given and need to be secured. European integration is always a work in progress, and democratic decision-making takes time. Europe is not the ugly nightmare that some may want it to be. Quite the contrary. It is the place with the highest quality of life and performs much better than we sometimes think it does. In fact, it could very well do with a little bit more self-esteem, realistic, constructive analysis and, why not, appraisal of what it is actually doing right. At the end of the day, the central questions cannot be answered by a single European country alone. But together we stand a chance and can still make a difference.

There is no other choice but to stand our ground on the global stage."

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Europe in the Age of Monsters – Can Enlargement Save Europe?

by Vedran Džihić

024 is often labeled as the year of decisions. So far, it has been a year of depression looming over our heads – while the war in Ukraine is at a critical stage and the horror in the Middle East and Gaza strip continues, our eyes are directed at the US elections later this year as well as the elections for the EU Parliament in June 2024. There is no doubt that what we are witnessing is an age of uncertainty and new unpredictability. The old – the liberal world order that we got used to since

the 1990s of the last century – seems to be dying out, as Antonio Gramsci put it famously, and the new has not been born yet. The interregnum that Gramsci once described as the age of monsters has become the emblem of our time. Democracy is confronted by authoritarian competitors and Russia challenges the West and mobilizes for the new anti-Western world order. The West itself is not any more immune to nationalism and authoritarian populism from within. What is the role that Europe can and should play in

this new global era of monsters? Europe today is at one of its most critical moments in history. War is no longer just a distant memory of the past. It has become a European reality. When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia did not have the prospects of becoming EU members. Instead, they were part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The ENP was originally conceived as the format for engaging with EU's neighbors to the East including Ukraine and stood



The bridge over the Drina, Višegrad, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has injected a very much-needed sense of urgency into EU enlargement."

rather as an alternative to full-fledged enlargement, which was regarded as a step too much under the circumstances.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has injected a very much-needed sense of urgency into EU enlargement. Enlargement, the policy that shaped the Union the most since its very foundation, was a sleeping bureaucratic beauty since the Big Bana Enlaraement round of 2004 and 2007. In the countries of the Western Balkans, it turned into a game where the EU was pretending that it want the countries in the Western Balkans in the EU, while those countries pretended to reform and want the membership in the EU. Today, all three countries -Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia - are candidate countries for EU membership. Ukraine and Moldova got the green light for the opening of accession negotiations in December 2023, received the draft neaotiatina framework in the meantime and are about to start negotiations. With the return of a sense of urgency to enlargement, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina also made at least a formal progress with the EU giving the green light for the opening of negotiations once they fulfil certain additional criteria.

Enlargement as the cornerstone of a new Europe

There is a sharp contrast between Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia on the one hand and the countries of the Western Balkans on the other. In 2023, during huge pro-EU protests, a sea full of EU flags flooded the main square in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. The pro-EU protesters in Georgia took to the streets of Tbilisi in May 2024 to oppose a controversial "foreign influence" bill proposed by the government. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets in an attempt to crack down on protesters, yet they remained persistent in demanding what 80% of Georgian citizens want - membership in the EU and NATO. While Ukrainians are fighting

for a European and democratic future. and Georgians and Moldovans dream of becoming part of the EU's family, there are no flaas on the streets of the Western Balkans cities. It is rather the sound of possible new conflicts. sirens of nationalism and pro-Russian disinformation combined with Euroscepticism that marks the new era. When my home country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, received the green light for the opening of membership negotiations earlier this year, there was no euphoria on the streets of Bosnia whatsoever. In fact, despite the enormity of the news, a large majority of the Bosnian population barely noticed it, as has been the case in other developments regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU prospects. The process of EU integration for Bosnia and Herzegovina resembled the metaphor of the ever-repeating scenes and events for years, rather like the movie 'Groundhog Day'. It is no surprise that for years, annual reports of the EU Commission on the enlargement progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been almost 'non-events', or at best just another piece of news that would queue in the endless stream of news and events with no real effects on the political situation in the country nor the daily lives of Bosnian citizens. The green light for the beginning of accession negotiations was met with a small spark of hope among the citizenry which was quickly drowned by new threats of secession by the president of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, and renewed infighting between Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Serbs. Meanwhile, Serbian president Aleksandar Vucic kept blaming the West and the EU of being hostile to Serbia, formed a new government with pro-Russian former Secret Service boss Aleksandar Vulin as the new deputy prime minister, and welcomed the Chinese president Xi Jinping in Belgrade.

The EU must not repeat the mistakes of the Western Balkans when it comes to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Once the elections for the EU Parliament are concluded, the EU and its leadership need a new internal master plan for enlargement. More funding, easier decision-making processes within the EU, including qualified majority voting, and more strategic foresight will be needed for the EU to live up to promises given to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia as well as the Western Balkans. Gradual integration into the EU's internal market needs to happen now. Citizen-centered enlargement, as Veronica Anghel and Erik Jones argue, is already happening with millions of people from Ukraine and the Western Balkans already living and working in the EU. Enlargement needs to become the cornerstone of a new strategic and geopolitical framework for the EU with security issues at its core. Today, in times of war, it means mobilizing all possible resources to support Ukraine in its fight. It also means putting additional resources into the Western Balkans to counter the malign Russian influence and to send citizens a powerful signal that the EU does care, and that the West is powerful enough to protect the European neighborhood.



On top of all these strategic steps and institutional changes ahead, there is one additional fundamental task for the EU - to revive enlargement as a value-based process that not only preaches democracy, freedom and human rights but stands ready to fight for them. Enlargement has always been about democracy and freedom. Recently, the EU struggled tremendously to confront the illiberal and authoritarian tendencies in its midst and in its neighborhood. Orban's Hungary is the case in point but also is Serbia with its dramatic democratic backslidina in the era of Aleksandar Vucic and his Serbian Progressive Party. The global horizon is more and more shaped by the competition between Western democracies and their authoritarian adversaries. China and Russia beina the most powerful ones. So far, the EU was at best mediocre in dealing with new despots and other authoritarian challenges. With the rise of the far-right in many European countries and the return of populist retrotopian politics, the further erosion of European fundamental values is imminent. The EU needs answers, needs solutions and needs new democratic engagement. It is high time to bring democracy and European values back to the forefront of the enlargement project.

The quest for new pro-European democratic engagement beyond despair

Famous Hungarian philosopher Ágnes Heller kept repeating a simple message in the final years of her life confronted with the rise of Hungarian illiberalism: Freedom is always endangered and we need to protect the only system that can guarantee it, the liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is imperfect, in some places more imperfect than in others. But we do not have anything else to protect. This is the only thing we

can protect." In times of war in Europe and global turmoil this protection is even more vital, one could argue. In the famous 'An American Tragedy' penned iust davs after Trump was elected as the US President, David Remnick underlined that despair is by no means an answer and that the sense of depression or defeatism is misplaced. As Remnick put it back then: "To combat authoritarianism, to call out lies, to struagle honorably and fiercely in the name of American ideals—that is what is left to do. That is all there is to do." The very same simple but effective formula also applies to European ideals in the new era of enlargement and engagement.

One particular form of engagement is the one we see in various protest movements, from Georgia to Moldova to Southeastern Europe, which are either explicitly pro-democratic and pro-European or implicitly so by fighting against environmental destruction, corruption and injustices, all of which lie at the core of European values. The EU needs to do its utmost to protect the citizens in the European neighborhood fighting for those values – be it on the streets of Tbilisi or Belgrade or in small communities.

One very important question in this context is whether the new forms of democratic protest and resistance against new authoritarian politics and political leadership spreading across Europe would be able to create a new and strong pan-European momentum that will bring the "West" and the "East" of the European continent together. The rise of the far right and new forms of authoritarianism are threatening the EU from the inside. Pro-Russian politicians and structures in candidate countries challenge the common European purpose from outside. This new far right international, to quote Boris Buden, can only be

confronted by a new pro-democratic, pan-European alliance spreading from today's EU capitals to the cities of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the Western Balkans

Hard work ahead

Ivan Krastev, one of the most interesting and thought-provoking European public intellectual, often tells jokes to expose the paradoxes of political reality. One particular joke regarding EU enlargement got stuck with me. This joke, which still serves as the perfect illustration of the desperation of the Western Balkans about their European prospects, asks the question of how to distinguish between the pessimists and optimists in the Balkans when it comes to EU enlargement. The pessimist is somebody who believes that Albania is going to join the Union during the Turkish presidency. And the optimist is the one who believes that Turkey is going to join the EU during the Albanian presidency. A similar story imagining Ukraine being in the EU's Council to decide on the Bosnian membership needs to become the real utopia for Europe, a goal to fight for, something to aspire to and to dream of.

In a recent article for the New York Review of Books on the war and gloom in Ukraine today, Tim Judah tells a story of the war through the lenses of Ukrainian soldiers fighting Russian troops. At the very end of his article, Judah recalls his conversation with Yuriy Ganusyak, a former cycling coach turned manufacturer producing batteries for drones and drone-jamming systems. When Judah raised the issue of the current pessimism surrounding the war in Ukraine, Ganusyak responded: "We are not optimists or pessimists. We are just doing our job. We are doing what we can. It is like a story from Auschwitz.



Natalie Tocci (IAI), Cengiz Günay (oiip) and Tobias Schumacher (College d'Europe) at the oiip, 2019

The first to give up were the optimists and then the pessimists. But only the guys who did something survived."

It is a time of doing for the EU and the candidate countries, it is also high time for hard work on the future vision of the European continent. Hard work on both sides is vital: It is up to the EU to implement necessary internal reforms and to show not only its technocratic face when it comes to enlargement but also enthusiasm and determination to make the Union stronger and more relevant. The EU needs to set its goal straight in Ukraine - to anchor Ukraine firmly in the EU and NATO. Candidate countries from Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to the Western Balkans – have to deliver in terms of reforms despite the most difficult challenges like the war in Ukraine or captured state and economy in some countries of the Western Balkans. Both sides need to strive to form a new democratic alliance capable of withstanding authoritarian challenges and monsters both inside and outside of the EU.

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A Change of Season?

Turkish Foreign Policy in the Period of "Strange New Multipolarity"

by Zeynep Arkan Tuncel

n oft-repeated argument in many political discussions is that "foreign policy is never just about foreign policy". This argument particularly holds true for present-day Turkey as an actor of the 'strange new multipolarity'. As a recent oiip panel devoted to this intriguing topic explored, the United States' post-Cold-War unipolar moment seems to be over; China is on the rise as its main rival, Russia is attempting to revisit its glory days, and middle powers such as India and Brazil are enjoying an unparalleled degree of autonomy and influence in global politics. As one of these powers, Turkey remains a striking case, not least because of the dilemmas inherent in its foreign policy.

Turkev's foreign policy is a particularly sensitive issue given the country's history, geopolitical location, and profound sense of insecurity that dates back to its post-World War I occupation and partition by the Allied powers, sparking its War of Independence. This so-called Sèvres Syndrome, inherited from the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, has deeply affected its foreign policy and permeated its policy-making structures and processes. In the past decade, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) further fuelled this feeling as an effective means to mobilize public support for its foreign policy choices and to distract attention from Turkey's declining domestic economic and political conditions, relying on the 'rallyround-the-flag' effect of foreign policy.

Turkey's key foreign policy dilemma relates to the AKP's attempt to auestion the very foundations of the Westerndominated liberal order while at the same time benefiting from being part of this order. Coupled with the cult of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a symbolic leader and saviour of Sunni Islam, this has often translated into disorientation, intense praamatism, and unpredictability in Turkey's foreign policy. In a period during which ongoing wars and subsequent refugee crises continue to occupy the very top of the political agenda in a landscape dominated by populist right-wing political parties, Turkey's foreign policy dilemmas and choices remain a major concern for many in Europe.

Turkey's first segue into a multidimensional foreign policy dates back to the mid-1960s and has since matured under successive governments. Yet, the backbone of Turkish foreign policy had been Turkey's profound commitment to its NATO allies and European vocation. While this initially seemed unaffected when the AKP came to power in 2002, the following period witnessed many twists and turns, and rendered Turkey's overall policy direction somewhat

incomprehensible even for its long-term allies. Despite the façade of a grand rhetoric, transactionalism seemed to dominate Turkey's relations with the EU, which negatively affected both parties: it rendered the Union's search for a value-driven foreign policy devoid of meaning, reduced refugees into a bargaining chip between the two sides, and strengthened Erdogan's authoritarianism domestically. Turkey's NATO membership, which had served as the anchor of its foreign policy identity during the Cold War era, on the other hand, lost its privileged position amidst Turkev's attempts to create a zone of security and influence in neighbouring regions. In this endeavour, Turkey found itself running against strong rivals such as China and Russia with whom it was not on par economically, politically, or militarily. To leverage its weaknesses, Turkey often relied on the strategy of bargaining and playing stronger actors against one another (such as the Turkish decision to purchase Russia's S-400 air defence system), which has not proven hugely successful in the long run. The AKP government also instrumentalised foreign policy and relied on a paranoia of external meddling, which resonated with a public that never fully recovered from its lingering Sèvres trauma. The result was a short-sighted and muddled foreign policy lacking grounding principles and a long-term outlook. Instead, foreign policy was centred around the personality of Erdoğan and prioritized his political survival. As a consequence, Turkey is no longer seen as the credible partner or mediator it once was by many of its neighbours and former allies. Despite Erdoğan's strong domestic rhetoric, Turkey's auxiliary position in the war in Gaza and limited intermediary role in the Russia-Ukraine war are clear illustrations of this fact.

The unintelligibility and unpredictability of Turkish foreign policy might not have caused a huge problem had this been the case some twenty Turkey is no longer seen as the credible partner or mediator it once was by many of its neighbours and former allies."

years ago, during which Turkey had to conduct its foreign policy under severe structural constraints. Under the existing conditions of instability and 'strange new multipolarity,' where middle powers such as Turkey have more leeway to pursue more autonomous foreign policies in pursuit of their own interests, however, this is a source of concern. For many, this stems from the fact that Turkey attempted (and often failed) to punch above its weight in terms of external political influence, to quote Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay's 2017 article on emerging middle powers. Turkey enjoys deep-rooted ties with many neighbouring regions and pursues a multifaceted foreign policy not only through traditional channels but also through many non-traditional actors that associate with the current government's policy line [the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı) are prime examples of such actors]. This influence, however, remains limited to certain communities, and largely owes >

The power of the opposition is on the rise, fuelled by increasing domestic instability and economic decline."

to Erdoğan's close personal ties with and appeal to other authoritarian leaders in Europe as well as his flexible (i.e. negotiable) foreign policy that is often accompanied by strong rhetoric aimed mainly at the domestic audience.

The 2024 municipal elections proved to be a turning point for Turkey. Whether this marks the beginnings of the post-AKP/Erdoğan era in Turkish politics is yet to be seen, but local politics and priorities carried the day, and foreign policy will likely continue to be balanced out by domestic concerns. The power of the opposition is on the rise, fuelled by increasing domestic instability and economic decline. The extraordinary success that the Republican People's Party (CHP) achieved in recent polls is supplemented by a concrete promise for Turkey's European allies. From a foreign policy perspective, the CHP's rise signals a return to normal and predictable foreign policy along conventional European, if not transatlantic, lines, as illustrated by the

renewed engagement of its new leadership. At his address to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group in Strasbourg, the new leader of CHP Özgür Özel stated that progress in terms of Turkey's membership to the EU and establishing deeper ties with Europe is a top priority. While the issue of EU membership is a contentious issue whose resolution will be highly unlikely in the years to come, reinvigorating Turkey's links with its European allies would represent a significant shift in the difficult relationship between Turkey and Europe that would benefit both parties in a period of war and instability. This would not only help Turkey reorient its foreign policy outlook but also contribute to the EU's credibility as an international actor. While this might not be good news for those who value Erdoğan either as an authoritarian ally or a symbolic leader to target, it is certainly good news for those who prefer a 'change of season' in Turkish politics, for it to break free of its competitive authoritarian shackles.



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Foto: © shu1

EU Sanctions against Russia

by Anastasiia Soboleva

n February 2022, the EU launched a new wave of sanctions against Russia in response to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. By February 2024, a total of thirteen packages had been adopted, with considerable restrictions applied even in such sensitive realms as the energy sector. This moment can be deemed pivotal not only for the EU-Russia relations but crucially, for the future of Europe in general.

Starting point: 2014 sanctions

The sanctions regime has been ongoing since March 2014, when Russia openly violated Ukraine's territorial integrity by annexing Crimea and further supporting military operations in Donbas. The first rounds of sanctions concerned persons and entities directly involved in the two events, establishing travel bans, asset freezes, and termination of dealings with Crimea-based businesses. With the downing of the Malaysian flight MA-17A on July 17, 2014, sanctions started targeting specific economic sectors too, prohibiting the arms trade,

export of dual-use military goods as well as some technologies and services linked to oil production. Newly introduced financial sanctions also curtailed the long-term financing of several state-owned banks (Sberbank. VTB, Gazprombank, Rosselkhozbank, VEB), oil-related businesses (Rosneft, Transneft, Gazpromneft), and some companies in the defense sector, loans to whom could not exceed 30-days maturity and whose assets could not be purchased. In subsequent years, sanctions were renewed and expanded to other persons and entities, though their substance stayed largely the same. The 2014 sanctions were relatively mild: they remained targeted, sparing the broader population from their negative effect. Even the sectorial sanctions covered goods on a very fine-grained level – as opposed to the Russian 2014 countersanctions, which banned imports of European and American foodstuffs across wider categories. The EU regulations also permitted exports for contracts made prior to 2014, which was not the case for the Russian

countermeasures. Overall, though the EU export sanctions and, even more so, Russian food embargo did reduce trade flows when it came to the sanctioned items, the trade in non-sanctioned goods was largely unaffected. The strongest negative effect on Russian GDP should thus be attributed to the capital restrictions for Russian banks and companies, as well as a general decline in oil prices observed during that period.

As far as EU countries are concerned, it is true that there were relative winners and losers of the sanctions regime. The economy affected most was Germany, followed by Italy and Finland, which absorbed major trade losses and alleviated the aggregate impact on the European market. The Russian embargo did particularly hit specific domestic groups such as farmers in Poland – which, however, was mitigated by government support measures. Simultaneously, economic sectors in some other Member States, e.g. Greece, Sweden, Luxembourg,



excluding 10 biggest Russian banks from the SWIFT system and freezing up to EUR 300 billion of the Russian Central Bank's assets, making half of its foreign exchange reserves unusable. In total, due to plummeting export volumes, interrupted transaction and supply chains, rouble depreciation, plunging private consumption and investment, Russian GDP contracted by 2.1% in 2022.

However, economic consequences are

Bulgaria, experienced a noticeable rise in exports to Russia after 2014. Interestingly enough, despite polarization among members states on their attitude to Russia and actual negative effect on certain domestic sectors, the sanctions regime persisted till 2022. Given that national leaders simultaneously attended to the international audience, domestic political elites, and business - all of whom were affected by the restrictions differently - the European Council routinely converged about sanctions prolongation.

accounting for 36%, 25%, and 45% of respective imports in 2021. Following the first-coming coal embargo, the EU imposed a ban on the import or transfer of seaborne crude oil and specific petroleum products from Russia in June 2022, which applied from December 2022. The additionally introduced price cap was supposed to set the maximum price for seaborne crude oil, petroleum oils, and oils obtained from bituminous minerals at US\$60/bbl. In total, the oil embargo and price cap reduced EU imports of Russian oil by about 10% of demand. Together with plunging prices, which reached the low of USD 64.1/barrel in December 2023, sanctions led to a significant decrease in Russia's oil revenues in 2023. For natural gas (as well as uranium), there has been no import embargo so far, especially in view of its storage complexity. Still, starting already before the war, the EU managed to limit purchases of Russian pipeline gas from over 40% in 2021 to around 8% in 2023, largely due to diversification of suppliers, surging LNG imports, and voluntary decline in gas consumption.

Harsher measures of 2022

EU exports of sanctioned goods were minimized as of 2023. Trade bans and a subsequent drop in net exports caused Russian current account surplus to shrink from 10.5% to 2.8% relative to GDP. In turn, new financial sanctions markedly curtailed access of Russian financial institutions to capital,

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022 prompted the EU to bring sanctions to a whole new level. Individual lists were expanded to 967 persons and 50 legal entities; financial sanctions covered 21 companies and 14 banks; trade bans spanned over a wider range of industries, including fossil fuels, metallurgy, technology, defense; transport operations and Russian state-owned media were similarly restricted. Energy sanctions are the crucial novelty of this round: since 30-50% of the Russian budget hinges upon gas and oil exports, the measures were supposed to limit incoming revenues that would finance the war. For the EU, however, this was a tough decision, as Russia was its leading supplier of natural gas, oil, and coal in 2020-2021,

cunningly mitigated by the Russian regime. When the new wave of sanctions started. Russia shipped oil reserves into a shadow fleet of tankers to avoid transit and insurance restrictions; limited natural gas supplies to elevate the price; and re-directed its trade flows to third countries such as China and India. To prevent capital flight, the Russian Central Bank increased the interest rate to the high of 20% and converted 80% of export income into roubles. Russian citizens became limited in moving cash across the border while non-resident investors were limited in withdrawing their capital. To finance fiscal deficit, the aovernment increasinaly relied on the National Wealth Fund, besides resorting to windfall taxes on big business, nationalizing local branches of multinational companies, switching to the rouble in foreign trade, purchasing critical goods from alternative suppliers -- China, Turkey, and CIS states such as Kazakhstan or Armenia. Moreover. Russia can still retaliate against the EU with harsher means, including complete halt of energy supplies (pipeline gas particularly), an ultimatum to pay solely in roubles, as well as broader sectoral countersanctions. Overall, the Russian economy proves adaptive to the Western sanctions, with GDP growth expected at considerable 3.2% in 2024, according to the recent IMF forecast - although longterm repercussions of the 2022 brain drain and limited access to high-tech products must be considered, too.

Effect on Europe: From repercussions to opportunities

For EU countries, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict involved a tough decision: to sanction Russia, putting at risk its own - primarily energy - security. Coupled with preceding supply bottlenecks, post-Covid rising demand, and a dry summer in 2022, the war drove energy prices up in Europe as well as worldwide. This was the case especially for gas, whose prices peaked at exceptional €339.20/MWh in late-2022 compared to €50/MWh traded in mid-2021. Since Ukraine was a leading producer of wheat, oilseeds, maize, and some fertilizers, food supply chains got heavily disrupted so that food prices also rose. All this augmented inflation to its record levels in 2022, which, despite government aid programs, resulted in the cost-of-living crisis for the entire EU.

Although euro area inflation subsided to an acceptable 2.8 % in January 2024, economic prospects are still hampered by slow growth and looming recession. Undoubtedly, domestic audience in all the member states has been affected, with businesses facing reduced profits and households struggling to pay their bills. Adaptation to the sanction regime might furthermore contribute to economic divergences among and within the EU countries. Existing differences in fiscal capacity and market development imply the varying adjustment ability of the states, e.g. to increase energy storage, allocate government aid, or switch to alternative partner markets. The relative disadvantage in fiscal resources can also contribute to within-country inequality, whereby sanctioned industrial sectors and vulnerable population groups are hit most. Ensuing polarization together with distrust of national and EU institutions is hence a potential repercussion of the war and sanctions against Russia, which is especially risky given the rise of populism across Europe.

However outrageous on its own, the Russian attack on Ukraine has revealed the reactivity of the Union to external shocks. The crisis has prompted leaders to address already long-pending issues hindering Europe on the way to greater sustainability. Shortly after the war began, EU leaders held an informal meeting in Versailles about the future development of the Union: the resulting Versailles Declaration emphasized the need to bolster defense industry, strengthen the economic base, as well as reduce dependence on Russian energy and other strategic imports, such as critical raw materials or food products. Other points highlighted were diversification of suppliers, improving energy efficiency and leveraging renewables, capacity-building along the value chain, overall enhancement of the single-market mechanisms, including the banking and capital markets union.

The outcome of the meeting was thus the move towards greater integration and self-sufficiency. Besides, the political role of the European Council stands out given its increasing involvement in day-to-day politics and especially delicate questions like sanctions. As evidenced by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, EU Heads of State and Government are taking over the initiative, directly instructing the Council and Commission with the major, primarily norm-driven, principles of the policy.

While the EU leadership has showed resolve in its condemnation of Russia, the present situation is a long-run test of consensus-making capabilities. Effective implementation of the sanctions and living up to the new EU frontiers will require credible commitment of political leaders and domestic interest groups. This way, the Union can not only present a valid international counterweight in the war – but also build a stronger Europe that stays united at times of crisis.

To continue reading

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Why Europe Matters for China's Foreign and **Security Policy in 2024**

by Thomas Eder

Beijing expects to gradually lose its lucrative ties with the US, making those with the EU all the more important."



Regarding Taiwan,
a Chinese invasion or
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the new president
in May 2024."





hen it comes to Chinese foreign policy in 2024, decision-makers in Austria and the EU have to most importantly consider two highly topical questions: Will China invade or blockade Taiwan? Will China escalate its support for Russia during the war in Ukraine?

Regarding Taiwan, a Chinese invasion or blockade remains unlikely despite the inauguration of Beijing-critical William Lai as the new president in May 2024. China would only take these actions if it thought permanent separation could otherwise not be avoided. Beijing does not trust Lai, who is part of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which it views as hostile. But Lai reached only 40% of the vote and promised to preserve the status quo, i.e. no push for international recognition. Moreover, the more Beijing-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) won the parliamentary elections, and secured the Speaker position. This means that Lai will have to negotiate and compromise, including on "cross-straits" - or China-related policies. This is not the outcome China wanted, but it is a step forward from its perspective, and something to build on. Beijing indeed already frames the DPP as not representing the mainstream public opinion on the island. The Taiwan-related threat to China is also less physical than relational or ontological. As long as China's "security of the self", of its identity - and the Chinese

Communist Party's (CCP) domestic legitimacy – is not upset by plans for formalized permanent separation, an invasion is much less probable. Developments on Taiwan therefore do not make Chinese military action in the short– (to medium–) term more likely.

Among many external factors deterring Beijing on Taiwan, the most important is of course potential military conflict with the US, but the threat to ties with the EU also counts. President Biden committed to direct US intervention and the defense of Taiwan in case of an invasion. A prolonged blockade might bring the risk of sanctions and military escalation without the benefit of a successful takeover of the island. Given China's slower post-COVID growth, high debt, plummeting FDI inflows, unsatisfactory domestic demand, rising unemployment, and real estate crisis, Beijing wants rather stable relations with its most important export markets. Among the latter, the EU tops the list ahead of the US. Among potential investor home states, the EU is, again, particularly interesting. Looking at China's inward FDI stock, the EU tops the list of "ultimate investors", i.e. companies that make decisions, not "vehicles" in Hong Kong or the Cayman Islands that investments are routed through. Beijing expects to gradually lose its lucrative ties with the US, making those with the EU all the more important. EU leaders have

repeatedly emphasized vis-à-vis Beijing the damaging effects of a war in the Taiwan Straits for the EU (and global) economy. They refer to the dominant role of Taiwanese semiconductors in high-tech supply chains and the security of essential maritime trade routes. EU-China trade would be less secure, even partly physically blocked, certainly much more expensive, and would likely decrease substantially due to a Taiwan Straits war. Should Beijing be viewed in Europe as having caused this situation by invading without commensurate provocation. politico-diplomatic relations would also suffer a great deal. Avoiding such an outcome adds to several important reasons for Beijing to hold back.

During the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, China is unlikely to provide heavy weapons and ammunition to Russia. The relationship with Europe is key. Chinese foreign policy elites are convinced that China needs Russia as a security and diplomatic partner to outcompete the US in global power and influence until mid-century. They are, however, also convinced that China needs Europe as an economic and innovation partner to achieve that goal. Some explicitly say that Russia and the EU have equal strategic value for China. This includes keeping Europe from aligning completely with US strategy on the Western Pacific and contributing whatever Washington requires for its competition with Beijing. In the longer term, a Taiwan Straits war remains a relevant possibility. China could then abruptly lose its economic relationship with the US, and a large portion of such ties with US allies and partners in the Pacific, making the EU even more important. China's foreign policy scholars also emphasize how much more important economic ties with the EU are compared to those with Russia, and how unattractive it would be to lose them over Russia's current war and interests. The number

of EU member state capitals decisively turning against Beijing, should it cross Europe's red lines, is too high - a continuation of the EU's current China policy would not be possible. Even Germany's next elections in 2025 might then deliver a much more China-skeptic government. This could lead to a steep decrease in EU-China economic ties and much more proximity to the US on policies related to the Western Pacific. Maintaining its relations with Europe is therefore a central reason for China's relative balance in policies related to the Russia-Ukraine War.

European decision-makers should recognize China's conviction that it can still turn Taiwanese voters over time and that it faces real disincentives against an invasion or blockade, but should add their reassurances to Beijina that they will not upset the status quo. At the same time, given China's reliance on solid economic relations with Europe, they should regularly make clear to Beijing how much of a problem a war in the Taiwan Straits would be for the EU economy and EU-China economic ties. On China's support for Russia, European leaders should realize their leverage. China appears to have surged its deliveries of dual-use goods, components and technology, but holds back on heavy weapons. Chinese companies are now being gradually blacklisted by the EU. European leaders will have to explain European core interests more emphatically to Beijing and make Europe's red lines crystal clear. It should be conveyed that, if anything, the issue of China's support for Russia has gained salience since the fall of 2023. Republicans blocking US aid for Ukraine from September 2023 to April 2024 means Washington's support for Ukraine after the US elections in November 2024 is in doubt. Beijing now acts more clearly against European interests, not American ones, if it increases its backing of the Russian invasion force.

Chinese foreign policy elites are convinced that China needs Russia as a security and diplomatic partner to outcompete the US in global power and influence until mid-century. They are, however, also convinced that China needs Europe as an economic and innovation partner to achieve that goal."

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Strange New Multipolarity: How Does it Impact Europe's Stability and Security?

An account of an oiip event on 22 April 2024 by **Fabian Fischer**, **Loïc Simonet**, **Vedran Džihić** and **Thomas Eder**

tates increasingly ignore the UN Charter's prohibition of the use of force, regional organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) may crumble, and democracy has been in retreat globally for years. Key context for all of these developments is the end of unipolarity and the emergence of a pluralistic order that compels Europe to devise new foreign and security policies. New emergent powers challenge the liberal international order, frameworks outside the Western-led system such as the SCO and BRICS expand, and armed conflicts are spreading globally without any hegemon constraining that trend. The oiip has a research focus which deals with these seismic shifts in global geopolitics. To explore global changes and the geopolitical priorities of major and emerging middle powers, the experts of the Austrian Institute for International Affairs - oiip have published various analyses, which can be found on our website.

On 22 April 2024, the oiip organized as part of its cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence (BMLV) a panel discussion titled: Strange New Multipolarity. Panelists were Stephanie Fenkart, Director of the International



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Institute for Peace (IIP), Misha Glenny, the Rector of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), and Jagannath Panda, Head of the Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs at the ISDP. The oiip's President, Wolfgang Petritsch, provided an introduction. The event aimed at exploring the perspectives of developing nations of the so-called "Global South" on the ongoing shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world. The panelists also addressed how these shifts impact Europe.

The return of large-scale warfare to the European continent in 2022 was noted as the most striking symbol of a new, unstable and multilayered order by Wolfgang Petritsch. In a transitional period from 2014 to 2022, Europe was not yet ready to accept the epochal change or Zeitenwende, he noted. Unipolarity and a global hegemon are gone, however, and wars spread globally in a new time of disorder. The new Realpolitik of strongman autocracies has exposed Europe's weaknesses. It remains to be seen whether Europe will be reduced to an object of history or will assert itself as a proactive player and normative actor.

Simultaneously with Russia's invasion, Misha Glenny reminded, an information war started. Ukraine managed to win over European support within a week, with Russia viewed as a security threat for the rest of Europe, especially Moldova, the Baltics and Poland. Meanwhile, Russia was quite



f.l.t.r. Misha Glenny, Jagannath Panda and Loïc Simonet (oiip)

successful in the Global South. He argued that due to Ukraine's obscurity outside of Europe, long-standing connections between leaders such as former South African President Jacob Zuma and Moscow, and shared antipathy towards the West, the Russian narrative is pervasive. Even partners of the West such as India continue to buy oil and weapons from Russia - partly due to historical relationships. Europe's strategy of isolating Russia has not resonated with countries of the "Global South", who perceive the war as a regional conflict, rather than a global one.

The Israel-Gaza War could have a longer-lasting impact on the EU's relations with the "Global South", according to both Glenny and Stephanie Fenkart. They noted that social media attention in the "Global South" has been much higher regarding the Israel-Gaza War than the Russia-Ukraine War, with a focus on the supposed hypocrisy of the "West". The international order may be challenged very strongly.

In the multipolar global landscape, new middle powers are increasingly powerful and new forms of (often minilateral) alignments are emerging, said Jagannath Panda. Such

groupings, like the guadrilateral formats US-Japan-Australia-India and China-Russia-Iran-North Korea, should be taken seriously, because they may strongly impact the European security order. Most new middle power- and non-Western arrangements are marked by the lack of a common ideology, Fenkart added. Involved states agree, however, that the pre-existing order was overly dominated by the "West". A clear definition for "middle power", or a list of such states, could not be found, but India. Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey, as well as Japan, South Korea and Australia were mentioned in this context.

This new global order may require the EU to seek a certain balance, identify new trends and build new cooperative relationships with middle powers, Panda arqued. EU-India relations have been elevated to a new level in recent years, despite different assessments of geopolitical challenges such as the Russia-Ukraine War. Perhaps India's approach has been smart in achieving its interests. Moreover, multilateral institutions should be forged that take the interests of countries that are not the US or China more into account. Generally, the EU should help improve the credibility of multilateral institutions as well as its own credibility when it comes to enlargement, according to Fenkart. The "Global South", Glenny underscored, is also key to Europe's green transition and needs to be highly valued if the EU does not want to be outmaneuvered by the US and China. Economic competition between these three actors intensified with new industrial and protectionist policies. These include the US's 'Inflation Reduction Act', adopted on 16 August 2022, which provides large subsidies for US carmakers that may violate international trade rules, demonstrating that American interests do not always align with Europe's.

To explore global changes and the geopolitical priorities of major and emerging middle powers, the experts of the **Austrian Institute for International Affairs** - oiip have published various analyses, which can be found on our website."

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Targeting Places of Worship in Europe

by Daniela Pisoiu, Erik Hacker, Annika Scharnagl

knife attack leaving three dead in a church in Nice in 2020, a bomb left in front of a Jehovah's witnesses church in Austria in 2024, arson and pig parts placed at mosques all over Europe, and a firebomb attack on a synagogue in Poland as we write these lines - these are only some of the more prominent recent attacks on places of worship in Europe. Beyond the handful of violent and even terrorist attacks, however, there are a myriad of low-scale attacks that never make the news. There are also thousands of incidents of graffiti, vandalism or theft at places of worship, almost a part of daily life, that remain under- or unreported.

The EU-funded project PARTES took it upon itself to first map and understand the threat landscape, the actors who resort to such actions, and the best practices to counteract this phenomenon. Bringing together research institutes, religious communities, and security authorities from 10 European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain), the project first of all delivered a systematic overview of violent and non-violent incidents. This effort particularly focused on various types of hate crimes, but also the types of extremist actors behind these actions. On this basis, several rounds of consultations were initiated between religious communities, and with security and local authorities in order to build communication channels



PARTES proposes a comprehensive prevention model for the protection of places of worship that is evidencebased, inclusive and participatory."



PARTES EU Workshop in Brussels, April 2024

Yhile a number of communities have beefed up their security concepts, in part supported by national authorities, protective measures in and around places of worship remain inadequate, making them vulnerable to surprise attacks and serious incidents."

and further cooperation among all of these stakeholders. An important part of the project is also awareness raising within society, which will be carried out through a number of short videos and entertainment events in major European capitals, including Vienna. The security concept of PARTES goes beyond specific hard security measures and intends to sensitize and activate the broader society, so that such measures ideally are not put to use.

While research and networking activities are still on-going, a number of trends could already be identified. The targeting of religious faiths in acts of violence varies across European countries. The Muslim community however shoulders the greatest impact in six of the countries studied (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain). The primary target in the other countries is the Christian communities. The number and severity of attacks are not necessarily correlated; this is for example illustrated by instances of shootings and murders at Catholic places of worship

in Spain and France, despite these not being the primary target in a quantitative sense in these countries. While violent attacks and hate crimes are prevalent, the more frequent online hate campaigns and acts of vandalism (including graffiti) are potentially more impactful overall. The data indicates a potential link between online campaigns against certain religious communities and subsequent physical violence or hate crimes, and the other way around: physical attacks followed by online campaigns to disseminate the actions even more. Some countries clearly experience fewer incidents than others in the scope of this research (the Netherlands, Latvia, Portugal, and Romania). Finally, cyberattacks, as on the website of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia, are likely a sign of a new type of attack that will spread to other countries and become more prevalent, considering existing vulnerabilities.

As concerns the perpetrators of attacks against places of worship, these are usually individual attackers or unorganized small groups of young people. Far-right groups and individuals typically target Muslim and Jewish communities, whereas jihadist individuals display a broader scope, but mostly focus on Christian communities. Generally, the intensity and nature of attacks, as well as the type of perpetrators involved, vary significantly based on the national context. Examples of the national differences are the murder of a sexton in a church in Algeciras, Spain, by a radical jihadist in 2023, the graffiti sprayed on Greek Orthodox churches by a left-wing extremist group and the attack on a synagogue in Halle, Germany, in 2019 by a single right-wing extremist.



The project has furthermore identified a number of key vulnerabilities, in particular:

- High levels of stigmatization of religious communities, resulting in an increase in the number of hate crimes against them.
- Underreporting of hate crimes and inadequate procedures for gathering and systematizing data on hate crime.
- Lack of identification of perpetrators, exacerbated by the lack of protection of places of worship.
- Disparities in funding for protective measures between regions, countries and religious communities.

While a number of communities have beefed up their security concepts, in part supported by national authorities, protective measures in and around places of worship remain inadequate, making them vulnerable to surprise attacks and serious incidents. In this context, even minor security measures such as video surveillance and security personnel could help prevent thefts and hate crimes. Weaknesses include inadequate surveillance, weak physical barriers, and a lack of trained security personnel. Insufficient financial resources hinder the implementation of adequate security measures.

An underlying factor linking the various national differences is the increasing contextual similarities in the countries. Beyond structural problems, these contextual factors create a breeding ground for violence against places of worship. First and foremost, there is the increasing hate speech and hate campaigns perpetrated by right-wing extremist groups, as well as populist discourses alienating cultures perceived as non-European. Extremists use such hostile environments to recruit and

organize attacks. Another aspect is the insufficient reporting of incidents, often resulting in a lack of trust in authorities. Coordination between law enforcement agencies, religious communities, and government agencies is still insufficient, hindering information exchange. Moreover, investment in special units in law enforcement agencies that address extremist crime and hate crimes remains lacking.

PARTES proposes a comprehensive prevention model for the protection of places of worship that is evidencebased, inclusive and participatory. In order to effectively combat security threats posed to synagogues, mosques or churches, it is essential to understand the underlying violent extremist phenomenon and its concrete manifestations in relation to these targets. In adopting such an approach, governments also need to involve religious communities in developing appropriate policies and concrete measures for protection. Moreover, it is necessary to educate the broader population on toxic extremist rhetoric, but also specific features and manifestations of various faiths.

In the following months, PARTES will organize interreligious dialogues in a number of European capitals, including Vienna, as well as living labs focusing on addressing cyber threats and concrete threat scenarios. Large-scale events in France, the Netherlands, Spain and Austria will focus on interreligious exchanges, outreach and awarenessraising among the broader society. Addressing prejudice and educating the public on the particularities of religious communities will contribute to creating an atmosphere less vulnerable to extremist propaganda.

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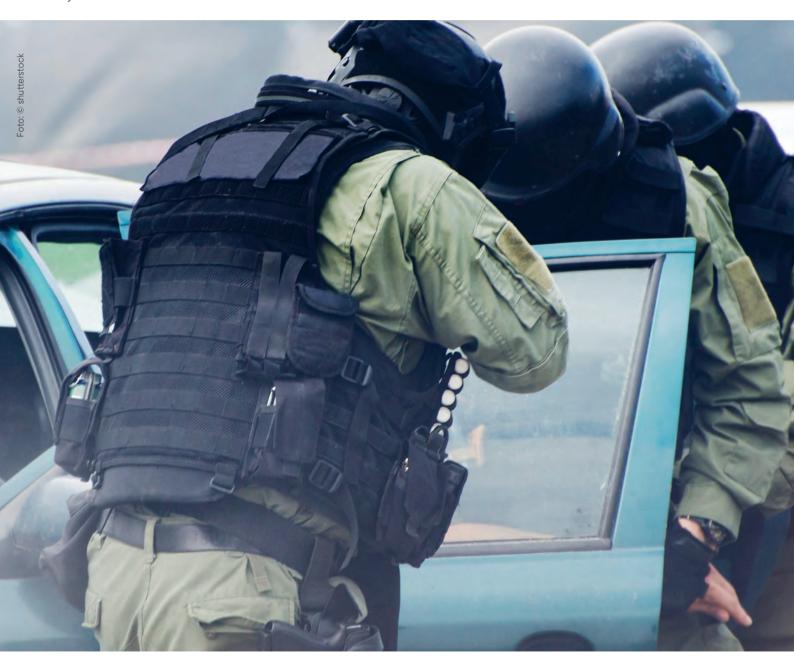
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From "Absent Friend" to Global Actor?

EU Counter-Terrorism and the Way Forward

by Vito Morisco



The EU's role has been largely supplementary to that of Member States but nowadays it adopts some sort of "actorness" in terms of counter-terrorism."



he European Union (EU) is wellequipped to counter the terrorist threat both regionally and globally. Although such a statement might sound like an exaggeration and raise scepticism, terrorism is far from being a new phenomenon in European states. Indeed, Europe has been the site of heterogeneous and varied terrorist activities in the 20th and 21st centuries, ranging from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the German Red Army (RAF), Black September and Abu Nidal Organization, Italian Red Brigades and New Order through the Basque Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Croatian Ustasha, al-Qaeda and ISIS-inspired individuals. These experiences have provided EU Member States with a wealth of experience in combatting far-right, left-wing and anarchist groups as well as Islamist extremists and separatist movements. Nevertheless, several experts described the EU's counter-terrorism policy mainly as an absent friend, namely a junior partner with a marginal role in combating terrorism abroad within the framework of the post-9/11 War on Terror. In 2003, the "European Security Strategy" still presented terrorism as a consequence of regional conflicts external to the EU. The attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). however, represented a wake-up call and the terrorist threat suddenly became European. The EU's role has been largely supplementary to that of Member States but nowadays it adopts some sort of "actorness" in terms of counter-terrorism since the European security governance provides – at least on paper – an advanced institutionalized system of cooperation and coordination between national frameworks constructed around a core of common instruments and procedures with a cross-border reach.

The EU relies on a sophisticated institutional design and legal outlook where the European Commission makes legislative proposals in terms of counter-terrorism policy and these drafts are then negotiated by the Council and the European Parliament. European agencies include a Financial Intelligence Unit to counter terror funding and an Internet Referral Unit to monitor online propaganda and extremism. Eurojust, the EU's judicial cooperation unit, publishes the "Terrorism Convictions Monitor" three times per year. Europol hosts the European Counter Terrorism Center (ECTC) which represents a central hub in the fight against terrorism, and the EU also counts a Counter-Terrorism Coordinator appointed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: established in the aftermath of the Madrid bombings in 2004, the Coordinator tracks the dynamics in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South Asia to evaluate the potential impact on the EU. The 2015 Paris attacks triggered a second wave of counter-terrorism

measures. Indeed, the EU has adopted the Security Union Strategy 2020-2025 which introduced – in the wake of pre-existing national legislations - more priorities and legal actions in various areas such as firearms and explosives, maritime security or money laundering. Also, in the online sphere the EU is actively trying to regulate terrorist content through the obligation for tech companies to remove terrorist content on the internet within one hour after receiving a removal order from the EU. In March 2024, the EU adopted the "Artificial Intelligence Regulation" to regulate generative Al, Metaverse, and Al-driven algorithms on platforms like X and TikTok, aiming to counter conspiracy theories and disinformation fueling extremism. The EU may also impose restrictive measures (sanctions) to target persons and groups involved in terrorist acts, including through asset freezes and travel bans; currently, there are 16 individuals and 21 groups and entities on the so-called "EU terrorist list".

Moreover, the EU's 2022 Strategic Compass outlined a unified vision for security and defense policy, bolstering counter-terrorism efforts through missions like EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUBAM Libya, EUAM Iraq, EULEX Kosovo, and EUTM Mozambique. Despite challenges in implementation, the EU has integrated counter-terrorism clauses with partner regions (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Group States) since 2005. Collaborations extend globally, including joint missions in the Gulf of Guinea and training programs in the G5 Sahel countries. Multilateral cooperation is emphasized, with partnerships with entities like the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Global Coalition against Daesh. The EU also engages with NATO, Interpol, OSCE,

the League of Arab States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Notably, the EU has invested significantly in countering violent extremism projects and promotes South-South cooperation. Counter-terrorism dialogues and seminars with regions like Central Asia and Southeast Asia demonstrate ongoing efforts to address global security challenges.

With these caveats in mind, the EU seems to be best placed to emerge as one of the leading regional and alobal counter-terrorism actors. Although since 9/11 the EU has proved its willingness to achieve visibility and "actorness" within the counter-terrorism domain, several factors have prevented it from fully accomplishing its potential and vision. Indeed, Member States have resisted relinquishing their competencies and sharing intelligence due to the dualism of national sovereignty and common security on one side, and the need for cooperation to face transnational threats and the principle of subsidiary – the EU has no exclusive competence on decisions that can be taken by Member States - on the other. If Europe wants to take on the leadership against terrorism and extremism, Member States have to be courageous and take further steps. First, although the European counter-terrorism policy has taken shape, its development has been characterized by long periods of inertia followed by accelerations in the aftermath of terrorist incidents; for example, after five years of impasse due to German concerns about data protection breach, an agreement on the EU Passenger Name Records (EU-PNR) was finally reached in 2016 after jihadist attacks in Paris and the threat of returnee foreign fighters. The implementation of measures adopted at the EU level has often lagged behind, but the fact that Member





States have resisted relinquishing their competencies and sharing intelligence due to the dualism of national sovereignty and common security."

States call for further cooperation after episodes of terrorism clearly underlines their awareness of shared and unified responses to transnational threats. Thus, EU members should adopt a more proactive attitude and become drivers of policy change instead of reacting to attacks (crisis-driven). To do so, the EU must introduce reporting obligations and mechanisms to monitor the follow-up of its policies since Directive 2017/541 simply obliges the members to criminalize terrorism-related acts rather than harmonizing the implementation of European protocols and, most importantly, assessing their effectiveness.

The conceptualization of radicalization represents another critical aspect, since the 2005 "EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism" did not explicitly define this process; indeed, the document provided a broad definition of radicalization as the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism. However, such an ambiguous catchall definition might easily marginalize ethnic minorities, polarize societies, and erode democratic norms. For example, the Gaza War will inevitably trigger a long-term spillover effect across Europe but, at the same time, Member States must comply with the European Convention on Human Rights and the founding principles of the European Union such as the respect for human dignity, equality, democracy, rule of law and freedom. In other words, European countries have to tackle hate crimes and extremism without falling into a securitization trap. To do so, the EU must develop a more coherent and comprehensive conceptualization of radicalization where law enforcement agencies can uniformly investigate terrorism-related episodes across Europe. According to Human Rights

Watch, unlike antisemitic acts, countries and civil society actors tend to monitor Islamophobic incidents less systematically. Similarly, there are issues related to the classification and under-reporting of violent right-wing incidents because some Member States find it challenging to qualify extreme rightwing deeds as terrorist acts. Reporting episodes of violence and sharing intelligence is crucial since also right-wing extremism represents a transnational phenomenon; for instance, the Swedish neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement has branches in Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland and takes part in gatherings in Greece and Germany.

Right-wing attacks at the al-Noor Islamic Centre in Oslo (2019) and the Hanau shootings in Germany (2020) prove that the EU should prioritize more effective targeted approaches rather than "colour-blind" counter-terrorism policies that address all forms of terrorism irrespective of motivation and typology. Indeed, jihadism has been the primary focus of counter-terrorism efforts since 9/11 but the Russia-Ukraine War, the polarization of the pro-Israel and pro-Palestine camps, and the post-COVID-19 socio-economic crisis, coupled with easier access to low-cost 3D printing and unmanned aerial systems (UAS), might create a fertile ground also for right-wing terrorism.

Europe still matters and could play a pivotal role as a counter-terrorism actor thanks to its long history of fighting terrorism. Nevertheless, the EU must find a compromise among members with diverse experiences and historical trajectories that shape different strategic cultures. It cannot be said that all members are similarly concerned about terrorism because they face a range of threats. For example, Eastern European states mainly focus on Russia

whereas Mediterranean countries look towards the south; again, other countries like France push for global activism, and cooperation, also through military means, with third countries such as Germany which have typically been more resistant. Unsurprisinaly, the EU is still mainly seen as a platform for informal and horizontal cooperation, as demonstrated by European governments that pursue their security dialogue with third countries on the basis of traditional diplomatic ties rather than within the several EU's counter-terrorism partnerships. Member States need to step out of concerns for national sovereignty and let the EU become the principal policy actor before the next large-scale terror incidents occur, because only a united European response would be able to face transnational and hybrid threats from state and non-state actors.

Vito Morisco is an Affiliated Researcher at the oiip and holds a PhD in Middle East Politics from the University of Exeter, UK. He worked as an intern at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany and at the immigration office of the Italian Ministry of Interior. He also completed a Certificate in Terrorism Studies at the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV), University of St. Andrews, Scotland. In addition, Vito studied Persian language at the University of Tehran, Arabic at the University of Jordan and worked as junior analyst at the Institute for Islamic Strategic Affairs (IISA) in London. His research interests include critical terrorism studies, political violence and Islamist movements.

Human Rights: Europe Can Show the Way

The full version of the online interview is available on our website at www.oiip.ac.at.

Dialogue between Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Wolfgang Petritsch, President of the oilp





he Austrian lawyer and top UN official shares his lucid vision of the current human rights crisis, the ways to overcome it and Europe's role as a bridge builder.

Wolfgang Petritsch: High Commissioner Türk, dear Volker, what are the main challenges you face in your position? What are your main concerns when it comes to human rights protection?

Volker Türk: If one looks at the state of human rights these days, what comes to mind is a situation of crisis. In situations of war and conflict, we see a "dehumanization" of the other: civilians are not adequately protected, civilian infrastructure gets massively destroyed, humanitarian access and humanitarian aid are not ensured. But crisis is also perceptible in an increased tendency

towards authoritarianism, with civic space shrinking, human rights defenders getting arrested, like recently in Tunisia, journalists and media workers attacked, restrictive laws on "foreign agents" adopted, torture being used under national security concerns. The role of Tech Companies, which is not enough balanced with content moderation, is especially worrying in an election year such as 2024. Another area where the crisis becomes obvious relates to social and economic inequalities. And not only we miss the needed outcry to stop this from happening, but the very institutions that were created after the Second World War to work on these issues are put under strain. We witness many attacks against the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross these days. So, yes, we are in a crisis situation, and this is why it is so important to strongly re-assess that human rights are our future and the answer to many of the challenges we face.

Wolfgang Petritsch: Last year we commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. Is it still possible in the 21st Century to embrace this notion of universality? More specifically, how do the geopolitical trend towards a multi-polar world, the spread of crises and violent conflicts, the authoritarian temptation all over the world, even inside the European Union, actually affect the very idea of universal human rights?

Volker Türk: It is indeed a major issue. Ian Bremmer refers to the "G-zero world" where different power dynamics emerge in different parts of the Earth. This raises the coherence and universality of the human rights regime. Let us not forget that, during the negotiations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community's profile was completely different, with countries under colonial rule underrepresented. The 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action were important because they allowed for a very strong commitment by all UN members to the universality of human rights, also taking into account cultural and social particularities. There was no single state that did not validate the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights last year. It is therefore

very important that all states remain committed to these norms and standards, even if it is sometimes just "lip service". This gives those of us who work on human rights a huge leverage.

Wolfgang Petritsch: In his report on "Our common agenda", UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres proposed a Summit of the Future, which he described as "a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reinvigorate global action, recommit to fundamental principles, and further develop the frameworks of multilateralism so they are fit for the future". Now. Volker. vou contributed to and continue to be involved in the preparation of the summit, which will take place on the 22nd and 23rd of September in New York. How, in your opinion, can this event strengthen, even maybe rejuvenate human rights?

Volker Türk: The Pact for the Future is indeed a huge opportunity. The Covid pandemic has shown how important multilateralism is. Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine, the tragic events in Israel and Gaza and so many conflict situations around the world have distracted us from the bia challenges of our time: climate change, the rights of future generations, inequities at the global level, the weakening of multilateralism. The revised version of the Pact came out last month, and there is strong indication that the human rights system will be strengthened. Let me give you one concrete example: the Global Digital Compact to be agreed upon at the September Summit of the Future. We need to make sure that the human rights norms that apply both offline but also online are translated into very concrete commitments, including for "big business". We also hope that member states will pick it up and realize the potential that human rights have, not just when it comes to violations and the "doom and gloom", but also as solutions. So I hope that the Pact for the Future will endorse this vision of human rights not only as a difficult, sensitive,

uncomfortable area, but also as a force for transformation and change.

Wolfgang Petritsch: We, at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs, are launching a new publication called "REFLECTIONS", which first issue will be devoted to the question "Why Europe matters". Although your field of action is, of course, truly global, you nevertheless are an Austrian and therefore a European citizen. What can and should Europe do to protect and to promote human rights?

Volker Türk: Europe, in this multipolar "G-zero world", plays an extremely important role because of its history. We have this "never again" strong sentiment hopefully translated into politics, but I wish that this would be much more comprehensive and include many other areas of history as well, including the decolonization process. The other area where Europe can play an extremely important role is being a bridge builder. For instance, on the tech side, Europe has led the way in terms of regulation, with the EU's 2022 Digital Services Act, the Al Directive, the Digital Market Act. Sometimes Europeans come across as a bit arrogant in their interactions with the rest of the world. We need to approach these situations with a sense of humility but also determination and with a sense of support and responsibility that goes beyond taking care only of what is happening in Europe. Three weeks ago, I was in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. What struck me is that all our mobile phones benefit from some of the natural resources that are mined there, such as coltan. The abundance of natural resources is unbelievable. At the same time, the poverty and vulnerability of people in eastern DRC are heartbreaking. Europe, as a responsible actor, needs to look outside much more and truly assess these connections, these inter-linkages that each and every aspect of our life has with the rest of the world.

I hope that the UN Pact for the Future will endorse this vision of human rights not only as a difficult, sensitive, uncomfortable area, but also as a force for transformation and change."

Volker Türk

Volker Türk United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has devoted his long and distinguished career to advancing universal human rights. In October 2022, he took up his official functions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Prior, Volker Türk was the Under-Secretary-General for Policy (2021-2022) and Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2019-2021). As Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva (2015-2019), Mr. Türk played a key role in the development of the landmark Global Compact on Refugees.

Wolfgang Petritsch is President of the oiip. A retired career diplomat, Wolfgang Petritsch was the EU's Special Envoy for Kosovo (1998-1999), EU chief negotiator at the Kosovo peace talks in Rambouillet and Paris (1999), and then High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (1999-2002).

Why Europe Matters in Global Refugee **Protection**

by Judith Kohlenberger

In these geopolitically instable times, the lack of a unified and effective migration and asylum policy presents a direct threat to **Europe's core interests.**"

n 2024, the European Parliament, as the final step in the process, passed its vote on the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). It has also come to be known, somewhat derogatively, as Europe's "asylum compromise", suggesting that none of parties of the EU's trilogue - the Council of Member States, the Commission and the Parliament seems to be truly content with its outcome, but begrudgingly conceded to it. Indeed, only days following the European Parliament's vote in favour of the reform, the responsible ministers of Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Malta and Spain - the so-called "Med 5" - slammed the reform for "lack of ambition" and demanded more funds for preventing migration flows in countries where they originate. They are joined by experts and NGOs who worry that over time, it will erode basic European principles and further torpedo international law, all the while failing to address the main problems of EU asylum policy, such as lack of accountability for member states who do not share the burden.

This is a damning verdict for a reform that was more than three years in the making, in a changing geopolitical landscape and increased attempts at "hybrid warfare" by autocratic leaders who employ migrants as pawns in their vicious game. Perhaps more than in any other policy area, "Europe matters" when it comes to finding a coherent, humane and fair response to global migration and refugee flows. And yet it fails, repeatedly, to deliver it. Lebanon refugee camp, 2017



Melilla - Deadly scene of European migration policy. On 24 June 2022, at least 37 people died attempting to overcome the border fence between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Melilla, due to failure to provide assistance and massive use of force by Moroccan and Spanish security forces. Since then, civil society organizations have been placing flowers at the border fence every 24th of the month to commemorate the victims of the massacre.



© Sherin Gharib The antidote to the rise of these essentially anti-European forces is simple: Showing that in Europe, human rights, rule of law and freedom are a lived reality, under II circumstances whatsoever

Europe's self-interest

In these geopolitically instable times, the lack of a unified and effective migration and asylum policy presents a direct threat to Europe's core interests. The EU Turkey Deal exemplified that autocratic third countries are given huge leverage when receiving EU funds to host several thousand refugees - in the case of Turkey almost four million – on their grounds. President Erdoğan has repeatedly proven that he knows how to skilfully employ this leverage against the EU, for example when he had dozens of refugees carted to the Turkish-Greek border river Evros in March 2020 in order to assert his foreign policy interests, just days before the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic. Displaying openly to the rest of the world that it has no coherent response to increased arrivals of people in need of protection, and indeed can be internally destabalized by them, Europe essentially invites its adversaries to blackmail it. The unsolved "migration question" has become its Achilles Heel.

The current trend to externalize asylum procedures to even more distant third countries, such as the recent deals with Tunisia, Egypt and soon, perhaps, Ruanda, will only add fuel to the fire. In the long term, Europe will thus create more migration problems than it solves, undermining its own credibility as a regulatory superpower in the world, adhering to and promoting a rule-based order. By externalizing worn clothes, meat by-products,



the effects of climate change and now even refugees to countries in the Global South, it essentially reiterates old colonial practices of exploitation and dominance, suggesting that there is, indeed, a hierarchy of human rights. So far, paying third countries to keep migrants and refugees away by linking development cooperation to "migration prevention" has led to sketchy results at best, and has, in some instances, even yielded unintended outcomes, such as the creation of new, more dangerous migration routes and a rising death toll in the Aegean Sea.

Fortification of borders has allowed NGOs and profit-orientated security and technology companies to gain influence at Europe's periphery, at the expense of democratically elected governments. The result is an effective diffusion of responsibility, as it becomes increasingly difficult to disentangle when and under which conditions national bodies, EU agencies, private actors or NGOs operate, for instance in Search-and-Rescue missions in the Mediterranean. Forsaking control of its immigration and asylum rules to third countries or private-sector companies, as any externalization deal essentially requires the EU to do, will hence increase rather than prevent loss of control of its external borders. Here, as in related policy areas, the answer must be "more

Europe", rather than less, but a Europe that is accountable and unified.

Where human rights aren't "fake"

The way in which countries in the Global South recently positioned themselves in relation to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza reflects how Western practices, among them the externalization of "unwanted" policy issues, are interpreted as a politics of double standards. As a result of its inconsistent migration policies towards third countries, exemplified by the fact that the EU temporary protection directive was activated for Ukrainian refugees, but not those fleeing their war-torn countries in the Middle East in 2015, Europe is losing in the new global bloc formation. Russian propaganda exploited and amplified reports of discriminating border controls in February 2022, when "European-looking" Ukrainian residents were allowed to cross into EU territory, but residents of colour, among them African students studying at Ukrainian universities, were denied protection. Russia's autocratic leader Wladimir Putin continues to paint Europe's insistence that human rights and the rule of law be upheld under all conditions as "fake" - and puts it to the test. Repeatedly, he has sent migrants and refugees to the EU's external borders, where they have not only been denied entry, but

were subjected to police violence, denied medical treatment, and left to starve - thus proving Putin's point.

Europe matters now more than ever because only Europe, with its unique, precarious history of persecution, refugee displacement and hosting, can address global migration flows by creating options that comply with and strengthen human rights, such as increasing resettlement quotas, diversifying legal labour migration paths and enforcing burden-sharing. It is high time it started to revert from populist mock solutions such as outsourcing asylum procedures or fortifying borders with little to no lasting effect on asylum numbers. If European leaders continue to uphold and bolster Europe's "migration question" for their own electoral gain, faith in their abilities to present workable solutions will be further eroded and citizens will be driven to seek quick fixes, such as those offered by political entrepreneurs on the extreme ends of the spectrum. The antidote to the rise of these essentially anti-European forces is simple: Showing that in Europe, human rights, rule of law and freedom are a lived reality, under all circumstances whatsoever.

Judith Kohlenberger is a Senior Researcher at the oilp and the Institute for Social Policy, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU). She is also affiliated at the Jacques Delors Centre at Hertie School in Berlin. Her work has been published in international journals such PLOS One, Refugee Survey Quarterly and International Migration, and awarded several prizes, most recently the Austrian Academic Book of the Year 2023. She serves in the Integration Council of the City of Vienna and on the board of the Austrian Society for European Politics (ÖgfE). At oiip, Judith works on forced migration and refugees, in particular from the Middle East, and their labor market integration in European host countries.

Civil Societies in the EUROMED Region

by Sophie Reichelt

ivil societies in the EUROMED region are facing multiple threats. Increasingly anti-democratic tendencies among their governments are leading to shrinking spaces for action and recognition – with some CSOs even facing criminalization of their work. Apart from the challenges posed by anti-democratic tendencies, the war in Gaza and the resulting polarization of societies further threatens their cohesion – not only within their respective countries, but also in the EUROMED region as a whole.

In this context of growing mistrust and polarization, the Anna Lindh Foundation plays a crucial role. Established in 2005 and named in honour of the assassinated Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, the Foundation is dedicated to promoting intercultural and civil society dialogue. Inspired by Lindh's significant contributions, including her involvement in peace initiatives in the Middle East and her vocal opposition to the 2003 Iraq War, the ALF, with its 40 member states and over 3,000 civil society organizations, serves today as an important platform for civil society actors throughout the EUROMED region.

In December 2011, the Austrian ALF members elected the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (oiip) as Head of Network (HoN). Since then, the most important aspect of our work is to support and strengthen the intellectual, cultural and civil society exchange of the Austrian member organizations. In 2023, we organized a joint



Intercultural Achievement Award October 2023

The ALF, with its 40 member states and over 3,000 civil society organizations, serves today as an important platform for civil society actors throughout the EUROMED region."

event together with the winners of the Intercultural Achievement Award, fostering intercultural exchange. In addition, we advise and support the members in their participation in the calls of the Anna Lindh Foundation. At present, the Austrian network has around 60 members, most of which are civil society organizations, public organizations, or individual members working in the political, cultural and educational sectors.

Sophie Reichelt is a Research Associate at the oiip. After studying International Economics and Business Administration at the University of Innsbruck and the Universidad Autónoma in Madrid, she worked as a project manager in the field of live marketing communication. In October 2020, Sophie Reichelt started her Master of International Development at the University of Vienna with a focus on peace and conflict as well as on migration studies. Her master thesis focuses on European and Spanish border and migration policies and their diplomatic relations with Morocco.



ack in 1995, one of the brightest minds of former Yugoslavia and Europe, Predrag Matvejevic, published a book titled "Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape." At the time, when Europe faced a dark momentum with the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995, Matvejevic developed his cultural philosophy of the Mediterranean, a sea that through history shaped the European continent and connected it to both the Middle East and the Arab world. To write his monumental book, as he explained in one of his many interviews, he went to the Croatian island of Cres. In the solitude of one of the most beautiful islands of the Mediterranean, he found the peace and strength to write and finish the book.

The beauty, quietness and solitude of the island inspired Paul Schmidt, Secretary General of the Austrian Society for European Affairs (ÖGfE) and one of the authors in our magazine, and myself (Vedran Džihić) to initiate a Summer School on Cres dedicated to the future of Europe and particularly to thinking the continents as a whole including today's regions still outside of the EU.

While first born within ÖGfE's and oiip's Jean Monnet Network Projects "Western Balkans to EU", the Summer School continued to grow and flourish even after the end of the project. It was in September 2023 that 25 young scholars, researchers, activists and civil society representatives under the age of 28 from all over Europe – the NEXT GENERATION - came together for the "CRES Summer School" to discuss how Europe can regain a new momentum and push the Enlargement project further. oiip joined a consortium of partners such as European parliament, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Center of Advanced Studies Southeastern Europe, Elcano Royal Institute from Spain and Spanish Embassy in Croatia as well as the French Embassy in Croatia, and organized a whole week of fascinating lectures, workshops and new encounters between young Europeans, experts and activists. What emerged in those days at Cres was a vibrant new network of enthusiastic young people and leaders able to meet political challenges, deepen the dialogue with decision-makers, and thus contribute to regaining a new European and democratic momentum.

In September 2023, 25 young scholars, researchers, activists and civil society representatives from all over Europe came together to discuss how Europe can regain a new momentum and push the Enlargement project further."

> For us at oiip, the Cres Summer School became a new alumni focal point for bringing together selected oiip youngsters - young researchers, former and current fellows and trainees - with the new emerging network of young Europeans and future leaders from across Europe. In September 2024, Cres and the Mediterranean will again be the place to explore current European horizons in lectures, workshops, scenario planning formats. Topics this year will range from the debate on the new geopolitical momentum in Europa following the Russian aggression on Ukraine, social and rule of law perspective on current challenges in Europe, to the discussion about Enlargement strategy, and the question of how to support and refresh European democracies and values from below through local initiatives and emancipatory engagement of citizens. We are happy that the Austrian Ministry for European and Foreign Affairs will be supporting this year's edition of the Summer School, confirming the shared determination by stakeholders, scholars, and activists to shape a positive European future.

> The island of Cres has a famous slogan coined throughout the decades no stress at Cres, where time seems to stand still and solitude can be found. With the Cres Summer School and certainly without stress the new generation of young Europeans will be following in the footsteps of Predrag Metvejevic's exploration of the Mediterranean by thinking of and shaping a new and better Europe of the future. oiip is proud and happy to be part of this adventure.



Imprint

Austrian Institute for International Affairs - oiip Währinger Straße 3/12 1090 Wien

Responsible for the content: Cengiz Günay, Petra Podesser, Annika Scharnagl

Proofreading: Laura Green

Design: www.gruenberg4.at



