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**THE EU-CHINA RELATIONSHIP CALLING FOR A NEW VISION**

Jing Men*

The economic reform undertaken by Beijing at the end of the 1970s initiated China's rise. By the first decade of the 21st century, China's rise has become widely recognised. While for several centuries the West has been accustomed to dominating international relations, the increasing influence wielded by China on international affairs creates a sense of confusion to the West. Furthermore, China's rise not only poses challenges to international relations, but also requires a re-examination and redefinition of relations between Beijing and other countries. Against this background, the EU-China relationship needs to be re-evaluated and readjusted. A new vision is called for.

In EU-China relations, several important years need to be reviewed. After diplomatic ties were established in 1975, the first bilateral trade agreement was reached in 1978. This was more or less the time that Beijing decided to implement the reform policy in the country. In 1995, when the Europeans made their first China policy paper, the reform policy was in full swing, and while productivity in China had increased substantially, the Chinese economy had grown at a remarkable speed. When the Europeans first started to use the word "partnership" to define their relations with China then, it was twenty years after the reform policy had been carried out.¹ This indicates a linkage between China's economic development and Europe's rising interest in China. This linkage is confirmed by the latest China policy paper published in Brussels in 2006. Compared with the previous policy papers, this one is composed of two documents, one on the general relationship and the other on economic, trade and financial issues, showing that economic relations with China had become a major concern – China's rapidly growing trade surplus made it "the single most important challenge for EU trade policy."²

It is generally agreed that EU-China cooperation over economy and trade is the cornerstone of bilateral relations. Indeed, without transnational business and economic cooperation, the EU-China relationship would be much weaker and one could even wonder what would be left to create common programmes. In other words, although the EU and China share some common objectives in global governance and with regards to the international political economy, the common objectives do not necessarily shorten the gap between these two distinct actors. Despite the fact that

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¹ The title of the second China policy paper was "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China". It indicated that the Europeans started to think of China as a partner.

² See European Union, *Competition and Partnership: A policy for EU-China trade and investment: Executive Summary* Brussels, 24 October 2006, p. 1, retrieved 19 October 2011, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/october/tradoc_130793.pdf.

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nearly 60 dialogues have been established between Brussels and Beijing, differences remain. Mutual trust has not, in fact, been enhanced.

Yet, what is interesting is that there is an EU-China strategic partnership on paper. While the leaders from both sides are aware of their diverging visions, there seems to be a tacit agreement between the leaderships that they intend to keep at least a warmer and closer relationship in rhetoric. Notwithstanding this rhetoric, as both of them are rather loose in forging strategic partners internationally,³ the partnership does not possess real substance as the term implies. If the essence of the strategic partnership is in question, then what is the nature of the EU-China relationship? How shall this bilateral relationship be defined? To examine EU-China relations, this paper will pose some questions to the EU and China respectively and analyse from both sides the changes and on-going problems. The paper will conclude with prospects for EU-China relations.

Problems for the EU to consider

When Europeans think about China, at least the following problems are on their minds:

First of all, the EU-China partnership was built on a business relationship. For several decades, the EU enjoyed the advantage of providing capital and technology to China, whereas China provided cheap labour and low cost goods to the EU. The two were ideally complementary and both were happy to maintain such a pattern of cooperation for some time. Unfortunately, this will not last forever. China is climbing the ladder in the production chain and developing its technological resources. Moreover, China has changed from trying hard to attract foreign investment to becoming an increasingly active investor not only in the Third World countries, but also in Europe and the United States. By the end of 2015 when the 12th Five-Year Plan will be completed, it is anticipated that external investment to China will be more or less equal to China's outward investment to the other parts of the world.⁴ In contrast, the Euro crisis has drastically weakened the financial capacity of the EU – the EU is in need of financial support and China seems to be ever more important to the EU. While it is unclear whether China will support the euro or not, and while we do not know how much China will be prepared to invest in the EU, the problem for the EU is that it is gradually losing its comparative advantage over China.

Secondly, many Europeans believe that China should be transformed on the basis of the European model. At the end of the Cold War, China was left as the largest communist country in the world. Recognising China's changes since the reform policy was adopted, the EU has attempted to

³ The EU has ten strategic partners, whereas China has more than 20 strategic partners. There is no document from either the EU or China to explain the criteria of selection. Therefore, it is unclear to the public why the EU or China has established strategic partnerships with these countries.

⁴ The information was mentioned in the speech by Mr Zhang Yansheng, Director of the Institute of Foreign Economy at the National Development and Reform Commission, at the seminar on China's 12th Five-Year Plan organised by Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation on 1 April 2011.

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facilitate further changes in China and transform the country into a liberal democracy based on the rule of law,⁵ as it believes that Europeans “have a great deal to offer, both in advice and resources.”⁶ Dialogues, exchanges and cooperative projects between Brussels and Beijing have allowed the EU to expose a lot of its success stories to its counterpart and the latter has indeed learnt from the EU's successes when building its own economic, social and legal system. Yet, the problem is that the Chinese leadership has stressed on many occasions that China is built with “Chinese characteristics.” In other words, China will never be Germany or France, China will remain China.

Thirdly, since the end of the Cold War, China has consistently been under external pressure to improve its human rights record. As a result of strong economic development and the rapid increase in China's GDP, the living standard of the Chinese is much better than in the pre-reform era. Yet, political reform continues to lag behind economic reform. In order to maintain social stability, Beijing is more cautious in granting civil and political rights to its people. Up till now, a dozen years after signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, China has not ratified it. The EU-China human rights dialogue has been going on since 1997, but Europeans are frustrated to see that China's progress in the field of human rights is much slower than they expected it to be. The bi-annual dialogue has not helped to make any breakthroughs; rather, it remains boring and superficial.⁷

Fourthly, when the Europeans signed their first trade agreement with China, the latter was still a poor developing country with a planned economy. In 1978, China's GDP accounted for only 1 percent of the world economy while its share of global trade was even less than 1 percent. More than thirty years later, China has developed into the world's second largest economy and the largest trading partner of many countries in the world, including Japan, Australia, South Africa, Brazil and India. While China is still developing from a regional power to a world power, how to define China becomes a problem. Europeans tend to argue that China is now a developed country and should take on more international responsibility, such as in the field of climate change and sustainable development. The Chinese, on the other hand, insist that they are the largest developing country, pointing in particular towards the fact that average per capita income in China is still rather low.

Fifthly, few Europeans understand China. Despite the increasingly close interdependent relations between the EU and China, few Europeans know China well. Since the founding of the first European Community, Europeans have been busy with integration. They have tended to be inward looking, rather than outward looking. Foreign policy was only added to the agenda in the 1990s. As Shambaugh pointed out, “compared with the United States, the depth of expertise [in Europe] on China remains very limited. This deficiency is

⁵ This is one of the objectives in the EU's engagement policy with China, which can be found in all the China policy papers issued in the past years.

⁶ D. Shambaugh, “The Strategic Triangle: U.S. and Europeans Reactions to China's Rise”, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2005, p. 15.

⁷ This opinion is from someone who participated in the human rights dialogue with the Chinese counterpart.

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the result of structural and intellectual impediments."⁸ While the Chinese are eager to go abroad to study in Europe, the Europeans are not that interested in studying in China. Currently, there are 180,000 Chinese students in Europe but only 18,000 EU students in China.⁹

Problems for China to consider

When the Chinese consider the EU, some problems arise as well:

First, China has always been supportive of European integration. Even during the Cold War era when ideological differences separated them into different camps, the Chinese already had the idea that Europe could be a force to balance against the United States. When Britain, Denmark and Ireland joined the European Community, the Chinese press hailed it as "a new step by the West European countries in joining forces against the hegemony of the superpowers, especially against U.S. control and interference in Western Europe."¹⁰ Starting from the 1980s, China, under Deng Xiaoping, developed the idea of constructing a multipolar world – according to this design, Europe is an ideal partner towards multipolarity. Nevertheless, on many occasions, China learnt, rather disappointedly, that Europe is an ally to the US rather than its own partner.

Second, with the change in the international political environment in recent years, in particular, since humanitarian intervention has become commonly accepted in order to fulfil the "responsibility to protect", China has been obliged to readjust its principle of non-interference. Open differences between the Chinese and European foreign policy were demonstrated in cases such as Sudan and Libya, and most recently in Syria. China intends to impress the world as a responsible player, but the divergence with the West in general, and the EU in particular, sometimes leaves China in a passive situation. Another example of divergence is that while China holds the sovereignty principle dearly, and regards territorial integrity as its core interest, the European leaders have gone beyond China's bottom line once in a while by meeting the Dalai Lama. According to the Chinese, the Tibetan issue is strictly its domestic affair. Yet, in view of the Europeans, such a meeting is a way to demonstrate their criticism of human rights abuse in China. When considering such meetings, one should think about the mutual violation of the sovereignty principle – the Europeans interfered in Chinese domestic affairs by meeting the Dalai Lama but the Chinese interfered in European affairs by arguing against such meetings. The human rights issue is one of many issues in EU-China relations. The real questions to be asked concern the severity of this issue and the extent to which it negatively affects bilateral relations.

Third, Chinese leaders have recently increased pressure on the EU as they want China to be granted Market Economy Status (MES). Chinese Premier Wen set it as a precondition for European bailout in his speech at the

⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹ The author got the data from an interview with the Chinese Mission to the EU.

¹⁰ Quoted from: G. O'Leary, *The Shaping of Chinese Foreign Policy*, London, Croom Helm Ltd., 1980, p.192.

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World Economy Forum in Dalian.¹¹ When joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ten years ago, China agreed that it would only be granted MES in 2016, fifteen years after its accession to the WTO. Up till now, about eighty members of the WTO have already granted MES to China, which makes China more motivated to convince the EU and the US to grant it MES. As there are only four years left before 2016, and only 1 percent of Chinese products exported to the EU are targeted by the union for anti-dumping investigations, it seems that the MES will not have as big an impact on EU-China trade and economic relations as it will on political relations. Another issue, which is often mentioned alongside the problem of the MES in EU-China relations, is the arms embargo. While the MES will not be a problem for China in four years' time, there is no timetable for the arms embargo to be lifted. A European diplomat argues that the Europeans are reluctant to cooperate with China on these two issues because they "are negotiating tools if we want ... human rights improvements [in China]."¹² This may be true to a certain degree. However, the real problem is that the Member States cannot speak with one voice. China is frustrated but is learning to accept the "non-decision-making" problem in the EU.

Fourth, the EU is an important business and trade partner. While the EU has been the largest trading partner of China since 2004, China has been the 2nd largest trading partner of the EU since 2003, and may well become its largest trading partner by the end of this year. Yet the EU, after financial crisis, faces a rather uncertain future. How the eurozone will overcome the euro crisis and how the debt-ridden countries will get back on their feet remain to be seen. Furthermore, the difficulties in decision-making at the European level and the differences in the EU Member States on how to deal with the problems can only make the Chinese more suspicious about the European capacity in crisis management, which may affect China's confidence in the EU as well as in euros.

Fifth, while China addresses the EU officially as a strategic partner, the importance of the EU is far less than the importance of the US in China's foreign policy agenda. Irrespective of whether China loves the US or hates it, the Chinese leadership knows that the US cannot be ignored. The EU, regarded as a political dwarf in international affairs, does not share the same weight as the US. The fact that the EU is not entwined in East Asian affairs (it has no military bases in any of China's neighbours and no legally binding relations with Taiwan) means "[t]here is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and the EU and neither side poses a threat to the other."¹³ However, the EU's lack of involvement in Asia also reduces its importance in

¹¹ J. Anderlini & L. Zhang, "Wen sets preconditions to help Europe", *Financial Times*, 14 September 2011, retrieved 20 October 2011, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b234ad8a-de98-11e0-a228-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1bcd2lVXG>.

¹² J. Hale, "EU Arms Embargo Called 'Bargaining Chip' in Wider China Talks," *DefenseNews*, 13 January 2011, retrieved 10 May 2011, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=5447300>.

¹³ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *China's EU Policy Paper*, Beijing, People's Republic of China, October 13 2003, retrieved 19 October 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t27708.htm>.

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China's external relations. As a consequence, China is somehow half-hearted in its relations with the EU.

A new vision for EU-China relations

For the EU and China to further deepen their relations and explore broader cooperation, each will have to first solve some problems. For the EU to face a rapidly growing and ever stronger China, it needs to consider what updates to make in its policy in order to adjust to the challenges and changes brought by China's rise. If the EU's objective of transforming China will not be achieved, will it be able to accept the reality of China? Before making a new policy on China, the EU needs to strike a balance between the material benefits it envisages in the relations with China and the promotion of normative values in China; between its long-term objective of supporting China's transition towards a liberal democracy and its short-term goal of overcoming its euro crisis. Similarly, China also faces an ever changing EU. With the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the EEAS has been launched. The EU will invest more energy in its foreign policy and external relations. If successful, the EU will be more influential in international affairs. How serious China takes the EU in its multipolar design and how China will work with the EU to exert more influence on global governance vis-à-vis the US, will not only depend on how the EU reacts to China's multipolar design, but will also depend on China's proposal and the approaches that are used.

In the meantime, both sides are well aware that differences in political belief and practices are barriers in constructing mutual trust. Twenty years ago when Fukuyama published *The End of History and the Last Man*, he celebrated the success of liberal democracy and claimed that this is the final form of human government.¹⁴ Now that the EU and the US are struggling with the financial and economic crisis, China seems to be the saviour. Yet, business is business. It remains a big question as to whether economic cooperation will bring political relations closer. Without political compromise between the two sides, it is difficult to further deepen EU-China relations. Compared to China, the EU has another problem, that is, the lack of consensus in decision-making process. As a matter of fact, when some Europeans criticise China for playing "divide and rule" among the Member States, China is a victim of the dissonance in the EU. The EU's failure to harmonise its voice on many occasions not only weakens its international and domestic influence, but also damages relations with third countries.

The future of EU-China relations depends on the new vision of the leaderships from both sides. In face of an ever-changing world, both Brussels and Beijing need to show commitment and sincerity in overcoming differences and enhancing cooperation. Pragmatism, flexibility and mutual understanding should be the key words.

¹⁴ See F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Penguin Books, 1992.



CONVERGING TRAJECTORIES: EUROPEAN AND CHINESE FOREIGN POLICIES IN THE LIBYAN CRISIS

Simone Disegni*

What does it mean, exactly, for a country to behave as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international arena? Any big actor looking to reassure its partners would surely want to be classed as such. “Traditional” powers such as the EU or the US, as well as emerging countries like China, Turkey or Brazil, would surely want this title. Yet the expression is vague enough to imply radically different translations in practice. What does it mean to act “responsibly”, for instance, when a part of the population of a state rises against the ruling government and the country slips into a civil war? Does it imply a “moral” requirement to assist the unfortunate rebels or, on the contrary, should we support the legitimate government against domestic unrest? And what about the responsibility towards the citizens of our “stakeholder” itself?

Abstract as they may seem, these and other foreign policy dilemmas have risen with painful concreteness for governments around the world in the last few months, after the upheavals in Libya were repressed with unusual violence by the Gaddafi regime. With the final conquest of Tripoli and other major cities by the rebels in late August, and the killing of Gaddafi in October, the bloody civil war now appears to have drawn to an end. However, as a “new course” gradually opens up in Libya, many questions can already be posed: what signs will this conflict leave in terms of foreign policy attitudes for the big outside players? How distant, in particular, have China and the EU really been on this dossier? While the apparent divergence in terms of proclaimed approaches remains relevant, the concrete behaviour of the two actors throughout the crisis actually seems to have been guided by similar worries and objectives. The attempts at cooperation sketched in this context – this paper argues – might even signal a gradually converging trajectory in terms of foreign policy attitudes, one increasingly marked by the pragmatic aim of protecting key interests abroad without facing excessive risks.

The Libyan revolution seen from Brussels and Beijing: two (apparently) incompatible pictures

At a first glance, it would seem difficult to imagine two more distant worldviews and approaches to foreign policy than the ones embodied by the EU and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). *Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights* – solemnly states the 2003 European Security Strategy – *are the best means of*

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*strengthening the international order.*¹ Relying on a widespread conviction of the universal value of some core principles, in other words, the EU explicitly cares about domestic standards in third countries, including political ones. Not only does it follow those evolutions closely, it is also openly committed to intervene in order to foster such desired developments. From a Chinese perspective, however, such an explicitly “interventionist” posture towards foreign affairs is simply unacceptable. Based on a strong anti-colonialist determination, in fact, the PRC’s approach rejects any interference in the domestic affairs of a third country, considering such an attitude as a patent threat to another “holy” principle of modern international law: the sovereignty of each state within its own borders.²

Retracing the acts and postures taken by the two sides³ since the explosion of the Libyan crisis, one may indeed be tempted to identify a perfect example of how these conflicting views were translated into concrete practice. Inspired by the proclaimed engagement to protect fundamental human rights against gross violations, France and Britain took the lead in order to prevent a massacre and pushed the international community to enforce a “no-fly” zone on the Northern African country, paving the way for a *de facto* strategic support to the rebels. Sticking to its commitment not to intervene in the domestic affairs of a third country, however, the PRC did not back Resolution 1973 authorizing the protection of the civilian population by “all necessary measures.”⁴ The Chinese press went even further in the following months, proffering scepticism towards the successive “NATO-led operation”, that was suspected of intruding in the Libyan conflict beyond the terms of the Resolution.⁵ While European countries voiced their request for Gaddafi to step down from an early date,⁶ and gradually recognised the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the legitimate government, moreover, China remained ostensibly loyal to the ruling regime, at best calling it to halt violence on civilians. Gaddafi’s Foreign Minister himself was received in Beijing in June, while unconfirmed reports claimed that China breached the international embargo selling weapons to the regime during the crisis.⁷ Only after the rebels conquered Tripoli and actually took control of the country did Beijing eventually drop its objections and recognise the new provisional government in mid-September.

¹ Council of the European Union, *A secure Europe in a better world – European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 10

² See the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence” at the basis of contemporary Chinese foreign policy.

³ We are well aware that the EU does not bear but minor competences in the field of foreign policy and that its role within this conflict has been particularly weak due to internal disputes, notably German refusal to get involved in any intervention. For the benefit of the clarity of the presentation, however, we somewhat simplify the picture, referring to the “dominant” European position, as embodied by France and the UK in particular.

⁴ United Nations, Security Council, *Resolution 1973 (2011)*, New York, United Nations, 17 March 2011.

⁵ “NATO-led air strikes continue in Libya”, *China Daily*, 26 March 2011

⁶ Council of the European Union, *Declaration by the Extraordinary European Council*, D/11/2, Brussels, 11 March 2011, pp. 2-3.

⁷ “The Libyan dilemma”, *The Economist*, 10 September 2011.

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Europe and China, in this perspective, appear as distant as always in terms of foreign policy attitudes. The Libyan case, in other words, would seem to confirm the irreconcilability of their two approaches to international affairs, based on their radically different foreign policy principles. As we shall see in the next paragraph, however, things may actually be considerably more complicated than the apparent picture suggests: taking a more attentive look at the moves made by each actor, a certain deal of cooperation can indeed be retraced, perhaps even signalling a gradual reduction of the “ideological” distance between the rising star and the old continent.

Realpolitik and its followers

Official discourse is certainly an important aspect of contemporary diplomacy: in a world where words circulate extensively but interventions are hard, declarations, press releases, white papers and other types of communications do indeed constitute a relevant part of states' foreign policy. Yet, any careful observer of contemporary politics knows how rhetoric can effectively be used to achieve other goals: strengthening legitimacy, consolidating consensus and covering embarrassing facts. Noble declarations, in other words, often hide more pragmatic objectives. Proclaimed values, similarly, rarely constitute the catalyst of specific foreign policy actions. At best – as Jan Techau puts it – they are invoked “as a fig leaf to make pure power politics look better.”⁸

Neither China nor the EU, to come back to our case, is immune to such a kind of exercise. The Western intervention in Libya was certainly coherent with the principles that NATO members pretend to embody: support to democracy and the civil society, protection of fundamental human rights, determination to solve conflicts using multilateral instruments. The parameters themselves were indeed set with greater carefulness than those set in past experiences such as the unfortunate Iraqi adventure: the operation was covered by a specific UN mandate, it involved the support of non-Western countries and explicitly excluded any military intervention on the Libyan soil. However, notwithstanding this caution, the Europeans made a solemn proclamation that was profoundly unrealistic: “every leader, including Arab leaders, must understand that the reaction of the international community and Europe will now be the same each time. We'll stand alongside populations demonstrating without violence.”⁹ Indeed no analyst would have admitted that Western countries could actually afford intervening at several stages to support rebellions. The impotence of Europe and the US in front of similar repressions – from Syria to Yemen – has confirmed such consideration. As for the intervention in Libya, by the way, it appeared clear from the outset that, besides the humanitarian cause, the priority given to such a mission by Western diplomats was related to much more concrete objectives. On the one hand, the European economy is too thirsty for fossil fuels and energy companies are too greedy for juicy contracts to leave such a key supplier as Libya to sort out its own problems. On the other hand, a successful operation

⁸ J. Techau, “Doing the right thing for the wrong reasons”, *Internationale Politik*, 26 August 2011.

⁹ N. Sarkozy, *European Council Press Conference*, Brussels, 24 March 2011.

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to support the “heroic” rebels against the dreadful regime offered an ideal opportunity for European governments to regain credibility with their domestic populations, who were becoming increasingly angry at the ambiguous relationships held for decades with Northern African regimes. With general elections in sight, French President Sarkozy was the quickest to get the point and drive the necessary U-turn, which other leaders soon followed. To summarise, having been forced to enact a painful “selective interventionism” in Libya, one could argue that Western countries are doomed to choose where to engage militarily directly on the basis of the relevance of the interests at stake, and taking into account the level of political risk to be endured by conducting the operation.

Opportunistic behaviour, however, is the rule rather than the exception in foreign policy and China itself seems to have faced serious, though different, dilemmas in complying with its principles throughout this crisis. As the Economist observed, actually “Libya presented an unusual combination of challenges for China”¹⁰: if rumours of another popular rebellion against an autocratic regime had to be minimised to prevent any attempt of emulation at home, the government could not ignore the presence in the Northern African country of some 38.000 fellow citizens, working in projects worth over 18 billion dollars according to official estimates,¹¹ mostly in the construction industry. The bloody reaction of Gaddafi’s regime to the upheavals, moreover, supported calls for a resolute reaction by the international community, not just by Western powers but also by regional actors such as the Arab League and the African Union. At a closer look, in fact, China’s response was much more collaborative and “flexible” than its criticism of the NATO operation would suggest. If it did not back Resolution 1973 allowing for the intervention, Beijing did certainly not veto it: its behaviour on that occasion, in this light, would rather be qualified as a sort of “constructive abstention.” That vote, by the way, had been preceded by another important Resolution, imposing tough sanctions against Gaddafi with the unanimous approval of the Security Council, including the PRC.¹² Despite its official loyalty to the ruling regime, moreover, China moved with extreme caution amidst the turmoil: it first mounted a huge operation to bring its citizens home, away from the danger area; later it took contacts with the newly-formed NTC, repeatedly meeting representatives of the rebels throughout the crisis. As the curtain draws over the Libyan war, with the success of the “Eastern revolution”, the reason looks clear: Beijing did not want to be left on the “wrong side” on the confrontation, jeopardising future investment opportunities after the end of the conflict. All in all, notwithstanding its rhetoric, China was obliged to withdraw from its proclaimed commitment to non-interference in other countries’ affairs in a number of ways. Far from representing a singular exception to a solid trend, Parello-Plesner and Pantucci recently suggested that this apparent difficulty to implement the proclaimed “sovereignist” doctrine may indeed signal “a

¹⁰ The Economist, loc. cit.

¹¹ D. Qingfen, “China looks to Arab states for opportunities”, *China Daily*, 9 April 2011.

¹² United Nations, Security Council, *Resolution 1970 (2011)*, New York, United Nations, 26 February 2011.

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broader Chinese realisation that its previous posture of absolute non-interference is increasingly at odds with its global economic presence."¹³ Just as Britain and the US experienced in the past centuries, in other words, China may well be starting to feel "the many burdens of a great-power status."

Towards a "homogenisation" of foreign policies?

The upheavals which have erupted throughout the Arab world during the last year have reminded the world how powerful an engine history can be, drawing revolutionary and large-scale changes against all predictions. That wave of protests has not only produced significant transformations in the countries involved, but elsewhere as well. On a different note, as we have seen in the last paragraph, the impact of the Arab Spring – and of the Libyan civil conflict in particular – may indeed be causing interesting evolutions in the major powers' approaches to foreign policy. Undeniably, China and the EU remain two profoundly distinct "objects" – a classic, Westphalian state controlled by a one-party regime on the one hand; the most ambitious "post-national" experience bringing together twenty-seven democracies, on the other. As already highlighted, they rely on very different cultures, historical backgrounds and worldviews. In the present global scenario, moreover, they are clearly heading in opposite development trajectories: the wealthiest and most socially advanced region on the planet, Europe, is certainly doomed to an increasing marginalisation in both political and economic terms. China, conversely, is unquestionably the "rising star" of the 21st century, having embarked upon a seemingly relentless growth trajectory that will rapidly make it the world's greatest power.¹⁴ Ironically, however, as the analysis drawn in the previous paragraphs suggests, their approaches to international affairs may be converging in an original way. Stemming from radically different approaches, in fact, both China and the EU are finding themselves increasingly at odds in pursuing foreign policies that are fully coherent with the values they profess. In a highly interdependent world, "principled interventionism" and "absolute non-interference" are emerging as equally unrealistic doctrines to follow. No big power, in other words, can afford either meddling in all foreign crises or retreating from any engagement in international affairs. A compromise with one's principles, in this context, becomes necessary. If Chinese and Europeans still have a long way before agreeing on a single position, the Libyan case may well suggest that their approaches are developing in a similar direction: both actors seem to have started to admit, albeit – through their acts, not words, that some sort of intervention needs to be staged in specific cases. This intervention is to be made in a strictly *realpolitik* style, particularly in those contexts where the interests at stake are the highest and the level of political risk to be faced is low. If such *de facto* pragmatic convergence becomes more established, the prospects for EU-China cooperation on global political matters may

¹³ J. Parelló-Plesner and R. Pantucci, "China's Janus-faced response to the Arab revolutions", *ECFR Policy Memo*, London, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2011., pp.1-10.

¹⁴ For instance, see Gnesotto and Grevi (eds.), *The new global puzzle – What world for the EU in 2025?*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2006, 1st edn.

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improve considerably in the coming future. Such an evolution, nevertheless, is far from being certain. While collaborating on Libya, in fact, China and Western powers have clashed again on the Syrian dossier: together with Russia, the PRC has recently vetoed a Resolution threatening sanctions against the Ba'atist regime for its repression.¹⁵ For the time being, the converging path outlined cannot but evolve slowly and "selectively", concentrating on those specific scenarios where China and the EU share similar interests and objectives.

Conclusion

It would not be easy for anybody to explain to Syrian or Yemeni rebels targeted by repression why they have not been supported by the international community just as their Libyans "cousins" have. Indeed, one perhaps has to admit that international politics is still, to a large extent, rife with hypocrisy and double standards. The observation applies equally, at different levels, to today's main powers, including China and the EU. Yet it needs to be acknowledged that, notwithstanding a genuine commitment to building and preserving peace throughout the world, there is no evident answer to the question of *when* and *how* it is possible to intervene in a foreign country to stop a violent repression or solve a painful civil conflict. International law, moral philosophy and even power politics cannot but give contrasting responses to such intricate dilemma. What is certain, beyond official rhetoric, is that few crises can really be solved effectively in today's world without a coordinated intervention of the international community: if the Iraqi adventure has shown the tragedy of unilateralism, the Libyan operation will probably be regarded in the future as a valid example of "effective multilateralism." Even if nobody seriously believes that China and the EU have primarily been inspired by humanitarian concerns, the cooperation sketched in this context between the two can be welcomed as good news. Faced with similar political challenges, these two actors may be gradually converging towards a closer approach to foreign policy, one that is essentially marked by a pragmatic "selective interventionism." The failure to agree on a common stance on the Syrian dossier, however, is the most telling signal that such an evolution will still face many obstacles in the coming years. Europeans and Chinese, in sum, still seem to disagree on what it means exactly to behave as a "responsible stakeholder."

¹⁵ "Russia and China veto UN resolution against Syrian regime", *The Guardian*, 5 October 2011.



SOUTH SUDAN AND SUDAN: NEW CHALLENGES FOR EU AND CHINESE POLICY

Gino Brunswijck*

The youngest nation of the world, South Sudan, saw the light this July after a landslide decision for secession from the North. This new state in Africa will have to meet several challenges in the field of state building, peace building and development. China and the EU were obliged to devise new policy responses to the changed situation in both Sudans. This paper analyses how Chinese and EU-policy has evolved in recent years in dealing with former Sudan and consequently South Sudan. As a conclusion, the paper will also identify the challenges for European and Chinese foreign policy and possible areas for enhanced cooperation between the three actors.

Chinese Policy in Sudan: the pre-secession era

China adheres to the principle of non-interference in its diplomatic relations with Khartoum, which was instrumental in creating a good understanding between both parties. The model worked well, but with the increase of Chinese activities in the Sudanese oil sector in the mid-90s, highlighted by the fact that Beijing currently buys the bulk of the Sudanese oil,¹ as well as the war in Darfur, this principle of non-interference has come under pressure.

The increase in economic exchanges over the last 10 to 15 years has brought about a more visible presence of Beijing in Sudanese politics. China has also become a more important political partner for the Sudanese government as a result of Sudan's increasing isolation: Khartoum has strained relations with the International Financial Institutions and the UN has issued several resolutions against the regime. The boom in Sudanese oil production provided the government with a larger pool of resources, which allowed it to strengthen its military and political influence domestically. Beijing wanted to avoid a significant departure from the principle of non-interference, because this could have had repercussions on relations with other African states.² Due to the Darfur conflict and its opposition to resolutions related to the government in Khartoum, Beijing suffered international criticism. However, China has had to strike a delicate balance between its economic interests in

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¹ For more details on the Sudanese-Chinese partnership, see G. Brunswijck, *The Washington Consensus versus the Beijing Consensus: The differences between European Development Cooperation in Africa and China's Africa Policy. Case Study: The Sudan.*, Master's Thesis, College of Europe, Bruges, 2009.

² D. Large, "China & the Contradictions of 'Non-interference' in Sudan", *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 35, no. 115, 2008, pp. 93-98, pp. 101-102.

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the Sudanese region and its effort to be regarded as a responsible power for global peace.³

Between 2006 and 2007, Chinese diplomacy played a pivotal role in getting Bashir's agreement to deploy the UNAMID-mission. Chinese diplomacy evolved from sending messages, to active diplomacy and persuasion, and finally to cooperation with African diplomats on concrete proposals. China favoured the strengthening of economic ties and the reinforcement of military cooperation over sanctions. Moreover, the Chinese erased a portion of Sudan's debt, delivered several million dollars in aid and concluded new economic deals in the oil sector. In this way, Beijing raised its moral profile amongst its African partners; the West also lauded China for its efforts. Additionally, China provided US\$3,5 million to AMIS, and 444 troops were detached to UNMIS in South Sudan and 322 to UNAMID.⁴ A problem, however, was the fact that several rebel movements were overlooked and they should have been integrated in the peace building initiatives.⁵

China's involvement in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) allowed it to forge ties with political representatives from the South. The southerners were in search for investment for their post-war rebuilding efforts and Beijing was a potential partner in this respect, even though it was Khartoum's partner during the war. China has accorded the cash-strapped southern government a loan of around US\$300 million. In 2007, the parties concluded another aid deal. However, because of Beijing's solid ties with Khartoum, the southern government and population were still quite reticent in engaging with China.⁶

The EU's Cooperation with Sudan

The latest EU-Africa strategy has an influence on the Cotonou agreements because it identifies new areas of cooperation. For the Commission, next to building peace, the concepts of democracy and governance are central to its strategy and these concepts are referred to as "the most important challenge."⁷ Improvement of democracy and governance will spur economic development, reduce poverty and ameliorate human rights records.⁸ The most important instrument for the realisation of the objectives is the European Development Fund.⁹ However, the government of Sudan did not ratify the 10th EDF in the framework of the revised Cotonou Agreements of

³ J. Holslag, "China's Diplomatic Victory in Darfur", *BICCS Background Paper*, Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies, Brussels, BICCS Background Paper, August 2007, pp. 1-3.

⁴ E. Van der Meulen, F.P. Van der Putten, "Great Powers and International Conflict Management: European and Chinese Involvement in the Darfur and Iran Crises", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael*, Den Haag, January 2009, p. 13.

⁵ Holslag, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-4, pp. 7-8.

⁶ Large, *op.cit.*, p. 99, pp. 102-105.

⁷ Commission of the European Communities, *Republic of the Sudan – European Community: Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the Period 2005-2007*, Brussels, European Commission, 2005, p. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Africa-EU partnership, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, Brussels, Africa-EU Partnership, 2007, pp. 2-3, p. 23.

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2005,¹⁰ as the agreement would imply that the country had to recognise the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The situation became more complicated when the ICC accused Sudan's president of war crimes and crimes against humanity. As a consequence, several non-governmental organisations (NGO) were obliged to leave the country.¹¹ This constituted an obstacle for European programs, since some of the expelled NGOs were carrying out the implementation of EU development projects.¹² The non-ratification means that the EU could not disburse €300 million, which was reserved for Sudan under the 10th EDF. Nevertheless, the EU continued financing existing projects through the 9th EDF and continued to contribute to peace-building initiatives and humanitarian assistance.¹³ For example, the Peace Facility relies on the Peace Facility relies on EDF-funding and this provision assists the AU in capacity-building on issues of peace-building and conflict resolution, and delivers assistance to concrete missions such as the AMIS-mission.¹⁴ To the latter, the EU was the biggest sponsor with €435 million and about 150 supporting staff.¹⁵

Current situation in Sudan and South Sudan

The current situation in Sudan brings many challenges to the table for policymakers of all actors involved. The most pressing issues are the elaboration of fair distribution of oil revenues, tackling unrest in several states in Sudan and South Sudan, the removal of small arms in the region, addressing development and a pending food shortage.

One of the provisions of the CPA is that oil revenue would be split evenly between the North and the South. Former UN-envoy, Pronk, stated in 2006 that due to the fact that there are no clear figures on the annual oil production and no commonly agreed oil price per barrel, it is difficult to determine the respective shares. This clouded the relations between the North and the South. UN-envoy Pronk feared that the country could be submerged again into a civil war if no notable progress was made on transparent oil revenue distribution after the secession.¹⁶ In 2011, Global Witness stated that oil distribution is still not clearly reported and accounted for. The NGO based this conclusion on the high divergence that exists between oil production data from the government and oil production figures from China National Petroleum Company (CNPC).¹⁷

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities, *Non-ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement by Sudan, FAQ (August 2009)*, Brussels, European Commission, 2009, pp. 1-3.

¹¹ "Soudan: nombre d'états s'opposent au mandat d'arrêt contre le président Al-Bachir", *Le Monde*, 6 March 2009, p. 1.

¹² Commission official, Interview, Brussels, 30 March 2009.

¹³ European Commission, *Non-ratification by Sudan*, loc. cit.

¹⁴ Aprovev, *Too big- too many- too much: Policies and Instruments of the European Union in "post-peace agreement" areas: a coherent contribution to stability, security and development? The case of Southern Sudan*, Brussels, M. Peter & E. LoWilla, Aprovev, 2008, p. 32.

¹⁵ C. Zhang, "Possibility of Cooperation: China and EU in Darfur", *SIS International Review*, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, Shanghai, no. 2, 2008, pp. 77-78.

¹⁶ ABC Australia, "Hope for the Future – Sudan", *Journeyman Pictures*, 2006, 23 minutes.

¹⁷ Global witness, *Crude calculations: The Continued Lack of Transparency over Oil in Sudan*, London, Global Witness, January 2011, pp. 2-7.

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The problematic distribution of oil revenue as well as ethnic tensions that often lead to cattle disputes, renders four states of former Sudan unstable. In the Unity state (South Sudan), a border state, there are reports of oil revenue misuse. This is exacerbated by the lack of border demarcation lines, which also adds to the instability.¹⁸ In the North, government forces and rebel groups clashed in Abyei, Bleu Nile state and Southern Kordofan, causing hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. It was said that these states would hold a referendum to decide on self-rule, these referenda were systematically postponed. Ethiopian leader Zenawi, with support from the AU, is mediating between the NCP and the SPLM-N, but has so far failed to bring both parties to the table. Moreover, the International Crisis Group is afraid that the conflict in Darfur will re-emerge after the return of a prominent rebel leader from the Justice and Equality Movement to the region. In the meantime, relations between the North and the South are deteriorating with both sides accusing each other of supporting insurgency.¹⁹ After the 9th of July, UNMIS and international aid organisations left South Kordofan after severe human rights abuses were reported by the UNMIS on the 5th of June.²⁰ Also in the Southern states, interethnic clashes have occurred over cattle.²¹ Moreover, one of the greatest challenges for peace-building in the region will be the removal of the 720.000 (whole of Sudan) small arms in hands of civilians. These weapons are more frequently used in cattle and land disputes, worsening the instability in the region.²²

Food supply could also create tensions, according to UN agencies. Due to the return of many northern refugees, internal security and heavy rainfall, the current food supply will not be sufficient. As in the wider region, the Horn of Africa, a famine crisis has broken out. South Sudan, as a landlocked country and one that is still dependent on the North for many supplies, also has many risk factors which could trigger a food crisis. Next to this, local food production is very low, food prices are susceptible to price hikes and South Sudan is a net importer of many food products.²³ Additionally, land acquisition deals between foreign investors and the government also raise controversy. It will be important to evaluate whether these land deals improve the food security of South Sudan or not, because as these foreign businesses start to produce crops primarily for export, as is the case with

¹⁸ International Crisis Group, *South Sudan: Compounding Instability in Unity State*, Africa Report No. 179, Nairobi/Brussels, International Crisis Group, October 2011.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, *Conflict Risk Alert: Stopping the Spread of Sudan's New Civil War*, Nairobi/Brussels, International Crisis Group, September 2011.

²⁰ "Sudan's unfinished business: fighting in Southern Kordofan", *The Guardian*, 25 August 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/aug/25/sudan-unfinished-business-southern-kordofan>.

²¹ "Breaking the cycle of violence in Sudan", *The Guardian*, 3 September 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/03/south-sudan-violence>.

²² M. Kahl, "The Challenge of Managing State-owned Small Arms and Light Weapons in South Sudan", *BICC Feature*, Bonn International Center for Conversions, Bonn, vol. 1, October 2011.

²³ "South Sudan facing severe food shortages, UN agencies warn", *The Guardian*, 29 September 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2011/sep/29/south-sudan-facing-food-shortages>.

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foreign investors in Ethiopia, the country will become more vulnerable to famine.²⁴

China's Policy in South Sudan

Its early entrance in the circle of South-Sudanese leaders (infra) allowed Beijing to establish diplomatic relations swiftly once the country became independent on the 9th of July 2011. The same day Beijing opened its Embassy in Juba.²⁵ In its public statements, China follows the same model of cooperation as it does for other African countries, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, while offering economic cooperation in the form of package deals. The ambassador vows to cooperate in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, energy and communications. Next to this, Beijing commits to engage for stability in the region and will work towards good North-South relations.²⁶ Recently China declared that it is prepared to mediate on fundamental questions between both countries.²⁷ These questions focus principally on oil processing. The bulk of the oil fields is now located in the South Sudan, however, the country still needs northern infrastructure to export and process oil products. For both governments, oil proceeds are the most important source of revenue. Both governments are negotiating on the costs of the use of northern infrastructure and the North would like to impose customs duties on the South.²⁸

Alongside mediating over these questions, Beijing has already reinforced its influence in the South Sudanese oil sector with the CNPC establishing a branch in Juba. Some Southerners complain about the negative environmental impact of the refineries. Taking this into account will reduce hostility towards oil companies. Furthermore, China will allegedly negotiate the construction of a pipeline from South Sudan to the Kenyan port of Lamu. This would have a serious impact on the revenue shift, about 80% going from North to South and consequently on the peace and oil distribution arrangement.²⁹

EU's policy in South Sudan

The EU should step up its diplomatic engagement, which were rather limited in the time before independence. The EU decided to engage in South Sudan

²⁴ G. Brunswijck, "Land Acquisition in Ethiopia: Food for thought", *EADI Conference Paper*, EADI Conference, York, September 2011.

²⁵ Z. Zhang, "Le Sud-Soudan: pays le plus jeune d'Afrique", *Beijing info*, 18 July 2011, retrieved 5 October 2011, http://french.beijingreview.com.cn/alaune/txt/2011-07/18/content_377341.htm.

²⁶ Ambassador of China in South Sudan Li Zhiguo, *Sino-South Sudan Relation Opens a New Chapter, Bilateral Cooperation Benefits the Two Peoples*, Juba, Chinese Embassy in South Sudan, 30 September 2011.

²⁷ L. Cardoso, "Afrique de l'Est: Processus de paix: La Chine prête à la médiation entre le Soudan et Sud Soudan", *allAfrica.com*, 11 August 2011, retrieved 5 October 2011, <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201108110288.html>.

²⁸ R. Abbas, "SOUDAN: La Chine pourrait huiler le processus de paix", *IPS Agence de Presse*, 4 October 2011, Retrieved 5 October 2011, http://www.ipsinternational.org/fr/_note.asp?idnews=6717.

²⁹ D. Hardenberg, "China: A Force for peace in Sudan?", *Al Jazeera*, 11 January 2011, Retrieved 5 October 2011, <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/20111910357773378.html>.

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by providing €200 million in aid to meet the development challenges, where 90% of the population earns less than a dollar a day.³⁰ Development assistance is mentioned as a priority area for the EU.³¹ The aid will be allocated along the usual priority areas for the EU: education, health, agriculture, food security and democratic governance. The specific funding actions will be based on the 2011-2013 Development Plan, which is to be published by the government of South Sudan. However, it remains to be seen how the programmes will be handled as the nascent South Sudan boasts leaders from a military background and reports of nepotism are widespread.³² Nevertheless, an official visit of commissioner Piebalgs to both Sudans demonstrated that the EU is willing to engage with both sides.³³

As mentioned above, Khartoum's refusal to ratify the 10th EDF also has an impact on the South. The South is expected to sign up autonomously to the Cotonou Agreement, however, analysts expect that the process will take at least one year. In light of this, the current pledge of the EU should be considered as a temporary concession.³⁴ Nevertheless, humanitarian aid has a separate funding line and €131 million is allocated to the whole of Sudan, making it the largest beneficiary.³⁵

So far the EU does not yet have a delegation on the ground.³⁶ The UK Parliament Commission called the EU to get a delegation in place as soon as possible and to act faster. The EU should tackle the current issues, such as the oil revenue question and border demarcation, in concert with the international community. Furthermore, it should find creative ways to continue its development assistance (for both North and South) and help the Southern government ameliorate the aid absorption capacity.³⁷ In addition, trade relations are not yet formalised through the Everything But Arms initiative, the EU has agreed to allow South Sudan to access the process "as soon as conditions are met."³⁸

³⁰M. Manrique, "South Sudan: A new chapter begins", *EurActiv*, 15 July 2011. Retrieved 5 October 2011, <http://www.euractiv.com/global-europe/south-sudan-new-chapter-begins-analysis-506600>.

³¹ European External Action Service, *EU Relations with the Republic of South Sudan*, Brussels, European Union, 2011, retrieved 5 October 2011, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/south_sudan/index_en.htm.

³² "South Sudan : EU to provide € 200 million to support a sustainable and peaceful creation of the new state", *Europafrica.net*, 23 May 2011. Retrieved 7 October 2011, <http://europafrica.net/2011/05/23/south-sudan-eu-to-provide-e200-million-to-support-a-sustainable-and-peaceful-creation-of-the-new-state/>

And Aprovev, op. cit., p. 15.

³³ *Europafrica.net*, loc. cit.

³⁴ "EU seeks to unblock funding for South Sudan", *Europeanvoice*, 17 February 2011. Retrieved 7 October 2011, <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/eu-seeks-to-unblock-funding-for-south-sudan/70277.aspx>

³⁵ *Europafrica*, loc. cit.

³⁶ EEAS, loc. cit.

³⁷ Parliament of the United Kingdom, *South Sudan: EU must act to stop Africa's newest nation becoming its next failed State say Lords*, London, UK Parliament, 22 June 2011.

³⁸ EEAS, loc. cit.

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There is still room for more cooperation between China and the West, and especially between China and the EU on these issues, given the interest both actors have in stabilising the region and notwithstanding the fact that their approaches to the region are currently very different. Indeed, China and the West had a different analysis of the Darfur question. Whereas the EU pointed to Khartoum's effort to secure oil supplies in the region and its support for the Janjaweed militias who committed crimes against humanity, China's view was that it was an ethnic conflict over scarce resources, which was exacerbated by environmental degradation and the lack of community dispute settlement mechanisms.³⁹ Clearly both arguments touch upon different aspects of the intricate conflict, and if they were to address these aspects together, the EU and China could improve cooperation over peace-building strategies. However, security issues are not a priority area in the principally economically oriented partnership between the EU and China.

It appears that the EU and China have comparative advantages. Both actors would benefit from a stable environment: China would be able to safeguard its current investment, while the EU could increase activities on the Sudanese market. Moreover, if such stability was realised, both would be regarded as actors promoting peace. Nevertheless, China and the EU should prevent their companies from merely extracting resources without contributing to local development.

China has been acting a lot faster than the EU in South Sudan because of its stronger local influence, diplomatic presence and economic clout. Over the years, China has acquired a central position in Sudan due to its good relations with both the North and South. While China is a unitary actor, the EU did not appear as a single security actor during the Darfur crisis. It will be difficult for the EU to harmonise European views on the current crisis in Sudan as well as to integrate the Chinese point of view in policy responses. Additionally, the EU-procedures for establishing trade and development relations are more complex than the Chinese package deals. These procedures are especially cumbersome for South Sudan which has a very nascent institutional structure. Furthermore, China's pragmatic stance and years of engagement with both sides has allowed it to gain a considerably greater influence in the region than the EU.

For both Sudans, it will be important to address the current security challenges with the support of the international community. The international community should actively re-engage with Sudan and South Sudan because the current situation, with four states submerged in violence, sabotages the peace agreement and economic progress for the countries. Equally, the development challenges will have to be addressed in concert. International partners should find ways to support South Sudan by establishing a sustainable framework for energy cooperation, which would substantially benefit the local population. Oil has spurred economic growth figures, but this has not reduced poverty as human development indices of Sudan remain amongst the lowest in the world. Furthermore, the international community

39 Zhang, *op. cit.*, p. 57.



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should effectively improve corporate responsibility for companies investing in the region. Otherwise, South Sudan might become a fragile state suffering from the “resource curse”, where conflict over resources would be the modus vivendi.



THE EU ARMS EMBARGO AND THE RISE OF CHINA

Kevin Blachford*

Since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has remained the sole global superpower on the international scene. However, two contemporary developments look set to challenge the American preponderance of the international system: the rise of China, and the financial turmoil to world markets since 2008. The effects on the international system of these developments are yet to be seen, but it seems increasingly likely that the unipolar episode for the US since the end of the Cold War may be coming to a close.¹ The EU, which has been firmly wedded to an American-led global order, will also increasingly find itself having to cope with challenges to the current Western-dominated international system.² As China grows in influence and stature, it may be in a position to challenge this status quo. China may also be able to use its growing influence to challenge policies that hinder its recognition as an equal to Western powers. With growing economic influence, China will want equality of status as a major power. This may lead China to challenge Western policies such as the EU arms embargo, which has been in place since 1989. This paper therefore seeks to analyse how the growing power of China may influence the international system and challenge the EU over important political issues such as the arms embargo.

The Rise of China and the Arms Embargo

The EU has often been reliant on US leadership but America may in the future be challenged over global issues by the growing power of China.³ Along with economic uncertainty, the rise of China is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. However, this does not necessarily imply that conflict and confrontation are inevitable; indeed, the EU has the opportunity through its ability as an actor to use soft power to improve relations with China and help China integrate rather than challenge the current international system. The EU is China's largest trading partner, but the EU has been reluctant to cooperate fully with China due to China's human rights record.⁴ Nevertheless, as a result of the complications arising from the 2008 financial crisis, the EU

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¹ G. Rachman, "Think again: American decline", *Foreign Policy*, 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/02/think_again_american_decline.

² See Fareed Zakaria on his argument that the BRICS may challenge US domination: F. Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2008, 1st edn.

³ R. L. Schweller & X. Pu, "After unipolarity: China's visions of international order in an era of U.S. decline", *International security*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2011, pp. 41-72

⁴ European Parliament, *Human rights remain key to EU-China trade relations*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2008, retrieved 2 October 2011, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20081204STO43793+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

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may not be able to afford committing to an idealistic foreign policy in dealing with China while struggling with its own sovereign debt crisis.

The EU has, along with the US, enforced an arms embargo on China since 1989 in response to the crackdown by Chinese authorities of the Tiananmen Square protests. Twenty years later, the arms embargo is still in place and there is no sign of it being lifted in the near future, despite recent support to lifting the ban from Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.⁵ Because of the EU's reliance on American leadership, it is likely to continue following the American position on this issue and keep the embargo in place. However, with the European sovereign debt crisis growing worse, it is difficult to see how long the EU can keep the embargo in place when the Chinese ability to finance European debt could be the key to European financial difficulties. What remains unclear is the extent to which China's growing financial power will provide political leverage on issues such as the arms embargo.⁶

Despite China's rise, the EU has been reluctant to relax trade restrictions without any sign of commitment by China to improve its human rights record. The arms embargo is a contentious issue in the EU's relations with China, but it is an issue that is unlikely to be resolved in the near future as a result of American reluctance to see China's military power grow.⁷ The EU is developing closer integration in many areas; however, on security matters, EU Member States are still firmly dependent on both US leadership and American hard power.⁸ Despite the EU's desire to improve relations with China, it remains very dependent on its American ally and collective action problems hinder the ability of European Member States to speak with one voice. Whilst the US was able to become a superpower due to the destruction of European and Asian economies during the Second World War, China is not going to rise in a similar vacuum, as a well-established global system based on American leadership already exists. China is not in a position to challenge the Western-led global order and is unlikely to be able to do so in the near future. The Chinese foreign policy rhetoric is based on the idea of a "peaceful rise"⁹ which shows its reluctance to be seen as a revisionist power and China's dependence on a US-dominated international system. Yet, the West has portrayed China's rise as a threat, with many realist academics and policy makers suspicious that China's rise will inevitably lead to conflict or even an

⁵ A. Retman, "Ashton Pragmatic on China in EU Foreign Policy Blueprint", *EU observer*, December 2010, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://euobserver.com/884/31538>.

⁶ B. Hatton, "China charms Europe, but Beijing has own agenda", *Associated press*, 18 September 2011, retrieved 9 October 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/china-charms-europe-beijing-own-agenda-063837797.html>.

⁷ The American realist Stephen Walt regularly comments on the prospects of conflict and balancing behaviour in East Asia. See S. Walt, "What I'm telling the South Koreans", *Foreign Policy*, 5 October 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/10/05/what_im_telling_the_south_koreans.

⁸ Recent military intervention in Libya showed how reliant European members of NATO are on American leadership and power. See: D. Brunnstrom, "NATO says must address weaknesses exposed by Libya", *Reuters*, 5 September 2011, retrieved 6 October 2011, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/09/05/uk-libya-nato-rasmussen-idUKTRE7842RP20110905>.

⁹ J. Yue, "Peaceful Rise of China: Myth or Reality?", *International Politics*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2008, pp. 439-456.

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attempt by China to challenge the whole international system.¹⁰ Fearing increased competition from rising powers, America has also become increasingly reluctant to share its most advanced military technology with other nations and with China in particular.¹¹

Great Power Status?

Since the end of the Cold War, arms embargoes have been used as a tool as they 'are perceived as an efficient means of coercion compared to other forms of economic sanctions'.¹² China, however, is fiercely protective of its sovereignty and Western lectures on human rights are undoubtedly perceived as hypocritical and patronising.¹³ On his 2011 visit to the UK, Wen Jiabao, Premier of the PRC, responded to a journalist's questions on human rights with the following words: 'You have let me down, you have let yourself down, and worst of all, you have let the Chinese people down'.¹⁴ While Wen Jiabao's response demonstrates that China desires to be treated as an equal, lectures on human rights and the arms embargo show that the West has not embraced the rise of China and feelings of mistrust and uncertainty remain. The EU is China's largest trading partner and, with closer ties to China, a necessity for the EU in a time of economic hardship, European leaders need to decide what kind of relationship to build with China. In 2005, the EU came close to lifting the embargo with support from France and Germany. It was hoped that lifting the embargo would improve relations; nevertheless, under American pressure, the embargo was kept in place and no further action was taken.¹⁵ For China, the arms embargo is a matter of status, lifting the embargo would prove China's equality on the world stage and its recognition as a great power.¹⁶ For the EU, the arms embargo represents Western mistrust over China's intentions and a warning for China to improve its human rights record.

The post-Cold War order has left the regional structure of East Asia with China as the dominant power of mainland East Asia, but with the US as the dominant power of maritime East Asia. Realists in America often see the rise of China as a challenge to US global hegemony and a popular realist belief is

¹⁰ J. Traub, "Over the horizon: is worrying about war with China a self-fulfilling prophecy?", *Foreign Policy*, 2 September 2011, retrieved 7 October 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/09/02/over_the_horizon?page=0,1.

¹¹ The US defence industry is often reluctant to share sophisticated military technology as seen with the F-22 jet fighter, which is banned by federal law for exports. However many nations are also increasingly dependent on the US defence industry. See S. G. Neuman. "Power, Influence and Hierarchy: Defence and Industries in a Unipolar World", *Defence and Peace Economics*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2010, pp. 106-107.

¹² M. Moore, "Arming the Embargoed: a Supply-Side Understanding of Arms Embargo Violations", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2010, p. 595.

¹³ Henry Kissinger once stated, "any attempt to prescribe its [China's] institutions and domestic practices would cause deep resentment" see H. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, 1st edn., p. 830.

¹⁴ S. Hoggart, "Wen Jiabao: More Giant Pandas but no Pandering to the Press", *The Guardian*, 27 June 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jun/27/wen-jiabao-china-giant-pandas>.

¹⁵ T. Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy", *The Pacific Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2008, p.89.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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that 'China should be contained, its economic development slowed, and the concomitant decline in the position of the US should be delayed for as long as possible'.¹⁷ But China is not an ideological aggressive, garrison state like the Soviet Union. Chinese nationalism cannot be compared to an aggressive ideology like Soviet communism and China lacks a universal ideology, which supportive states can coalesce.¹⁸ Containment and seeking to delay accepting China's place in the world is a flawed strategy. The EU arms embargo may be centred, to some extent, on human rights violations, but it is also a politically symbolic message that the West does not trust China and that China will be a source of conflict. China is perhaps the most self-conscious rising power in history¹⁹ and Chinese leaders are well aware of history and the fate of previous rising powers. They are especially sensitive to the "potentially catastrophic political consequences of attempting to maximize the international military clout at the expense of domestic development."²⁰ China, however, is not currently in a position to be a military power, even at a regional level, due to its exceptionally weak military.

China's Demand on Technology

At a time of financial hardship, lifting the EU arms embargo on China may appear to be a lucrative opportunity to improve relations. The pace of China's economic rise means that China will sooner or later be able to develop its own sophisticated technology. Even the UK's Ministry of Defence recognises that many future technological innovations that can be used by the military will originate in the commercial sector.²¹ A highly developed Chinese economy will help produce its own military technology with or without the EU arms embargo. America and the EU cannot expect China to develop its infrastructure to a high technological standard whilst the country still relies on Soviet era military technology.²²

The Chinese are seeking to modernise in all areas of technology and infrastructure, civilian and military. Lifting the EU arms embargo is important to China. As the world's second largest economy, China's military is currently woefully inadequate. The majority of China's existing military equipment was produced by the Soviet Union in the 1970s. What remains tends to be even more outdated. In "2005, 25 per cent of its fighters were MIG 19s, which the Soviets removed from first line service back in 1965."²³ . Fears that China's

¹⁷ M. Beeson, "Hegemonic Transition in East Asia? The Dynamics of Chinese and American Power", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, p. 95.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁹ For more on how China is well aware of the implications of its rise, see M. Leonard, *What does China think?*, New York, Public Affairs, 2008, 2nd edn.

²⁰ J. Yang, "China in the South Pacific: Hegemon on the Horizon?", *Pacific Review*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2009, p. 143.

²¹ S. G. Neuman, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

²² It seems China is also relaxing pressure on the embargo issue and is seeking other high tech imports instead which may also benefit its own defence industry. See A. Rettman, "EU to Keep China Arms Embargo Despite Massive Investments", *EU Observer*, 5 January 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://euobserver.com/884/31592>.

²³ J. Baylis et al., *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 2nd edn., p. 266.

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deployment of a new aircraft carrier would disrupt the balance of power in East Asia appear to be premature. The carrier, purchased from the Ukraine in 1998, is unsuitable for heavier planes due to its short "ski jump" ramp. Without the skills and organizational experience necessary for a naval task force, China is also unlikely to be able to form a carrier battle group, particularly with just one carrier that will be subject to maintenance several months of the year.²⁴ China's rise is inevitable and the growth of its economy has been unprecedented in history, yet the Chinese military is still decades behind the US. Increasingly, the Chinese are likely to pressure the EU to lift the arms embargo so it can modernise its military equipment.

China is dependent on foreign trade for its economic modernisation as much of its sophisticated technology is often imported.²⁵ Yet, China's growth is unprecedented in history, which implies that, sooner rather than later, China will have somewhat reduced its dependency on imports. With recent IMF predictions that China will overtake the American economy as early as 2016,²⁶ it is possible that China will be able to develop its own sophisticated technology.

Conclusion

The financial crisis of 2008 has exposed many underlying problems of Western economies. The EU is bearing the brunt of the crisis and China has shown its support in the aftermath of the crisis by buying government bonds from struggling economies such as Spain and Portugal.²⁷ Wen Jiabao has declared, "China is a long-term investor in Europe's sovereign debt market,"²⁸ which is welcoming news to many struggling European markets and financial institutions. However, with the continued market volatility seen this summer,²⁹ it is not implausible that China may have to step up once again to buy European debt in order to support one of its largest markets. If Europe continues to struggle financially, it is possible that China may use its holdings of European sovereign debt as leverage for political concessions. Although there are no signs of the EU arms embargo being on the current agenda, it is a possibility that China may exert pressure on the EU to lift the embargo. Richard Ned Lebow in his recent work *A Cultural Theory of International*

²⁴ A. M. Denmark, A. S. Erickson, & G. Collins, "Should We Be Afraid of China's New Aircraft Carrier?", *Foreign Policy*, 27 June 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/27/should_we_be_afraid_of_chinas_new_aircraft_carrier?page=0,0.

²⁵ J. Yue, op. cit., pp. 443-444

²⁶ B. Arends, "IMF Bombshell: Age of America Nears End" *Marketwatch*, 25 April 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/imf-bombshell-age-of-america-about-to-end-2011-04-25>.

²⁷ E. Moya, "Positive China Buys Spanish Bonds", *The Guardian*, 12 January 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/jan/12/supportive-china-buys-european-bonds>.

²⁸ A. Cave, "Eurozone Relief as China Pledges Debt Bailout", *The Telegraph*, 25 June 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/8599119/Eurozone-relief-as-China-pledges-debt-bailout.html>.

²⁹ "World Bank Chief Zoellick Says Markets in Danger Zone", *BBC News Online*, 14 August 2011, retrieved 18 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-14522634>.



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Relations (2010) has convincingly argued the importance of status and prestige as a motivation for states in international relations. Status is one of the primary motivations for any nation, and especially for China. Henry Kissinger who, along with Richard Nixon, helped America open diplomatic relations with China, argues that equality of status and “a fierce insistence on not bowing to foreign prescription is for Chinese leaders not a tactic but a moral imperative”.³⁰ Therefore, it seems increasingly likely that the EU will be faced with a China seeking total equality with Western powers, especially with regards to the EU arms embargo. If the EU continues to be indebted to China, the time may come when China chooses to use its financial clout for political leverage.

³⁰ H. Kissinger, op. cit., p. 831.



BOOK REVIEW

**Attila Marjan, *The Middle of The Map: Geopolitics of Perceptions*, London:
John Harper Publishing, 2011, 197pp.**

Wei Shen*

While the 19th century was frequently called the British Century, and the 20th the American Century, popular wisdom has it that the 21st century in which we are all living is poised to be the Chinese Century, during which China is predicted to overtake the United States as the world's largest economic, political and even military power. Although we still have almost ninety years to go before we can assess the truthfulness of this prophecy, it is incontestable that the first decade of this still very young century has been marked by China's rising influence on the global economy as well as China's increasing assertiveness in international affairs. China's rise has significant implications for the reconfiguration of the world's great powers, and it is often proffered that it will bring an end to the United States' unipolar status, whilst at the same time weakening the European Union's (EU) influence.

While new and old global actors are busy trying to adapt to their newly acquired or modified roles in the world, how do citizens in the aforementioned countries view their new identities and those of the "others"? This is the central question that is addressed in the recently published book *The Middle of The Map: Geopolitics of Perceptions* (John Harper Publishing 2011) by Attila Marjan. A scholar with extensive experience of both sides of the Atlantic, Professor Marjan has interviewed a series of key players in the fields of politics, business and academia, posing questions on the issue of mutual perception patterns. The book is divided into two parts. In the first part of the book, Marjan tries to illustrate and understand how the EU, the US and China, the three key players in the 21st century, view their own identities and how they perceive each other in the global order. Already in his earlier work, *Europe's Destiny: The Old Lady and the Bull* (Woodrow Wilson Centre Press 2010), Marjan took a rather pessimistic view on the future of the EU, referring to it as "an old and fragile lady" which is challenged by the globalisation process and other rising powers. He firmly rejected the idea of "an European identity" and claimed that Europeans "are becoming more and more American without even having become truly European."

According to Marjan's new book, the average European opinion of the US is "not flattering" and the general attitude towards China is even worse. By illustrating some of the European stereotypes of America and the Americans, Marjan explains and compares the differences in cultures, societies and politics that exist between Western allies. Marjan further claims that while China's economic numbers and growth figures dazzle Europeans, there is an even greater cultural gap between the Europeans and the Chinese.

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China's rise is noticeable not only in the economic sphere but also in global politics in Europe. In observing how Americans view Europe, Marjan is right to point out that it is impossible to generalise and come up with an "American" perception of Europe, as American views on Europe vary substantially depending on social class, education and work. Marjan states that despite some apparent transatlantic differences, there is a positive "brotherhood" feeling among US intellectuals when they are asked about their European counterparts. However, while Europe's economic power is recognised in America, its weight in international political affairs is considered more limited. Marjan also suggests that many Americans believe in China's eventual rise, which will pose challenges to the US's economy and military capability. China's views of Europe, according to Marjan, "have never been unambiguous and crystal-clear." These mixed feelings apparently spring from bitter colonial experiences after the Opium War, as well as a lacking knowledge of Europe more generally. Marjan also claims in his book that China is increasingly assertive and confident in handling global affairs and that national self-esteem was boosted by the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. At the same time, he points out that China is unsure about its new status and uneasy about how to behave as a global superpower.

The second part of Marjan's book studies the trilateral relations between Europe, the US and China on the global level. As Europe and America decline, while Asia, led by China's growth, rises, Marjan affirms that Europe and America should complement each other in economic, military, diplomatic and cultural powers, to form a "EU-USA geopolitical partnership" to maintain their influence on the changing global order.

Marjan published this book at a time when the world is battling with the eurozone debt crisis and economies on both sides of the Atlantic are declining. He is right to highlight the importance of perceptions and self-perceptions among opinion-leaders in current global powers. Cultural gaps – and even stereotype and prejudice – do have an influence on shaping geopolitics in times of great uncertainty. His book, however, has some serious flaws that cannot be ignored. Though Marjan makes it clear that his book is "intentionally subjective", the limited scope of the interviews he conducted turn this publication in a collection of ad-hoc personal anecdotes rather than a piece of structured scholarly research that produces substantial new findings. Furthermore, the announced triangular discussion of the geopolitics of perceptions is not balanced, as Marjan's books focuses predominantly on the EU and transatlantic relations/differences, while perceptions of and by China – which could potentially be very interesting – are only briefly discussed, in a rather simplified manner. Finally, while Marjan's intention to keep the book light in style is legitimate and even appreciated by the reader, his overuse of personifications and metaphors turns out to be counterproductive. Though figurative language is a useful tool to engage readers into discussions, Marjan's repetitive use of such language, on the contrary, reduces its efficiency.

Attila Marjan's *The Middle of The Map* provides a lively and enjoyable account of what elites on both sides of the Atlantic think of their region's role and identity in a new world order. It makes an entertaining contribution to the



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study of contemporary transatlantic relations. On the other hand, it falls short of its own objectives: if the days of the G7/G8 are definitely over, why should the focus on a hypothetical "G3" help to better understand the new multipolar world we are living in? As a scholarly work, it is also somewhat unsatisfying in methodological and stylistic terms. At the same time, it raises interesting questions for further research: the author is right to claim that mutual perception patterns and evolving collective identities are indeed an important field of research, and his book illustrates well the limits of relying on opinion polls or elite interviews when it comes to fully understanding the complexity of such identity dynamics.



CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference: “The EU and China – Partners for a Green World”

19-20 April 2012, Brussels, Belgium

Identifying opportunities for, and hurdles to, EU-China cooperation over attempts to make the world economy greener is the topic of the upcoming international conference organised jointly by the College of Europe and the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation. By bringing together researchers, policy-makers and business operators, the conference aims to facilitate the formation of policy and business partnerships between China and the EU. The sectors concerned include agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and urbanisation and mobility, and horizontal issues such as trade, technology transfers and the role of civil society will be addressed.

The necessity for close collaboration between these two global players stems from their combined economic weight and their benchmarking roles in addressing the issues of climate change and resource scarcity. Demand for global resources is indeed increasing, as demand levels in emerging economies are starting to converge with those of advanced economies. The world is therefore confronted with faster resource exhaustion and climate change, which translate into price rises, increasing economic rivalries and political tensions, as well as ecological damage. Combined, this has a profound effect upon vulnerable countries, located primarily in Africa and in Asia.

As two dominant global players, China and the EU have a decisive role to play in the shaping of a new global pattern of production and consumption based on three pillars: resource and energy efficiency, renewable energies and consumption moderation. Multilateral negotiations concerning the assessment of potential risks, the magnitude of efforts and their timing, the apportionment of responsibilities among players and concerning the types of mechanisms continue. Meanwhile, the EU and China have to do their own homework, exploiting to the full their respective economic systems (the EU 2020 Strategy and the 12th Five Year Plan). But they would also gain by working together: exchanging experiences and building partnerships would indeed lead to better results at home and at the global level. This is the rationale for the planned conference.

This high-level conference will be organised in collaboration with our distinguished Chinese partners and will take place on **19-20 April 2012** in Brussels. The conference intends to attract policy-makers, representatives of businesses and enterprises, local actors, think tanks, scholars and civil society to exchange positions, discuss policy proposals and develop areas for further research and cooperation. A policy dialogue exploring the state of play of negotiations, the achievements, the hurdles and the perspectives for further cooperation will be followed by six panels. Additionally, the Conference aims at establishing a long-term network, with the

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purpose of maintaining a biannual active platform for bilateral exchange and communication. The topics of the six panels include:

- Public diplomacy and civil society dialogue in relation to “green economy”, environment protection and climate change;
- Trade and IPR in relation to the “green economy”;
- Green urbanisation;
- Green manufacturing;
- Renewable and nuclear energy;
- Green agriculture.

Papers are called to cover the following issues on the six above mentioned panels:

- The current situation in China/the EU;
- Differences between the EU and China in their policy/approaches/positions in the field;
- The existing problems; what needs to be done to solve the problems;
- The advantages and disadvantages the EU/China has in coping with the problems in the field;
- Cooperation developed between the EU and China in the field, lessons and experience to be learnt;
- Prospect for the future.

Please submit paper proposals of approximately 500 words along with a brief CV to both Professor Jing Men (jing.men@coleurope.eu) and Mr Gino Brunswijck (gino.brunswijck@coleurope.eu) no later than 11 December 2011. All proposals will be reviewed and the organisers will confirm acceptance by 6 January 2011. Participants are expected to provide complete copies of their papers, which should be around 7,000 words, in electronic form by 15 March 2012.