

Conference

The EU, Japan and a Fraying International Order

22 - 23 March 2021

Hybrid (Sala Europa, Villa Schifanoia) and Online

Scientific Organisers:

Prof. Ken Endo | Hokkaido University and European University Institute

Dr. Giulio Pugliese | University of Oxford and European University Institute

Introduction

The rise of China has fuelled the hopes and kindled the insecurities of many of its neighbours and counterparts, across the Eurasian landmass. At the same time, China's regional assertiveness, the challenge posed by distorted market practices and the sirens of *dirigisme*, global political involution, and the advent of a more isolationist, if not outright disruptive and protectionist, United States posture have translated into repeated –both exogenous and endogenous– blows to the international liberal order. Japan and the European Union's responses to such dire international challenges offer a unique window into the complex interplay and links among economic, political, and security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region, with important implications for European actors.

In the face of these challenges, we intend to hold an event that raises awareness of contemporary Japanese and East Asian security, political and economic dynamics, while exploring avenues for cooperation between Japan and the EU, as well as Japan and NATO. Both partnerships ought to be considered only natural, considering our shared values, and our common stakes in an international liberal order, premised on multilateralism and an open world economy. Yet, the NATO-Japan relationship and the recent EU-Japan Strategic and Economic Partnership Agreements brim with untapped potential for more fruitful cooperation in defence of the global commons.

The conference at the European University Institute's Robert Schuman Centre, where an EU-Asia Project has been inaugurated in January 2021, will explore the EU and Japan's international relations in an age of great power competition, especially their position amidst US-China rivalry and the engagement with economic statecraft and strategic communications. This conference and the EU-Asia Project will position the EUI as a European hub for research on contemporary Asian politics and economics. The event - focused on EU-Asia geo-economics and (dis)information challenges - will include relevant Europe & Asia experts from our network, and members of the EUI academic community.

The Aim of the Conference

First and foremost, we are concerned with the European Union and Japanese government's response to China's rise and the implications of US relative decline. The initial panels will explore Japan and European players', expanding strategic horizons under the rubric of Indo-Pacific strategic visions, their respective understanding of the composite nature of the China challenge, the advent of the US-China strategic confrontation, and the implications of these trends for Japan-EU and Japan-NATO cooperation.

Secondly, and within the above-mentioned framework, we intend to explore the growing relevance of propaganda and disinformation to understand contemporary politics. We intend to explore the significance of China and the United States and its counterparts' embrace of strategic communications, which is defined as state-led "use of words, actions, images, or symbols to influence the attitudes and opinions of target audiences to shape their behaviour in order to advance interests or policies, or to achieve objectives. For the military [...] it includes creating conditions that define a desired end-state." The fight against COVID-19 and its aftermath will pose the most pressing economic challenges faced by Western European nations since the Second World War. In fact, the coronavirus crisis coincides with momentous change in world politics and accelerates the decline of the liberal international order. Given the urgency of US-China strategic competition and preliminary evidence of China and the United States' engagement in a battle for European hearts and minds, we intend to analyse the role of government-led information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, we will look at how European and Japanese governments can redouble their efforts at economic statecraft, the use of economic and tech policy to advance security and diplomatic goals. After all, China's technological ascendance and US-China strategic competition has led to increased uncertainty in the global economy and as a result Tokyo is seeking to adjust to the new and more difficult environment. The Japanese government added an Economic Team within its National Security Secretariat and aside from infrastructure competition, securitised aid, strategic free trade agreements, Tokyo is inaugurating tighter investment screening, and more seriously considered trade embargoes, wider export controls, and technological protection, mostly with China in mind. These initiatives work in lockstep with similar ones in the United States, Europe, Israel and the like. And some governments are scrambling to readjust their economies' supply chains, to avoid asymmetric economic dependencies, and to reposition in the global race to technological edge in the Internet of Things, robot technology, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum technology and the like. How can European and likeminded Asian players rise up to the challenge of 21st century geo-economics, while avoiding the pitfalls of full-blown protectionism? This topic will be explored also through a close analysis of the EU and Japan's attempts at WTO reform, and level playing field vis-à-vis distorted market practices.

[1] James P. Farwell, *Persuasion and Power: The Art of Strategic Communication*, Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012.

N.B. All times listed in this programme are CET.

Programme

22 March

Introductory morning session on the EU, NATO, and the Indo-Pacific

Post-COVID-19 'Challenges and Opportunities' with mostly practitioners and academics - big picture analysis from a wide range of voices

9.00 - 9.30

Welcome Address and Keynote Speakers

Prof. Brigid Laffan | Director of the Robert Schuman Centre, European University Institute

Dr. Enrico Letta | Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po in Paris and former Prime Minister of Italy

Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi | Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Mr. Kazuyoshi Umemoto | President of the Japan Foundation

9.30 - 9.45

Break

Europe Faces Asia; Asia Faces Europe

9.45 - 11.30

Avenues for European engagement in Asia and EU-Japan Cooperation, as discussed by key players.

Chair: **Prof. Ken Endo** | Hokkaido University and European University Institute

Global Norms and Global Standards: 'The Brussels Effect Goes Asia'

Dr. Nathalie Tocci | Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali

The Connectivity Agenda

MEP Reinhard Bütikofer | European Parliament

Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific, the Belt and Road Initiative, and JICA's Initiatives Against COVID-19

Prof. Shinichi Kitaoka | President, Japan International Cooperation Agency

The Italian and EU engagement with the Indo-Pacific: Avenues for Cooperation with Japan

Dr. Anna Costa | Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

11.30 - 12.00

Break

Afternoon session on the nature of US-China competition and its impact on EU-Asia relations

Questions on major trends, following the COVID-19 pandemic, a new US presidency, a major economic downturn and US-China competition. What is Japan and the EU's stance amidst US-China competition? What role can middle powers across the Indo-Pacific play?

Panel 1 - Setting the Political and Values-Based Landscape: The Prospects of EU-Japan, Transatlantic and Trilateral Coordination towards Asia

12.00 - 13.30 Chair: **Dr. Giulio Pugliese** | University of Oxford and European University Institute

Building Blocks for an EU Indo-Pacific Strategy: The French, German and Dutch Concepts in Comparison

Dr. Gudrun Wacker | Asia Senior Fellow, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

The Biden Administration and Transatlantic Economic Coordination Towards Asia

Dr. Andrew Small | Senior Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund

Japan-Europe-US Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific: From Trump to Biden

Prof. Michito Tsuruoka | Keio University

Discussant: **Dr. Eva Pejsova** | Senior Japan Fellow, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

13.30 - 13.45 Break

Panel 2 - Setting the Strategic Landscape: Taiwan, Europe, and Japan amidst US-China Strategic Competition

13.45 - 15.15 Chair: **Prof. Ken Endo** | Hokkaido University and European University Institute

Scenarios of Crisis in the Taiwan Strait

Dr. Mathieu Duchâtel | Director of the Asia Program at Institut Montaigne

Subject vs. Object: Europe in Sino-American Competition

Prof. Luis Simón | Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Japan Amidst US-China Rivalry

Mr. Hiroyuki Akita | Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Nikkei)

Discussant: **Ms. Céline Pajon** | Senior Research Fellow, Head of Japan Research, Center for Asian Studies, French Institute of International Relations; and Senior Fellow, Japan Program, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

23 March

This day will be devoted to more niche and topic-specific policy issues, and will already set the ground for leveraging EUI's expertise to solve problems, by building bridges with Japan and the Indo-Pacific.

Panel 1 - NATO, the EU, East Asia and Disinformation

8.30 - 10.00 Chair: **Prof. Ken Endo** | Hokkaido University and European University Institute

Significance of Strategic Communications and Disinformation in the early 21st Century

Prof. Neville Bolt | King's College London

The Strategic Communications of Techno-Democratic Statecraft: Lessons from Taiwan

Dr. Aurelio Insisa | Hong Kong University

Significance of Strategic Communications : Implications for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Initiative

Prof. Chiyuki Aoi | Tokyo University

Discussant: **Dr. Peter Busch** | King's College London

10.00 - 10.15 Break

Panel 2 - The Promise and Pitfalls of Connectivity: FOIP, BRI and EU-Asia Connectivity Initiatives

10.15 - 11.45 Chair: **Prof. Bernard Hoekman** | Director, Global Economics, European University Institute

EU-Japan Connectivity Promises

Prof. Marie Söderberg | European Institute of Japanese Studies and Chairperson of the European Japan Advanced Research Network (EJARN)

The BRI: Challenges and Opportunities for EU-Japan Cooperation

Prof. Shino Watanabe | Sophia University

Priorities for the Digital Connectivity Agenda

Dr. Akiko Fukushima | Senior Fellow, The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research

Discussant: **Dr. Maaike Okano-Heijmans** | Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute

11.45 - 12.00 Break

Panel 3 - Between Openness, Securitisation and Protectionism: EU-Asia Trade and Trade Practices

12.00 - 13.30 Chair: **Prof. Kazuto Suzuki** | Tokyo University

The EU-Japan-US Trilateral Initiative on Subsidies at the WTO

Prof. Douglas Nelson | Tulane University

Prof. Bernard Hoekman | European University Institute

Objectives of Trilateral Trade Agenda

Mr. Hosuk Lee-Makiyama | Director of the European Centre for International Political Economy

The EU, Japan and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Prof. Michael Plummer | Director, Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Europe, and Eni Professor of International Economics

Discussant: **Prof. Stephanie Rickard** | London School of Economics

13.30 - 13.45 Break

Panel 4 - Between Openness, Securitisation and Protectionism: Politics and Economic Security in Europe and Japan

13.45 - 15.15 Chair: **Dr. Giulio Pugliese** | Oxford University and European University Institute

The BRI in Southern and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU

Ms. Francesca Ghiretti | Research Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali

Confronting Chinese Assertiveness in Europe: The EU and Beijing's Inroads into Europe's Strategic Sectors

Dr. Hugo Meijer | CNRS Research Fellow at Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI)

Japan's Burgeoning Economic Security Strategy: Navigating Amidst the US-China Competition

Prof. Akira Igata | Executive Director, Center for Rule-making Strategy (CRS), Tama University

Discussant: **Dr. Liselotte Odgaard** | Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Speakers

Mr. Hiroyuki Akita	Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Nikkei)
Prof. Chiyuki Aoi	Tokyo University
Prof. Neville Bolt	King's College London
Dr. Peter Busch	King's College London
MEP Reinhard Bütikofer	European Parliament
Dr. Anna Costa	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Dr. Mathieu Duchâtel	Director of the Asia Program at Institut Montaigne
Prof. Ken Endo	Hokkaido University and European University Institute
Dr. Akiko Fukushima	Senior Fellow, The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research
Ms. Francesca Ghiretti	Research Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali
Prof. Bernard Hoekman	Director, Global Economics, European University Institute
Prof. Akira Igata	Executive Director, Center for Rule-making Strategy (CRS), Tama University
Dr. Aurelio Insisa	Hong Kong University
Prof. Shinichi Kitaoka	President, Japan International Cooperation Agency
Prof. Brigid Laffan	Director of the Robert Schuman Centre, European University Institute
Mr. Hosuk Lee-Makiyama	Director of the European Centre for International Political Economy
Prime Minister Enrico Letta	Former Prime Minister, Italy; Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po in Paris
Dr. Hugo Meijer	CNRS Research Fellow at Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI)
Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
Prof. Douglas Nelson	Tulane University
Dr. Liselotte Odgaard	Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute
Dr. Maaike Okano-Heijmans	Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute
Ms. Céline Pajon	Senior Research Fellow, Head of Japan Research, Center for Asian Studies, French Institute of International Relations; and Senior Fellow, Japan Program, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Dr. Eva Pejsova	Senior Japan Fellow, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Prof. Michael Plummer	Director, Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Europe, and Eni Professor of International Economics
Dr. Giulio Pugliese	University of Oxford and European University Institute
Prof. Stephanie Rickard	London School of Economics

Prof. Luis Simón	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Dr. Andrew Small	Senior Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund
Prof. Marie Söderberg	European Institute of Japanese Studies and Chairperson of the European Japan Advanced Research Network (EJARN)
Prof. Kazuto Suzuki	Tokyo University
Dr. Nathalie Tocci	Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali
Prof. Michito Tsuruoka	Keio University
Mr. Kazuyoshi Umemoto	President of the Japan Foundation
Dr. Gudrun Wacker	Asia Senior Fellow, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
Prof. Shino Watanabe	Sophia University