GLOBAL TRENDS TO 2030
SHAPING THE FUTURE IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD

The Future of Democracy and Governance
The Future of Economics, Society and Global Power

November 2018

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On behalf of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the 2018 Annual Conference, which convenes under the timely theme ‘Global Trends to 2030: Shaping the Future in a Fast-Changing World.’ Once again, the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) and the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) are hosting this two-day event.

With a view to generating fresh insights for the next edition of the ESPAS Global Trends to 2030 Report, which will be published in Spring 2019, we are hosting thought leaders, global foresight practitioners, and strategists from around the world to explore major social, economic, technological and geopolitical trends that will shape Europe and the world over the coming decade.

Global power shifts, pressure on liberal democracies, challenges to global governance, the transformation of economic models and of the very fabric of societies, new uses and misuses of technology, humanity’s growing ecological footprint: the world may be on the cusp of a new geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological order.

Against this backdrop, how can the European Union ensure that it holds its destiny in its own hands? What must it do to better prepare and shape the future, tackling emerging challenges and seizing the opportunities that will arise?

Given the wide array of issues covered throughout the two-day conference, we have set out to capture some of the valuable insights of our guests in a short collection of insightful, forward-looking essays. Our aim is simple: to ensure that our speakers’ contributions are able to reach beyond the conference’s immediate audience and to stimulate strategic thinking about the key trends that will shape the world to 2030, and their possible implications for the EU. We are therefore tremendously grateful that, amidst their heavy professional and personal commitments, our speakers generously responded to our request for contributions. The result is a unique collection of over 35 original short essays addressing the different themes of this year’s Annual Meeting.

Along with the ESPAS leadership, including the ESPAS Honorary President, James Elles, I sincerely hope that you will enjoy this collection of think-pieces and that they may trigger further dialogue and reflection on how to prepare for the future, shape better policies and build up resilience.

Sincerely,

Ann Mettler
Head, European Political Strategy Centre,
Chair, European Strategy and Policy Analysis System
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed meaningfully, both intellectually and practically, to the organisation of the 2018 Annual ESPAS Conference, and to the preparation of this accompanying publication. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to them. First and foremost, I would like to warmly thank our speakers and contributors. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the ESPAS Steering Group and their collaborators for a partnership that has been growing ever stronger: Klaus Welle, Anthony Teasdale and Frank Debié from the European Parliament, Jim Cloos and Leo Schulte Nordholt from the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU; Christian Leffler and Hervé Delphin from the European External Action Service (EEAS); Jiří Buriánek and Béatrice Taulègne from the European Committee of the Regions; Luis Planas, Maria Echevarria and Pierluigi Brombo from the European Economic and Social Committee; Mikołaj Dowgielewicz from the European Investment Bank; and of course, James Elles, ESPAS’ Honorary President.

Even more so, I wish to genuinely acknowledge the contributions of all the members of the ESPAS teams across all participating institutions who worked untiringly for this year’s conference and this publication: Danièle Réchard, Eamonn Noonan, and Freya Windle-Wehrle have been the pillars of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Julia DeClerck-Sachsse, Simonetta Cook, Marco Migliara, Béatrice Taulègne, and Andrej Stuchlik from the European External Action Service, the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank respectively.

Huge thank you is also due to the members of the ESPAS Young Talent Network for their engagement and enthusiasm in the preparation of this year’s annual conference.

At the EPSC, I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Ricardo Borges de Castro, Ruby Gropas, Luis Viegas Cardoso, Natacha Faullimmel and Antonija Vidakovic who have steadily carried through the entire process over this past year; Paweł Świeboda, who has always had purposeful and insightful suggestions; Agnieszka Skuratowicz, Mihaela Moldovan, Martina Gunda, Aurélie Therace, Kim Hoang Lê, and Isabelle Declere and Virginie Censi-Gauci who oversaw the full organisation of this event from the start and ensured that this all came together; Jonáš Jančařík, who set up our website and orchestrated our online presence; Annick Hilbert, who created this year’s ESPAS design and beautifully laid out this publication; Rachel Smit for her sharp editing; and of course Carmen Tresguerres, who has worked closely with all to ensure that we always strive for more and better.
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THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
AUTOCRATS, PLUTOCRATS AND DATACRATS: ARE DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE AS WE KNOW THEM DOOMED?

Daniel W. Drezner
Professor of International Politics, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

If the post-Cold War era was all about The End of History, then the post-Brexit era is all about The End of ‘The End of History.’

The myriad challenges to liberal democracy and governance seem to be overwhelming. From without, authoritarian capitalist states such as China and Russia are not only thriving, but setting themselves up as exemplars of governance for other countries to follow. From within the advanced industrialised democracies, waves of populism have roiled domestic politics and the liberal international order. In the United States, where trust in institutions is at an all-time low, this has manifested itself in a form of ‘pluto-populism.’ In Europe, these phenomena are linked. Elected leaders like Hungary’s Viktor Orbán have explicitly stated that, ‘liberal democratic states can’t remain globally competitive’, and that it is better to create ‘an illiberal new state’ inspired by Russia and China. The issue is not whether Orbán is actually correct, but that he is publicly willing to articulate such an alternative.

And, finally, the rise of Big Data and Big Data monopolies have generated significant uneasiness about their effects on the body politic. The concerns are two-fold. First, the rising corporate power of entities like Google and Facebook make them influential, but not necessarily beholden to liberal democratic values. Google’s willingness to subordinate its corporate culture to appease Chinese authorities with a censored search engine is one example. Second, the vulnerability of social media firms to misinformation, propaganda, and other forms of information warfare has further eroded faith in the deliberative democratic process.

These concerns are well-placed. They have rather profound and disturbing effects on the marketplace of ideas. But many of these concerns are based on the presumption that one can simply extrapolate from the negative trends of the past few years. It might be better to think of this through a cyclical lens. There is no doubt, however, that illiberal forces are having their moment in the sun. There are equally valid reasons to believe that their power has crested. Indeed, if the Trump administration’s experiences can be generalised, it is quite possible that pluto-populists create the very antibodies that render them less hospitable in liberal free-market democracies.

There is no doubt, however, that illiberal forces are having their moment in the sun. There are equally valid reasons to believe that their power has crested.
There is little doubt that politics have become a central concern for business leaders around the world. From Brexit to global issues such as protectionism and sanctions, corporations and investors are increasingly faced with situations where ‘politics make markets’. How can they turn rising political uncertainty into manageable risk (and opportunity)?

One key approach is to accurately identify the actual trends behind political events. Take for instance the recent electoral successes of radical right-wing parties. Interpreting their rise as a ‘populist wave’ is unhelpful, as the majority of these forces are not in power. Rather, looking at them as part of a broader trend of voter realignment helps to gauge the true impact of political change on business. As an example, radical parties did not have to win elections to force a referendum on EU membership in the UK, and in many countries, the fragmentation of party systems might be more relevant for economic policy-making than the emergence of fringe parties itself.

Understanding how institutions mediate political change can also be useful to differentiate political risk across markets and issues. On the national level, certain electoral systems make it more difficult for radical parties to win elections than others, while the constitutions of some countries impose strict limitations on what governments can do regarding issues such as international treaties. Similarly, international trade negotiations take place in highly institutionalised settings, which limit both the range of strategies states can follow and the potential outcomes.

By looking at political change in terms of trends and institutions, businesses can also better assess risk and opportunity in different contexts. For instance, a fragmented parliament can mean increased regulatory stability, which, in times of strong economic growth, many investors might appreciate. However, a recession might require a swift response from the government, which might have a hard time passing the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of the economic shock.

For businesses, trying to make sense of politics in an era of information overload can be daunting. But political change can be analysed and managed in order to make the most of the ongoing volatility.
True to the famous Clausewitzian notion that ‘war is the continuation of politics by other means’, there is little doubt that strategic planning around issues of security and defence can never be divorced from politics, in the broadest sense of the term. For an organisation like NATO, the ability to fully perform its core tasks – namely collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security – is intrinsically shaped and influenced by the broader global, regional and local political milieu. In this context, the ability to correctly understand, analyse and assess the global political environment, as well as the specific political contexts where the Organisation operates is essential to strategic planning and policy implementation alike. This is especially the case when addressing complex, non-conventional and essentially political challenges, such as stabilisation, counter-insurgency, or even broader counter-terrorism operations.

The main complexity of assessing ‘political risks’ in these fragile contexts is the need to sufficiently broaden the notion of ‘politics’ and ‘political risk’ beyond a purely conventional, state-centric framework. In fragile, post-conflict or stabilisation settings, political agency and power is indeed diffused beyond the state, with significant political influence and capital held by non-state armed challengers to the state, local traditional and religious leaders, civil society and international actors, among others. In these cases, effective strategic planning must take into consideration all these actors, their interests, their leverages and their inter-relationships in order to correctly assess the environment and identify, respond and mitigate existing risks, as well as capitalise on opportunities.

Assessing political risk in a volatile and contested world therefore requires to go simultaneously local, by focusing on micro-dynamics, as well as global, to be able to fully understand and account for the role and influence of external parties on local dynamics. What is more, much of these assessments need to be carried out in the ‘fog of hybrid war’; namely in complex security environments where the lines between conflict and non-conflict, between war and peace, are themselves contested and, more often than not, blurred. To overcome these difficulties, it is especially important to build solid partnerships with local actors to increase situational awareness of the local context and power dynamics; but also to work with other international actors on the ground, wherever possible sharing information to compile accurate and ground-based assessments, with a focus on early-warning.

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ON RISK AND FORESIGHT

Pei Shan Lim
Head, Centre for Strategic Futures, Singapore

Risk is often seen from a negative perspective, frequently conceived of as a potential obstacle to an organisation’s realisation of its stated goal. However, broadly conceived, strategic risk may be more usefully understood as the effect of uncertainty on organisational outcomes. This uncertainty may take the form of issues or events, which may hinder or help an organisation’s cause. This duality is elegantly reflected in the Chinese word for ‘crisis’ – ‘wēi jī’ – which consists of the characters for danger and opportunity. A crisis can be dangerous, but it can also be an opportunity. For example, it would not be an exaggeration to say that climate change is an existential risk for humanity. And yet, in responding to this risk there is much opportunity for innovation, be it in renewable energy, clean technology, or urban design.

Singapore itself was born in crisis – a newly-formed small island city-state thrust into independence in a volatile region, whose prospects for survival – let alone success – looked woefully dim in the 1960s. And yet, it was this sense of crisis that called forth the creativity and inventiveness of Singapore’s founding fathers. They devised novel governance solutions for pressing problems in the areas of education, housing and economic development, for example. This, together with a nimble and far-sighted foreign policy, helped this unlikely country to overcome the odds that were stacked against it, transforming Singapore from third world to first.

The next chapter of the Singapore story will bring with it new challenges and opportunities. At the Centre for Strategic Futures, our role is to help our decision-makers navigate an increasingly complex and uncertain operating environment, to anticipate and to effectively respond to risks, through the practice of strategic foresight. Even while we cannot predict the future, we seek to reduce unknown unknowns and minimise the frequency and impact of disruptive shocks. We scout – looking ahead, over the horizon, to sense make and to seek to understand, what is changing the world, and how and why the world is changing. We challenge – questioning established assumptions and mental models. We grow – building capability and capacities for futures thinking across the Singapore government. Only through constant questing and questioning, will we be able to see both the danger and the opportunity in strategic risks – to survive, and possibly thrive, in a fast-changing world.
POLITICAL RISK IN THE 21ST CENTURY: WHY IS IT DIFFERENT FROM THE PAST?
TWO WORDS: CLIMATE CHANGE.

John D. Podesta
Founder, Center for American Progress

Just three years ago, the world’s nations came together twice to recognise new, ambitious, multilateral visions for the planet. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) codified 17 global aims, including the most ambitious humanitarian and economic goal in history: to end extreme poverty within 15 years. The Paris Climate Agreement saw every country on earth acknowledging responsibility for solving the global crisis of climate change.

Today, however, the ambitions of those multilateral agreements seem to be moving out of reach. The rise of authoritarian leaders and exclusionary populist political movements in the United States, Europe, and countries around the world cuts squarely against the vision of both Paris and the SDGs, challenging global security. The exploitation of new technologies to undermine democracies and fuel hate crimes, even genocide, undermines human solidarity itself.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s dramatic report from September of this year made clear, the world has just over a decade to fundamentally reshape our energy systems and economies, or we will suffer the worst effects of climate change for generations to come. The hurricanes ravaging the East and Gulf Coasts, the wildfires wiping entire California towns off the map, the crop failures across Europe resulting from record-breaking heat waves, the devastating typhoons in Asia—all of these tragedies are just the beginning.

It could not be clearer that world leaders do not appreciate and are not planning for the security risks that will come from increased climate migration, food insecurity, spiraling rates of vector-borne diseases, and growing water scarcity. These are fates that do not await us in the distant future, but within the next few decades, if climate change is not brought under control.

Now more than ever, we need a global politics of cohesion and cooperation, a recognition that our life on this planet is not a zero-sum proposition – that, in the words of the late Wisconsin Senator Paul Wellstone, ‘We all do better when we all do better’. We must reject the right-wing populist politics of fear and division, recapture the spirit of solidarity that animated the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, and turn it swiftly into action before it’s too late.
To human perception, a decade is a comparatively long period. But in foresight, it is the most constructive timespan to think about the future. Although it might seem counterintuitive, we can say a lot of things with certainty about 2030: we know that the world will be connected and complex, with cars, bodies and even entire cities linked to the Internet, humans and goods traveling much further than now, and ideas and influence with them. We know that Africa and the Middle East will continue to experience population growth, and that, as a whole, humanity will continue to become urbanised and older – or indeed, more mature. We know also that while Europe will lead the pack age-wise, Asia and Russia will follow the same path. China will become the world’s third economic power, energy needs and temperatures will rise, and American power will continue to weaken.

But one would be mistaken to think that all of this knowledge makes the future a certain place – for two reasons. Firstly, seeing a trend does not equal to understanding its impact. This is where foresight is different from forecast: whereas the latter gives us the facts, the former interprets them. One example of a wrong interpretation was a widespread (and wrong) conclusion in the 1960s that the rise of the global population would lead to a worldwide famine and even – eventually – the extinction of humankind. Going through the process of thinking through the consequences of a trend is therefore a crucial step.

Secondly, we are not the victims of our future: it will depend in large parts on the decisions we take today – how we manage climate change, achieve healthy longevity, protect democracy, develop Artificial Intelligence, build multilateral alliances, and solve conflicts is what will really determine what 2030 will look like.
OUTLOOKS TO 2030 - TRENDS AND DRIVERS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR COMMON FUTURE

Elissa Golberg
Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy, Department of Global Affairs, Canada

Looking to 2030, we can be quite certain that the current global policy context of ‘dynamic evolution’ will persist – posing challenges for established relationships, approaches and institutions, but also opportunities for innovation and new, cross-regional and multi-stakeholder, collaborations. But to seize on the latter, and build resilience to the ambiguity and uncertainty that is expected to prevail, governments and citizens will need to come together around re-defined common purposes.

Greater than the sum of international laws, norms and institutions that frame contemporary international affairs, the current ‘rules-based international order’ has entered the lexicon as a marker of the shared values that have largely united the global community since the immediate post-WWII period. Far from being static, however, this system has and must continue to evolve to remain relevant to citizens and states.

There is growing recognition of the urgency of this task. There is a need to account for the rebalancing of global power relations, the new technologies that connect and amplify voices in all regions and levels of society, and the effects of evolving societal, economic and environmental trends and hazards. Certainly, over the next decade, rapid urbanisation, climate change, social inequity, networked terrorism, protracted forced displacement, irregular migration, shifting demographics will remain mainstays. Phenomena such as these are already testing our communities, governments and international institutions’ ability to mitigate and respond effectively to their impacts. Other dominant drivers such as a growing mistrust of expert and technological solutions to significant global challenges, and the effects of protectionism, populism and xenophobia have further eroded confidence in the current rules-based order.

No one country, alone, is able to respond to the totality of challenges that will come over the next decade. The onus is on us to focus today’s collective attention and actions on ensuring that the necessary trust in our collective systems does not falter further, just when joint efforts and positive citizen engagement are needed the most, to face uncertainty in an evolving global ecosystem.

To respond to the challenges ahead, Canada is determined to help defend the best of the rules-based international order and assist with updating it for the 21st century. We do this by embracing innovative global solutions, pioneering issue-based alliances, promoting gender equality and respect for diversity, acting as advocates for results-based multilateralism and the rule of law, and by revitalising our partnerships in Canada and abroad – including on issues such as labour, the environment, gender and indigenous rights. Acting as a convener, connector and catalyst of necessary change is at the heart of Canada’s efforts to modernise the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and pursue an inclusive trade agenda; in our work to advance the UN reform agenda including gender-responsive peacekeeping; and in our pursuit of new ways to invest our international aid so it will leverage more funds for sustainable development, including from the private sector, and to advance women’s empowerment.

Ultimately, a broad coalition, recommitted to what we share in common, must be forged at national, regional and international levels. Focusing on what unites us – not what sets us apart – is the best path towards a future of shared prosperity, peace and stability that we all want.

Canada is determined to do its part.
IS THERE A RETREAT FROM DEMOCRACY? ASK AFRICANS

Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi
Executive Director and Co-founder, Afrobarometer; Founder and Former Executive Director, Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)

The rise of ‘strong’ leaders breaking norms and weakening institutions to deliver results has gained a certain allure among voters around the world and spawned enough copycats for scholars and media analysts to warn of a retreat from democracy. Not quite so in Africa. At least that’s what average Africans tell us.

For more than a decade and across many indicators, ordinary Africans have consistently expressed support for democracy and accountable governance in Afrobarometer surveys. The latest wave of the survey (2016-18), covering 34 countries in all regions of the continent, bears this fact out. More than two-thirds (68%) of Africans prefer democracy – down slightly from 72% in 2012. Support for multiparty competition is at 63%, for high-quality elections at 75%, and for presidential term limits, 75%. Indeed, the proportion of Africans who think it’s more important to have an accountable government than an efficient one increased between 2015 and 2018, from 53% to 62%. In short, demand for democratic governance is still strong.

Supply of democracy, on the other hand – always lagging behind demand – continues its slow downward trend. Only a minority (42%) of Africans say they’re at least ‘fairly satisfied’ with the way democracy works in their country. Other indicators of the supply of democracy, such as perceptions that the prior election was largely free and fair, remain reassuring. Still, overall, supply trails demand when it comes to democratic goods by about 9 percentage points. At best, popular ambitions for democratic governance are only being partially fulfilled.

On balance, the picture that emerges is an Africa that wants to have what the West, at its best, is having: democratic, transparent, accountable, time-limited governments and economic opportunities. And they want it in Africa!

The data tell us Africans today are unsatisfied by but not dissatisfied with democracy. They just want more dividends from democracy. They want less corruption, more transparency, less impunity, more economic opportunity. African governments would do well to supply these goods, and it’s in the interest of external partners to push for and to support this quest – lest non-liberal democratic models of national development become more alluring.

The data tell us Africans today are unsatisfied by but not dissatisfied with democracy. They just want more dividends from democracy. They want less corruption, more transparency, less impunity, more economic opportunity.
Conflicts involving multiple violent non-state groups have become the most lethal form of violence in today’s world. Non-state actors including rebels, militias, gangs, and criminal organisations in conflict are nothing new, yet the operations of these groups are taking on new forms. They are likely to become even more pressing security challenges in the future.

Broadly speaking, there are three trends related to these actors. The first is the proliferation of violent non-state groups. There are more than 70 different rebel, militia and other groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hundreds in Libya, and thousands in Syria. The number of non-state actors involved in conflicts is on the rise, but we still do not have the right tools to address these non-state dynamics. Secondly, these groups are operating increasingly transnational. Conflicts are fought across borders, while our responses mostly continue to be confined by state borders. And thirdly, violent non-state groups have every time easier access to information technologies. This allows them to deliver messages across the globe instantly, and to erase traces of illicit transactions.

These trends have produced a more complex security landscape because they facilitate links between violent non-state groups. Security dynamics across the globe are shaped by their interactions. Organised criminals subcontract computer hackers, terrorists engage in spot sales with arms traffickers, human smugglers work together with militias, and drug cartels cooperate with rebels.

Despite this, interventions to prevent or reduce armed conflict have largely been tailored to single categories of groups rather than their interactions. They target rebels, terrorists – that is, those challenging the state – but not necessarily those who operate in the shadow of it.

The operations of violent non-state groups will become more networked, less traceable, and more pervasive across both the Global North and South. Policymakers therefore need to change their mind-sets now and adopt a more holistic approach to prevent future security threats arising from violent non-state groups.

The operations of violent non-state groups will become more networked, less traceable, and more pervasive across both the Global North and South. Policymakers therefore need to change their mind-sets.
A DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Kasper Klynge
Tech Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Last year, the Danish government appointed the world’s first ‘Tech Ambassador’ to spearhead Denmark’s new TechPlomacy initiative – elevating technology and digitalisation to a strategic foreign policy priority. This was a response to the emerging new digital world order, in recognition of the need for common norms and rules in the digital era. Recent events have confirmed this, considering examples of misuse of data (most prominently the Cambridge Analytica case, but the broader picture includes four major personal data breaches affecting 146 million people in 8 months), as well as large-scale cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns affecting elections. The digital transformation of our societies brings about fantastic potentials. But a strategy that maxes out on these opportunities cannot stand alone. It needs to go hand in hand with minimising the new risks and challenges of the digital age.

Both at the national and international level, governance institutions are challenged. On the one hand, technology has the potential to lift people out of poverty, improve healthcare and other key sectors and drive economic growth. On the other hand, technology risks generating a new gap – between countries, regions and individuals with access to the newest technology, and those without. In this gap, lies a potential for new security issues, flows of migration and causes of extremism. Moreover, technology is becoming a geopolitical factor affecting global power balances, which will no longer be defined solely by economic, conventional and nuclear capabilities. AI, cyber capabilities, access to 5G infrastructure and more must be taken into account.

TechPlomacy is an acknowledgement of the importance that technology and digitalisation has on individuals and societies alike – and the key role that global tech companies play as drivers of this development. Denmark’s Tech Representation is a formal diplomatic platform for dialogue and collaboration on both foreign and domestic policy topics with the tech industry, governments and multilateral organisations. We need a stronger multi-stakeholder discussion in an effort to promote a more responsible and human-centric technological development. In short: TechPlomacy is about creating new international alliances of tech companies, civil society and governments to help prepare our societies and promote a balanced approach to technology where all actors take responsibility.
THINK-TANKERS SHOULD TRANSFORM INTO TOUGHEST PUBLIC VOICES

Jakub Janda
Executive Director, Head of Kremlin Watch Program, European Values Think-Tank

In a world of massive disinformation and radical or silly strategic decisions or policies – from Brexit to appeasement towards aggressive dictators – think-tankers need to play a new role. The traditional role has been to conduct research, make a conference speech, or maybe pen an op-ed. In the future, this will clearly not be enough.

The need for expertise relating to the practical world of politics has never been more urgent. One can stay behind the curtain as a silent advisor, but the political establishment across Europe needs strong voices backed up by policy expertise. Quite often, political discussion is considered to be messy by those who study and understand detailed policies. But if think-tankers don’t engage, our public space will be dominated by hysterical populists and stupid policy decisions.

The watchdog role is often done by journalists, while the structural problem is that media professionals often don’t have the time or expertise to study a particular policy field systematically. Moreover, it is not journalists’ role to be public opponents of a particular policy or political leader. Think-tankers should not hide under the cover of neutrality and not taking sides. Having a strong opinion on particular policies is definitely legitimate and doesn’t undermine the position of an expert.

What good does real expertise bring if it doesn’t make a difference in the practical world of politics that results in policy? Think-tankers should dedicate themselves to strong advocacy roles. Standing up for what they believe is right cannot come only by opposing something (the watchdog role), it also means proposing specific solutions. Advocacy activities should not be limited just to publishing excellent ideas, they should include spending significant time trying to persuade policymakers that your ideas make sense. Think-tankers should spend at least a third of their working hours talking to journalists, government insiders or parliamentarians. If they don’t do it, they are wasting their knowledge and not making impact in the real world, which badly needs them.

Think-tankers should dedicate themselves to strong advocacy roles.
STRATEGY UNITS AND THINK TANKS: FROM EARLY DETECTION TO ROBUST DECISIONS

Antonella Mei-Pochtler
Head of the Strategy Unit - Think Austria, Federal Chancellery

In a world where, on the one side, volatility and disruption are the new normal and, on the other, we are experiencing an explosion of data and computing power, we have to reflect more than ever about how to evolve evidence-based policy work. We can analyse more and faster, and, increasingly, in real time. We can automate decisions – from simple to very complex – with the help of AI. But at the same time we observe a paradox: the more data we have and the more evidence we produce, the more people retreat into their beliefs. Data and information overload seems to produce evidence negation and even explicit misinformation. The responsible and careful exploitation and utilisation of data, as well as the interpretation and communication of data findings have never been so relevant.

Evidence is not a ticket to conviction, but rather a piece of the puzzle to be used mindfully. This requires both a more robust and muscled corpus of evidence, as well as an enabled audience, capable of processing and discovering facts and fiction.

Particularly in regimes that are taking a populist turn, leaders increasingly position themselves against experts and elites. In some of these countries statistical integrity is at stake. We should push for secure and independent statistical authorities and also make sure that investments in statistics are increased. But that addresses only one side. We need to better understand the origination and education of beliefs. Behavioral economics helps us here, so do social media.

With this in mind, Think Austria – the new Strategy, Analysis and Planning Unit in the Federal Chancellery of Austria – acts as a radar into the future; an effectiveness barometer. It provides the Federal Chancellor with a pool of experts, in order to tackle issues ranging from economic and social policy, culture, education and the environment, to foreign and security policy, as well as digitisation, with both quantitative and behavioral evidence in mind.

On a general level, strategy units and think tanks can act as early detection systems for global developments and consequently enable policymakers to reach more sustainable decisions encouraged by statistical authorities and experts. Think Austria’s main goal is to secure the future viability of Austria by providing policy solutions for mid- and long-term challenges.

Evidence is not a ticket to conviction, but rather a piece of the puzzle to be used mindfully.
A FORESIGHT PERSPECTIVE ON ‘EVIDENCE-BASED’ DECISION-MAKING

Kristel Van der Elst,
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The current crisis of credibility is fuelled by a series of events and revelations which brought into light fake news, opaque think tank practices, non-reproducible research, issues around institutions’ conflicts of interest, lack of transparency and intellectual independence, as well as the serving of funders’ interests – corporate and foreign government donors – to name a few. If this trend persists, credibility will be an intense challenge for experts, think tanks and anyone seeking to persuade with evidence. At the same time, we are hearing a call for ‘evidence-based’ policy. These revelations might spawn a corrective response towards increased transparency about sources of influences and ideas. Despite it, the future of evidence, expertise, and ‘evidence-based’ policy is bound to become increasingly complex.

Pluralism in our societies has increased. This makes it more crucial to recognise that, while advice might be informed by research, it is often guided by values. As, between and within societies, dialogue decreases and over-arching value-sets or governance rules are eroded, we can expect advice to become more diverse and biased. Noteworthy here on a global level is China’s strategic goal to create ‘a new type of think tanks with Chinese characteristics’ to improve decision-making, modernise state governance and strengthen its nation’s soft power.

We are living in a world where the ambiguity of interpretation is getting stronger. Research has shown that credibility of advice is granted by the receiver of the advice often by heuristic processing rather than through an analysis of the logical argument. In other words, we often take short cuts to compensate for our lack of competence on a subject or a lack of time to spend on truly understanding it. In a world where issues and contexts are increasingly interconnected, fast-changing, messy, complex, unknown, we can expect a decrease in decision-making based on traditional research.

We are also living in a world of novelty – with things we have never seen and we do not know how they will play out. In a world where things are unfamiliar, uncertain and unknown, the ability to have solid interpretation skills trumps accurate knowledge.

Policy is by nature a forward-looking practice, aimed at shaping a future we find desirable. Applying foresight – the assessment of what might happen or be needed in the future – is essential: to make our strategies and decisions more robust and resilient in light of uncertainty, to avoid being blindsided by change, to build a common desired future and to influence others by engaging their fear and hopes.

As any other powerful tool, foresight and the future – which holds no data, only assumptions, hypothesis, expectations, possibilities and preferences – can be used and abused.

We are confronted with diverse narratives and research about the future – in evidence-based policy and in public opinion shaping. It might be worth for each of us to systematically reflect on ‘whose’ future we are being persuaded by, and what makes us believe it (coming back to Aristotle’s three modes of persuasion – logic, emotional appeal, and the source’s credibility or authority). We have to question our assumptions, be open to learn from comparing and contrasting views of the future, and hone our critical thinking skills. Only then will diversity of thinking fuel better decision-making.
THE CLASH FROM WITHIN

Tarek Osman
Author and Broadcaster

There are clashes raging now between powers in the West and others in the Arab, Islamic East. But to denote these a clash of civilisations means accepting two fallacies.

The first is that those who are clashing with each other – primarily in rhetoric – represent the ‘civilisations’ of both: the West and the Arab, Islamic East. They do not. Groups, in the East, that denounce the West as a consistent enemy, bent on weakening the Arabs and Muslims, and on the other side, groups that see Arabs and Muslims as hoards taking over Europe, are, both, pedlars of fears.

On the Arab, Islamic side, there’s the fear of many among the weak and the poor, of being confined to the realities of their lives, which seem to worsen by the day. On the Western side, there’s the rich’s fear of the poor spoiling, let alone swamping, their houses.

This leads us to the second fallacy: that these fears are deep-seated in the respective societies, and constitute a fundamental feature of each’s psychological make-up. They are not. Trade, cultural interaction, and social exchanges have been, by far, more prevalent in the East-West relationship than war or political confrontation. This has been the case, also, in the last four hundred years, when the West became much stronger and richer than the Arab, Islamic East.

Today, fears trump other aspects of the long relationship, not because these fears are integral to each side, but because both sides are undergoing difficult transitions, albeit of very different natures.

In the East, a colossal demographic transition is taking place. The largest cohort of teens and twenty-somethings, probably ever to come of age at the same time in that part of the world, are coming to the stage, inheriting an accumulation of failures. Some are frustrated and angry. Among them, a small group, in their venting of anger and searching for meaning, get radicalised. Some lose all hope, and want out (risking their lives to reach the new land of milk and honey: Europe). But the vast majority of those young Arabs and Muslims are neither radical, nor potential immigrants. They, mostly, rebel against (and often disrespect) their parents and grandparents whom they see as responsible for those failures. The previous generation has been responding with the anxiety of the old when they see tumultuous change. In this tense transition, fears come to the fore. But the causes of the fear, and the way out of it, have little to do with the West. This is an internal struggle in the Arab, Islamic East.
In the West (and especially in Europe), at least three centuries of assured superiority over the entirety of humanity seems to be coming to an end. Declining competitiveness, new largely imported technologies, the rise of vastly larger and much hungrier economic powers in Asia, and the settling in of a kind of lethargy that comes with ageing and prosperity, are triggering fears that the paradise that Europe has created is on the brink of being lost. We are hearing the old siren of: ‘barbarians at the gates’. But the real malaise is internal – from the structures of most Western economies to the making and execution of public policy. And so, the causes of the anxieties in the West, and the way out of them, are home-grown.

When anxious, we become defensive, seek familiarity, take comfort in group-think, blame the ‘other’, and sacrifice the values we adopted when the going was easy.

But anxiety is almost always a temporary condition. Humans grow out of fear. Societies adjust their economics and politics, and gradually the factors behind these fears are modified or absorbed. Already, greenshoots in the Arab, Islamic East are spreading, despite what appears, in the wider landscape to be a barren land. And in the West, there is a burgeoning realisation that fears are eating into the core values that have been the true foundations of the European paradise. Pedlars of fears (radicals and extremist populists) will lose their moment under the limelight. With time, difficult transitions will give way to a ‘new normal’.

We are not in a clash of civilisations. We are seeing major social and economic developments acting upon our societies, in both sides of the Mediterranean. The real tumult will not be between our societies (in the West and the Arab, Islamic East). It will, likely, be within them.

*The real tumult will not be between our societies (in the West and the Arab, Islamic East). It will, likely, be within them.*
A CONTEMPORARY BABEL; NOT A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

Zuzanna Radzik
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Do you remember the biblical story about the construction of the tower of Babel? The Book of Genesis describes people who attempted to build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens. In response, God confused their language and scattered them around the world. You can interpret this simply as a story about a jealous and revengeful God and humanity boasting its technological abilities and trying to blaspheme God by constructing a skyscraper. Read it in more nuanced way, and it is a story about unity, uniformity and diversity.

The major issue here is language. One language for all. ‘Now the whole earth had one language and the same words’ – starts the story (Gen 11:1). Noteworthy, the whole previous chapter enumerates Noah’s descendants, consistently commenting that all of them settled in their land, with their families, their languages, and their nations. This echoes the first commandment to ‘be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’ (Genesis 9:1). And yet, people in the story about the tower of Babel gathered in one valley with an attempt to build one city, as they said: ‘Otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth’. Why did they fear being scattered? Famous Netziv, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, suggests that ‘this was related to the uniformity that was among them. And since the opinions of people are not identical, they feared that people might abandon this philosophy and adopt another. Therefore, they sought to ensure that no one would leave their society. And one who veered from this uniformity among them was judged with burning, just as they did to our forefather Abraham. And the ‘same words’ can also be seen as the fact that they would kill whoever did not think like them’ (Haamek Davar on Genesis 11:4:3).

Natziv sees the danger not in the expressed intentions of the builders but in one language and one purpose. As he wrote, we fear that we are not identical, so we fantasise about unity and disciplining each other. Ultimately the story of the tower of Babel is one of the biblical stories about sin: it starts with fake, oppressive unity. Our problem is therefore much different than an imaginary clash of civilisations. There is a tension between the reality and our dream about unity of our communities (nations, religions, etc), push for uniformity within our identities, discipline over others to stay in, and using fear of the stranger as an argument for unification.

However hard we try, our most troubling clashes are not with faraway strangers and distant civilisations. It is the differences across our societies that disturb us the most.

Natziv says that people in Babel were so desperate to keep their fake unity that they would kill whoever did not think like them. Ironically, we live in a world where most successful business models are based on claiming that they connect everyone with everyone (one language of a sort) - but the secret to their success is polarisation. Our contemporary Babel fuels animosity and lack of trust while feeding also aspirations for global unity.

Respecting and appreciating the fact that we are diverse, with multiple languages, opinions, lands, and nations (like the descendants of Noah), and that this was wanted, still sounds like the most obvious, but unfortunately most unreachable, solution. And now, not only human nature, but also technology is against it.
For years, anti-Semitism has been on the rise in Europe. Since 2012 alone, Islamists have murdered 15 people in six anti-Semitic attacks. Although Jews are less than 1% of France’s population, 50% of violent racist crimes there are anti-Semitic and 12% of British hate crimes target Jews, just 0.5% of the population.

Anti-Semitism is a threat to the very fabric of our civilisation – and not just because racism of any kind is an assault on our values. Unlike other forms of racism, the conspiratorial nature of anti-Semitism (mis-)informs an entire warped worldview. Anti-Semites don’t just hate Jews. They are convinced that the Jew/Zionist/Israel controls the world/banks/America etc. and plots war/oppression/organ-trafficking etc. Seeing every major event in history and every national and personal misfortune as evidence of a global conspiracy by the ‘Elder of Zion’ produces a mindset antithetical to free societies.

While anti-Semitism on the far right is well-recognised, it is different for other sources. Anti-Semitism within the Muslim community is sometimes misunderstood as a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, coming dangerously close to ‘explaining’ or even ‘justifying’ it. The truth is that many Arab and Muslim leaders have carefully nurtured anti-Semitism within their societies, before and particularly after the establishment of Israel. Rather than a consequence, it is a root cause of the conflict.

On the Left, we have the absurdity of anti-Semitism without anti-Semites. Anti-Zionists claim to follow a legitimate political position. But their unhealthy obsession with the world’s only Jewish state – demonising not just criticising it, treating Israel effectively as ‘the Jew among the nations,’ denying its right to even exist, and holding every Jew responsible for Israel – suggests something more sinister. Witness how Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party has thus become a home for anti-Zionists, Holocaust deniers and Islamists alike.

Anti-Semitism is a central and unifying element of those otherwise diverse forces threatening our civilisation. Those invested in preserving our liberal democracies and our values – from gender equality to gay rights, from respect for minorities to freedom of and from religion – thus ought to make exposing and fighting anti-Semitism their central and unifying element as well.

Those invested in preserving our liberal democracies and our values – from gender equality to gay rights, from respect for minorities to freedom of and from religion – thus ought to make exposing and fighting anti-Semitism their central and unifying element as well.
We did not get it wrong. Engagement and embracing China’s accession to the World Trade Organisation were absolutely the right strategy for the post-1978 China that made decisive progress in shifting away from Communism and toward a market orientation. China was converging, to an extraordinary degree, and intended to continue. From 1992, and up to the mid-2000s, China implemented economic policies aligned with advanced market economy norms – although often with reservations, with backsliding, with vestiges of statism, and slowly. The withdrawal of the state from the economy, the rise of private business, the expansion of market pricing and resource allocation, the opening to foreign businesses: all of these indicators were real. Given such epic changes – taking place by China’s choice, not under Western compulsion – what strategy other than engagement, including WTO inclusion, could possibly have made sense?

China’s divergence from reform tendencies is hotly debated today, but it is manifest, albeit a recent phenomenon. Even at the start of Xi Jinping’s era many Chinese voices were still calling for constitutionalism and rule of law to underpin the institutions needed for the future, and the economic reform programme Xi and the Communist Party proffered at the 2013 Third Plenum was striking for its commitment to reform. But liberal market systems had their detractors at that time too, in China and abroad. Liberal Chinese voices met with increasing argument from those who counselled a chauvinistic course. In the years that followed, Beijing’s difficulties in implementing reforms and the temptations of nationalism combined to change the conversation.

Today, most assessments show stalled or negative progress toward the set of overarching reform goals previously assumed to be the endpoint. In fact, Beijing has of late explicitly asserted an alternative and distinct path to development, and has been quite reticent about whether it will converge with advanced market economy norms.

This detour underlies much of the reassessment taking place among like-minded market economies, including the EU and the United States. At its core, the strategic shift underway is an assertion that the permissiveness and broad-mindedness about non-reciprocal engagement with China that dominated market economy policy since 1978 was contingent on evidence of Chinese convergence, not a moral or sentimental posture. That insistence on convergent economic policy mindsets, and rules, is reasonable and necessary. It can be partial, and peaceful, and need not entail closing all doors. For one thing, only a fraction of our engagement with China presents any inherent risk to us in advanced market democracies, either in the short term or systemically. Security and welfare can both be achieved with engagement: no black or white choices are required. For another, China is already paying a heavy price in terms of welfare and growth potential from its attempt to side-step many economic lessons learned. It is likely to revert to a more liberal model in the foreseeable future, and when that happens, we will be better served by having left the door open to reengagement.
China should never be ‘broken’. But it can be changed to any color we like – if we only just continue to touch it, to engage with it, so it realises that becoming like us is the only and the best way to go.

This was the assumption that many people in the Western world held regarding the evolution of the Chinese political system since its near-break down after the crackdown of the protest movement in June 1989.

As China slowly recovered from the shock of the People’s Liberation Army shooting down its own people, many Chinese readily embarked on what seemed like the ‘way out’ offered by the pragmatic helmsman Deng Xiaoping – to bury any political rights and responsibilities for a narcotised peace of consumerism and self-realisation.

Many Western observers stood in awe as the People’s Republic rose to an increasingly prosperous – although like many other countries, increasing unequal – society, and a more and more international, responsible player. Leaving all the setbacks in terms of political liberalisation aside, the China of the 1990s and 2000s has grown into a fairly open and responsive power.

Then came, in 2008, the year of the Olympic Summer Games in Beijing: The deceased Nobel peace prize winner Liu Xiaobo facilitated and published the ‘Charter 08’, which adopted name and style from the ‘Charter77’ and was bearing signatures from nearly all segments of the Chinese society. It was a strong message, but also an invitation to liberal forces within the Chinese Communist Party to work together for peaceful political change.

It would have been quite a risky ‘joint venture’, but it seemingly wasn’t (yet) meant to be. The government arrested Liu and many others, which – looking back now – has been the starting point for the ongoing course of systematically repressing citizen activism.

The alternative route the Chinese took and followed up to today is ‘self-optimisation’ with the help of digitalisation and commercialisation, fostered by the government, and somehow followed and accepted by large parts of the society.

It is not for us to ‘fix’ anything with regard to China – but to alert the world (in a Winston Churchill fashion of the 1930s) if Xi Jinping – or any of his successors – goes further into a ‘re-education camp’ type of approach, as with the Uyghur Muslim minority in Xinjiang, denying their efforts and marginalising or even eradicating ‘uncivilised’ or ‘dangerous’ groups, leading China on a much more aggressive course internally, and eventually also externally.

It is for us first and foremost to fix our own modes of economic, political and societal governance – and to stand up for them in a reflective, self-critically manner – to be able to engage and to attract the next generation in China.
MONEY OR MINDSET: HOW SHALL THE EU DEAL WITH THE RETURN OF MIDDLE KINGDOM?

Yu Jie (Cherry)
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The EU still perceives China’s extensive investments with anxiety; as a source of pressure on the Union’s fragile unity. Brussels has deep suspicions over China’s broader strategic calculation beyond commercial gains. This leads to a spiralling xenophobia developing within parts of Europe. And this xenophobia easily becomes Sino-phobia.

Beijing has to realise that it is vital to engage fully with EU Member States on whose sovereign land infrastructure systems are to be built – irrespective of their size. This includes conducting far wider international consultations on projects that are part of the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’. China must look for ‘win-wins’ that are not just China winning twice at its partners’ expense.

China should make genuine attempts to generate positive economic well-being in investment destinations, and not merely treat the involved European partners as vehicles to achieve China’s sole benefit. However, as so often with China’s foreign affairs, its engagements with its partners seem fundamentally rooted in a Sino-centric approach to the world; intended primarily at meeting pressing domestic needs.

Growing Sino-phobia often combines with a longstanding normative division between China and Europe. This divide hinders the EU’s attempts to be a substantial diplomatic partner with Beijing. The EU’s engagements with China have drawn from its neighbourhood policy, whereby democratisation processes through political reforms were seen as means to re-integrate formerly Communist East European states. This attitude generates great suspicion among both the Chinese public and political elites. It is seen as a fundamental challenge to the Chinese state’s stability, which is based on the Communist Party’s absolute legitimacy and control with a strong government role.

Europeans cannot afford to ignore the omnipresence of the Party or to pretend that those conceptual differences on democracy and political freedoms do not exist. President Xi’s recent strident moves both at home and abroad have not put the Middle Kingdom in a comfortable position with the West.

Like China’s relations with all great powers, there is a substantial distance to travel between wish and reality. China and the EU should not impose their individual ‘unrequited wants’ and return to enmity. Instead, they should find common ground to work out their common interests.

China’s foreign affairs, its engagements with its partners seem fundamentally rooted in a Sino-centric approach to the world; intended primarily at meeting pressing domestic needs.
Self-censorship is governed by subtle shades of fear. You may be outside the country where your life or liberty were threatened, but you’re not necessarily free. In a world where everyone can read what you publish on the Internet, where your family and friends can be penalised overseas, and where you yourself can be targeted by government agents, exile does not really exist – as we have seen most recently in the case of the Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi. This very dark trend may result in a patchwork of countries whose own citizens can write what they like – but nowhere will be entirely safe for everyone, and that will be to the detriment of free speech world-wide.

In 2017, the Washington Post unveiled a new slogan – ‘Democracy Dies in Darkness’. When I read it, I immediately thought of Turkey, which has foreshadowed to some extent what we are now seeing in Europe and America: democratically-elected leaders who swiftly become allergic to criticism, polarisation among voters, and – most worryingly – acclimatisation to hate-filled rhetoric. We have seen the degradation of mainstream media lead to the emergence of an Alice Through the Looking Glass-type world where apparently the public can no longer tell the difference between what is fake and what is real – and let us not forget that President Erdogan, a true trendsetter, was using the term ‘fake news’ long before the phrase became the buzzword on every European and American’s lips.

When truth becomes something people fiercely disagree on, and where there is a sense that journalists are players in a battle not just of competing opinions but of competing facts, the natural conclusion is a nightmarish scenario: namely, truth-rating.

In May this year, Elon Musk proposed a website where the public can rate journalists and their articles, like Tripadvisor or Yelp, to give them a ‘truth score’. He posted a vote on Twitter which garnered 88% support for the idea, and shortly afterwards bought his proposed domain name – Pravduh.com. Even if he doesn’t go ahead with the implementation of a journalist-rating site, I would not be surprised if someone else does it, and soon. The game is already on, flourishing in a political climate where leaders such as Trump and Erdogan refer to critical media as ‘enemies of the state’ – one of many intriguing and worrying parallels between the two men.
Democracy as we know it seems genuinely threatened for the first time in a century. The Internet is awash with divisive and deceptive propaganda and attempts to meddle with elections. Authoritarians are gaining support. Polls show increasing willingness to sacrifice democratic values for the promise of security. This realisation has created a sense of crisis among believers in democracy. But crisis thinking is no way to create a better future. Attempts to hold onto democracy in its past or current forms will not suffice. That would shut down options and close off dialogue, precisely when the opposite is needed. These times demand bold, audacious thinking that opens up new possibilities in the future.

Democracy as we know it is being harshly tested by today’s unprecedented challenges and rising uncertainty. Today’s policies are not delivering strong, sustainable and balanced growth. Climate change targets are far from being met. Inequalities in many countries are rising. Political divides seem to be widening, with consensus further out of reach. Yet if these collective problems are caused by humans, then humans must be able to resolve them collectively. Inclusive, innovative, and legitimate democracy ought to provide the means to do so.

Democracy as we know it is not ready for the future. The increasing power of data will raise questions over who is in control. Artificial Intelligence could take on a much greater role in decisions affecting our lives. Greater migration pressures from climate change could lead to even greater social fragmentation. These and many more potential developments on the horizon could make today’s preoccupations look like the tip of the iceberg.

Democracy as we know it must be reinvented. That means holding onto its core values, but recognising that the strategies for achieving them may have to be radically different. Foresight can help us reveal and challenge our deepest assumptions in order to envisage new alternatives. Are quadrennial elections the most effective way of gathering public opinion? Are political parties faithful conduits of public preferences? Could we create more successfully moderated online discourse to understand political preferences and bridge divides? What can we learn from those who have lost faith in the status quo? What new social contracts could serve our era?

The future is in the making. It will go ahead with or without the contribution of people who believe in peace, justice, and liberty. Experimentation will be needed, so believers in democracy must start today to have an impact in the future. What success will look like is far from clear, but one thing is certain: it won’t look anything like democracy as we know it.
THE FUTURE OF ECONOMICS, SOCIETY AND GLOBAL POWER
Humans have such a heavy collective ‘footprint’ that our collective actions could trigger dangerous climate change and mass extinctions if ‘tipping points’ are crossed – outcomes that would bequeath a depleted and impoverished world to future generations. But to reduce these risks, we don’t need to put the brakes on technology; on the contrary, we need to deploy appropriate ‘clean energy’ and food-growing technology more urgently.

Our lives, our health, and our environment can benefit from further advances in biotech, cybertech, robotics, and AI. However, global regulation of these hugely empowering technologies will be needed on ethical and prudential grounds. But enforcing the regulations is unlikely to be more effectual than current global enforcement of drug laws or tax laws. The threat from technically empowered mavericks is growing, countering it will aggravate tensions between security, privacy and freedom.

There’s an institutional failure to plan long-term and to plan globally: perhaps more international bodies are needed along the lines of the World Health Organisation and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

There seems to be no scientific impediment to achieving a sustainable and secure world, where all enjoy a lifestyle better than those in the ‘West’ do today: we can be techno-optimists. But intractable geopolitics and sociology lead to a wide gap between potentialities and what actually happens. Environmental degradation, unchecked climate change, and unintended consequences of advanced technology could trigger serious, even catastrophic, setbacks to society. In an era when we are all becoming interconnected, when the disadvantaged are aware of their predicament, and when migration is easy, it is hard to be optimistic about a peaceful world if a chasm persists, as deep as it is in today’s geopolitics, between welfare levels and life chances in different regions.

Without a broader perspective – without realising that we’re all on this crowded world together – governments won’t properly prioritise projects that are long-term in a political perspective, even if a mere instant in the history of the planet.
NEW PUBLIC INVESTMENT – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mikołaj Dowgielewicz,
European Investment Bank Representative to the EU Institutions

The EU needs to prepare itself for a substantial evolution in public investment and government spending. Current trends to better manage existing public assets will be reinforced as Europe grapples with the impact of years of under-investment in long-term challenges such as energy transition, digital infrastructure and education. Generating novel and more efficient revenue streams and establishing innovative risk-reducing instruments will be vital. Three trends that will influence new public investment are:

**Public sector balance sheets**
Countries will improve the governance of their public wealth, the property they own, their natural resources, as well as infrastructure. To better monitor and enhance fiscal health, Member States will fully incorporate governmental assets and liabilities into their fiscal policy decision-making. Generating higher yield from public assets, ‘unlocking public wealth’ will become a key task for future public asset management.

**Financial instruments**
Public investment will increasingly make use of financial innovation, such as financial instruments. Despite the bad press gained for their pivotal role in the financial crisis of 2007/2008, securitisation techniques will regain importance for governments. Recent work under the G20 to establish infrastructure as an asset class is a first sign of this development. In addition to their possible impact on national and EU actors, financial instruments and the possibility to leverage public money have the potential to fundamentally transform development finance.

**More EU coordination and protection**
As to the EU, effectively coordinating fiscal policies and thus a Member State’s room to manoeuvre will become paramount. Even prior to the economic crises of the last decade, some types of public investment, such as infrastructure, remained difficult to finance. Additionally, part of the ‘known unknowns’ is the fact that a next crisis will inevitably happen: Lessons learned will include smart ways to deleverage risk for national public investment, such as new debt issuance strategies, investment protection schemes, or a European Sovereign Wealth Fund.

‘Unknown unknowns’ remain, such as the future of central bank intervention, shadow banking, and many more. While the global era of quantitative easing is unlikely to be repeated, non-bank financial intermediaries (already 13% of total financial system assets⁴) could alter the landscape of financing partners for EU countries. Coordination at EU level will remain vital to reducing the possible negative impacts of such uncertainties.

Generating novel and more efficient revenue streams and establishing innovative risk-reducing instruments will be vital.
THE EU’S RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE THE BIG 3 CHALLENGES

Heather Grabbe
Director, Open Society European Policy Institute, Brussels

Europe’s political debates are focused on the wrong issues. Populists are promoting migration as the primary issue in order to divide people into defensive tribes. Meanwhile, most mainstream parties have run out of ideas and language to meet voters’ fears about jobs, identity and security.

This navel-gazing is self-defeating and paralysing. Even worse, it is sapping Europe of the political energy it needs to deal with massive challenges ahead.

The Open Society European Policy Institute and Carnegie Europe are creating a manifesto for the next generation of EU leaders to lift their eyes from current politics and see the three huge, transnational challenges that are approaching fast:

Tech: the digital revolution and its enormous impact on jobs, democracy and social cohesion.
Lifetime: demography makes current social welfare and pensions schemes unsustainable, so a new social contract will be needed between state and citizen.
Planet: economic and population growth will breach the resources of the Earth without a shift to a low-carbon and sustainable economic model.

These enormous, scary changes will hit most parts of the world, with dramatic effects on societies, economies, politics and the physical environment. All humans will face these challenges in one way or another. But Europeans have the unique advantage of a regional governance structure that has resources to manage the adaptation better than individual countries can do alone. The EU can also create more binding agreements than international cooperation can, through its community of law and political solidarity. Lastly, it can tap deep transnational networks of expertise, across business, science and academia, civil society, national administrations and the EU institutions.

If the EU successfully applies its resources to the Big 3 challenges, it could set global norms and provide political leadership on a scale that would help not only Europeans but also the rest of the world to adapt.

Europeans have the unique advantage of a regional governance structure that has resources to manage the adaptation better than individual countries can do alone.
A cursory look at global and local challenges underlines just how compelling the need for governance within and beyond states is as we approach the third decade of the 21st century. Mobility of people, climate change, sustainability, regulation of finance, product markets, technological innovation, AI and security in all of its dimensions require regulation and governance at the transnational level. The EU, as the world’s most intensive form of transnational governance, is struggling to address a host of policy issues because of limits to its powers and cleavages across the Member States on what should be done. There is thus ample evidence of the demand for governance, but the challenge lies in the weakening capacity to supply it. This arises from interrelated change and transformation in the international system and in domestic politics.

**Global dynamics**
The liberal international order established with US leadership after the war is under sustained attack and stress. The election of President Trump on an ‘America First’ ticket has destabilised the World Trade Organisation and the trading system and undermined global achievements such as the Iran deal. The rise of authoritarian powers globally makes it far more difficult to sustain the multilateral system.

Polarisation at national and international levels poses fundamental problems for transnational governance.

**It starts at home**
Domestic politics in many countries are undergoing a period of turbulence characterised by changes in the infrastructure of politics, political behaviour and electoral outcomes. Taken together these changes have driven political volatility and made government formation more difficult. Societies are more polarised across space, generations and cleavages. To the traditional left-right cleavage has been added identity politics of one kind or another. In countries with weak democratic roots and traditions, there has been a pronounced rise in authoritarianism and a weakening of liberalism. This manifests itself most clearly in Hungary and Poland.
The decade to 2030 may represent our last chance to act decisively against climate and environmental change. India could well be the first of the world’s major countries to experience its full destructive force.

In summer 2018, Indians and foreigners were asked not to visit parts of the country faced with a desperate water crisis. The subcontinent’s groundwater levels are falling alarmingly and 54% of India experiences high water stress. By 2030, India’s water demand should twice exceed its water supply. Heat and humidity levels could become unbearable for days on end in many regions within decades. The Indian Ocean’s sea level is reportedly rising faster than elsewhere; this could endanger much of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, home to some of the highest population’s densities in the world. All this will affect food sufficiency in the sub-continent. As the most affected people try to relocate, increased migration flows within and across borders are another possibility, potentially worsening internal and international strife. Should current trends continue unimpeded, India’s 1.3 billion inhabitants could experience climate change-induced destabilisation earlier than most societies – with profound consequences for the rest of the world.

Fighting climate change should hence present a core plank of EU-India engagement over the next decade. Particularly productive partnerships could be forged around urban issues. The speed and quality of urbanisation will be crucial in mitigating India’s contribution and resilience to climate change. Two thirds of Indians still live in rural areas. If uncontrolled urbanisation is to be checked, the needs of the countryside and of smaller or medium-sized urban centres will have stay at the forefront of policymaking, while a massive effort should take place to make Indian cities better regulated, environmentally resilient and neutral. Fostering liveable urban spaces in a context of high population density has long been a key concern in much of Europe, and innovation continues in this regard. India, meanwhile, can draw from a long and varied history of creative, efficient adaptations to difficult climatic conditions. Revalorising them and identifying potential applications in Europe would benefit both India and the EU and potentially contribute to a lasting partnership.

The decade to 2030 may represent our last chance to act decisively against climate and environmental change.
EUROPE CAN MAKE SURE THE MULTILATERAL SHOW GOES ON

Shada Islam
Director of Europe and Geopolitics, Friends of Europe

As US President Donald Trump ramps up his opposition to the ‘ideology of globalism’, the question is simple: can the EU step in as guarantor and guardian of international law and cooperation?

The short answer is: yes. The longer one is: yes, but not alone.

The days when crafting and deciding new global rules and conventions could be done solely by a small group of like-minded Western nations are long gone. The focus now has to be on collaborative action.

The EU has made a good start in building partnerships with new world powers. Bilateral trade and cooperation pacts are being signed with nations big and small and commitments on climate change and nuclear disarmament, including the nuclear deal with Iran, remain strong.

The priority going forward must be to prevent the collapse of the multilateral trading system. Trump’s trade war with China risks destabilising the entire global trading system. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is also in desperate need of an overhaul.

The EU must take the lead in updating the WTO’s content, rules and processes, including the dispute settlement system.

This won’t be easy. The most difficult questions include better access to Chinese markets, the forced transfer of technology, the role and power of state-owned enterprises, the protection of intellectual property rights and industrial subsidies.

The EU must also proactively promote its own connectivity blueprint, which many see as a response to China’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The connectivity strategy is in fact much more than that.

With its focus on ‘sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based connectivity’ and projects which comply with international environmental, labour and fiscal standards, the EU plan provides China with a useful rulebook on to toning down some of the more abrasive aspects of the BRI.

Also, if ‘marketed’ properly the EU plan could be a godsend for Asian, African and Latin American nations which are looking for help in negotiating infrastructure projects with China.

Striking a partnership of equals with new world powers won’t be easy for a Europe long used to dictating global rules and putting the transatlantic relationship at the top of its priorities. But it’s the only way of ensuring that the multilateral show goes on.

The EU plan provides China with a useful rulebook on to toning down some of the more abrasive aspects of the BRI.
‘Whoever becomes the leader in [AI] will become the ruler of the world’ said Vladimir Putin. This statement echoes the thoughts of many: AI will shape the global order. Beyond its weaponisation for hard power, AI has an equally important role in fostering soft power. This can be observed through the global AI powerhouses that China and the US have nurtured.

These tech giants have three characteristics of empires. First, because of the global competition and the critical mass of data required for machine learning performance, they try to expand over an ever larger digital territory. Second, they also capture the economic wealth they generate abroad. They poach the best talents and startups from the peripheral regions, deepening regional inequality. Finally, by optimising to generate the most ‘engagement’, they influence our perception of reality, our choice and our behaviour – a formidable ideological influence, unregulated, like historical empires.

The EU has failed to nurture global AI powerhouses. In 2013, the French senate worried that the EU would become cyber-colonised. Five years later, European investment in AI is still a fraction of that in Asia and the US. Despite its market size and its scientific excellence, it lacks a digitalised industry and capital. Through its tendency to concentrate immense wealth and power in hands of few monopolistic actors, AI is perceived as a foreign threat to the EU socioeconomic models. Pushed by industrial incumbents that have for the most part failed their digital transition, Europeans have tried to regulate the AI revolution rather than governing it.

We have therefore two objectives: reclaim sovereignty and, as champions of ethics, articulate the AI revolution with our cornerstone social and liberal values. However, by putting the emphasis on regulating the AI revolution in a context of industrial weakness rather than enabling and governing it, the EU weakens its own power and potential to catch up with existing digital empires. We might therefore end up failing at both.

Pushed by industrial incumbents that have for the most part failed their digital transition, Europeans have tried to regulate the AI revolution rather than governing it.
Enormous strides have been made in the methodology and practice of strategic foresight. What needs to happen now is more integration of strategic foresight into the decision-making process.

Global Trends has become an industry with hundreds of reports issued yearly by government, business and academia. Moreover, the methodologies underpinning those works have become more sophisticated. Demography is now a predictor of democracy and conflict. Today, we are on the threshold of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence providing us a mechanism for warning about risk and resilience in real time.

But what does all this matter if the decision-making process is stuck back in the nineteenth century? Time and again, a crisis only becomes real to policymakers when it is upon them. The risks of a migratory surge were well known before the 2015 onslaught of over a million migrants heading for Western Europe. In the US, hurricanes are destroying ever more property and lives but governments at federal, state and local levels have been slow to discourage the further development of coastal areas.

Incorporating strategic foresight into decision-making takes courage for policymakers. Most ideologically-driven decision-making won’t stand up when the standard is effectiveness over the long terms or robustness in the face unintended consequences. Even more difficult for policymakers is taking action against a growing threat that has not peaked and graduated into a full-scale crisis.

How to overhaul the policymaking process? So far Asians – such as Singapore or China – are more adept perhaps because the long-range strategic outlook is more culturally rooted and rewarded. There’s no doubt strategy is harder in a democratic society where outside of a war situation there’s little agreement on the means or even ends. The hope is that a younger generation of policymakers will want to change how decisions are made and integrate strategic foresight.

There’s no doubt strategy is harder in a democratic society where outside of a war situation there’s little agreement on the means or even ends. The hope is that a younger generation of policymakers will want to change how decisions are made and integrate strategic foresight.
The future is a risky business: out of the apparently infinite possibilities that exist, only one will actually materialise. Foresight consequently feels like a very unfair roulette, and its effectiveness is often compared to that of dart-throwing monkeys, beaten by the unlikely appearance of a black swan.

But this perception is simply untrue, for a simple reason: the future is not an unknown galaxy, but an extension of today. That means that we have a vast array of information available to help us narrow down the chaotic infinity of the future. But how do we use this information effectively?

Firstly, we create a clear set of categories into which we sort the trends we can measure (if it is not measurable today it is speculation and does not belong into foresight). We then differentiate between trends according to their lifespan: some trends will last a decade or longer (often referred to as megatrends); others will unfold over five years or so (I like to call them catalysts). Both these trends are not easily changed by humans. But there are also those trends where the trajectory is not defined yet but depends entirely on decisions to be taken (they can be called forks in the road, game-changers, or decision-making points). Thanks to these categories we should be able to see more clearly what we can, and cannot change, about the future.

In a second step, we need to put these trends into relation with each other. After all, none of these trends exist on their own, but they are accelerated or decelerated by others. This step serves as a reality check of the first one – it checks how trends interact with each other, how they will make implementing decisions regarding game-changers difficult – or indeed, easier.

When done this way, the analysis gives decision-makers a roadmap narrowing down infinity to a set of areas where their efforts are most required, outlining obstacles that might appear on the way, as well as solutions and potential developments. Instead of being risky, the future can then be opportunity.

The future is a risky business: out of the apparently infinite possibilities that exist, only one will actually materialise.
ASPIRATIONAL FUTURES FROM OUR NEXT GENERATION

Catarina Tully
Director, FromOverHere; Founder, School of International Futures

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out a vision of a sustainable, secure, inclusive world where no one is left behind by 2030. In 2015, all countries agreed to ‘implement this Agenda for the full benefit of all, for today’s generation and for future generations’.

Juxtapose this extraordinarily ambitious agenda with reality. The dawning realisation of climate volatility and shrinking planetary boundaries. A proliferation of migration flows. Weak signals of a digital hyper-globalised economy with the potential to amplify inequalities, the collapse of generational political settlements and social contracts, and a regulatory vacuum as society struggles to adapt to technological innovation.

Will our aspirations fall by the wayside as we face the realities of these growing challenges?

Now, more than ever, we need a systematic process for engaging with uncertainty. We need to double down on our ambitions while acknowledging potential risks and systemic failures. We need to create hope amidst turmoil. We need Strategic Foresight. In the 2019 OECD Development Cooperation Annual Report, I describe how foresight helps us engage with emerging technologies, adapt to volatility through partnerships and dialogue, and support the development of common, strong and collaborative visions. And any journey to transformational futures – where no one is left behind – must include marginalised communities and future generations.

The practice of Strategic Foresight itself must rise to this opportunity by reflecting new voices and new approaches.

This was our intent at SOIF (the School of International Futures), when we launched the Joseph Jaworski Next Generation Foresight Practitioners Award to identify, support and showcase global, innovative practice in Strategic Foresight. The Award, and the Sensing Network it has established, are a first step in supporting and connecting innovative practice from new geographies and new generations.

A wide range of key issues surfaced – from the role of futures to empower youth and provide agency over their future, future urban leadership, foresight for prevention and risk mitigation, migration, food security, and decolonised approaches to foresight that promote inclusion. Next generation approaches explored capabilities of Artificial Intelligence, data science as tools to support futures work, new foresight methodologies and models, and ways to communicate. We hope this is the first step of what will become a global accelerator for emerging foresight leaders.

The inaugural Special Awardees – thirteen winners from five continents - have travelled here to be with you at ESPAS. Please seek them out and ask them about their work shaping our emerging futures.

The practice of Strategic Foresight itself must rise to this opportunity by reflecting new voices and new approaches.
THE ESPAS YOUNG TALENT NETWORK
**EUBook**: The one and only EU social platform! Following an overhaul of EU competition rules there are no more social digital platforms – the EU is your digital interface! EUBook represents all EU institutions and allows you, EU citizens from around the world, to connect. As soon as you are born, you automatically become a member of EUBook. You can follow your leaders, you can express your opinion on every topic. By engaging actively in discussions, in virtual activities, and dialogues with citizens from all other EU Member States, you are rewarded in bitcoins (EUcoins) that you can spend on an array of services. Enjoy and do not worry about anything: the Cybersecurity and Data Protection Offices of the EU are monitoring and guaranteeing the smooth and secure running of EUBook!

**EUVote**: A new simplified voting system for legislative proposals. EU citizens are all part of a safe and protected voting community based on a blockchain system. When you vote, you earn cryptocurrency. Conversely, failing to vote means losing currency! Not all votes carry the same weight, our weighted voting system takes into account age, medical history, geographical location (whether you are resident in the EU or not), your interest in the topic, and your carbon emission. When you do not know how to vote you can ask EUiri – a software that generates your most likely vote based on your digital history and profile. You can obviously also check how your friends and relatives voted.
YesEUcan: Choose what’s in the EU’s annual work plan. All citizens can participate in a yearly public consultation on the EU’s work plan, i.e. its priority areas. You can participate in two ways: in a more active way (virtual engagement) or a more simplified way (through simple digital methods). Depending on your choice, hence your involvement, your vote will carry more or less weight. At the beginning of each calendar year, you have to signal through your private ‘digital passport’ how you want to engage in the process. If you choose virtual, you will be part of our virtual deliberative focus groups and will be contacted by our cyber experts by September; if you chose digital: just go on EUbook and get involved!

MMF (Multiannual MEMBERSHIP framework): Every five years, Member States can decide whether to stay in the EU. The budget and institutional representation are then tailored accordingly with the help of Artificial Intelligence, which makes the adjustments easy. If a Member State decides not to be part of the EU family, the digital profile of its citizens on EUBook and EUVote are frozen, and they are not able to express preferences for YesEUcan on their ‘digital passport’ where the wording ‘membership on hold’ will appear. But not to worry! Nothing is forever, and we are happy to welcome Member States back at any given MMF cycle!
YOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE ESPAS 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Take a picture and share via Twitter - use #espas18
A LOOK BACK; A LOOK FORWARD: FROM ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE TO ANTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

European Commission

The Ebola epidemic, the annexation of Crimea; Isis’ global emergence; the migrant and refugee crisis; Charlie Hebdo; the Zika outbreak; the Brussels attacks; the Brexit vote; Turkey’s failed coup; the election of President Trump; Xi Jinping’s Davos speech; President Macron’s election; the United States’ withdrawal from the Paris agreement and the Iran Deal; a looming global trade war...

When the European Political Strategy Centre first embarked on its extraordinary journey with its EU partners in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System it could hardly have foreseen how much the world would change in the ensuing years.

Today, we could be on the cusp of a new international order whose contours are not yet fully understood. The sequence of events above is just a ‘post-it’ of how much has happened in such a short amount of time.

During this period of ‘polycrisis’, the European Union proved its resilience and was able to continue affirming its values and defending its interests globally, from trade to climate change. But nothing achieved so far should be taken for granted.

In a more interconnected and interdependent world, where change – boosted by new technologies and innovation – is increasingly fast-paced, agility and anticipatory governance become ever more important to deal with new challenges and crises, as well as to identify opportunities to prosper.

And, in a world where democracy and freedoms have declined in the past 12 years and Europe is confronted with increasing polarisation and political fragmentation, as well as challenges to evidence-based policymaking and the rise of disinformation, fake news (and very soon deep fakes), anticipatory governance needs to be upgraded to ‘anticipatory democracy’.

More than that, against a backdrop of resurgent power politics and the apparent growing global appeal of alternative governance models, anticipatory democracy is a necessity. It is the key to keeping our societies, economies and institutions resilient in the future.

Anticipatory democracy means that long-term strategic thinking must be reconciled with democratic electoral cycles and take into account the constraints and needs of democratically elected leaders. Especially in what pertains to the ongoing global technological race, policy- and decision-makers in liberal democracies need to find solutions to keep up with the fast pace of change while upholding democratic deliberation – even as some of their key competitors do not subject themselves to such constraints.

Since 2014, many steps have been taken at the EU and Member State levels to build-up and mainstream anticipatory and strategic foresight capabilities. ESPAS, this unique EU inter-institutional project, is living proof of this. But these efforts must and will continue as they are key to building the resilience our democratic systems require.

This journey should not be made alone, but together. Never has it been so important to engage both within the EU and with our allies and counterparts from around the world to reflect on common global trends and challenges, and on how to shape the rules and frameworks that will govern our future actions.

As we mark the centennial of the Armistice that put an end to one of the world’s deadliest conflicts, let us pledge not to repeat the mistakes of the past and look at the future as a ‘global commons’ that we all need to preserve.

Let us pledge not to repeat the mistakes of the past and look at the future as a ‘global commons’ that we all need to preserve.
Europe has much to do to reassert its position as a global actor in this changing world. While the European Union represents a highly sophisticated system of transnational governance, there are several barriers to its further development. One is the difficulty in promoting a European identity. Another is the need to find better ways to coordinate strategy and policy across different levels of government. The unused potential in the EU Treaties needs to be exploited. Internally, we need to emphasise the cost of not having a European framework for challenging current problems; externally, we need to build a community of values with continental democracies.

There is ample room to expand the European Union’s capacity to deal with high-level policy challenges, from securing external borders to combatting climate change. European trade and investment flows span the globe, and we need to remain globally competitive. Governance of the euro calls for ambitious and far-reaching institutional changes. We need to improve cohesiveness among EU Member States, and solidarity among our citizens. Measures to improve the safety of our external frontiers are also needed.

Security and defence presents another challenge. The transatlantic partnership was a cornerstone of Europe’s post-war recovery, and will be part of the picture long into the future. But this should not obscure the need for Europe to develop its own capacities and capabilities. The 21st century offers a very different mix of threats and opportunities than the 20th century; Europe needs to rethink and update its approach accordingly.

Economic strength remains a key dimension of Europe’s international role. The need here is to innovate our way into tomorrow’s economy. The alternative is to risk becoming locked in to outmoded and vulnerable structures. Comparatively high levels of prosperity and of educational achievement are advantages to be exploited. Europe also needs to invest heavily – and effectively – in cutting-edge research and development.

There are differing views about how best to distribute competences between national and European authorities in specific areas. There is a dawning realisation that increased European cooperation, on the one hand, and more robust national governance, on the other, need not be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, closer continental cooperation leads to greater national resilience. But there can be no doubt that a roll back of European integration would leave each Member State worse placed to overcome challenges, not better. Turning back on the achievements of the European Union is a sure way to undermine Europe’s global influence.

International realities have changed, and new thinking is needed about roles and responsibilities across levels of governance in the EU. To become a genuine pole in world affairs, the Union must be prepared to embrace brave and ambitious reforms.

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The European External Action Service

The multilateral order is being challenged in unprecedented ways. And yet, the most pressing global problems can only be resolved collectively. Multilateralism, based on shared rules and principles, continues to be the best model to address the most pressing global challenges of our times. At the same time it offers the most promising way to ensure peace, security and prosperity for Europeans and the rest of the world alike. At the same time, in a rapidly changing global environment, our approach to what kind of multilateral order we promote must necessarily evolve.

The European Union actively engages in support of the multilateral system, not least through actively supporting the United Nations. It is also advancing multilateralism through support to key milestones of the multilateral system, such as the Human Rights Council, the Paris agreement, the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, widely known as the SDGs, as well as the UN Global Compact on Migration or the Iran nuclear deal. The European Union is also actively engaged in strengthening the basis of multilateral cooperation by working closely with regional organisations around the world.

Still, in a rapidly changing global environment, our approach to what kind of multilateral order we promote must necessarily evolve. Reforms to promote a more robust and effective system must begin by assessing where the system needs to adjust to the new international environment and to the new challenges of our times. An ever more connected world requires that in addition to peace and security, human rights, development and climate change, questions of social justice and economic distribution are addressed at a global level. Global migration will need to be tackled collectively and in pragmatic ways. It will also become increasingly important to harness the opportunities of the digital revolution and prevent the risks posed to citizens around the world by authoritarian attempts to exploit new technologies for mass supervision and to curtail personal freedoms.

A more inclusive multilateral order will be both more legitimate and more effective in responding to the global challenges of our times. The EU should step-up efforts to support reforms and the modernisation of important existing organisations such as the UN or the Bretton Woods institutions and to look into how better to cooperate with other international institutions and formats such as the G20 or the Asian Investment Bank.

The aim is a level playing field for all countries, big and small, that can counter the current trend towards great power competition, which risks side-stepping the interests of large sections of the global population. The EU needs to invest more in a multi-stakeholder approach and to become more creative in global and regional partnerships. In order to be an effective global player and a strong partner and ally, the EU will also need to remain flexible and should invest on building its strategic autonomy as means to better leverage its efforts in support of effective multilateralism.
Populism and Euroscepticism are rapidly gathering momentum in Europe, even becoming a feature of national governments’ coalitions. This puts European values that go back as far as the foundation of the European Community – values that still held sway in recent history – at great risk. Populism is not new but after the financial crisis and the refugee crisis following the civil war in Syria, it has for the first time come to the fore of social and political life in countries that, until now, were regarded as having strong democratic systems. The entire political spectrum is being directly or indirectly influenced by populist ideas, dominated by a steady stream of strident statements by populist politicians, fake news and the ever more sophisticated manipulation of information, disseminated mainly using social media. By playing on negative emotions, this relentlessly detracts from fact-based discussion and democratic values.

Instead of giving in to defeatism, we must remember that few human events or developments are ever necessary or unavoidable. History has often shown us how decisions taken at key moments can be to the progressive advantage, or to the detriment of, humanity. The European parliamentary elections in 2019 are going to be one of those decisive, game-changing moments, but it is only now that it seems to be dawning on many supporters of the European project and of European values, both in the wider European public sphere and at national level, just what is at stake. Having said that, the fact remains that the hard work to preserve democracy starts long before electoral campaigns.

Ultimately, populism divides society into two homogenous, opposed groups – the ‘pure’ versus the ‘corrupt elite’. Populist leaders appropriate the right to represent the ‘people’, implicitly delegitimising all other parties, associations and organisations. From this populist perspective, there is no room for involvement in the political process between the ‘people’ and the ‘elites’. On the contrary, we believe that democracy would be deeply flawed without the intermediary participation of the public. Democracy needs a variety of independent actors, well-rooted in society, to guarantee free and rational public debate, ensuring that those in power are transparent and accountable. In other words, what we are advocating is participatory democracy.

Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union formally recognises the role of participatory democracy through civil dialogue, consultation and the European citizens’ initiative. Even more now than in the past, there is an urgent need to identify and close the gaps in democratic representation that populists often exploit. Strong civil society is the best protection against authoritarianism and populism and there is evidence that being a member of an association (civil society organisation, social partners, etc.) counters populist attitudes. Ultimately, it is only through greater transparency and ownership, and the participation of citizens and organised civil society at both national and European level, that Europe will be able to avoid extremism, defend its democratic values and build a community of common destiny.
European Committee of the Regions

In a global landscape, where a single vision for the way global power will evolve in the future no longer exists, new actors with global ambition are becoming increasingly powerful.

More than just being a global trend, this can also be seen as a new form of ‘governance fabric’ requiring, in turn, a fresh mind-set to address global challenges – climate change, migration, resource scarcity – and transnational issues such as the rise of inequalities, threat of extreme violence and terrorism and fragmentation of societies in a place-based, solution-oriented context. In the growing competition between places that matter and places that don’t matter, the criteria of sustainability and resilience will, progressively, make the difference.

The ever-growing relevance of cities and metropolitan regions in the 21st century indisputably makes them game changers. They increasingly gather and exercise unexpected capabilities and political influence at a global level. Therefore, nations states’ importance will also depend on their digitally and physically connected, knowledge-based world cities. Empowering cities and metropolitan regions allows them also to become seats of power alongside traditional nation states and international organisations.

Governance is now multipolar, multilateral and multilevel.

Old ways of thinking and governing are no longer appropriate. The most important principle needed to understand the new global hierarchy is that flows are more important than attributes. Connectivity will be the catalyst for change in the coming decade. Globalisation and digitalisation will profoundly change the essence and nature of global power in the context of regulating flows. The global connectivity revolution and polycentric governance are paving the way for a new paradigm, as evidenced from the fact that megacities and metropolitan regions already have a higher GDP per capita than their corresponding national average.

Collective decision-making across national borders that addresses critical challenges cannot neglect the growing power of cities and metropolitan regions in shaping the future. Urbanisation, technology and capital accumulation are fast making the ‘non-State world’ scenario ever more likely. In that respect, the European Union, as a regional and global power, must take advantage of the attractiveness of its cities and metropolitan regions, its singular position and experience of the integration process to cope with the diversity and growing heterogeneity of the global system.

Collective decision-making across national borders that addresses critical challenges cannot neglect the growing power of cities and metropolitan regions in shaping the future.
BIOGRAPHIES

OF THE

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TO ESPAS

2018
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Antonio Barroso is a Managing Director with Teneo. He is responsible for coordinating the firm’s global political risk research platform and for the specific coverage of France, Portugal and Spain. He has almost a decade of experience in advising investors and corporations on political risk in Europe. He is a frequent public speaker and a regular media commentator on political and economic issues, with frequent contributions to the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Bloomberg and CNBC.

Prior to joining Teneo, Antonio was a Senior Analyst at Eurasia Group where he co-developed the firm’s Western Europe coverage. Previously, he worked for the Center for Political and Constitutional Studies under the Spanish Ministry of the Presidency, where he conducted research about EU institutional reform. He also worked for the Center for Sociological Research in Madrid, where he developed public opinion polls and managed the fieldwork of a major international survey.

Antonio is currently writing his doctoral dissertation at the London School of Economics. He received master’s degrees from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs in New York and the College of Europe in Bruges. He also holds a BA in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Granada in Spain.

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Dr Benedetta Berti is Head of Policy Planning in the Office of the Secretary General at NATO. An Eisenhower Global Fellow and a TED Senior Fellow, in the past decade Benedetta has held research and teaching positions at West Point, The Institute for National Security Studies and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, among others. Her work focuses on armed groups and internal wars, analysing the impact of insecurity on civilians. Dr Berti is the author of four books, including Armed Political Organisations. From Conflict to Integration (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013) and her work and research have appeared, among others, in Al-Jazeera, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. Twitter handle: @benedettabertiw

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Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, which received widespread praise in the international media. Other positions included assignments as special assistant to the US UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and deputy national security advisor to US Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill. He received a BA from Wesleyan University and a PhD from the University of Cambridge.

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Jim Cloos is Deputy Director-General in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union where he oversees teams dealing with the preparation of European Council meetings, co-legislation, inter-institutional relations, and support to the rotating Presidency.

He started his career as a diplomat, working at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU from 1987 to 1992 and eventually became the Deputy Permanent Representative.

During the Luxembourg Presidency in 1991, Jim Cloos actively contributed to the drafting of the Maastricht Treaty. After joining the European Commission, he headed the Cabinet of the European Commissioner in charge of Agriculture (1993-1995) and the Cabinet to the President (1995-1999). He was also Director for relations with the US in the Council Secretariat (2001-2006) and a close collaborator of the High Representative Javier Solana.

▶ MIKOŁAJ DOWGIELEWICZ
Mikolaj Dowgielewicz was appointed head of European Investment Bank (EIB) Brussels office and permanent representative to the EU institutions in September 2015.

From 1998 to 2000, he worked in the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bronislaw Geremek.

In 2003, he became adviser on enlargement to Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament and, in 2007, he entered the Cabinet of the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margot Wallström. In December 2007, he was appointed Secretary of State in the Office of the Committee for European Integration (OCEI). In July 2008 he was appointed Government Plenipotentiary for Presidency of the EU Council. In January 2010 he became Secretary of State for European Affairs and Economic Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the second half of 2011 he chaired the EU General Affairs Council during the Polish Presidency of the Council. In March 2012, he was unanimously elected Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) by the Bank’s 40 Member States.

▶ DANIEL W. DREZNER
Daniel W. Drezner is professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and the author of Spoiler Alerts for the Washington Post. Prior to Fletcher, he taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has previously held positions with Civic Education Project, the RAND Corporation and the US Department of the Treasury, and received fellowships from the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Council on Foreign Relations, and Harvard University. Drezner has written six books, including All Politics is Global and The System Worked, and edited two others, including Avoiding Trivia. He has published articles in numerous scholarly journals as well as in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Politico, and Foreign Affairs, and has been a contributing editor for Foreign Policy and The National Interest. He received his BA in political economy from Williams College, an MA in economics and a PhD in political science from Stanford University. His latest book, The Ideas Industry: How Pessimists, Partisans, and Plutocrats are Transforming the Marketplace of Ideas, was published by Oxford University Press in the spring of 2017.
**James Elles**

James Elles was a British Conservative Member of the European Parliament for the South East region of the UK from 1984 to 2014. Since stepping down, he has remained active in a number of fields. Apart from being Chairman of the South East Conservative European Network (SECEN), he is a Member of the Steering Committee of the European Internet Forum (EIF) (which he co-founded in 2000). He also continues to chair the Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN), which he founded in 1992, and is Honorary President of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis (ESPAS) which he started in 2010, examining long-trends to focus on priority challenges facing the EU in the years ahead.

**Florence Gaub**

Dr Florence Gaub is the Deputy Director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies. In addition to overseeing the institute’s research activities, she works on strategic foresight as well as the Middle East and North Africa. She is widely published and currently the penholder for the upcoming ESPAS report *Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe*. Her two latest publications include *The Cauldron: NATO’s Libya campaign* and *Guardians of the Arab State: Why militaries intervene in politics*.

Previously employed at NATO Defence College and the German parliament, she wrote her PhD on the Lebanese army at Humboldt University Berlin and holds degrees from Sciences Po Paris, Sorbonne and Munich universities.

**Elissa Golberg**

Elissa Golberg was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy at Global Affairs Canada in September 2017. She is also currently the department’s champion for innovation.

Ms Golberg has successfully pioneered complex policy and multi-million dollar programme initiatives, and led multi-disciplinary teams working on significant international peace and security, human rights, emergency management, and sustainable development challenges.

From 2015 to 2017, she was Assistant Deputy Minister for Partnerships for Development Innovation at Global Affairs Canada, where she oversaw Canada’s multi-sectoral and multi-country investments in sustainable development through civil society organisations and led the department’s development innovation agenda.

Prior to that, from 2011 to 2015, Ms Golberg served as Canada’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament (2011-15) where she chaired several important global processes including in relation to a fissile material cut-off treaty, polio eradication, violence against women, human rights special procedures, humanitarian action and forced displacement.

Other recent previous roles have included Director-General of the Canadian Government’s Stabilisation and Reconstruction Task Force (2009-11); and Representative of Canada in Kandahar, Afghanistan (2008-9).

Born in Montreal, Ms Golberg holds a Master’s degree in International Relations, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History. She is a recipient of the NATO ISAF General Service medal, the Queen’s Jubilee Medal, the Public Service Award of Excellence, and 3 Ministers’ Awards for Foreign Policy Excellence. She has been a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, and a member of the Forum’s Global Agenda Council on Violence and Fragility. She has published articles on humanitarian, fragile state and public policy related matters.
ANTHONY GOOCH

Anthony Gooch is Director of Public Affairs & Communications at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Since joining in 2008, he has played a key role in managing the OECD’s major international public campaigns in response to the ongoing global economic crisis on sensitive issues, such as the fight against tax havens, BEPS (Base erosion and profit shifting) tax rules for Multinational Companies, Fighting International bribery and promoting standards on Education (PISA). To help the OECD recast the concept of well-being, he pioneered the OECD Better Life Index (www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org). More recently he has taken the lead in framing and shaping OECD’s response to the challenge of the ‘post-truth’ era. Prior to joining the OECD he had a 13 year career at the European Commission during which he coordinated International Trade negotiations with the Latin American region, was Special Adviser to EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy & EU Spokesman for International Trade and represented the EU in its Delegations to the United States and the United Kingdom.

HEATHER GRABBE

Heather Grabbe is Director of the Open Society European Policy Institute in Brussels. From 2004 to 2009, she was senior advisor to then European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, responsible in his cabinet for the Balkans and Turkey. Before joining the European Commission, she was deputy director of the Centre for European Reform, the London-based think tank, where she published widely on EU enlargement and other European issues. Her writing has appeared in the Financial Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and The Guardian, among others. Her academic career includes teaching at the London School of Economics, and research at Oxford and Birmingham universities, the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House, London), and the European University Institute (Florence). Her publications include Defending EU Values in Poland and Hungary (with Stefan Lehne, 2017, Carnegie Europe), The Closing of the European Mind – and How to Re-Open It, Can the EU Survive Populism? and The EU’s Transformative Power: Europeanisation through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe (2006, Palgrave).

DANIEL GROS

Daniel Gros has been the Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) since 2000. Among other current activities, he serves as adviser to the European Parliament and is a member of the Advisory Scientific Committee of the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) and the Euro 50 Group of eminent economists. He has held past positions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Commission, and served as advisor to several governments, including the UK and the US at the highest level. He is editor of Economie Internationale and International Finance. Daniel Gros holds a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago and is the author of several books and numerous articles in scientific journals. His main areas of expertise are the European Monetary Union, macroeconomic policy, economics of transition to a market economy, public finance, banking and financial markets.
BÉRÉNICE GUYOT-RÉCHARD

Bérénice Guyot-Réchard is Lecturer in 20th Century International History at King’s College London and is a specialist of modern South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Her award-winning work focuses on the long-term impact of decolonisation on the world as we know it today, particularly in terms of international politics. She has written extensively on Sino-Indian relations and on the strategic borderlands between India, Burma and Tibet, most notably in Shadow States: India, China and the Himalayas, 1910-62 (Cambridge University Press, 2016). She is currently working on a history of the Indian Ocean since 1945. She regularly intervenes on South Asia-related issues in international media and policy circles.

EMMANUEL GYIMAH-BOADI

E. Gyimah-Boadi is Executive Director of Afrobarometer, which he co-founded in 1999, as well as the founder and former executive director of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).

A former professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana, Legon, he has held faculty positions at universities in the United States, including the School of International Service of the American University (Washington, DC), and fellowships at the Center for Democracy, Rule of Law and Development (Stanford University), the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the US Institute of Peace, and the International Forum for Democratic Development. He is a fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Democracy and the Advisory Council of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (London), among others.

He received his doctorate from the University of California (Davis) and undergraduate degree from the University of Ghana, Legon.

Gyimah-Boadi’s articles have appeared in the Journal of Democracy and UNU-WIDER, among others. He is co-author of Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa (Cambridge University Press, 2005). He has received a myriad of awards, including the 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Peace and Social Justice for advancing democracy, good governance, and economic opportunity. His latest award, the African Studies Association’s 2018 Distinguished Africanist Award for outstanding scholarship and service to the Africanist community, will be presented on 1 December 2018.

ANNETTE IDLER

Annette Idler is the Director of Studies at the Changing Character of War Centre, Senior Research Fellow at Pembroke College, and at the Department of Politics and International Relations, and affiliate at the Latin American Centre, all University of Oxford. She is also Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, Graduate Institute Geneva. She holds a doctorate from the Department of International Development and St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford.

Annette has conducted extensive fieldwork in the war-torn and crisis-affected borderlands of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, analysing the relationships among rebels, criminals and paramilitary groups and exploring their impact on citizen security.

Her research interests as an academic and policy adviser lie at the interface of conflict, security and transnational organised crime, especially drug trafficking as well as terrorism, peace building and governance. She is particularly interested in the role that diverse types of violent non-state groups play in these dynamics. Among other areas, she focused on the political economy of borderlands as spaces were criminal, terrorist and conflict dynamics converge. Methodologically, she is fascinated by the use of ethnographic methods in Political Science and International Relations, drawing on insights from Anthropology, Sociology, Criminology, Development Studies and Area Studies.
SHADA ISLAM

Shada Islam is Director for Europe & Geopolitics at Friends of Europe, where she is responsible for policy oversight of the think tank’s initiatives, activities and publications. She has special responsibility for issues related to the Future of Europe, Migration, the Asia Programme and the Development Policy Forum. Shada is Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Natolin) where she teaches Asia-Europe relations and has been selected as a fellow by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). She was named one of twenty most influential women in Brussels by Politico. Shada is the former Europe correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review and has previously worked on Asian and Migration issues at the European Policy Centre. She is one of the authors of Friends of Europe’s much-read Frankly Speaking commentary and is sought after as a speaker, commentator, columnist and moderator at high-level European and global events. Shada also continues to write on EU foreign and security policy, EU-Asia relations and trade and development issues for leading Asian, European and international publications and academic journals.

JAKUB JANDA

Jakub Janda is Head of the Kremlin Watch Programme and Director of the European Values Think-Tank based in Prague. He specialises in the response of democratic states to hostile disinformation and influence operations. He is Associate Fellow at the Slovak Security Policy Institute and a regular contributor to the Atlantic Council. He serves a member of the Editorial Board of the expert portal AntiPropaganda.sk and is a proud member of the Active Reserves of the Czech Armed Forces.

In 2016 – 2017, he was tasked by the Czech security and intelligence institutions to consult on an ‘Influence of Foreign Powers’ chapter within the Audit of National Security conducted by the Czech government, where he was involved in the Czech policy shift on this issue. Since 2015, he was asked to provide briefings or trainings in more than 20 countries. In the past he has worked for the humanitarian agency ADRA International and for a Member of the Czech Parliament.

JIE (CHERRY) YU

Yu Jie (Cherry) is Research Fellow at the Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House, focusing on the decision-making process of Chinese foreign policy as well as China’s economic diplomacy. She speaks and writes frequently at major media outlets such as BBC and the Financial Times and regularly briefs senior policy practitioners from the EU institutions, the UK Cabinet Office, and the Silk Road Fund in Beijing, as well as advises major corporates such as UBS and Royal Dutch Shell. Dr Yu has testified at the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. She was Head of China Foresight at LSE IDEAS, the foreign policy think tank at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Prior to LSE, she was a management consultant, specialising in Chinese state-owned enterprises investments in Europe and Chinese market entry strategies for European conglomerates at the London Office of Roland Berger Strategy Consultants. Dr Yu has been recognised as a ‘Leading Woman’ of the London School of Economics and remains an associate of LSE IDEAS.
EVA KAILI

Eva Kaili is a Member of the European Parliament representing the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and affiliates with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D).

She chairs the Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and is member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

Prior to joining the European Parliament, Eva Kaili worked as a journalist and television news presenter. She has a bachelor’s degree in architecture and engineering from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a Master of Arts in International Relations and is currently studying towards a PhD in International Political Economy with the University of Piraeus.

She is also actively involved with Love146, an international organisation fighting against child slavery and exploitation.

CASPER KLYNGE

Since September 2017, Casper Klynge has been Denmark’s and the world’s first Tech Ambassador spearheading the Government’s decision to elevate technology to a foreign policy priority as part of the TechPlomacy initiative. Working out of Silicon Valley, Casper has a global mandate with part of his team sitting in Copenhagen and in Beijing, rethinking the traditional understanding of diplomacy and diplomatic representations in the process. Before leading the tech representation, Casper served as Ambassador of Denmark to Indonesia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea & ASEAN (2014-2017) and to the Republic of Cyprus (2013-2014). Prior to that, Casper had several positions within the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has also functioned as the Senior Civilian Representative / Deputy Head of NATO’s multinational Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan (2010-2011), and as Head of the European Union’s civilian crisis management mission in Kosovo (2006-2008). Mr Klynge holds a Master degree in Political Science, and he is a 2009 Marshall Memorial Fellow.

BRIGID LAFFAN

Brigid Laffan is Director and Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. She was Vice-President of University College Dublin (UCD) and Principal of the College of Human Sciences from 2004 to 2011. She was the founding director of the Dublin European Institute UCD from 1999 and in March 2004 she was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

In September 2014, Laffan was awarded the UACES (University Association for Contemporary European Studies) Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2012 she was awarded the THESEUS Award for outstanding research on European Integration. In 2010 she was awarded the Ordre national du Mérite by the President of the French Republic.
CHRISTIAN LEFFLER

Christian Leffler is Deputy Secretary-General in charge of Global and Economic Issues at the European External Action Service (EEAS). Mr Leffler has previously held the post of Managing Director for the Americas (North, Central and South America and the Caribbean) at the EEAS and Deputy Director-General at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Development. In 2010, he has acted as an adviser to the High Representative on issues concerning the creation of the EEAS. Prior to this he was head of Cabinet to Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström. Mr Leffler began his career at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He served at the Embassies in Egypt and France before going to Brussels in 1991 to participate in Sweden’s EU accession negotiations. He has worked on institutional issues and external relations at the European Commission since 1996.

PEI SHAN LIM

Pei Shan Lim is the Head of Centre for Strategic Futures (CSF), a strategic foresight unit in the Singapore government. She previously served at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, where she worked on launching Singapore’s third government-to-government project with China. Pei Shan is an alumna of the former Strategic Policy Office (the forerunner to the CSF), where she worked on foresight and whole-of-government strategy. She started her career in the Ministry of Defence covering regional politics, and subsequently human resource strategy. Pei Shan read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford. She also has a Masters in Political Science from Columbia University and a Masters in Public Policy from Peking University.

KISHORE MAHBUBANI

Professor Kishore Mahbubani is Senior Advisor (University & Global Relations) and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, where he also served as Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy from 2004 to 2017. Concurrently, Prof Mahbubani serves in the Boards and Councils of institutions around the world, including the Yale President’s Council on International Activities (PCIA), University of Bocconi International Advisory Committee, World Economic Forum - Global Agenda Council on Geo-economics and as Chairman of the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize Nominating Committee. Before that, he enjoyed a long career with the Singapore Foreign Service from 1971 to 2004. He had postings in Cambodia (where he served during the war in 1973-74), Malaysia, Washington DC and New York, where he served two stints as Singapore’s Ambassador to the UN and as President of the UN Security Council in January 2001 and May 2002. He was Permanent Secretary at the Singapore Foreign Ministry from 1993 to 1998. He also served as a member of Commission of Eminent Persons under the chairmanship of the former President of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo to advice the International Atomic Energy Agency from 2007 to 2008.

Prof Mahbubani has spoken and published globally. He is the author of Can Asians Think?, Beyond The Age Of Innocence, The New Asian Hemisphere, The Great Convergence (which was selected by the Financial Times as one of the best books of 2013) and Can Singapore Survive?, and co-author of The ASEAN Miracle. His latest book, Has the West Lost it? A Provocation was published in April 2018. More information on his writings can be found at www.mahbubani.net.

Prof Mahbubani was awarded the President’s Scholarship in 1967. He graduated with a First Class honours degree in Philosophy from the University of Singapore in 1971. From Dalhousie University, Canada, he received a Master’s degree in Philosophy in 1976 and an honorary doctorate in 1995. He spent a year as a fellow at the Center for International Affairs at
Harvard University from 1991 to 1992. Prof Mahbubani was conferred The Public Administration Medal (Gold) by the Singapore Government in 1998. He was listed as one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world by Foreign Policy and Prospect magazines in September 2005, and included in the March 2009 Financial Times list of Top 50 individuals who would shape the debate on the future of capitalism. He was selected as one of Foreign Policy’s Top Global Thinkers in 2010 and 2011. In 2011, he was described as ‘the muse of the Asian century’. Most recently, he was selected by Prospect magazine as one of the top 50 world thinkers for 2014.

Antonella Mei-Pochtler is the Special Advisor to the Austrian Chancellor and leader of the newly established strategy unit ThinkAustria. She is also a Senior Advisor to The Boston Consulting Group where she was one of its senior leaders based in its Vienna office until the end of 2017. Her other activity is focused on board positions (J.A. Benckiser SE from 2005 – 2011, PCapital from 2007 – 2014, Wolford AG from 2013-2017, Westwing AG from 2018) and not-for-profit organisations in the data driven health and education areas (DKMS,Teach for All). She is also a co-initiator of BCG’s educational initiative business@school, for which she received the Freedom and Responsibility award from the German government in 2002, and the co-founder of the German Phorms school network. In 2008, she was voted one of the world’s 10 best consultants by Consulting Magazine and in 2013 she was awarded its lifetime leadership award. She was recently voted one of the 25 female CEO candidates of a DAX company.

Antonella Mei-Pochtler was born in Rome and went to the German School. She then studied Business Administration at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich with a scholarship of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and at the University of Rome. She earned her MBA at INSEAD in Fontainebleau with the Dean’s List Award.

She has written many articles on a wide range of topics, and a selection of essays has been published in her book Acupuncture for Management.

Ann Mettler is the head of the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), the in-house think tank of the European Commission. The EPSC provides specialised and forward-looking advice to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and consists of six teams, covering economy, social affairs, sustainable development, foreign and institutional affairs, as well as outreach and communication.

Prior to assuming her position in December 2014, Ann was Executive Director of the Lisbon Council, a Brussels-based think tank, for eleven years. From 2000-2003, she worked at the World Economic Forum, where she last served as director for Europe.

Ann holds Master’s Degrees in political science and European law and economics, and graduated with distinction from the University of New Mexico, USA, and the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Bonn, Germany.

Nicolas is President of The Future Society, which he co-founded in 2014 and incubated at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. The think-and-do tank specialises in questions of impact and governance of emerging technologies, starting with Artificial Intelligence through its ‘AI Initiative’. A recognised thought-leader, strategist and implementer, Nicolas advises governments, international organisations, NGOs and industrial players across Europe, America and Asia. Nicolas is a member of the OECD High-Level Expert Group on AI Governance, and of the Global Council on Extended Intelligence (IEEE and MIT Media Lab). He teaches at Sciences Po Paris, is a Visiting Professor at the IE School of Global & Public Affairs in Madrid and at the Dubai School of Government. Nicolas is also a
Senior Visiting Research Fellow with the Programme on Science, Technology and Society at Harvard Kennedy School, and a Fellow with the Center for the Governance of Change at IE Business School in Madrid.

▶ CARLOS MOEDAS

Carlos Moedas is European Commissioner in charge of Research, Science and Innovation since 2014. He graduated in Civil Engineering from the Higher Technical Institute (IST) in 1993 and completed the final year of studies at the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris (France). He worked in engineering for the Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux group in France until 1998.

He obtained an MBA from Harvard Business School (USA) in 2000, after which he returned to Europe to work in mergers and acquisitions at investment bank Goldman Sachs in London (UK).

He returned to Portugal in 2004 as Managing Director of Aguirre Newman and member of the Executive Board of Aguirre Newman in Spain. In 2008, he founded his own investment company, Crimson Investment management.

In 2011, he was elected for the National Parliament and was called for the government to Secretary of State to the Prime Minister of Portugal in charge of the Portuguese Adjustment Programme.

▶ JOHN D. PODESTA

John D. Podesta served as Counselor to President Barack Obama. His duties included overseeing climate change and energy policy. In 2008, he served as co-chair of President Obama’s transition team.

He is the former Chair of the Washington, DC-based think tank Center for American Progress and the Center for American Progress Action Fund. Prior to founding the Center in 2003, he served as White House chief of staff to President Bill Clinton.

He also recently served on the President’s Global Development Council and the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Additionally, Podesta has held numerous positions on Capitol Hill, including counselor to Democratic Leader Senator Thomas A. Daschle (1995-1996).

Podesta currently serves as Chair of Hillary for America, where he oversees campaign policy, communications, and strategic engagement.

A Chicago native, Podesta is a graduate of Knox College and the Georgetown University Law Center, where he is a visiting professor of law.

▶ TAREK OSMAN

A syndicated essayist at several international newspapers, Tarek Osman is the author, most recently, of Islamism: A History of Political Islam (Yale University Press, 2017). His internationally bestselling book Egypt on the Brink (Yale, 2010) was included in Foreign Policy magazine’s top-ten books of 2011. He wrote and presented several BBC documentary series including Minds at War (2016), Sands of Time: A History of Saudi Arabia (2015), Islam Divided: Sunni-Shii (2015), and The Making of the Modern Arab World (2014). Having given the 2015 inaugural lecture at Oxford University’s Middle East Centre, Oxford University Press included him among the international scholars who contributed to its 2017 ‘Democracy Under Threat’. Project-Syndicate selected him to contribute to its state of the world report, launched at the World Economic Forum, in Davos in 2017. He is currently working with Cambridge University Press on a major project on British interests in the Middle East in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Tarek is the Senior Political Counsellor for the Arab World at the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD).
Joshua Polchar is a policy analyst and strategic foresight facilitator at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Working in the Office of the Secretary-General and the Trends Shaping Education team, he designs and delivers interventions and processes to build anticipatory capacity in a range of organisations.

Joshua has lived in three countries and worked with many more. Before joining the OECD, Joshua worked at The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. A graduate of the Oxford Scenarios Programme, Joshua holds a master’s degree in Political Science from the University of Amsterdam, and a bachelor’s in French with International Studies from the University of Warwick.

Zuzanna Radzik is a Catholic theologian, journalist and Executive Board Member at the Forum for Dialogue.

A graduate of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Warsaw as well as the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, she specialises in Jewish-Christian relations. She is also co-managing Forum for Dialogue, the oldest and biggest Polish not-profit working for Polish-Jewish reconciliation.

She regularly contributes to the Catholic weekly Tygodnik Powszechny and comments on the religious issues in the other Polish media. Her debut article published when she was 19 led to the shutting down of an anti-Semitic bookshop in Warsaw.

After she discovered that it is hard to do any work in the Catholic Church while being a woman, she published two well-received books about women in the Church and Christian feminism and continues her effort to uphold Catholic feminism in Poland.

Martin Rees is a cosmologist and astrophysicist, UK Astronomer Royal, and Director of the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at Cambridge University. He has been Director of the Institute of Astronomy, a Research Professor, and Master of Trinity College. He was President of the Royal Society during 2005-2010. In 2005 he was appointed to the UK’s House of Lords. He belongs to numerous foreign academies including those of the US, Russia and the Vatican. He has served on many international bodies connected with education, research and space and has won many international prizes for his research. He has also been concerned with the threats stemming from humanity’s ever-heavier ‘footprint’ on the global environment, and with the runaway consequences and disruptive consequences of ever more powerful technologies. His most recent book, On the Future: prospects for humanity has just been published.

Daniel H. Rosen is the founding partner of RHG and leads the firm’s work on China. He has more than two decades of experience analysing China’s economy, corporate sector and US-China economic and commercial relations. He is affiliated with a number of American think tanks focused on international economics and is an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University. From 2000-2001, Mr Rosen was Senior Adviser for International Economic Policy at the White House National Economic Council and National Security Council. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a board member of the National Committee on US-China Relations.
ANNA ROSLING RÖNNLUND

Together with Hans Rosling and Ola Rosling, Anna Rosling Rönnlund founded Gapminder in 2005. Gapminder’s mission statement is to fight devastating ignorance with a fact-based world view everyone can understand.

She designed the user-interface of the famous animating bubble-chart tool called Trendalyzer, used by millions of students across the world, to understand global development trends. The tool was acquired by Google, and Anna worked at Google in Mountain View, California as a Senior Usability Designer 2007 to 2010. At Google, Anna improved search results for public data, developed data exploration tools for Public Data and made a bubble tool gadget (Motion chart) in Google Spreadsheets. In 2010, Anna came back to Gapminder to develop new free teaching material. Anna is now Vice President and Head of Design & User Experience at Gapminder. She also sits in the Gapminder Board. Anna holds a Master’s Degree in Sociology and a Bachelor’s Degree in Photography.

Anna founded Dollar Street, the biggest systematic image bank with representative home documentations based on data. At the moment we have almost 30 000 photos and 10 000 video clips, which are free to use under Creative Common license.

HELGA SCHMID

Helga Schmid has served as Secretary-General of the European External Action Service since 2016. Before that, she was its Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs, since 2011, and she was also Director of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (Policy Unit) of the High Representative for the CFSP in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union from 2006 to 2010.

Before coming to the EU, Helga had served as Head of the Political Staff of Germany’s Federal Foreign Office in Berlin and Head of the Minister’s Office (2003 to 2005); as Deputy Head of the Political Staff of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin and Deputy Head of the Minister’s Office (2000 to 2003); Political Adviser to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (1998 to 2000); and Political Adviser to Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel (1994 to 1998).

She also worked as a Press and Public Affairs officer at the German Embassy in Washington (1991 – 1994) and as Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for European Affairs (1990 – 1991).

DANIEL SCHWAMMENTHAL

Daniel Schwammenthal has been the Director of the AJC Transatlantic Institute since 2011. Before joining the Institute, Mr Schwammenthal worked for seven years as an editorial page writer and op-ed editor for The Wall Street Journal Europe in Brussels and Amsterdam, writing about EU politics and economics, the Arab–Israeli conflict, Iran, radical Islam and terrorism.

ALEV SCOTT

Alev Scott is a British-Turkish writer based in Athens. She is the author of the recently published Ottoman Odyssey (2018) and Turkish Awakening (2014). She writes for the Financial Times, Guardian and Politico, among other papers.
KRISTIN SHI-KUPFER

Kristin Shi-Kupfer is Director of the Research Area on Public Policy and Society at The Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS). She heads MERICS’ research on politics, society and the media. She is an expert on media policy, civil society, religious policy and ideology in China.

She previously worked as a research associate at the University of Freiburg’s Institute for Sinology. She earned her PhD from Ruhr University Bochum with a thesis on spiritual and religious groups in China after 1978. From 2007 to 2011 she was the China correspondent for the Austrian news magazine Profil, the German Protestant Press Agency (epd) and Südwest Presse in Beijing. She also worked as a freelance contributor for other media like ZEIT Online, Die Tageszeitung (taz) and Deutsche Welle in China. In May 2017, Shi-Kupfer was appointed member of the expert committee of the German-Chinese platform on innovation under the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Radosław Sikorski is Senior Fellow at Harvard, Distinguished Statesman at CSIS and principal of Sikorski Global. He was Poland’s Minister of Defence (2005-2007), Foreign Minister (2007-2014) and Speaker of Parliament (2014-2015). He served as a war reporter in Afghanistan and Angola. 2001-2005 he was Resident Scholar at AEI and director of its New Atlantic Initiative. Together with Carl Bildt, he launched EU’s Eastern Partnership. He proposed and helped to set up the European Endowment for Democracy. In 2014 he led the EU mission to Kiev, which stopped the bloodshed on the Maidan. Foreign Policy magazine named him one of 100 global policy intellectuals ‘for speaking the truth even when it’s not diplomatic.’ Radek Sikorski graduated from Oxford University with a B.A. in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He is married to the writer Anne Applebaum.

ERIN SIKORSKY

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FRANS TIMMERMANS
Frans Timmermans began his career with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1987. After taking part in the diplomat training programme, he worked at the European Integration Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Moscow. He later worked for Hans van den Broek, European Commissioner for External Relations, and Max van der Stoel, High Commissioner on National Minorities for the OSCE.

In 1998, Frans Timmermans was elected as a member of the House of Representatives for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA), where he dealt principally with foreign affairs. In the fourth Balkenende government, from February 2007 to February 2010, Mr Timmermans was Minister for European Affairs. In 2010, Mr Timmermans returned to Parliament as the Labour Party’s spokesperson on foreign policy.

On 5 November 2012, Mr Timmermans became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the second Rutte government. Two years later, on 1 November 2014, he became First Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for better regulation, interinstitutional relations, sustainable development, the rule of law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
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Cat Tully is the founder of the School of International Futures (SOIF). SOIF helps leaders, communities and organisations engage with the future, to make better decisions today. SOIF runs projects and foresight retreats across the world and has 600 alumni in 50 countries. Cat advises on and teaches strategic foresight, emergent strategy and system stewardship internationally.

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She has nearly 20 years of experience in forward-looking strategy and policy advisory roles. She works with senior executives and policy makers including heads of state, ministers, heads of international organisations and think tanks, and CEOs providing the insights, resources and processes to help them turn long-term strategic thinking into actions and impacts.

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KLAUS WELLE

Klaus Welle has been Secretary-General of the European Parliament since 2009, where he has had a long career. In this capacity he is the European Parliament’s most senior official. From 2007 until 2009 he was the head of the Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament. From 2004 until 2007, he was the Director-General for Internal Policies at the European Parliament. From 1999 until 2003, he was the Secretary-General of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament. From 1994-1999 he was Secretary-General of the EPP Party. Mr Welle holds a degree in Economics from the University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany.