

# International Institute for Peace

The International Institute for Peace (IIP) is a non-governmental organization with consultative status to the ECOSOC and UNESCO

The IIP functions as a platform to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution across the world to a wide range of stakeholders – scholars, diplomats, practitioners, military personnel, and civil society as well as students and private citizens. The Institute strives to address the most topical issues of the day and promote dialogue, public engagement, and a common understanding to ensure a holistic approach to conflict resolution and a durable peace.



INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTE FOR  
PEACE

## Annual Report 2020



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## Preface

The year 2020 was an incredibly challenging one. The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly showed how fragile and vulnerable established structures, institutions and states are. We saw how easily things fall apart, which we took for granted for a long time. Free travelling, open borders, economic stability, education, health care and stockpiling of health-related goods – concepts which were a reality for most of the people living in the so-called West or the first world. These concepts, however, have never been a reality for many people living in areas of conflict and war, in areas of drought and malnutrition, in poverty, in authoritarian states. While the focus of the year 2020 clearly was to cope with the pandemic and its consequences all over the world plus the election of a new US president, it is important not to forget about the most vulnerable, their needs, desires, and their hopes for a prosperous future.

Undeniably, 2020 posed a challenge for the work of the IIP as well. How to continue advocating for democracy and human rights when people cannot meet anymore? How to continue to collect information on the ground when travelling is not possible? Finally, how to continue to share background information on ongoing conflicts when there is no safe space for activists and civil society, diplomats, scholars, and military to meet confidentially and engage in an open dialogue?

As everyone else, we were confronted with all these questions in the beginning of March. However, we must say that even with all the restrictions we were and are still facing, we managed to keep up our work quite vividly. Taking advantage of digital tools, we switched to online meetings and discussions. Thus, since the pandemic hit Europe, our Institute has held more than 40 events in 2020, covering international security and disarmament, transatlantic relations, developments in the Middle East and North Africa region, conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, developments in the Western Balkans, climate and health care and many other timely topics. Even though we observe geopolitical developments all over the world, it is at the center of the IIP's work to consider the impact of these developments on basic human rights and democracies and especially on the individual citizens and societies that are affected by these politics and policies.

We were proud to learn that the IIP, as the only foreign policy institute from Austria, has been included in the global think tank [ranking](#) by the University of Pennsylvania. This recognition as one of the top think tanks in Western Europe gives us an additional incentive to continue our efforts in making expert analysis available to the broader public and fostering conflict resolution and peace. Our goal is to bring to one table different points of views, without hiding our interest in promoting democracy and human rights globally, while not forgetting about cooperation, partnership and solidarity, diversity and gender-equality and the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

We would like to express our gratitude to our team, Marylia Hushcha and Luka Cekic, to our Vice-President Angela Kane and the Chair of the Advisory Board Heinz Gärtner, our interns Joy Hellers and Patrick McGrath, to all members of our Executive and Advisory Boards who have continuously supported our work with innovative ideas, proposals, written contributions, and by participating in discussions, talks and conferences organized by the IIP. Very importantly, we also thank to our audiovisual technician Michel Andriessen for his indispensable support and dedication that proved to be especially valuable this year.

In March 2020 we held the IIP General Assembly that was followed by an Advisory Board meeting in September where we discussed the future of our work, how to be more effective and stringent and how to extend our network in the spirit of cooperation and shared values. Our honorary president Erwin Lanc celebrated his 90th birthday on May 17th and we hope that we can congratulate him personally as soon as the situation allows it, and to thank him for his continued engagement for so many years.

We also would like to express our thanks to all persons, institutions, and organizations within Austria and broad for the fruitful cooperation in our fields of activities. Peace cannot be reached alone, but depends on cooperation and solidarity, on shared values and engagement. Peace is more than the absence of war. It includes dignity, social and economic security, democracy, fulfillment of human rights and a prospect for a thriving future for states and their citizens.

*Stephanie Fenkart & Hannes Swoboda*

## About the IIP

The International Institute for Peace (IIP) is an international, non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. The IIP has consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and the United Nations Organization for Education, Science, Culture and Communication (UNESCO). It operates on the basis of Austrian law as a non-profit association. Established in 1956, the Institute was re-founded by its former president Erwin Lanc in 1989, and its current president is Dr. Hannes Swoboda.

The IIP functions as a platform to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution across the world to a wide range of stakeholders – scholars, diplomats, practitioners, military personnel, and civil society as well as students and private citizens. The Institute strives to address the most topical issues of the day and promote dialogue, public engagement, and a common understanding to ensure a holistic approach to conflict resolution and a durable peace.

In order to address the diverse and multifaceted approaches to peaceful conflict resolution, the IIP collaborates with various national and international institutions and organisations (see our [partners](#)). The IIP, both alone and through collaborations, organizes lectures, conferences, seminars, background talks, workshops, and symposia on a wide range of issues.

In recent years, the IIP has focused in particular on the areas of international security, disarmament, arms control, migration, and non-proliferation. On a regional level, the IIP emphasizes the EU's neighborhood, including the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership countries, Russia, the Middle East, and Africa. However, the IIP has also featured events on topics ranging from the arts and EU foreign policy to the Korean peninsula and Latin America.

The IIP's values:

- **Diversity and dialogue:** The IIP seeks to include and represent voices and perspectives from a variety of backgrounds and identities.
- **Peace and human rights:** The IIP emphasizes the need to support and protect human rights and peace at all times and in all circumstances, both in our events and discussions as well as through our actions.
- **Cooperation and partnership:** The IIP strives to actively collaborate with partner organizations to utilize our relative strengths and foster teamwork.
- **Gender:** The IIP aims to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspectives, from ensuring equal representation on panels to highlighting gender as a topic. The IIP is a proud member of [International Gender Champions](#), a leadership network that brings together female and male decision-makers to break down gender barriers.
- **Nonpartisanship:** The IIP avoids all partisan affiliations and works to engage with voices from all political parties and outlooks.
- **Public engagement:** The IIP welcomes all interested members of the public to our panel events and discussions and publishes information and recaps of all events to improve accessibility.
- **Support for our interns:** The IIP is committed to paying its interns in order to allow students and young professionals to gain practical experience in the field.

## IIP Team and Board



**Hannes Swoboda, President**



**Angela Kane, Vice President**



**Stephanie Fenkart, Director**



**Erwin Lanc, Honorary President**



**Heinz Gärtner, President of the Advisory Board**



**Marylia Hushcha, Research Assistant**







**Joy Hellers**, Project Assistant



**Luka Cekic**, Project Assistant



**Patrick McGrath**, Project Assistant

## **Executive Board**

**Dr. Hannes Swoboda**, President; former MEP

**Dr.h.c. Mag. Angela Kane**, Vice President; former Undersecretary General at the United Nations

**Dr. Klaus von Dohnanyi**, Vice President, former MP at the German Bundestag

**Mag. Stephanie Fenkart**, M.A., Director

**Prof. Dr. Anton Giulio d'Robertis**, Board member, University of Bari

**Prof. Dr. Vivien A. Schmidt**, Board member, Boston University

**RA Dr. Leopold Specht**, Board member, Specht & Partner Rechtsanwalt GmbH

**Monika Begović, PhD**, Board member, President of the Atlantic Council of Croatia

**Dr Grigori Lokshin**, International Association of Peace Foundations (IAPF) in Moscow

## Advisory board

**Prof. Heinz Gärtner**, Chair of the Advisory Board, lecturer at the University of Vienna

**Prof. Vladimir Baranovsky**, Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)

**Mw. Prof. Dr. L.a. Luiza Bialasiewicz**, University of Amsterdam

**Dr. Irina Bolgova**, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO)

**Adnan Ćerimagić**, European Stability Initiative, Germany

**Dr. Matthias Dembinski**, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

**Dr. Vedran Džihic**, University of Vienna

**Amb. (ret.) Dr. Thomas Hajnoczi**, former Ambassador at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs

**Dr. Sergei Konoplyov**, Harvard University

**Mag. Gudrun Kramer**, Austrian Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution

**Dr. Pascal Lago**, Avenir Suisse, Switzerland

**Dr. Pascal Lottaz**, Waseda Institute for Advanced Study in Tokyo

**Yauheni Preiherman**, Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations

**Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. Markus Reisner PhD**, Theresian Military Academy, Austria

**Dr. Thomas Roithner**, peace researcher, Austria

**Dr. Mher Sahakyan**, China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research, Armenia

**Prof. Dr. Georg Schild**, University of Tübingen

**Prof. Annita Sciacovelli**, University of Bari

**Dr. Saskia Stachowitsch**, Austrian Institute for International Affairs

**Amb. (ret.) Dr. Fred Tanner**, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

**Dr. Dimitrios Triantaphillou**, Kadir Has University, Istanbul

**Mag. Waltraut Urban**, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies

**Vice Admiral (ret.) Rinaldo Veri**, Italian navy

**Alida Vračić MSc.**, Popolari, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Mag. Lukas Wank**, Shabka, Vienna

**Mmag. Martin Zartl, MSc.**, Austrian Orient-Society Hammer-Purgstall Association for the Middle East

## IIP in Numbers





# Projects and Activities



## International Security and Disarmament

2020 will be remembered first and foremost for the COVID-19 pandemic. It broke out in the Chinese city of Wuhan and soon spread all over the world. Apart from tremendous challenges to the healthcare sector, the pandemic created new political dilemmas and reinforced already existing ones. Many dormant conflicts and problems suddenly passed over the brink, leading to social unrest (Black Lives Matter movement), deadly accidents (explosion in Beirut), political turmoil (Kosovo and Belarus), acts of terrorism (beheadings in Mozambique and the attack in central Vienna) and war (Nagorno-Karabakh and Ethiopia).

2020 once again demonstrated that in the extremely interconnected and technologically advanced world, existential security threats are same for the whole planet. Climate change, pandemics, threats of nuclear explosions and terrorism do not know state borders and sooner or later, they will affect us all. International cooperation and global solutions are desperately needed. Global security would improve if more resources were invested into healthcare, environmental protection, education and economic opportunities for the population, rather than weapons production and purchase. In other words, human security is the recipe for the 21st century. Ironically, the healthcare sector has also become a hostage of geopolitical competition this year, as the global race in the development of the COVID-19 vaccine has demonstrated. It is therefore not only the resources that should be rechanneled into human security oriented industries, but also our minds need to be rewired to work in a more cooperative spirit. Needless to say, this is easier said than done.

Challenges to multilateralism have been further underscored. The world has witnessed the United States' withdrawal from the World Health Organization in the midst of a global pandemic. It has seen the institutional crisis in the OSCE whose Special Monitoring Mission in Eastern Ukraine has proven to be essential on one hand, but the organization barely played a role in the Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire agreement, despite decades of negotiations under its auspices between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference has been postponed due to the epidemiological situation. It remains to be seen whether this delay will be conducive to a more cooperation among the state parties that are scheduled to meet in 2021.

Against the background of many setbacks in the international arms control and disarmament regime that happened this year (examples include the US' withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty, inconclusive talks over New START extension, and Iran's uranium enrichment activities that surpassed all limits set in the JCPOA), one positive development stands out. With the ratification by Honduras of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the required number of ratifications by State parties was reached for the Treaty to enter into force. The TPNW will thus become binding international law that prohibits another class of weapons of mass destruction.

States possessing nuclear weapons and their allies are still reluctant to join the TPNW and condemn its very existence. However, the Treaty has been supported by the majority of world nations, establishing an international norm which has already put palpable political pressure on nuclear weapons states. For Austria in particular, the Treaty's entry into force signifies a foreign policy success. Vienna was one of the parties that in the 2000s initiated a diplomatic process that eventually led to the conclusion of the TPNW.

2020 has also marked the 65th anniversary of Austria's neutrality. To commemorate the date, the IIP held a conference that gathered researchers of neutrality and non-alignment from Austria and abroad. The participants discussed historical origins of neutrality in states' foreign policies and debated how neutrality can be applied under current geopolitical circumstances. Does Austria's EU membership comply with its neutrality law? How can Japan or Belarus be neutral in their foreign policies, while at the same time remaining US and Russia's allies, respectively?

EU's global standing has been another widely debated issue. Ursula von der Leyen's Commission declared the EU should become a geopolitical Union. The Union's *Weltpolitikfähigkeit* and the meaning of strategic autonomy have been discussed at another conference that the IIP organized together with partners. The second Vienna Peace and Security Talks tackled issues of migration, climate change, challenges at the EU's Southern and Eastern borders, as well as the internal divisions among member states. Inclusive approaches to security and their implementation on the European level have been identified as imperative. Thus, it has been a welcome development that by the end of the year the EU adopted a Gender Action Plan to be implemented in the EU's external action.

Twenty years ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that became a milestone in mainstreaming gender perspectives in security and conflict resolution areas. The role of women in conflict has for a long time been neglected. Women have been often treated as victims of conflicts and their contribution to conflict transformation and peace processes has neither been sufficiently recognized, nor utilized. Significant progress has been made since 2000 but challenges have remained. Sweden and France have adopted feminist foreign policies, while other EU members also expressed interest. With the Gender Action Plan adopted on the European level this November, the EU can take the global lead in promoting a gendered approach to foreign policy.

In the emerging multipolar world, it is important for Europe to consider how it can become one of new centers of power, while preserving its old alliances. What relationship should it develop with China? How can the EU cooperate with Beijing in mutual spheres of interest without neglecting human rights issues? Similar dilemmas are relevant for EU-Russia relations. What strategy should the EU adopt in the Middle East where its influence has been waning lately, be it in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Libya, or Iran? How will EU-Africa relations develop, considering the starkly different demographic trends on the two continents?

A short example vividly illustrates the EU's dilemma. The negotiation of the JCPOA, while spearheaded by the Obama administration in its final steps, required years of quiet diplomacy by the Europeans. The agreement became largely dysfunctional after the US withdrew from it. The lesson to learn here is that the EU needs to communicate its foreign policy achievements more clearly, as well as have contingency plans in order to be strategically autonomous. Better communication and more resolute action would improve the EU's global standing in the areas where it already is a leader, for example in climate policy, development assistance, and gender equality.

The IIP will continue following developments around the globe and particularly in the EU Neighborhood in 2021, bringing international expertise to the Viennese and European public.

*Marylia Hushcha*



## Selected projects

### **FRIENDS WITH ENEMIES**

#### Neutrality and Nonalignment Then and Now

Commemorating 65 years of Austrian neutrality law IIP and partners held a two-day conference on neutrality and nonalignment. Thirty years after the end of the Cold War, the ‘End of History’ is as far away as always, and the international security environment is changing again. With the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and novel ideas for security mechanisms in Europe, the world of US-led unipolarity is drawing to a close. Alliances in Europe and Asia are not as clear-cut as they used to be and even core institutions like NATO or the US-Japan alliance have come under pressure unheard of only a decade ago. What does that mean for neutrals and nonaligned countries? Researchers and practitioners came together to debate neutrality in the twenty-first century.

Date	2-3 March 2020
Venue	University of Vienna - Skylounge, Oskar-Morgenstern Platz 1, 1090 Vienna
Format	Conference
Partners	Waseda Institute for Advanced Study, Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna PEN-Club Austria
Participants	Heinz Fischer (President of Austria 2004–2016); Hannes Swoboda (President of IIP, former MEP); Heinz Gärtner (IIP, University of Vienna, Austria); Pascal Lottaz (Waseda University, Japan; IIP Advisory Board); Stephanie Fenkart (Director of IIP); Peter Ruggenthaler (LBIKF, Austria); Johanna Rainio-Niemi (U Helsinki, Finland); Vasileios Syros (U Jyväskylä, Finland); Laurent Götschel (Swisspeace, Switzerland); Eva Nowotny (University of Vienna); Nikolai Sokov (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Nonproliferation); Christine Muttonen (Former President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly); Pascal Lago (Researcher for Security Policy at Avenir Suisse, IIP Advisory board); Peter Jankowitsch (Ex-Foreign Minister, Austria); Angela Kane (former Under-Secretary General at the UN, Vice-President of IIP); Yauheni Preiherman (Chair of Minsk Dialogue Council on Foreign Relations, IIP Advisory Board); Herbert Reginbogin (CUA, USA); Keiichi Kubo (Waseda University, Japan); Andrew Cottey (University College Cork); Thomas Roithner (Peace Researcher, Vienna; IIP Advisory Board); Christoph Reinprecht (University of Vienna); Helmuth Niederle (poet, President PEN Austria); Antonia Rados (Journalist); Gerda Sengstbratl, (writer, Austria); Josef Winkler, (writer, Austria); Sarita Jenamani, (poetess, India); Tarek Eltayeb, (poet, Egypt); Mitra Shahmoradi, (poet and artist, Iran); Hamid-Reza Odjaghi, (musician, Iran)
Workshops	Neutrality and Nonalignment in a Historical Perspective The Neutrals and Geopolitics The Role of Neutral and Nonaligned States in Multilateral Institutions Neutrality, Non-Alignment and Values—From Good Offices to Engagement Neutrality and Art—The Art of Independence Readings by Authors from Nonaligned Countries





## Resolution 1325 and Gender in Security Policy – 20 years on

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted by the UNSC in October 2000. The resolution drew attention to the role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses, and post-conflict reconstruction. Specifically, it called for women to be involved and included equally in matters related to peace and security. As a result, UN member states were called upon to increase the participation of women in peace and security efforts and integrate a gender perspective. Further, the resolution asked for member states to take special measures to prevent gender-based violence that disproportionately impacts women and girls in conflict, including rape and sexual assault. Twenty years on from the passage of the resolution, to what degree have its stated aims been implemented or successfully achieved? How is gender currently incorporated in peace and conflict resolution efforts across the world today? And what is the role of gender in national security policymaking? This panel sought to answer these questions and more, as it commemorated the twenty-year anniversary of Resolution 1325. The panelists each provided a short presentation, which was followed by a Q&A session open to all audience members.

Date	30 April 2020
Format	Online panel discussion
Partners	Women in International Security Austria
Moderation	PATRICK MCGRATH, Project Assistant, IIP
Participants	ANGELA KANE, Vice-President of the IIP; former Under-Secretary General at the United Nations MARTIN DEXBORG, Advisor on Gender Issues at the OSCE CLARA BOHMAN, Researcher and Project Manager at WIIS



## Consequences of COVID-19 and the Implications for Disarmament

Date 1 July 2020  
Format Blog article  
Author THOMAS HAJNOCZI, Ambassador (ret.) at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, member of the IIP Advisory Board

The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing the inadequacy of decades-old concepts pretending to be indispensable for both national and international security. The virus does not respect any borders, political views, economic strength, or ambition as superior. As in previous pandemics, death is the great equalizer.

The pandemic has underlined that security, whether on the national or international scale, is always human security: the security of people living in a certain state or, more broadly, on our globe. The fallacy of juxtaposing human and national security has become evident.

Human beings face many different dangers. Climate change and natural catastrophes rank high among them. Only one of them - and certainly not the most likely - is a military attack by another state. While governments should strive to prepare for all possible threats to the security of their populations, hundreds of thousands of people are now paying the price for a disproportionate concentration on the military dimension. COVID-19 shows that more often than not, arms cannot buy security. And certainly not the most costly ones: nuclear weapons. According to figures publicly available, in 2019 alone, \$73 billion was spent on nuclear weapons worldwide. Only a tiny fraction of this spent on the healthcare sector would have made our societies better prepared and more resilient to the coronavirus. It has been calculated that for the UK's share of nuclear weapons-related expenditures, 100.000 intensive care unit beds, 30.000 ventilators, 50.000 nurses, and 40.000 doctors could have been financed.

In a world suffering from COVID-19, it is beyond any doubt that investment in health should be a priority. Furthermore, the trillions of dollars necessary for shoring up severely-hit economies and sustaining millions of unemployed people will have to be repaid over the next years. Thus, public expenditures will have to be cut in some sectors. This makes spending billions on arms programs every year an obvious candidate. The ongoing modernisation programs of nuclear weapons alone may reach trillions of dollars over the coming years. Insistence on a certain budget percentage for defence or continuing the qualitative arms race seem out of touch with the post-COVID reality. It remains to be seen whether rationality will prevail here.

The lack of rationality of political leaders has contributed to making COVID-19 such a severe pandemic. Academia and the WHO have warned already for years that a new zoonotic disease or a new strain of a known one will spread sooner or later. In spite of those exhortations to prepare better for a possible pandemic, the preparations undertaken were at best insufficient. An international organization always depends on the cooperation of its member states starting, from receiving relevant data speedily to sending missions. A late response will delay and hamper effectively addressing a pandemic. An international Lessons Learned exercise after COVID-19 will be essential and will demand reinforced international cooperation to be better prepared for the next potential pandemic. An important aspect should be focusing on improved international cooperation in the early detection of a dangerous virus and its spread. A possible area to study might be setting up an international monitoring system for the surveillance of viruses and other biological agents.



A highly successful example of an international organization achieving just that is to be found in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The organisation has built up its International Monitoring System (IMS) to provide a global surveillance system regarding nuclear tests. The IMS is complimented by a global communications structure and the International Data Center, which ensures the rapid dissemination of relevant information to all State Parties. This phenomenal achievement has proved to be helpful beyond its main function of detecting nuclear tests to the speedy identification of earthquakes leading to the prevention of tsunamis and the provision of rapid assistance. An approach modeled on the CTBTO for viruses might help to depoliticize the issue and allow for far greater resilience through international cooperation.

It is a trait of human nature that we do not like to stand out by delivering bad news on issues in our areas of responsibility. A well-rehearsed procedure to collect and swiftly transfer relevant data in a neutral way to a competent, impartial international organization could limit the risk of suppression and speed up the distribution of relevant information to all countries. This could in turn enable the adoption of the necessary precautionary measures and preparations as early as possible. Blaming certain groups or one other for being the culprit of a pandemic has happened many times in history but has never made the world a safer place.

In addition to this lack of rationality in preventing a pandemic, a number of political leaders have not proven adept at taking rational decisions in order to give absolute priority to saving lives. A political or sometimes personal agenda, such as a short-term advantage over locked-up economies or success at elections or military parades, was sometimes prioritized over the advice of scientific experts. This behaviour jeopardized human lives and led to increased damage to the economy. It is most disconcerting that such irrational behaviour of political leaders often happened in nuclear-armed states. Similar irrational behaviour would pose an existential risk in a crisis that might lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Then the number of victims of wrong decisions would not be counted in the tens of thousands but in the millions of people. The concept of nuclear deterrence that nuclear armed states still adhere to presupposes the total rationality of their political decision makers. The evidence of the corona crisis shows, however, that this cannot be relied upon, which in turn demonstrates the lack of credibility of the very concept of nuclear deterrence. Other reasons why nuclear deterrence cannot provide security in today's world exist as well: the impact of cyber and hypersonic speed making retaliation unreliable or increased multipolarity, just to name a few. In the post-COVID world, a serious discussion on how to get away from basing national security on such an outdated concept is overdue.

In the history of mankind, pandemics have come and gone time and again. Statisticians warned that the fact that 100 years since the Spanish flu no dramatic worldwide pandemic has broken out does not mean that this would be the last in modern times. On the contrary, with every year the probability of an outbreak has increased. But decision makers preferred to look the other way and were then surprised when COVID-19 came, reacting mostly too little and too late. Statisticians also underline that the fact that no nuclear weapon has been used for over 75 years does not mean that the probability has decreased close to zero. On the contrary, the longer the time without a nuclear weapon explosion, the higher the probability of one in the next years, whether unintentionally or intentionally. In spite of a very small margin of probability for each nuclear warhead, the present global arsenal of approximately 13.400 carries a considerable risk. Here too decision makers look the other way instead of intensifying nuclear disarmament and taking risk reduction measures such as de-alerting or no-first-use policies. The lack of preventive measures against the use of nuclear weapons would lead to a health crisis of a

magnitude that could not be managed, even after taking the best preparatory measures. The best window into the inhumane effects of a single atomic bomb might be gleaned from the devastation and lingering effects for generations inflicted on innocent civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years ago. And yet these two bombs were a fraction of the size of the thousands of warheads that make up today's arsenals.

Experts assume that COVID-19 may return in the form of a slightly modified virus, but other pathogenic substances might also cause old or new forms of pandemics. Technological progress might well allow states or terrorist groups to manufacture a synthetic pathogen. As in the case of nuclear weapons, a confined, localized use of a synthetic pathogen as a weapon would not be possible, so the user state or terrorist group would inflict damage on its own people. Since the attack by a sect in Tokyo many years ago, we have proof that this does not scare away some people. Others believe that nuclear weapons are usable weapons. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences are evident, yet there is no guarantee that such a weapon would never be used. After COVID-19, work on strengthening the biological weapons convention now seems more urgent than before.

The fundamental question is whether our worldview reflects our real needs or just our preferences. Do we want to see the world as a zero-sum game between two powers – absurd in a multipolar world – where geopolitical and economic competition determine the course of history? Such a worldview is appealing to our archaic instincts that our tribe is superior to others, but how can it contribute to the solution of big global security issues such as climate change, nuclear weapons, or the solution to the present COVID-19 crisis? The clear answer is that it does not – it only leads to a confrontational spirit that hinders necessary worldwide cooperation.

There is hardly a better example than COVID-19 for the need for international cooperation and multilateralism. As long as the disease is rampant and the world population remains unvaccinated, we will see further outbreaks that will spread again. Effectively addressing this danger necessitates multilateral cooperation that goes beyond states and international organisations. A multi-stakeholder model that also encompasses science, industry, academia, and civil society is the most effective way of working together in the 21st century. The platforms for such cooperation are multilateral fora and international organisations. This applies equally to addressing the nuclear weapons threat. Confining the discussion to military security specialists and diplomats of nuclear armed states prevents a comprehensive and more realistic view. Since it concerns the security of all states and ultimately the survival of mankind, the stakeholders are universal.

At a time when most nuclear disarmament treaties are ended and multilateral negotiations are not taking place at all, it is time to look for a new impetus. Will some of the lessons from the COVID-19 crisis also be applied in disarmament affairs?




## All Activities: International Security and Disarmament

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

January 29 | Making the Case – Die Gefahren von Killer Robotern und die Notwendigkeit eines präventiven Verbotes 

February 3 | Another Concerning Setback in Arms Control 

February 26 | Arms Control and Disarmament: Challenges and Opportunities for the European Union 

March 2-3 | Complete Interviews from 2020 Neutrality and Nonalignment Conference 

March 2-3 | Friends with Enemies: Neutrality and Nonalignment Then and Now 

April 17 | NATO, Russia, and Covid-19 

April 29 | Might Feminism Revive Arms Control? Why Greater Inclusion of Women in Nuclear Policy is Necessary and How to Achieve It 

April 30 | Resolution 1325 and Gender in Security Policy - 20 years on 

May 1 | Reforming the UN Security Council: A Discussion with Mona Ali Khalil and Angela Kane 

May 19 | The Postponed 2020 NPT Review Conference: Another Setback or a Window of Opportunity? 

May 27 | Ankaras Sturmreiter fegen über Libyen - Markus Reisner für zenith 


July 1 | Consequences of COVID-19 and the Implications for Disarmament 

July 9 | Strategic Dilemmas Facing the UN in the Post-Corona World 

July 20 | Not a Good Date to Commemorate 

July 23 | Ein neuer Weg für Europa? Die deutsche Ratspräsidentschaft in unsicheren Zeiten 

July 31 | Die Geopolitik der Atombombenabwürfe auf Hiroshima und Nagasaki 

September 28 | Buchbesprechung: "The Button: The New Nuclear Arms Race and Presidential Power from Truman to Trump" - William J. Perry and Tom Z. Collina 

September 29 | EU's New Ambition – How To Be More Geopolitical Nowadays 

October 1 | Interview with Dr. Clara Portela: A Geopolitical EU and the Power of Sanctions 

October 13 | Austria and its Neutrality—A Tradition with Potential 



October 22 | Conference Less Arms, More Peace: On Women, Peace and Security and the Future of Disarmament 🎬 📌

October 27 | Neutralität zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft 🎬

November 2 | Religion muss von Terror gelöst werden 📌

November 10 | Terror attack in Vienna 📌

November 12 | Antisemitismus, Islamismus und Terror 📌

November 20 | Europas Kampf gegen den Islamismus 📌

November 26 | Jihadi terrorism, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Austrian discourse on Political Islam 📌

November 26 | Interview with Herbert R. Reginbogin: International Day of Neutrality and the Future of Neutrality 🎬

November 26 | Atomare Aufrüstung 🎬

December 3 | What does Biden's presidency mean for the World and Iran? 📌

December 21 | Der größte Hacker-Angriff in der US-Geschichte 📌



## Transatlantic Relations

2020 marked a new low in the relations between the USA and the EU. For many decades, EU countries and the US were strong allies in building international security and defense, strengthening international trade and economic development, and supporting democratic values – including respect for universally-recognized human rights and the rule of law. The approach most suitable for reaching common goals and creating a “friendly environment” was a common understanding that these goals can best be reached through multilateral approaches – an ideal that the EU strives to maintain until today.

At the core of this multilateralism was the idea of confidence-building and trust through transparency and the conviction that everyone benefits from cooperation – even while acknowledging that this might differ between countries and regions to a certain extent. Furthermore, since the liberation from the Nazi regime in 1945, the US and Europe strived to establish common values based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, values which are part of international and European law. Even though they are not always respected by the US (extrajudicial killing of Iranian general Ghassem Soleimani in January 2020, actions of secret services, etc.) and by Europe (internal democratic challenges in Hungary and Poland) human rights and democratic values have to be respected, protected and fulfilled.

However, Europe in 2020 saw itself increasingly confronted with a US leadership that sought to destroy multilateral agreements following the slogan from the 2016 Donald Trump elections campaign “America First”.

### International Security

The suspension of the INF Treaty, the end of the Open Skies Treaty, sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC), the threat of sanctions in the context of Nord Stream II on EU governments or public companies, the attacks on the German export surplus (esp. in the automobile industry), and the withdrawal of one-third of US troops stationed in Germany clearly show that the spirit of cooperation and compromise after WWII and later during the Cold War has vanished. These recent developments marked a new low point in transatlantic relations, and the decision of the Trump administration to allow its military to use anti-personnel landmines – weapons that are especially inhumane and cruel and whose usage was restricted in 2014 during the presidency of Barack Obama, with the exception of the Korean Peninsula – is another concerning development when it comes to respect for human lives and physical integrity.

The so-called *end of arms control* since the suspension of INF and Open Skies treaty, the American unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA (so-called Iran nuclear deal), the verbal attacks from the US on its NATO allies and now the doubtful future of *New Start Treaty* which expires in February 2021 places Europe, also due to its geographical position, at risk. Additionally, we witness the rise of China, economically but also militarily, which is not willing to be part of arms control agreements and which also has a different ideological orientation. It is easy to destroy existing agreements, but it is way more difficult to negotiate new ones.

With the election of Joe Biden as new president of the USA, however, the hope to restore multilateralism and trust was restored again. How will the relation between the US and the EU look in the future? Will we be able to re-gain a spirit of cooperation? How will foreign policy



of the US look like in the next governing period of Mr. Biden and will the EU manage to become, as Ursula von der Leyen called it, more geopolitical? This would imply that the EU must be active in its own neighborhood – be it more proximate areas such as the Western Balkans, where some countries have a more immediate EU perspective, or the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Mediterranean in the South and in the East. With all these recent developments, the EU will need to address internal and external challenges.

### **What future?**

The Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, the lack of stockpiling of sanitary and health-related goods, natural disasters, international crime, terrorism, blackouts, famines, poverty, as well as an estimated 70 million people who were forced to flee their homes (not only towards Europe but mostly within their own or to bordering countries) have made it painfully obvious that global threats demand global answers. Without cooperation, the international community will not be able to tackle any of the aforementioned global threats. The EU and the US – as well as all other international actors, including Russia, China, India, and Brazil and middle- and small-sized countries – need to look for what unites us rather than what divides us. Even though we may never be able to restore or even establish confidence and trust, we can still look for possibilities for cooperation and compromises where we share the same interests.

It is of utmost importance, however, to look at global developments with a long-term and transnational perspective rather than through the lens of one or two governing periods. Let's hope that with Joe Biden and his government, the US and the EU will be able to come back to a more cooperative relationship. In 2021 the IIP will keep looking at ongoing developments in transatlantic relations and arms control and will foster dialogue among civil society, diplomats, decision makers and experts.

*Stephanie Fenkart*



## Selected projects

### USA and the World

The United States' role in the world has undergone some profound changes lately. Its status of an international leader, the great power in a unipolar world and a global agenda-setter has been increasingly questioned and challenged both domestically and internationally. One can speak of an ongoing global structure shift where transformations within and around the United States warrant close attention and careful analysis. The IIP held a series of discussions titled *USA and the World* that aim to shed some light on such pressing issues as the status of arms control negotiations, the transatlantic relations, and the presidential elections in the United States.

Date	October – November 2020
Format	Series of online panel discussions
Partners	Scientific Commission of the Austrian Ministry of Defense
Participants	HEINZ GÄRTNER, University of Vienna, Chair of the IIP Advisory Board MALLORY STEWART, Stimson Center GLENN DIESEN, University of South-Eastern Norway ANGELA KANE, Vice-President of the IIP; former Under-Secretary General at the United Nations EVA NOWOTNY, chair of the Board of the University of Vienna, former Austrian Ambassador in the USA, France and the UK HANNES SWOBODA, President of the IIP, former MEP DAN HAMILTON, Director of the Global Europe Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation Distinguished Fellow, STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP MATTHIAS DEMBINSKI, Senior Researcher bei Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK) JOHN C. KASTNING, First Secretary in der US-Botschaft in Wien LUIZA BIALASIEWICZ, University of Amsterdam, IIP Advisory Board PASCAL LOTTAZ, Waseda Institute for Advanced Studies (WIAS), IIP Advisory Board
Topics	<b>1 October:</b> The Future of Arms Control and Multilateralism <b>15 October:</b> The Future of Transatlantic Relations under a New US Administration <b>5 November:</b> Die USA nach den Präsidentschaftswahlen [in German] <b>19 November:</b> The World after the US Elections



## The OSCE and the Global Crisis of Multilateralism and Arms Control

The IIP Advisory Board Chair Dr. Heinz Gärtner spoke to Professor Philip Terrence Hopmann about the OSCE and the global crisis of multilateralism and arms control. Hopmann discussed his experience with the establishment of the OSCE, the significance of the 1975 Helsinki Conference and Efficacy of OSCE-missions and general remarks on conflict prevention. Did the OSCE live up to its expectations and is there any solution to the Azeri-Armenian conflict?

Date 27 October 2020  
Format Interview  
Participants PHILIP TERRENCE HOPMANN, John Hopkins School of International Studies  
HEINZ GÄRTNER; University of Vienna, Chair of the IIP Advisory Board



## Pompeo in Central Europe

Date 13 August 2020  
Format Blog article  
Author HANNES SWOBODA, President of the IIP, former MEP

Recently, US foreign minister Mike Pompeo visited Central Europe including Austria. Pompeo is a fervent follower and spokesman of President Trump. Both practice a special form of a nationalistic policy. This became also clear from the report of former security advisors John Bolton when he described his differences with President Trump. Trump has of course the interests of the United States on his mind -as he sees them - but primarily he wants to follow his own personal interest. And until now he was not keen on starting military intervention. On the contrary he wants to bring soldiers back from countries where the US army is fighting. He wants to be re-elected as a president who refrained from sending soldiers for external combats. He would rather use them for domestic purposes - for fighting demonstrators in US cities.

Not being keen on military intervention does not mean no to be aggressive. His attitude towards China, the canceling of the nuclear ( Vienna ) agreement with Iran, his animosity towards the Palestinians and even Trump's attitude towards Europe and in particular towards Germany can be called aggressive. Especially his fight with China for economic supremacy and political dominance in Asia is certainly very aggressive. One should not be surprised by the United States, trying to compete successfully with China, the rising Asian power. But Trump and Pompeo act in this respect similar to the team around George W. Bush, especially when Donald Rumsfeld explained, that the purpose defines the coalition not the coalition the purpose and the way to fight a war.

Trump is using the various economic instruments including sanctions, also towards European countries- for example concerning the pipeline North Stream 2. And he interferes directly into the capitalist market and private ownership to attain his aims. All in all, Trump has developed an aggressive policy and does not refrain from offending allies when it's suit his national and/or private interest. This policy can be interpreted as a special form of the widely practiced aggressive foreign policy of the United States - with special personal characteristics and without military intervention.

What Bush and Trump pushed aside is a rational and moderate representation of American interests. One representative of this way to deal with foreign and security issues was Brent Scowcroft who recently passed away - just when Pompeo started his travel towards Central Europe. Scowcroft was national security advisor to President Gerald R. Ford and George H. Bush. He was very critical towards the Georg W. Bush's policy in the Middle East and rejected the US attack of Iraq. He was equally critical of the election of Donald Trump, he sided even with Hilary Clinton at the election campaign.

When I could meet him in Washington he was extremely cautious and moderate in expressing US interests. His way to deal with security issues was taken up by President Obama - perhaps not always successful. But what became clear in the last years, is that those in the US, who were critical of the interventionist side of the US policy became very rare. With Brent Scowcroft one of the well known spokesman of such a "reasonable" US policy died. Now, maybe Joe Biden will get a chance at the forth coming election. But it is much too early to be sure. Trump will even strengthen and maximize his nationalistic and aggressive foreign policy. And he will sanction all those who are not ready to follow his line. And Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

will be his submissive instrument in implementing such a policy. Central European countries should not fall into the trap of Trump's/Pompeo's kind words, which intend to weaken Europe and enhance divisions inside the European Union.





## All Activities: Transatlantic Relations

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

February 3 | Statement: Another Concerning Setback in Arms Control 

February 26 | Arms Control and Disarmament: Challenges and Opportunities for the European Union 

April 17 | NATO, Russia, and Covid-19 

April 6 | Wahlen in den USA - Notstand möglich? 


April 21 | American Domestic and Foreign Policy in the Era of Covid-19: An Interview with Heinz Gärtner 

June 4 | USA vor der Wahlen unter Corona

June 18 | Friends Drifting Apart? The EU and its Relations with the US 

July 23 | Ein neuer Weg für Europa? Die deutsche Ratspräsidentschaft in unsicheren Zeiten 

August 13 | Pompeo in Central Europe 

September 8 | Buchbesprechung: "The Room where it happened: A White House Memoir" - John Bolton 


September 11 | Nordstream 2, Europa und die USA 

September 15 | Weitere Sanktionen gegen Russland - Stopp für Nord Stream 2? 

September 29 | EU's New Ambition – How To Be More Geopolitical Nowadays 

October 6 | "IMPORTANCE OF EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES" - Director of the IIP, Stephanie Fenkart, at the Webinar of the Atlantic Council of Croatia 

October 1 | USA and the World: The Future of Arms Control and Multilateralism 


October 15 | USA and the World: The Future of Transatlantic Relations under a new US Administration 

October 19 | US Elections: What is at Stake for the EU? 

October 29 | Interview with Philip Terrence Hopmann - The OSCE and the Global Crisis of Multilateralism and Arms Control 

November 5 | USA and the World: Die USA nach den Präsidentschaftswahlen 



November 10 | Interesse für Österreich dürfte unter Beiden schrumpfen: Wie viel Spielraum verspielt! 

November 10 | Drei Fragen - Drei Antworten: Heinz Gärtner über die US Wahlen 

November 19 | USA and the World: The World after US Elections 

November 24 | Mit Joe Biden - Für eine globale Klimapolitik 

November 30 | Eine Großmacht im Abstieg? 

December 21 | Der größte Hacker-Angriff in der US-Geschichte 





## Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Russia

As for any other region around the globe, 2020 was a remarkable year for the EU's Eastern Neighborhood too. The pandemic has radically changed the way of life for everyone, exposed weaknesses of healthcare systems, and brought economic and political transformations.

The IIP's work this year focused mainly on three events. We have closely followed the developments in Belarus, the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Russia's role with regard to these two conflicts, as well as internal developments in the country, including the referendum to amend the constitution.

### **Russia: A 'reset' to zero**

The year started with the resignation of Russia's prime minister and Vladimir Putin's right hand Dmitry Medvedev who was replaced with a relatively unknown figure – former head of the tax service Mikhail Mishustin. This move was the first indication of preparation for more profound changes in Russia's political system associated with power transition in 2024 – the year when Putin's fourth – and second consecutive – term will be over. However, a constitutional amendment proposal adopted by the Russian Duma surprised many. Among other proposals, most of which were merely a fig leaf to cover the real purpose of the reform, the Duma suggested to 'reset' to zero all presidential terms of the incumbent, basically allowing him to run for president again. The country-wide referendum held in July adopted all the proposed changes. Its results were recognized as legitimate, despite numerous reports of violations, such as possibility for the same person to vote multiple times. Potentially another fifteen years of Putinism do not look promising for the Russian society. They are likely to lead to intensification of politically motivated repressions, brain drain and stagnation inside the country as a result.

A whole another level of political repressions was already demonstrated in 2020 when a well-known opposition leader and anti-corruption activist Alexey Navalny was poisoned with a chemical agent 'Novichok'. The substance had been previously used by the Russian security service in a murder attempt of Sergey Skripal – a former double agent living in the United Kingdom. Luckily, Navalny survived the attack, returning to Russia from Germany in January 2021 after medical treatment, only to be immediately arrested.

Against this background, 2020 has also seen an unprecedented level of citizens' political engagement in the Far East Russian region of Khabarovsk where the region's popular governor Sergei Furgal was arrested on charges of involvement in multiple murders. The protests started in July and have continued since. Over the months they have gained a new symbolic meaning as a protest against centralization of power in Moscow and demand to respect citizens' political will: Furgal was elected by Khabarovsk population and cannot be dismissed by the president on, as protesters argue, politically motivated charges.

### **Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is far from over**

The conflict over an Armenian-populated enclave in Azerbaijan have lasted for three decades now. Despite negotiations under the OSCE auspices there was little progress towards peace. Naturally, political interests and positions have been involved in these discussions and sometimes prevented progress. But more fundamentally, the factors that prevent genuine peace

talks are the lack of will of the Armenians and Azerbaijanis themselves to recognize the legitimacy of the claim of each other, deep-rooted nationalisms on both sides and historical narratives of injustice done to their peoples.

The second Karabakh war brought a decisive victory to Azerbaijan. It took control by force over a significant part of the Karabakh region. Under the terms of the concluded ceasefire agreement, Armenia also agreed to withdraw from several other adjacent areas. Armenia was not prepared militarily to counter Azerbaijan's attack that was also supported by Turkey. Armenia's prime minister Nikol Pashinyan was called a traitor for signing the ceasefire agreement that in the eyes of many Armenians amounted to capitulation. Russia played a role of a ceasefire broker and will now ensure the fulfillment of the agreement with the help of 2000 Russian peacekeepers. By supporting Azerbaijan, Turkey has gained a new standing in the South Caucasus. As a result, power dynamics in the region changed, with Turkey and Azerbaijan improving their standing, Armenia losing, and Russia remaining the main security guarantor.

However, while the war has ended, the conflict is set to last. Violations of ceasefire are likely. The Agreement itself is considered to be vague and omits certain important issues (such as the status of Nagorno Karabakh). In addition, the Russian peacekeeping mission was limited to a five years term. Moreover, the conflict has already taken thousands of lives and displaced even more people. The questions remain whether 70% of Nagorno Karabakh Armenians who fled the war will return to their homes (if there is anything from their homes left), in what humanitarian conditions they will live and how Azerbaijan will treat ethnic Armenians on the territories that it now controls.

### **Belarus: A Revolution in the making**

Belarus has for a long time been the 'quietest' and the 'most stable' country in the region. Conserved for 26 years under the authoritarian regime of Aliaksandar Lukashenka, the country suddenly burst into mass demonstrations in summer after the presidential elections had been blatantly rigged. While public demonstrations against the election fraud have been commonplace in Belarus since the early 2000s, the scale of the protest this year was unprecedented. Interestingly, they largely resulted from the regime's own mistakes, first when it disregarded the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic thereby angering Belarusians who felt their lives did not count. Secondly, failing to see the level of discontent in the society, the regime let Sviatlana Tsichanouskaya – a spouse of a jailed blogger and a housewife – run for president. A newcomer in politics, Tsichanouskaya managed to unite the opposition and Belarusian society behind her, becoming a symbol of what has in fact turned out to be a national revolution.

Despite the unprecedented protest movement all around the country, Lukashenka nevertheless managed to hold his grip on power, relying on the close circles of loyalists, brutal repressions of the protesters by security forces and Russia's backing. He had to convince the latter that the Belarusian revolt had been orchestrated by the West and that Russia would be next. Lukashenka's genuine belief in the 'western hand', however remote from reality, was embraced in the Kremlin too. Thus, a geopolitical dimension emerged out of the purely domestic conflict.

With brutal repressions that have already taken lives of five and resulted in injuries, detentions and politically motivated criminal charges for thousands more, peace and stability will be gone from Belarus for the time to come. Both Lukashenka and political opposition (that are now

either in exile or in prison) are counting on the support of their allies in the East and West, respectively. Therefore, further escalation inside Belarus might bring the EU and Russia into direct confrontation.

### **Elections all over the region**

Apart from the notorious presidential elections in Belarus, other Eastern European countries have also held elections at various levels.

The presidential vote in Moldova brought victory to a pro-European candidate Maia Sandu. The elections were in many respects an indication of the foreign policy choice of the citizens. By casting their vote for Sandu – here the role of the Moldovan diaspora in the EU played a crucial role, Moldovans have chosen the EU over Russia that openly backed the incumbent president Igor Dodon. Sandu, however, has already faced serious challenges from her political opponents, starting with the resignation of the government a day prior to her inauguration. In the inauguration address, she declared that snap elections were the only way ‘to cleanse the parliament and restore justice’.

Parliamentary elections in Georgia held this fall have not made big headlines in the international media, but overall were a setback compared to the two previous elections in the country. Although assessed by the OSCE observers as overall competitive, they have been characterized by numerous irregularities in favor of the ruling Georgian Dream party of billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili that secured a parliamentary majority. The first round was followed by protests in Tbilisi and the opposition boycotted the second round.

Azerbaijan held snap elections early this year that however brought little change into the authoritarian state of Ilham Aliyev. The assessment of the election process by a joint election observation mission of the OSCE and the Council of Europe was poor. Only one opposition figure from a moderate party managed to secure a parliamentary seat.

For Armenia, 2020 was not a year of elections. However, the war in Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia’s loss in it have put pressure on Prime Minister Pashinyan to resign. If he indeed does so, snap elections will take place in the country already in 2021.

Local elections in Ukraine have become a failure for president Volodymyr Zelensky’s party ‘The Servant of the People’. The party did not manage to win a single mayoral post which in its turn severely affected the president’s political standing. His attempt to unite the country seems to have failed. Ukraine has remained fragmented along the old lines between East and West, as well as along newer ones: between cities and towns<sup>1</sup>. Weakened, Zelensky was soon challenged by the constitutional court – where many judges loyal to the president’s opponents preside. Challenging the president, the court annulled many important anticorruption laws.

### **Regional dynamics: What region?**

What do all these developments mean for the regional dynamics in Eastern Europe? In 2020 the old challenges have been overshadowed by the pandemic, but they did not disappear.

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<sup>1</sup>Konstantin Skorkin. “Старые расколы, новый легалайз. Что означают для Зеленского итоги местных выборов”. Carnegie.ru (26.10.12) <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/83049>

Corruption, oligarchism, lack of rule of law persist. Poverty is still widespread, with Moldova and Ukraine being the two poorest countries in Europe. The pandemic has only increased their economic hardships. The ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine negotiated in summer has held the longest than ever before, while the old conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh erupted in a hot war, changing power dynamics in the South Caucasus but not bringing peace. Moldova elected a pro-European president, while Russia seems to have once again institutionalized authoritarianism. As the example of Belarus has shown, it takes great sacrifice to try to break the decades old authoritarian system in a peaceful way. While the political change has irreversibly come to Belarus, it remains to be seen whether the current crisis will indeed lead to a more democratic system.

The European Union still looks at its Eastern Neighborhood through the framework of the Eastern Partnership, assessing the results of Deliverables 2020 program and discussing new strategy of cooperation for the years to come. The voices of ambitious EaP partners advocate for enhanced security cooperation with the EU. The voices of less ambitious ones remain silent. These divisions also demonstrate the EU standing in the region. While Moldova has elected a pro-European president, the EU had little leverage to prevent violent repressions in Belarus. Further, the EU was not a player in the brokering of the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

With these stark differences among countries in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood, what region should we talk about today? States that were all part of the Soviet Union before have chosen different trajectories of development and different alliances. It is also not only the EU and Russia that they chose between. It is Turkey, China, the United States and Middle Eastern countries too. Multipolarity has created new regional designations in the former post-Soviet space, including Eurasia, Black Sea area, Eastern Partnership, Belt and Road Initiative, Baltic Sea area, and other. It remains to be seen whether 2021 will bring more clarity to this mixed palette.

*Marylia Hushcha*

## Selected projects

### Russian Federation: Post-Putin after Putin?

In Russia, the year 2020 was marked domestically by a profound transformation of the political system, including the continuation of a fundamental change of generations, extensive cadre rotations, aggravation of elite conflicts and preparations for a constitutional reform with a view to regulating the succession of Vladimir Putin in the office of president and the associated transition of power in 2024. The power system created by Vladimir Putin over the past two decades is slowly but fundamentally and irrevocably changing. Post-Putin Russia is already a reality. The search for an appropriate position for Vladimir Putin for the time after 2024 in the spirit of Deng Xiaoping or Lee Kuan Yew is in full swing. But even a post-Putin Russia is likely to retain Vladimir Putin for a long time to come. The panel discussed the issue of the current power transition dynamics and possible implications on internal and foreign policies of the Russian Federation.

Date	11 February 2020
Format	Panel discussion
Partners	Research Centre for Eurasian Studies, University of Vienna
Welcome & Moderation	HANNES SWOBODA, President of IIP, former MEP STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of IIP
Participants	IRINA BOLGOVA, Moscow State Institute for International Studies (MGIMO), member of the IIP Advisory Board ALEXANDER DUBOWY, Scientific Coordinator, Research Centre for Eurasian Studies (EURAS), University of Vienna; Head of Research, Institute for Security Policy (ISP) GREG YUDIN, Higher School of Economics





## Presidential elections, protests, and the pandemic: How will Belarus look after August 9th?

Presidential elections in Belarus took place on August 9th this year. Even before the main election day, peaceful protests had been taking place around the country, with violent detentions of demonstrators by the security forces widespread. While political repression by the state authorities has accompanied virtually every presidential campaign in Belarus starting from the early 2000s, this time the demand for change has come from a broader range of society and has been much more pronounced than ever before. This is not least due to the serious economic downturn and the government's mishandling of the covid-19 pandemic.

During the discussion, the panelists reported on ongoing developments in the electoral process in Belarus and reflected on the challenges this presidential campaign posed for the current regime, opportunities and obstacles for alternative political forces, economic hardships for the population, the effects of the pandemic, and the role of external actors, in what looks like a changing political situation in the country.

Date	8 July 2020
Format	Online panel discussion
Moderation	MARYLIA HUSHCHA, research assistant at the IIP
Participants	KATERINA BORNUKOVA, Academic Director of BEROE Economic Research Center, MBA professor at the IPM Business School in Minsk, consultant for the World Bank RYHOR ASTAPENIA, Robert Bosch Stiftung Academy Fellow at Chatham House; Research Director, Centre for New Ideas ARTYOM SHRAIBMAN, founder of Sense Analytics, contributor for TUT.BY and Carnegie.ru



## War in the Caucasus: The Moscow Deal, the continuous fighting, and the role of the OSCE

Date	19 October 2020
Format	Blog article
Author	FRED TANNER, Graduate Institute, Geneva (HEID), former Senior Adviser for the OSCE Secretary General, member of the IIP Advisory Board

What we are witnessing since late September in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is a new full-scale war. It is affecting civilians and soldiers alike on both sides with hundreds of casualties. Nevertheless, it took Russia as a regional stakeholder a long time to summon Azerbaijan and Armenia to Moscow for a high-level crisis meeting. After drawn-out deliberations on the 10th October, the rivals finally agreed to a humanitarian cease-fire for the purpose of exchanging prisoners and casualties. Despite a re-confirmation of the truce on the 17th October, fighting is still continuing.

In addition to the agreement on a cease-fire, the Moscow deal also confirms that Azerbaijan and Armenia will engage in “substantive talks” based on the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs negotiation process. This reflects Russia’s determination not to open the issue for a new mediation format that was particularly pressed by Turkey. With this decision, the OSCE was given a new lease on life and a renewed importance in their role as mediators for future peace negotiations on Nagorno Karabakh. The OSCE Minsk group’s peace mediation mandate also includes the task to prepare the planning of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force. For this purpose, a High Level Planning Group (HLPG) was established in 1994 that is made up by a small number of seconded military officers. Unfortunately, its narrow mandate has not been tied to present-day practice of multinational peace missions.

The OSCE Minsk Group with its co-chairs is composed of 10 countries that also includes Turkey. As mediation cannot be conducted by committee, this role was confined to the co-chairs from Russia, France and the US. Azerbaijan has repeatedly argued that these co-chairs are not able to act as impartial mediators, especially regarding France and the US, both with large and politically active Armenian diasporas. Furthermore, prior to the Moscow meeting, Azerbaijan proposed that Turkey should join the co-chairs of the Minsk Group. Yet, at the Moscow meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov did not act upon this proposal. There were, however, speculations that a bilateral Russian-Turkish structured dialogue on Nagorno Karabakh could emerge.

Also important to the current OSCE conflict management structure in Nagorno-Karabakh is the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. The Personal Representative normally assists the OSCE Chair-in-Office and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs in shaping appropriate conditions for the deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping operation and facilitating a lasting conflict settlement. Furthermore, the Personal Representative acts as the OSCE’s “eyes and ears” on the ground in the contested territory. Over the last years he and his small observer team conducted regularly mirror patrols on both sides of the line of contact and the state border where incidences, provocations or fighting proved most likely. In view of the zero-sum relationship between the rivals, there has been virtually no space for further initiatives related to risk reduction measures, even though Ambassador Kasprzyk enjoys remarkably the confidence of the leaderships of both rival countries.

What should be on the agenda of the mediators now in view of the latest escalation of the armed conflict? There are three issue areas to consider:

- Compliance with the cease-fire regime and de-escalation of tensions,
- addressing humanitarian needs and,
- re-engage in substantive negotiations and efforts of reconciliations.

With the continuous violations of the cease-fire that bear grave consequences for the civilian population, calls have been made for establishing a robust cease-fire monitoring mechanism. Russia, seeing itself as a third party mediator in the region, offered Russian military officers as cease-fire monitors. It is unclear, if Azerbaijan would accept Russian military officers as observers in the contested areas. Not to forget that Russia has a mutual defence agreement with Armenia, there is a Russian military base in Armenia, and Russian border guards are stationed at the Armenian border to Turkey.

Alternatively, as prescribed in the mandate for the Minsk Group, the OSCE could set up an OSCE peacekeeping force. The OSCE, however, doesn't have sufficient track record, capacity nor resources to plan and execute such a mission in the short term. In contrast, as the example of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of the OSCE in Ukraine has shown, it would be possible, should there be a consensus among all OSCE participating states, to rapidly deploy an OSCE civilian multinational observation mission. Such a peace mission could draw extensively from lessons learned of the SMM, in particular regarding the use of cease-fire observation technology (UAVs, satellite imagery, cameras), conducting operations in a potentially active conflict zone, and facilitating humanitarian action.

The Moscow deal also stipulated that “specific parameters of the cease-fire will be agreed subsequently”. Negotiations for a sustainable and lasting cease-fire need to be conducted urgently. This should include agreed measures to reduce tensions and prevent further tit-for-tat retaliations. It should also create benchmarks for disengagements from the line of contact, withdrawal of heavy weapons and addressing the clearing of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance.

The continuous use of armed violence in this region without any end or peace in sight is affecting hundreds of thousands of civilians with indiscriminate targeting of urban areas and the use of cluster ammunition amounting to a violation of the Geneva Conventions. Emergency assistance is difficult as long as armed hostilities continue; humanitarian organizations cannot work safely in affected areas without security guarantees from both sides. With the approaching winter and the COVID-19 pandemic, the humanitarian situation will more than likely be further aggravated.

At the Moscow meeting it was agreed that substantive negotiations will resume, based on the agreed Madrid principles, that should eventually lead to a comprehensive peace process. As the conflict in and around Ukraine has shown over the last years, ongoing violations of a cease-fire agreement do prevent any constructive engagement on “substantive” issues of a peace process.

On the 19 October, the three Minsk co-chairs will be participating in a closed meeting of the UN Security Council on the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. In addition to appeals for immediate and unconditional cessation of armed violence there should also be an endorsement of the OSCE Minsk Group as well as calls for establishing a cease-fire monitoring mechanism and urgent humanitarian action. Without the silence of all arms, monitored by



impartial observers, ideally in conjunction with an investigative and an accountability mechanism that can assign responsibility when violations occur, there is little chance that stability and peace can ever return to this region.



## All Activities: Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Russia

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

January 13 | Moldova in 2019: Recap of the Year and Prospects for 2020 


February 12 | Russian Federation: Post-Putin After Putin? 

March 9 | What to do about Russia? 

April 17 | NATO, Russia, and Covid-19 

April 17 | Belarus in times of pandemic: domestic and foreign policy implications 

May 8 | Ukrainian politics, economic, and security in Covid-19 times: Nadiia Koval 


May 14 | Domestic Impacts of the Corona Crisis and Consequences for the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine 

May 19 | COVID-19 in der Ukraine: die Problematik der Pandemiebekämpfung 


May 25 | Gagauzia 2020: Politics, Security, and Society: An Interview with Samuel Goda 

June 3 | Sanctions against Russia: Still Useful? 

June 22 | Elections in Belarus as never before: Is there a chance for change? 

July 8 | Presidential elections, protests, and the pandemic: How will Belarus look after August 9th? 

July 20 | Armenian-Azerbaijani Border Clashes Risk a Major Regional War or Nuclear Disaster: Where is the International Community? 

August 6 | Armenia–Azerbaijan Conflict Ushered into a More Dangerous and Unstable Period 

August 14 | Belarus after Presidential Elections: Campaign, Results and Protest Movement 

August 21 | Belarus: Ongoing developments after the presidential elections 

September 15 | Weitere Sanktionen gegen Russland - Stopp für Nord Stream 2? 

September 30 | War in the Caucasus: Kamikadzedrohnen über dem Kaukasus 

October 2 | War in the Caucasus: A Perspective from Armenia 

October 5 | War in the Caucasus: From a Local Conflict to a Regional War 

October 13 | War in the Caucasus - Karabagh conflict: Why war? 



October 15 | War in the Caucasus: State, no State? A Legal Perspective on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict 

October 19 | War in the Caucasus: The Moscow Deal, the continuous fighting and the role of the OSCE 

November 11 | Belarus, Russia, Ukraine: Between the common past and an uncertain future 

November 11 | Political crisis in Belarus: Searching for light at the end of the tunnel 



## The Western Balkans Initiative

Austria has a long history with its closest neighboring region – the Western Balkans. The so-called Western Balkan Six countries include Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. They are also often discussed together with Croatia and Slovenia that are already part of the EU. While the region still faces numerous challenges, such as old-fashioned backwards-oriented politics and nationalism on the one hand, and the lack of economic, educational, or social perspectives on the other, the young generations in the Balkans seem to be losing patience and, when possible, emigrating to the West in search for a better life.

However, there are several organizations, individuals, diplomats, experts, and scholars who try to advocate for a more democratic and prosperous region by bringing it closer to the European Union, its values and its economic possibilities, including free travel, regional cooperation but also accountability of their own governments, fight against corruption and more stringent environmental protection. Even though the pandemic hit the region hard, there have been some positive developments when it comes to regional cooperation and solidarity.

### **The Future is within the EU**

The Western Balkans are at the heart of Europe and since 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit the EU and its members – including the skeptical ones, like France or the Netherlands - never challenged the overall European perspective of the region. The EU and the Western Balkans have common challenges, and it is their joint responsibility to find common solutions dealing with internal and external challenges. The overcoming of the COVID-19-pandemic and problems of stockpiling of health-related goods, climate, energy, migration, security, digital and geopolitical challenges are of common interest of both. Integration of the Western Balkans into the EU will bring more effective and efficient solutions to these challenges.

The opening of the accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia in March 2020 sends a clear message not only to the two countries, but the region as a whole. The future is within the EU. However, there are still several issues which need to be tackled within the region, especially since enthusiasm for enlargement within the EU is extremely low these days. This is not to be blamed only on the Western Balkans as such, but also depends on internal democratic backslides which we are witnessing in EU countries like Poland and Hungary, but also on EU-aspiring states like Turkey and Serbia. Additionally, in 2020 the focus of the EU was on how to deal and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and on the US presidential elections in November 2020.

The lack of rule of law, often accompanied by the lack of political will, is still one of the main issues, which is regularly addressed in the progress report of the European Commission when it comes to the Western Balkans. This issue is further complemented by attacks on media, widespread corruption, and organized crime, along with the increased external involvement in the region of Russia, Turkey, China and the United Arab Emirates. This clearly demonstrates that the way towards EU integration is still long. Nonetheless, we need to support the progressive forces in the Western Balkans who face a huge dilemma: on the one hand, they are strongly advocating for the process of EU integration in hope of more democracy and rule of law in the region. On the one hand, however, they feel the need to remind the EU stakeholders to be tough on their governments when it comes to implementation of reforms and fulfillment of human rights. This dilemma is especially sharply felt by the younger generation in the region.

## The Western Balkans in 2021

With the election of Joe Biden as new president of the United States there is some hope that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia will be fueled again, hopefully in close cooperation with the EU delegations within the region and the EU Commission generally. Biden knows the region and shortly after celebrating 25 years of BiH Dayton Peace Agreement in December 2020, which ended the war in 1995, it is time to address the ongoing regional struggles within the country, above all the lack of political will of the elites and the instrumentalization of ethnic nationalism. The US and the EU can be supportive of this process, but it is also the societies and the diaspora who should be included in order to create an inclusive process which addresses the needs of the societies and which opens new prospects for them within their home country beyond emigration. Additionally, the European Commission should have a close look at the internal actions of the respective governments and their compliance with conditionality, especially in the field of human rights, justice, and administrative reforms.

There are many initiatives like circular migration, the extension of the Erasmus plus program, creation of the so-called Mini-Schengen, and other, which represent useful tools to increase human capital and economic connectivity in the region but also to create a common value-based understanding beyond national borders. With the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) in 2016, the Western Balkans acquired an institutional mechanism that promotes the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation among the youth in the region. RYCO focuses on youth exchanges fostering new contacts and connections among the Western Balkans youth and going beyond the narrative of war and nationalism.

Supporting these progressive forces, be it individuals or organizations, in their strive for a more democratic and prosperous region, with the goal of full EU accession at one point, is surely one area where the IIP has been strongly engaged in 2020. From April to June, we held a discussion series on “*Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Western Balkans?*”, which was followed by another series of expert talks on “*25 Years Bosnian & Herzegovina Peace Agreement*” in November and December. We hope to continue this work in 2021, thereby contributing to a more democratic and prosperous Europe that includes, among other things, minorities and marginalized persons and groups.

The initiative *Young Generations for the new Balkans 2030: Towards Alternative Horizons* was created jointly by the IIP, the Karl-Renner Institut (RI) and the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (OIIP) in 2018. Through this project, we try to set the spotlight on youth, their progressive stances, and their hopes for the future. Together with local and international partners, we have been discussing and analyzing the overall situation of the Western Balkans and the countries’ cooperation within the international system, the EU, and NATO through workshops, seminars, panel discussions, policy recommendations, and art in order to understand the reality and set trends for a positive future of our neighboring region. We pose tough questions about the region’s development, its educational opportunities and limits, emigration and alternatives, reconciliation, and hopes in relation to the EU, as well as possible illusions. We aim to explore and promote alternatives to the status quo and embark upon the tough road to necessary action that would make an alternative horizon reality. The project is a common initiative led by European and regional institutes that features stakeholders, activists, and young people from the region and the EU, but it is carried out in the first place by a large group of young experts from the region and the diaspora to whom we are particularly grateful for their support and engagement.

*Stephanie Fenkart*

## Selected projects

### Study Visit to Tirana

Caught in a vicious circle between old-fashioned backwards oriented politics and nationalism on one hand and the lack of economic, educational and social perspectives on the other, young generations in the Balkans seem to be losing patience and when possible emigrating to the West in search of a better life. UN agencies and experts speak about a massive demographic revolution going on in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, changing societies more than many other developments in the contemporary history of this region. In parallel, democracies are still vulnerable, the EU integration process is not delivering fast results, and alternative horizons are not easy to find. Our initiative is turning the flashlights on youth, their progressive stances and hopes for the future.

During the visit to Tirana, young experts of the Western Balkans 2030 Initiative met with key local stakeholders, including Albanian MPs, Foreign Ministry officials, EU representatives, journalists and civil society, as well as spoke at a public panel.

Date	6-7 February 2020
Format	Study visit
Partners	Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Karl-Renner Institut, European Movement Albania, the National Youth Congress of Albania
Participants	<p>MAJA BJELOS, Belgrade Center for Security Studies          GLEDIS GJIPALI, European Movement Albania          ANJA JOKIC, National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)          AULONE MEMETI, ADMOVERE, Prishtina          DAFINA PECE, Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), Tirana          STEFANI SPIROVSKA, Youth Educational Forum, Skopje          STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP          MARYLIA HUSHCHA, research assistant at the IIP          PATRICK MCGRATH, project assistant at the IIP          GERHARD MARCHL, Head of the Department of European Politics, Karl-Renner-Institut, Vienna          HANNES SWOBODA, President of the IIP; former MEP</p>



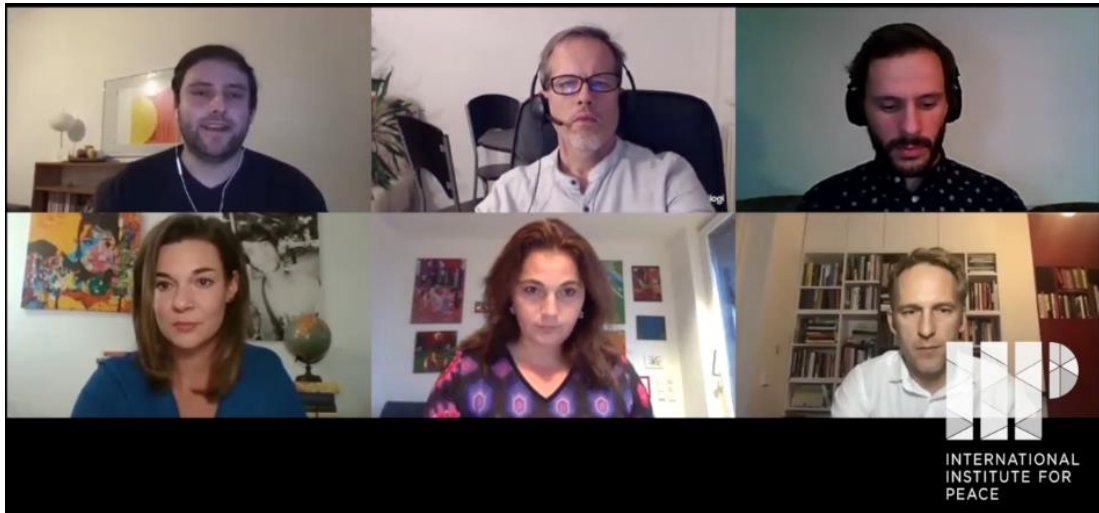
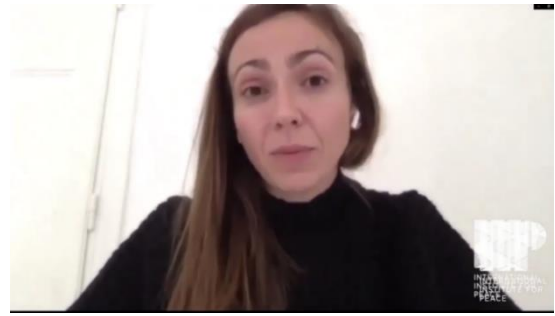
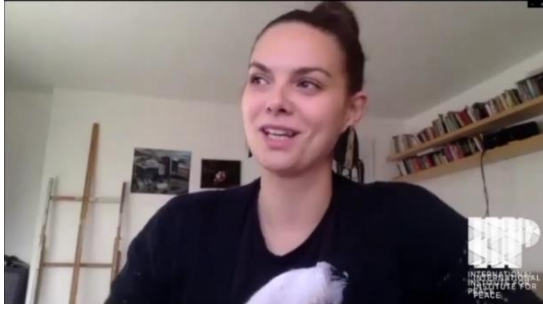


## Bosnian and Herzegovinian Peace Agreement turns 25

The Dayton Peace Agreement turned 25 years on 21 November (anniversary of the initialing) and 14 December 2020 (anniversary of the signature). The International Institute for Peace, the Austrian Institute for International Affairs, and the Karl-Renner-Institut (in the framework of the Initiative *Young Generations for the New WB 2030*) marked this anniversary by organizing two public discussions that looked at the anniversary and the agreement beyond the important fact that it brought a much-needed peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The discussions addressed the ongoing struggle to transform the country into a liberal and prosperous democracy based on rule of law and market economy.

Date	20 November and 14 December 2020
Format	Series of online panel discussion
Partners	Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Karl-Renner Institut
Welcome & Moderation	HANNES SWOBODA, President of IIP, former MEP STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of IIP ADNAN CERIMAGIC, Analyst, European Stability Initiative (ESI), Berlin; member of the IIP Advisory Board
Participants	RANDALL PULJEK SHANK, Program Advisor, PeaceNexus Foundation ALIDA VRACIC, Executive Director, Populari Think Tank, member of the IIP Advisory Board VEDRAN DZIHIC, Senior Researcher, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Vienna; member of the IIP Advisory Board SAMIR BEHARIC, Board Member of the Western Balkans Alumni Association, Jajce JOHANN SATTLER, EU Ambassador and Special Representative to BiH, Sarajevo WOLFGANG PETRITSCH, Former High Representative of the International Community to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Video messages	SENADA SELO SABIC, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO), Zagreb ILANA BET-EL, former Senior Advisor on the Balkans at the UN (1999), and a UN political officer in Sarajevo (1994-7) AJLA BOROZAN, Program Director, Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), Sarajevo LEJLA KUSTURICA, Director, Foundation Atelje za društvene promjene, Sarajevo TIHOMIR DAKIC, Coordinator, Centre for Environment (CZŽS), Banja Luka EMINA BOSNJAK, Executive Director, Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC), Sarajevo LEILA BICAKCIC, Executive Director, Centre for Investigative Reporting (CIN), Sarajevo ILIJIA TNINIC, Executive Director, Perpetuum Mobile, Banja Luka AMILA KARACIC, Deputy Program Director, International Republican Institute (IRI), Sarajevo IRMA BARALIJA, Vice President, Naša stranka party, Mostar





## Young Generations for the New Balkans Vision 2030 - Summer Supplement

Date	15 July 2020
Format	Policy paper
Authors	Experts of the initiative <i>Young Generations for the New Western Balkans 2030</i>

The Western Balkans Initiative, which is sponsored by the International Institute for Peace (IIP), the Karl Renner Institute, and the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (oiip), published its policy paper *Young Generation for the New Balkans Vision 2030: Towards Alternative Horizons* in December 2019. Since then, both the Initiative and the region itself have undergone important developments, changes, and updates. Within the region, a number of significant events have taken place this year, but the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and its resultant consequences have had a dramatic impact on the political, social, and economic situation in the six countries of the region. In March 2020, in the first phase of the pandemic, one notable change was the EU's announcement of the opening of accession negotiations for Albania and North Macedonia. This provided a moment of optimism and hope for two countries that have worked hard in recent years to undertake drastic reforms across many sectors.

The onset of the pandemic, however, has had a number of negative and tragic impacts for the countries of the region. The Western Balkans have witnessed devastating consequences along economic and health dimensions, and there has been increasing political turmoil in a number of countries. Notably, Albania witnessed major protests after the shock demolition of the National Theater; Kosovo's government was toppled in a no-confidence vote; and protests in Serbia erupted after the government's harsh initial lockdown. Meanwhile, Serbia held its most recent round of elections in June, leading to a decisive win for President Aleksandar Vučić, while Croatia's HDZ won big in the July elections. Elections in North Macedonia and Montenegro are to follow later this summer.

Over the same period, the Western Balkans Initiative visited Tirana, Albania in February to present the *Vision 2030* policy paper and meet with representatives from the Albanian government, civil society, the media, and non-governmental organizations. Representatives from the Initiative shared ideas and discussed current challenges for the region with partners in Albania, and the delegation hosted a public panel discussion on the paper as a capstone to the visit. Elsewhere, the Initiative organized a series of videos and analyses on the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic across the region as well as the impact of the opening of accession negotiations for North Macedonia and Albania.

Finally, the Initiative launched an online webinar series titled *Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans?*, which featured panel discussions and analyses by Initiative experts on developments in the region since the start of the pandemic. The lectures in the series focused on political turmoil in Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia; human rights, media freedoms, and civil liberties; solidarity within the region and beyond; the future of the region; and transitional justice and reconciliation. This supplement to the 2019 paper will seek to distill the key themes and ideas from the series of webinars and draw relevant recommendations, taking into consideration the latest developments across the region as it simultaneously faces a health crisis, a political crisis, and an economic crisis.

## **A new form of politics**

As the pandemic unfolded across the region, many governments revealed deeply un-democratic or illiberal tendencies, as evident in abuses of power, infringements of human rights and media freedoms, and increasing polarization. Numerous governments took advantage of lockdown measures and restrictions on protests to seize power or undertake previously opposed projects, such as the Albanian government's decision to demolish the National Theatre in Tirana while activists were forced to stay home. Similarly, governments implemented policies infringing on both human rights, such as through the introduction of trials by Skype in Serbia, as well as media freedoms, including the arrest of journalist Ana Lalić in Serbia. Moreover, governments used the pandemic to exacerbate pre-existing polarization, blaming opposition parties for the pandemic and using pro-government media outlets to peddle conspiracy theories. There is thus a need in the region to fundamentally change the form of governance, rather than simply the governments themselves, and move toward debates and an exchange of ideas rather than a more personal form of politics based on group alliances. Instead of debates over critical issues such as healthcare or education, politicians focus on building power for their parties and opposition parties focus solely on ousting the current government. Strong leaders such as President Vučić and Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama command widespread support based on their personal networks and patronage. Finally, there is a need to link new ideas and policies with political forces by building partnerships between civil society and politicians in order to develop concrete proposals. These civil society partnerships should also extend across borders to promote regional civil society cooperation to share best practices and new ideas.

## **A crisis in health**

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the many gaps and failings in the healthcare systems of the six countries of the Western Balkans. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on countries and societies all around the world, but the health crisis in the region was greatly exacerbated by a failure to develop and improve healthcare systems and hospitals over recent decades. Politicians have neglected to focus on improving healthcare or promoting policies that address long-lasting issues in health, and the region has simultaneously suffered from an exodus of trained healthcare professionals for EU countries in recent years. Most significantly, hospitals lacked sufficient supplies and protective equipment, and scandals concerning corruption over public procurement, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, impeded effective or rapid responses. Finally, the politicization of experts and medical professionals during the pandemic further contributed to the worsening of the outbreak, particularly as lockdowns were pre-emptively rolled back for political purposes. Most notoriously, the Serbian government used the virus as a propaganda tool during its electoral campaign, labelling the pandemic as an ally of the opposition, and relaxed nearly all lockdown measures far too early in order to hold rallies and the election itself. More responsibly, North Macedonia opted to postpone its election given its lack of capacity to ensure social distancing while also carrying out voting. It is thus vital that all countries in the region focus on building up their healthcare systems, ensuring vital equipment in case of future pandemics, de-politicizing healthcare and doctors, and supporting debate on healthcare policy that would improve the everyday lives of citizens.

## **Incomplete transitional justice and competing victimizations**

The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the previously stalled transitional justice and reconciliation efforts across the Western Balkans. On a broader level, however, the region suffers from a lack of regional judicial cooperation on war crimes issues, and most governments

lack the necessary political or institutional will to improve or strengthen transitional justice. One of the most immediate consequences of the pandemic was the collapse of Albin Kurti's government in Kosovo as well as the announced indictment of President Hashim Thaçi for war crimes. These developments will impact the state of transitional justice in Kosovo, but Thaçi's indictment also derailed the US-led negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo that might also have born consequences for transitional justice measures between the two countries. In recent months, the electoral campaigns in Serbia and Croatia, among others, have also brought about an increase in nationalist rhetoric within both countries, as politicians seek to stir up domestic voters and seek scapegoats for their poor handling of the pandemic. Competing narratives of victimization further complicate reconciliation processes, as governments deny the injustices suffered by others. It is thus not surprising that several accused or charged war criminals appeared on electoral lists in Serbia during the June elections, while convicted war criminals currently serve in the Serbian army, various ministries, and ruling party, highlighting Serbia's lack of respect for rulings by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Conversely, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made several notable strides in regards to convicting war criminals and furthering transitional justice, compared to the lack of progress in Serbia and Croatia. There is thus a need to increase regional judicial cooperation, censure politicians or groups who capitalize on nationalism and past crimes, and engage more deeply with the EU as a facilitator to ensure regional solutions.

### **Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

As schools and universities were forced to move online when lockdown measures came into force, many gaps and areas in need for development and improvement came into the spotlight. Similar to the crisis faced by the region's healthcare systems, education systems have suffered from a lack of development and adequate investment in recent years as well as long-standing issues of corruption. The digitalization of classes had mixed results across countries, with some countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, more effectively pivoting to distance learning while others, such as Kosovo and North Macedonia, lacking the necessary technology. In addition, the number of students and other young people from the Western Balkans who leave for education or work opportunities within the EU remains neglected by local governments, and as a result their needs as well as their potential resources for their home countries are overlooked. At the same time, the crisis revealed persistently low levels of media literacy and civic education among young people. The spread of conspiracy theories and fake news throughout the crisis was thus more pernicious due to a lack of resiliency among the population. Insufficient civic education also prevented young people from knowing what action to take, who is responsible, and how to hold their politicians accountable. Thus, there is a need to increase investment in education systems and specifically to improve education in the areas of media literacy and civic rights as well as to gather data on students and young people outside the region whose needs and skills could be utilized by the region's governments.

### **A need for more solidarity within the region and with the EU**

As the pandemic began to spread across the Western Balkans, many in the region turned to the EU as a possible partner and as a mark of solidarity in managing the crisis. It was significant, therefore, that EU officials decided to ban exports of critical medical equipment to non-EU countries, including the Western Balkans. Given the EU's much greater size, international bargaining position, and economic strength, this decision was poorly received in the region, encouraging leaders such as President Vučić to turn to countries such as China and Russia for support. On a broader level, the region has also struggled with a lack of clear communication



and long-term strategies coming from the EU regarding cooperation and integration prospects. At the same time, the US appears less engaged in the region and efforts to promote democracy and human rights, while Russia and China leveraged the crisis to increase their involvement in the region. China in particular provided equipment and support for Serbia, for which President Vučić showed significant gratitude while downplaying the EU's support. The EU is still needed in the region to help restore the political system, recover democracy, boost media freedom and human rights, and help resolve outstanding bilateral issues. The EU must engage with the region across sectors on a deeper level by involving the Western Balkans in all major initiatives, including in trade, the fight against Covid-19, and the European Green Deal, and at the same time challenge competing narratives from China and Russia. Moreover, the EU should work more closely with regional governments on the issue of circular migration to better understand migration in and out of the region and adjust to the needs and possible skills of these migrants. Finally, the European People's Party in particular should show more solidarity with pro-democratic forces in the region by winding down support for Croatia's HDZ and Serbia's SNS. For its part, the European Social Democrats should also monitor illiberal trends and support democratic standards among its partner parties in the region, particularly in Albania under Prime Minister Rama. At the same time, the region itself must focus on domestic reform and approach the EU jointly on integration matters. Regional cooperation is essential for a number of processes, including transitional justice as well as economic and transport integration. Thus, the Western Balkan governments must do more to jointly address issues in the region, adopt sectoral integration along EU standards, and speak with one voice to collectively lobby for further EU integration.

## All Activities: The Western Balkans Initiative

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

February 5-7 | Young Generations for the New Balkans: Visit to Tirana 


February 7 | Western Balkans Initiative 2020 Tirana Visit Interviews 

February 12 | Albania and the Road to Europe: Past, Present, and Future 

February 25 | Fortress Europe? An Interview with Alida Vracic 


March 9 | History, Reconciliation, and Peace 

March 25 | A Green Light for Albania and North Macedonia 


April 7 | How the coronavirus - and a little push from the Trump coterie - brought down Kosovo's government 

April 10 | Western Balkans Initiative: Video Analyses on COVID-19 and Opening of Accession Negotiations 

June 2 | Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans? Political Turmoil in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia 

June 9 | Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans? State of human rights, media freedoms, and civil liberties during the pandemic 

June 16 | Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans? Solidarity within the region and beyond 

June 23 | Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans? What future for the region? A Discussion with Goran Svilanović 

June 30 | Post-Covid or Post-Democracy Balkans? Transitional Justice and Reconciliation after the Pandemic 

July 15 | Young Generations for the New Balkans Vision 2030 - Summer Supplement 

July 21 | The Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. Can an Agreement Finally be Reached? 

September 15 | NATO and the European Union - Values and Interests concerning Western Balkans 

September 23 | Albanien Verstehen - Buchpräsentation 

October 6 | "Importance of Euro-Atlantic values" - Director of the IIP, Stephanie Fenkart, at the Webinar of the Atlantic Council of Croatia 

October 13 | EU offers again to help the Western Balkans - but we need more 



November 16 | Meet our Champions for a Liberal, Democratic and Prosperous BiH 

November 19 | 25 Jahre nach Dayton - Ist der Friedensschluss ein Erfolg? 

November 20 | Bosnian and Herzegovinian Peace Agreement turns 25 - PART I 

December 14 | Bosnian and Herzegovinian Peace Agreement turns 25 - PART II 





## Middle East and North Africa

The countries in the south and the south-east of Europe, around the Mediterranean, are part of a very fragile region. This did not change in 2020, although some new developments did take place. Some steps towards understanding and peaceful relations were accompanied by new turmoil and chaos inside countries and between countries of the region. One could observe autocratic rulers in many Arab countries putting dissidents into prison, another election in Israel caused by Benjamin Netanyahu's clinging to power and having no vision beyond this aspiration, and a political system in Iran adhering to the myth of an Islamic revolution which prevents domestic reform and a viable regional strategy.

### Arab-Israeli relationship

Due to American pressure, some Arab countries formalized already existing informal and partly hidden relationship with Israel. For President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu it was a big success. They called these openings of diplomatic relations peace treaties, although they did not stop wars, because there were no wars to be stopped. They gave them a biblical name – the Abraham Accords. The presents given by President Trump to Arab countries consisted mostly of offering sophisticated weapons for sale. In the case of Morocco, it was the recognition of the occupied Western Sahara as part of Morocco. These diplomatic steps initiated by the Trump administration are prototypes of transactional policies, policies where only material or political benefits count and moral principles are disregarded.

The fact that diplomatic relations have been established between regional neighbors is not at all a mistake, it should be self-evident. But the countries concerned did not consider combining the new diplomatic relations with some progress on the Palestinian issue. Palestinians are still denied any statehood and nation building. It would have been a good chance to give the peace process a new impetus. Unfortunately, the fate of the Palestinians is not on the mind of President Trump, not on the mind of Prime Minister Netanyahu, nor high on the agenda of most Arab states. Again, the Palestinians are left alone with their problems, including their leadership who cannot find a way to rally international sympathy and support. This leadership lacks a convincing strategy and loses support among the young. In addition, the Israeli government does everything it can to deny them legitimacy.

### Iran – the common enemy

The countries and governments involved - the US, Israel and the Arab countries - are all united in their criticism of the Iranian policies at home and abroad. In their view, the regime in Tehran presents the biggest danger to stability in the region. Activities by Iran and some proxies, like Hezbollah, are certainly not contributing towards peace in the region. Iran's leaders want to extend their influence in view of the overwhelming power of Sunni Arab countries. Directly or indirectly, some Shia allies are fighting in support of these interests.

On the other hand, the interventions by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen are not contributing to peace either. Unfortunately, instead of implementing the peace initiatives which were undertaken by the UN, the war continues and there is no end to it in sight. In addition, the cancellation of the nuclear agreement with Iran, the JCPOA, by President Trump was not a contribution to peace either. It hardened Iran's position instead of bringing the country to the negotiation table.

## **Turkey's increasing activities in the Middle East**

Another thing that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have in common is the rejection of the Muslim Brothers. They fear them not because these are fundamentalists – these countries have a long history of supporting fundamentalists themselves – but because they fear for their own autocratic rule. They share the animosity towards the Muslim Brothers with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who ousted the elected President Mohamed Morsi, a Muslim Brother.

At the same time, the common negative attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood brings them in contradiction to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, resulting in opposing roles of the Arab countries and Turkey in the internal conflict in Libya. Turkey is supporting the internationally recognized government, while most Arab countries support the rebel General Haftar. Interestingly, this also created tensions between Erdogan and the French President Emmanuel Macron, who also sympathizes with General Haftar, as well as maintains good relations with several Arab countries from Egypt to the Emirates.

President Erdogan also uses the strengthened relations with the Libyan government to spoil the Cypriot and Greek exploration activities of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, the tension with President Macron leads also to a stronger alliance between France on the one side and Greece and Cyprus on the other. Also, Israel and Egypt are supporting Greece and Cyprus and have concluded with them an energy alliance. As Russia also supports General Haftar in Libya and has no interest to be drawn into a conflict with Egypt and Israel – and the same is true for its relations with Greece and Cyprus – Turkey has no ally in this game, besides the weak government in Tripoli. Maybe this is one of the reasons why towards the end of 2020 President Erdogan pleaded for a new beginning in the relations between his country and the EU.

## **Lebanese crisis in a fragile environment**

An extremely specific case in the Middle Eastern region is Lebanon. Here, the old conflicts between different political and religious groups coincided with the catastrophic explosion in the Beirut harbor. The neglect of a big amount of explosive material stored without proper safeguards was an expression and symbol of a failed and corrupt state, at least of its fragile political system and administration. Already in the months before the catastrophe, many people throughout the country demonstrated against the corrupt system and the economic disaster. The demonstrators criticized all these forces, including Hezbollah, that had partially lost its self-promoted image as being outside of the corrupt system. In the end, no political force seems to be ready to go for radical reforms and a renewal from scratch.

Independently from these developments, the war in Syria is by far not over and the conflicts inside Iraq continue as well. These conflicts are affecting ally neighboring countries, not least because there is a low and slow return of refugees from Lebanon and Jordan. Therefore, we have to expect that the fight between different political, religious and ethnic groups in Iraq and Syria will continue. In both countries the Kurds struggle to survive physically or at least economically. Their hope to establish either an independent state or at least a viable autonomous region was again destroyed. Furthermore, Turkey is continuing its fight against those Kurdish groups which are connected to the PKK. The short-lived detente between Erdogan and the PKK is long ago over.

## **Arab spring – an unfinished revolt**

Ten years ago, in December 2010, young Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi protested against the corrupt and harassing authorities by burning himself. This tragic suicide started revolts not only



in Tunisia but in all Arab countries. These revolts which have been - prematurely - given the title Arab spring - soon turned into a cold winter, with the exception of Tunisia itself. Maybe it is - historically - too early to call them a failure.

The basic conditions for revolts, like unemployment, bureaucratic harassment, neglect of the rule of law, arbitrary imprisonments etc., are still present in many Arab countries. The fear of even worse conditions prevents in many cases the outbreak of new revolts. Many leaders warn the population of the dangers of Islamists taking over the government and causing civil strife and war. But as the Arab revolts of the so-called Arab spring came as a surprise when they started, so it can happen again. However, it is not certain whether they would succeed or fail again.

At the IIP, we will continue dealing with the fragile situation in the Arab countries in 2021, because all developments in our neighboring countries will inevitably have an effect on Europe. The mission of our institute is to promote understanding of developments in the European neighborhood with general interest but also with a clear orientation towards respect for human rights, including minority rights, gender equality, and the rule of law.

*Hannes Swoboda*

## Selected projects

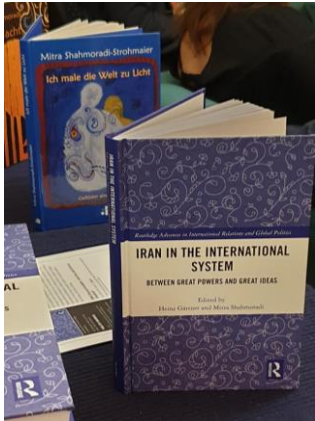
### Iran in the International System: Between Great Powers and Great Ideas

The year 2020 started with another upward spiral of tensions in the Middle East. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, high ranking Iranian military official Ghassem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike in Iraq. In few days, on January 8<sup>th</sup>, Iran responded, firing its missiles at Iraqi military bases hosting US troops. While no human losses were sustained there, a tragic incident that occurred on the same day when Iran mistakenly shot down a passenger plane heading from Tehran to Kyiv, claimed 176 lives. This prompted a new wave of anti-government demonstrations in Tehran, with police using tear gas against the demonstrators.

The protests in Iran and the military escalation between Tehran and Washington were a sad culmination of the gradual deterioration of US-Iranian relations, following President Trump's withdrawal in 2018 from the Joint and Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran has gradually abandoned its commitments under the JCPOA, announcing in January that it will no longer abide by the uranium enrichment restrictions set in the agreement.

The book *Iran in the International System: Between Great Powers and Great Ideas* (Routledge 2020) – published with the support of the IIP – addresses the events that led to another crisis in the Middle East. It looks at Iran's relations with major powers starting from the 1979 Iranian Revolution that had seen Islamic clerics come to power in the country. The book presentation and panel discussion at the IIP featured six contributing authors, covering Iran's relations with the United States, Russia, China, and the EU, and Iran's economic situation. It also looked at Iran from societal and historical perspectives.

Date	30 January 2020
Format	Book presentation and panel discussion
Moderation	MARYLIA HUSHCHA, research assistant at the IIP
Participants	HANNES SWOBODA, president of the IIP and former MEP STEPHANIE FENKART, director at the IIP MITRA SHAHMORADI, artist, painter and poet. Main editor of <i>Iran in the International System</i> BERT FRAGNER, researcher, professor of Iranian studies, Austrian Orient Society HEINZ GÄRTNER, researcher and political scientist, IIP and University of Vienna. Main editor of <i>Iran in the International System</i> ERZSÉBET N. RÓZSA, researcher and university lecturer, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs/Institute for World Economics MAHDI GHODSI, economist at the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies MHER D. SAHAKYAN, researcher and university lecturer, China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research, Armenia; member of the IIP Advisory Board PEJMAN PARSMEHR playing Santur



## Israel, Covid-19, and the Middle East: An Interview with Ofer Zalberg

Director of the IIP Stephanie Fenkart spoke with Ofer Zalberg of the International Crisis Group's Arab-Israel Project on the direct health consequences of the covid-19 pandemic for Israeli and Palestinian societies, the current and potential impacts of the new measures on the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the formation of a new government between Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and Benny Gantz's Blue and White party. The conversation also addressed the possible annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the pandemic, as well as regional challenges in the Middle East, including Iran and Syria.

Date	22 April 2020
Format	Interview
Participants	OFER ZALZBERG, Senior Analyst in International Crisis Group's Arab-Israel Project STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP





## Lebanon: A Failed State?

The explosion of large amounts of ammonium nitrate in the port of Beirut in August 2020 has claimed over 190 lives, even more injuries (around 6,500) and about 300 thousand displaced people. To make things worse, it has brought an already increasingly devastating situation in the country to a new level – triggering another upsurge of mass protests that had been going on in the country since October 2019. It seems that an immediate crisis has hit Lebanon on every front. Structural reforms are required to end sectarian politics and systemic corruption that have plagued the country for decades now. It is not any longer financially sustainable and urgently needs an ‘injection of liquidity’. The country also accounts for the biggest number of refugees per capita – Syrians fleeing the war in their home country end up in a conflict-torn Lebanon that has no resources to provide them with basic security and services, that are also lacking for the domestic population. The global pandemic further aggravates the situation within the country as well as restricts budgets of foreign donors. The powerful position of Hezbollah party and its leader Hassan Nasrallah – recognized by many countries as a terrorist organization – also limits the scope and willingness of many international players to help Lebanon. Some observers already speaking of a failed state in the Middle East, others vest hopes in the support of the international community, including through humanitarian assistance and IMF loans.

Date	22 September 2020
Format	Online panel discussion
Moderation	STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP
Participants	SAMI NADER, Economist and Director of the Levant Institute for Strategic Affairs in Beirut HANNES SWOBODA, President of the IIP, former MEP



## Normalization and the Balance of Power in the Middle East

Date 30 December 2020  
 Format Blog article  
 Authors HEINZ GÄRTNER; Chair of the IIP Advisory Board, Lecturer at the University of Vienna

### Normalization?

The most remarkable event in the Middle East in 2021 was the “normalization” between some Arab states (so far, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco) and Israel. According to the so-called Abraham Accords, these states will resume diplomatic and economic relations with Israel. This rapprochement has been in the making for some time already. The Arab states started to warm up to the Middle East Plan of President Donald Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner. This plan would acknowledge Israel’s permanent occupation of about one third of the West Bank and leave the Palestinians with a shattered territory without sovereignty over their own security. An investment package for not only the Palestinians but all Arab states would be attached to this plan. Before that, the Trump administration recognized Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights and moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem. All this has been confirmed once more by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo when he visited settlements in the West Bank and the Golan Heights in November 2020. “I am on Israel’s land”, he stated.

Both the Trump/Kushner Plan and the Abraham Accords ignore the Palestinian aspiration for an independent state. They are a reversal of President Obama’s initial preference for the borders of 1967, which has been obstructed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is also a turnaround of the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 that requires a recognition of Israel only within the borders of 1967 (this is the reason why Saudi Arabia is still hesitating over whether to join the Accords). The Accords also abandon a two-state solution as proposed by the European Union. For decades, the Palestinian issue has been key to Arab-Israeli-US-EU relations. It was also at the center of the Oslo Accords in the nineties. Why has it been abandoned?

### Alliance building

The Abraham Accords are not a sudden love affair between Arab states and Israel. If one takes a realist stance, there is only one explanation: the geopolitical position of Iran. Global indices<sup>2</sup> rank Iran’s geopolitical potential as fourteenth, well ahead of Saudi Arabia and Israel. The index includes over fifty factors, including population, size, coasts, land mass, resources, infrastructure, and discipline of the military; this is remarkable given that Iran’s military budget is seven times smaller than that of Saudi Arabia. Nuclear weapons are not included there. What do neighbor states do if they fear such a prospect? According to the balance of power theory, they build an alliance. Although the Abraham Accords do not contain explicit defense provisions, such as a collective defense clause, they speak of a common “Strategic Agenda for the Middle East” “to advance regional security and stability” signed by the parties, including the United States.<sup>3</sup> An alliance will increase the security dilemma and further incite a reaction from Iran. The latter will entail support for friendly militias as a second line of defense, but also

<sup>2</sup> 2020 Military Strength Ranking, Global powers ranked by potential military strength. <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization Between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel, Foreign Policy, Issued on: September 15, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ABRAHAM-ACCORDS-PEACE-AGREEMENT.pdf>



enhancement of its nuclear program. Such a chain of reactions will increase instability in the region.

President Trump, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman opposed the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) not so much because of Iran's nuclear program but because it would have recognized and improved Iran's geopolitical status. Furthermore, since Israel is a nuclear weapons state, the Abraham Accords would become a nuclear coalition. They would blow up the concept of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East, which the Arab states have at least rhetorically supported thus far.

### **Biden's challenges**

What will change under President Joseph Biden? He has alluded to both returning to the JCPOA if Iran meets certain conditions and to restoring diplomatic relations with the Palestinians. He will not, however, roll back the Abraham Accords. To avoid higher tensions in the region between Iran and its neighbors, Biden could take a bold decision and diplomatically recognize Iran. To forestall further isolation, Iran itself could try to get back into a regional dialogue on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and indicate that it could recognize Israel in the borders of 1967. It would also take Arab states at their word not to abandon the Palestinians. An isolated Iran would only embolden hardliners and encourage them to act more aggressively. To use a historical analogy, Germany's isolation after 1918 strengthened the radical nationalists; conversely, its integration with the West after 1945, for example, through the Marshall Plan aid, led to a prosperous and democratic country.


## All Activities: Middle East and North Africa

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

January 10 | Naher Osten: Was tun gegen die zunehmende Gewalt? 

January 10 | The Iran Crisis and How We Got There: An Interview with Prof. Heinz Gärtner 

January 29 | Another Blow to Peace in the Middle East? A First Reaction to Trump's "Peace Plan" 

January 30 | Iran in the International System: Between Great Powers and Great Ideas 

February 24 | How the Iran deal can be saved 

February 25 | Peace in Afghanistan 

February 26 | After the Elections in Iran 

March 4 | Israel: Another Green Light for Annexation 

March 24 | Den Atomdeal mit Iran durch ein erweitertes Gesprächsformat retten 

March 30 | The US, Iran, and Israel: Missed Chances for a New Middle East 

April 23 | Israel, Covid-19, and the Middle East: An Interview with Ofer Zalzberg 

April 27 | Lebanese Politics, Economics, and Security in the Era of Covid-19: An Interview with Sami Nader 

May 12 | The Middle East 75 Years After World War II 

May 18 | Israel, Europa und der Antisemitismus 

May 27 | Ankaras Sturmreiter fegen über Libyen - Markus Reisner für zenith 

June 10 | Iran - Ein Land im Wandel? 

July 7 | Annexion: Ja - Nein -Später? Hat Palästina noch eine Chance? 

August 31 | New Chance for Peace or Stabilization of Conflicts? 

September 3 | Türkei: EU-Kandidat, Partner und Gegner 

September 22 | Lebanon: A failed State? 



October 20 | Iran - Austria Dialogue

November 4 | Rabin's legacy 25 years after his death 

November 30 | Die Gefährlichkeit einer „lahmen Ente“ 

December 3 | What does Biden's presidency mean for the World and Iran? 

December 9 | Algeria: December 1960 - December 2020 People Versus the Power - An Instructive Example 

December 17 | Startschuss für den Arabischen Frühling 

December 30 | Normalization and the balance of power in the Middle East 



## Africa

As the EU's neighbor to the south, Africa plays an important role in debates over politics, economics, security, migration, and the environment inside the Union. The continent currently faces numerous conflicts and significant political turmoil, but it will also continue to grow in geopolitical importance in the decades to come. Challenges to democratic development, sustainable environmental practices, and economic growth continue to limit Africa's role on the global stage, but its engagement and inclusion in efforts related to peace and conflict resolution remain essential. In addition, Africa is the continent of origin for many migrants who seek safer or better lives in the EU. As such, it is of vital importance to work with African countries to promote safe, humane, and fair migration practices and policies.

When referring to Africa one might get the impression that it is a homogenous region, neglecting the diversity in history, culture, political systems, religion, and economy as well as the different strategic importance the 54 countries have for the EU, China, the United Arab Emirates and the USA. The struggle for Africa's natural resources and wealth is also making China invest heavily in developing infrastructure across the continent, providing greater connectivity to ports for export. However, contrary to investments from the EU, China does not connect its foreign direct investments with conditionality in the fields of good governance, democracy and human rights.

### Migration

Since 2015 public discourses in many European countries have been obsessed with "migration". This obsession was encouraged by right-wing politicians who have smartly used the fears of the local population for their populist purposes. In some countries this strategy even brought them to power, especially in central and eastern Europe. However, on the European side, a lot already has been said – pro and contra – in the context of (forced) migration, but the views from African countries remain insufficiently elaborated in the Western world. Migration inside Africa is quite different from migration inside the EU European migration, and it is different within various African regions. Whereas most of the people from Eastern Africa are looking for a better future while working in the Middle East, in the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, people from Western or Northern Africa tend to seek a better future in Europe or in the US. However, by far the biggest African migration is internal migration, either within the respective countries or into neighboring ones.

### The Horn of Africa

When talking about but not with African countries, tendencies towards lecturing become obvious. By referring to high corruption, lack of rule of law, conflicts and wars, famines, population growth, etc. we tend to forget about the successes and innovation on the African continent, which is also something we should look at and from which we could also learn. In 2016 the biggest migration crisis took place in Eastern Africa. With around 1.4 million refugees, Uganda is among the top refugee-hosting countries in the world. Contrary to the discourse in Europe about migration, Uganda tried to integrate the refugees into the local communities, allowing them to work, to move freely and providing them with land (30m x30 m allotment per family) and cultivating material.

In 2019 Abiy Ahmed, prime minister of Ethiopia, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in bringing peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Today, the situation within Ethiopia is

very fragile, with unresolved ethnic tensions which recently led to the eruption of violence in the Tigray region. Ethno-nationalism and tribalism are still a big challenge on the way to democracy.

In this moment of turmoil in the Horn of Africa, Kenya could be a good partner for the EU. Domestically, Kenya has been very stable for decades, its economy is growing, and it has a vibrant innovation industry (e.g. mobile money from M-PESA), which is mainly youth driven. When Kenya takes its seat for the next two years at the United Nations Security Council, it could help foster regional cooperation, encourage dialogue and reconciliation. The European Union should take this opportunity to support regional peace and security.

### **Western Africa**

With Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa and with a population of more than 200 million people, it became a country which cannot be ignored by the EU. Even though the Islamist group Boko Haram is active in the North-East of the country, terrorizing the local population, abducting girls and forcing them to conduct suicide-bombing attacks, the rest of the country is quite stable. Most mobility within West-Africa is regional, and the ECOWAS protocols grant citizens in its 15 member states the right to free movement, including the rights of entry, establishment, and residency. With the focus of the EU on migration from Western Africa towards Europe, the support of border-management projects might negatively impact free movement in the region (2015 European Agenda on Migration (EAM) and the Valetta summit of that year, the emphasis has been on addressing the root causes of migration, strengthening borders, tackling human trafficking, enforcing returns).

Similar to what is happening all over the world in international relations, it is crucial to build trust between societies, communities and their leaders. In other words, the struggle for democracy must be led and sustained by local stakeholders who have credibility and integrity. They are the foundation of a resilient democracy. Regional and international actors need to support these local actors diplomatically and financially. It is important to include the youth, since Africa is the youngest continent. In Nigeria, the median age is around 18 years old, whereas in Uganda it is 15 only. To have a perspective in their life is essential in order for them not to want to leave their country.

### **South Africa**

South Africa attained democracy in 1994 after the end of apartheid, holding its first multi-racial elections that saw a landslide victory for the African National Congress (ANC), which is still in power until today. Nevertheless, South Africa is a quite stable democracy, with all problems it still faces. With the new variant of COVID-19 which now is estimated to make up to 90 percent of all cases in South Africa, it becomes clear that vaccination policies must take the vulnerability of poorer nations into account. This will also be one of the biggest challenges for the EU which – in times of globalization – will be affected by the health situation all around the world.

With security challenges in Africa, be it irregular migration, insurgency in Mali, beheadings in Mozambique by militant Islamists, Boko Haram in Nigeria, widespread corruption, armed conflicts in Ethiopia, Somalia, Congo and Sudan, the overall health situation, etc. it is crucial for the EU to strive for a pragmatic partnership with Africa and the African Union. By changing

the narrative on Africa from a lost continent into a continent of hope which has a lot to offer, the atmosphere within African countries and towards African countries might change.

In its activities related to the African continent, the IIP focuses in particular on promoting engagement between the EU and African countries to encourage cooperation and partnership on key global challenges, such as climate change and public health. Through discussions and trips to the region, the IIP seeks to promote relations and understanding between individual countries and foster peace and conflict resolution. Moreover, the IIP concentrates especially on the role of migration in EU-African relations and provide a space for debate and dialogue on best practices and future trends.

*Stephanie Fenkart*





## Selected projects

### Fortress Europe? Current Migration Trends and European Responses

Refugees are living under inhuman and dangerous conditions in Bosnian and Greek camps. Migrants are dying in Libyan and Egyptian prisons, in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Sahara Desert. East and Horn of Africa host 4.2 million refugees and 9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

According to the Austrian government program, anyone who tries to cross “illegally” any EU border should be brought back - in compliance with international law - to the country of origin, the country of transit or another safe third country. The so-called “Hilfe vor Ort” approach remains up to now general statement without the necessary resources. A fair, orderly and regular migration management – like agreed in the United Nations Global Compact on Migration - is only possible with an equal dialogue between the countries of origin, transit and destination as well as the understanding of the regional migration dynamics and the complexity of migration causes and patterns.

Date	25 February 2020
Format	Panel discussion
Partner	Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC)
Moderation	STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP
Participants	FRANZ SCHMIDJELL, Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC) GERALD KNAUS, policy advisor, director of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Berlin ALIDA VRACIC, director of the Think tank Populari Sarajevo, Europe Futures Fellow at IWM and Erste Foundation, Vienna, visiting fellow at European Council of Foreign Relations, member of the IIP Advisory Board OLIVIA AKUMU, analyst, Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), Nairobi



## A New Migration Policy for the EU – Interview with Gerald Knaus

At the "Fortress Europe? Current Migration Trends and European Responses" event hosted by the IIP and the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue (VIDC) on February 25, the IIP spoke with panelist Gerald Knaus about a new migration policy for the EU and its impact on the EU's neighboring regions.

Date	25 February 2020
Format	Interview
Interviewee	GERALD KNAUS, policy advisor, director of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Berlin



## Judicial Independence and the Moral Hazard of Election Monitoring: The Case of Malawi

Date 1 July 2020  
Format Blog article  
Author PATRICK MCGRATH, project assistant at the IIP

*The recent rerun of Malawi's presidential elections following the Constitutional Court's annulment has put a check on anti-democratic tendencies by its former president, but the credit for this victory goes entirely to Malawi's tenacious judiciary and not to the international observers who are meant to support it.*

Malawi, with a population of nearly 19 million, is one of the world's poorest countries, with an annual GDP per capita of around \$370. Despite the many developmental obstacles it faces, it has long been a favorite of international donors and has been admired for its relatively robust democracy after the end of Hastings Banda's dictatorship in 1994.

Nevertheless, Malawi's elections in May 2019 were marred by blatant electoral fraud, with incumbent President Peter Mutharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) benefitting from tally sheets altered by Tipp-Ex, a correction fluid. As Mutharika initially refused to concede, Malawians took to the streets to demand a rerun.

Concurrently, the two primary opposition parties – the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the United Transformation Movement (UTM) – took the case to Malawi's Constitutional Court. In February this year, the Court annulled the results of the 2019 election and called for a new vote within 150 days, a ruling which was later upheld by the Supreme Court.

Mutharika contrived to delay the elections as long as possible by filing lawsuits, trying to force the Supreme Court Chief Justice to resign, and delaying the appointment a new head of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). The fresh elections were nevertheless held on June 23rd and delivered a decisive victory to Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP, who won with 58.57% of the votes.

Mutharika has subsequently claimed electoral fraud, including voting irregularities, violence, and intimidation, but the MEC has rejected his claims. On account of the Covid-19 pandemic, no foreign observers were able to monitor the elections, but the results have been widely accepted: Chakwera is now Malawi's newest president.

### **The Mutharika years**

Although he was only elected as president in 2014, Mutharika has a long and controversial history in Malawian politics. His brother, Bingu wa Mutharika, served as president from 2004 until his sudden death in 2012, while he served variously as Minister of Justice, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2012.

Despite Malawi's impressive economic growth and status as a favorite of international donors, Bingu wa Mutharika's tenure in office was embroiled in allegations of corruption, ill-advised economic policies, and rampant abuse of human rights, including the shooting of nearly 20 protesters and the mysterious murder of student activist Robert Chasowa in 2011.

As a result of these developments, most Western donors slashed aid to Malawi. At the same time, Vice-President Joyce Banda began to criticize the president for his plans to groom his brother as presidential successor, leading to her expulsion from the party.

After Bingu wa Mutharika died abruptly in 2012, the DPP sought to stage a coup by sending the deceased president's corpse to South Africa for alleged medical treatment while arguing that

Banda was unable to become president because she was no longer a member of the party. Banda ultimately formed a coalition of supporters, including foreign donors and the head of the armed forces, and was soon sworn in as president.

The presidency of Banda – who was seen initially as a reformer and was supported by foreign donors – later became mired in corruption following the 2013 “cashgate” scandal, and she lost the following elections to Peter Mutharika in 2014.

### **Domestic institutions and the international community**

The significance of the Malawi Constitutional Court’s ruling earlier this year cannot be understated – it is only the second time in African history that a court has annulled an election, following a ruling in Kenya in 2017. Despite the best efforts by Mutharika and the DPP to influence and intimidate the Court into ruling in its favor, Malawi’s judicial system has proven its independence and power in upholding democratic principles. Although it is one of the poorest countries in the world, Malawi shows that strong institutions can preserve democracy and ensure that politicians are not above the law. Lawyers also joined in protest to show solidarity with the Court and its judges.

The Court’s ruling, however, also has a darker side. The initial elections in 2019 were overseen by numerous foreign election monitors, including the European Union (EU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the Commonwealth of Nations.

All observers endorsed the initial election results, with the EU Election Observation Mission calling the elections “well-managed, inclusive, transparent and competitive.” The mission conceded “tensions” and an “unlevel playing field” but dismissed “various claims of ‘rigging.’” More worryingly, the SADC praised the MEC and its performance “in line with the electoral law and Constitution,” and the Commonwealth praised its “professionalism and dedication.” The AU mission did not note “any serious concerns with the process, either witnessed or observed.” (Malawi’s Constitutional Court, conversely, found “widespread, systematic and grave” irregularities.)

The legitimacy that these reports convey – despite the flagrant electoral fraud through such amateur and brazen tactics – presents a serious case of moral hazard for all international observers. Big donor countries, including EU states, the UK, and the US, as well as international and regional organizations carry significant clout when they observe and validate local elections, serving as a potential tool that authoritarian leaders can use to legitimize their rule. It is thus an additional credit to Malawi’s judiciary that it nullified the elections in spite of the tacit support of foreign observers.

Malawi’s most recent elections therefore illustrate both the need and power of strong institutions in even the most inauspicious circumstances alongside the moral hazard of foreign election monitors. If foreign observers are unable to detect fraud as clear as Tipp-Ex, the legitimacy they confer is not only unfounded but actively dangerous in supporting would-be autocrats.

This invites a need to rethink how foreign election monitoring is conducted and when the costs might outweigh the benefits. The rerun of Malawi’s election is an incontestable victory for the country’s democracy and the power of Malawian citizens, but this is purely to the credit of its domestic institutions and despite foreign observers. This should give pause to the international community in considering how it can best support development and democracy in countries around the world.

## All Activities: Africa

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

February 13 | Africa 2020: Europe's Most Challenging Neighbor 

February 25 | Fortress Europe? An Interview with Gerald Knaus 

February 25 | Fortress Europe? An Interview with Olivia Akumu 

February 25 | Fortress Europe? Current Migration Trends and European Responses 

March 12 | The EU and Africa: A Dialogue of Equals from Trade to Genetic Material to Art 

April 29 | A Mini Ice Age for Africa? 

May 27 | Ankaras Sturmreiter fegen über Libyen - Markus Reisner für zenith 

July 1 | Judicial Independence and the Moral Hazard of Election Monitoring: The Case of Malawi 

October 8 | Frieden - Freiheit - Unabhängigkeit. Namibia 1990 - 2020 

November 30 | Westsahara: Noch ein Konflikt wird heiß 

December 9 | Algeria: December 1960 - December 2020 People Versus the Power - An Instructive Example 

December 17 | Startschuss für den Arabischen Frühling 





## Climate, Resources and Health

The year 2020 was globally marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and new efforts to combat climate change. Both challenges – one may also call them threats – create new tasks for governments if they want to minimize – in short and long term – health risks for citizens. Although one could notice a tendency to act nationally and close borders to combat the virus, overall, international cooperation prevailed in the end. Nevertheless, we are still far away from a global pandemic governance which could guarantee a quick response to any outbreak of a pandemic.

With few exceptions, like Brazil and Belarus, governments were busy fighting the virus. Nevertheless, there was a resurgence in climate action by the great powers. The EU and China made firm commitments to reach carbon neutrality. In the US the change of president from Trump to Biden was the biggest boost for a global climate policy. But a strong green investment push is needed, along with a steady increase in carbon price and a clear policy to implement circular economy.

### **Covid - 19**

The pandemic with its origin in the Chinese city of Wuhan was at the beginning neglected and underestimated by the Chinese authorities. China could have fought the virus and prevented the pandemic. Soon, it became clear that the spread of the virus would result in enormous challenges for health systems and would produce a big economic depression following various lockdowns. China – after the initial neglect – introduced strict measures and soon enough delivered admirable results in combating the virus, even if recently it resurfaced again. Most democracies and even autocratic systems had difficulties to act swiftly and decisively.

The European Union also needed some time to coordinate its activities. Nevertheless, two major results have been achieved: a relatively strong recovery program and a coordinated procurement of vaccines, including joint support for research efforts to develop suitable vaccines. The European Union became the strongest supporter of COVAX, an initiative to develop quickly and distribute fairly the necessary vaccine.

Europe as a whole has been strongly affected by the economic consequences of the pandemic. However, some countries in the south have been hit especially badly. The deficiencies in their health systems, partly due to saving cuts in the past years, could not be overlooked. Overall, the number of casualties, especially of deaths, was lower than predicted. At the same time, the economic downturn was decisively higher than forecasted by sophisticated models done shortly before the pandemic came to the EU.

### **Economic and political consequences of the pandemic**

Again, poorer countries were hit by the virus more severely around the globe. Even if the direct effects of the virus were less strong than in some industrialized countries – partly due to the lower medium age of the population – the economic consequences of the lockdowns further weakened the already weak economies. The fact that a high percentage of the labor force in such economies was working in the informal sector reduced the chance of public financial compensation for job losses. In particular, already weak education system in many countries was further weakened by the closing of schools. The chances to get a job were drastically



reduced for young people from poorer families.

The general slowdown of the world economy also reduced the demand for primary products and affected the countries that relied on export of these goods. On the other hand, some companies and countries were on the winning side. At the end of 2020, the countries of East Asia, especially China, have gained relative economic power. Europe has managed to keep its position, but middle- and lower-income countries lost economic influence. The economies of these countries will shrink in 2020 for the first time in at least 60 years. Generally, poverty and worldwide unemployment are rising again. The World Bank forecasts that 89 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty which would be a rise of 15%.

The pandemic has also posed a challenge for multilateralism. The World Health Organization (WHO) could not fulfill its task, as it is strongly dependent on some countries and many private donations. Unfortunately, the United States with President Trump was not engaged in strengthening it, but instead left the WHO, along with cancelling its membership in other international organizations and neglecting its obligations and engagement in different multilateral agreements. Concerning the vaccine, President Trump implemented its “America first” policy. China acted bilaterally and sought to win friends by sending masks and other equipment and agreed to cooperate with some governments with respect to vaccination. Only the European Union had a multilateral approach in supporting fair distribution of vaccines around the globe. Unfortunately, it would not support the Indian and South African initiative to waive intellectual property rights for vaccines against the Covid-19 virus.

### **Climate policies**

Many political observers feared that the attention given to combating the virus would result in neglect of the fight against climate change. But some developments towards the end of the year demonstrated a new willingness to deal with climate change seriously. China’s leader Xi Jinping has announced that China should reach the target of net-zero carbon emissions by the middle of the century. Japan and South Korea followed suit. With the election of Joseph Biden, the US too is likely to reach this goal by 2050. In December 2020, the Europeans promised to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by the year 2030 in comparison to 1990 levels. If you take all these countries together – including also the United Kingdom – over 60% of global emissions are now covered by the goal to reach net-zero emissions in 2050.

Of course, plans and promises can be forgotten and broken. But many young people who demonstrated in support of more resolute climate change policies around the globe will watch critically the implementation of political promises. In addition, businesses, banks and insurance companies are giving their investments and financing activities a new climate oriented profile. Although there is still a huge gap between these targets and actual policies, there is now a hope for the world to come close to the fulfillment of the Paris goals. Moreover, the special climate representative of President-elect Biden, the former Secretary of State John Kerry, will certainly be a driving force for global action.

### **Unequal effects of climate change**

As the impact of the pandemic has not been same for all countries and regions, so it is with climate change as well. Many countries in already hot zones of Africa, small islands and countries with dense settlements near the maritime coasts are affected more than others. Desertification and rising sea levels destroy villages and agricultural lands. Most of these

countries have a small environmental footprint but are victims of much higher emission levels of the richer part of this world. In addition to this environmental imbalance, there is still a high level of environmental and social exploitation. With the increasing demand for rare earth and special metals – paradoxically also to produce batteries for clean energy – new environmental damage is done to poorer countries and people there, be it in Latin America or Africa. Also, child labor has not disappeared.

### **Multilateral initiatives to establish fair and climate-neutral trade**

These forms of environmental and social exploitation have led to pressure on companies to make their supply chains transparent and traceable. In the past, many of these international companies extracting minerals or roasting coffee, cocoa beans and other rejected such demands with reference to unknown practices of labor, farmers and companies at the origin of their supply chain. More and more initiatives are asking the production and delivery companies at the end of the supply chain to care for fair actions along the whole production process. Germany is working on a specific legislation concerning supply chain transparency and traceability. An initiative in Switzerland got a majority of votes but failed because it got no majority of cantons in a public referendum. Also, the European Union is working on similar legislation. Many companies are opposing it, but some other business leaders already demand such coordinated legislation. Trade must be an instrument to support socially and environmentally acceptable working conditions.

Another area where international cooperation is needed is the issue of deforestation, especially in the Amazon. Available data show an increasing destruction of the forest since 2008. There are various reasons for that, but, certainly, increased meat and soyabean demand is a driving force for Amazon deforestation. This is also the reason why public resistance is growing in European countries against the EU-Mercosur trade agreement negotiated by the European Commission on behalf of the member states. Although the European countries are not the world's main meat consumers, it is feared that this trade agreement could enhance Brazilian meat exports to Europe and indirectly result in additional deforestation. But to reject a trade agreement with dubious effects on the Amazon area is not enough. As deforestation leads to the elimination of certain critical types of trees, it leads to negative consequences globally and thus the response must also be a global one, including financial initiatives. In accordance with a joint program to save the Amazon and other rainforests, climate-neutral trade agreements could be concluded. President-elect Biden already declared his readiness to participate in establishing an international fund to save the Amazon forest.

Coordinated international legislation on transparency and traceability of supply chains and initiatives to save areas which are important for the global climate are only two examples of necessary multilateral activities which must react to national developments with global effects. National sovereignty does not help when the world is challenged by a pandemic. And the same is true when we think about environmental degradation and climate change. Even if it would be wise to shorten some supply chains in the interest of supply security of necessary materials and equipment, international trade will remain important. But it must contribute to a healthier, socially and environmentally responsible world.

*Hannes Swoboda*

## Selected projects

### **Öffnet die Corona Pandemie Chancen für die Klimapolitik?/ *Does the Corona-Virus Pandemic Open Doors for a New Climate Policy?***

In der Zeit der Globalisierung ist das bekannte Gedankenexperiment des Schmetterlingseffekts hilfreich, um über die heutige Welt nachzudenken: Was irgendwo auf der Erde passiert kann in kurzer Zeit die ganze Welt beeinflussen.

Covid-19 zeigt, wie abrupt der Übergang von Glattehen zu Havarie sein kann. Seit Februar vernichtet das Coronavirus eine unvorstellbare Summe von mehreren Billionen Euro und verdeutlicht somit die Risiken, die Instabilität und die Destruktivität einer auf fossilen Brennstoffen – gekennzeichnet durch immer wachsenden Güterkonsum - basierenden Weltwirtschaft. Außerdem hat die Physik der Erderhitzung ihren eigenen Kalender und die realistische Gefahr besteht, dass wir uns Kippunkten nähern, deren Überschreitung katastrophale und nicht rückgängig zu machende Folgen hat.

Einerseits bietet die Corona Pandemie die Chance einer echten Kehrtwende - andererseits könnte sie auch als Ausrede dienen, die Klimaziele zu verschleppen. Prof. Dr. Baumann erklärte, was getan werden könnte oder müsste, um die sich anbahnende Katastrophe zu verhindern, wie die Klimapolitik nach der Corona Pandemie aussehen sollte.

Date	27 May 2020
Format	Online panel discussion
Language	German
Moderation	ANGELA KANE, Vizepräsidentin von IIP, ehemalige Beigeordnete Generalsekretärin bei den Vereinten Nationen
Participant	FRANZ BAUMANN, Gastprofessor an der New York University, ehemaliger Beigeordnete Generalsekretär bei den Vereinten Nationen.



## ‘Individual sovereignty’ in pandemic times – a contradiction in terms?

Date 28 September 2020  
 Format Blog article  
 Authors LUIZA BIALASIEWICZ, Professor of European Governance at the University of Amsterdam, member of IIP Advisory Board  
 CHRISTINA ECKES, Prof. Dr. Christina Eckes is professor of European law at the University of Amsterdam

Over the past months, appeals to ‘individual sovereignty’ have brought together a wide range of political actors across Europe, united in their rejection of face masks, ‘social distancing’, and other forms of state-imposed regulation of behavior and mobility. Opposition to state efforts to govern the spread of the pandemic has created, indeed, the most unlikely of coalitions—from anarchists and natural health proponents to anti-vaxxers and libertarians of all stripes (from the radical-ecological to the right-nativists)—all mobilizing around a purported defense of ‘personal freedoms’ and ‘individual rights’ against the sovereign power of states.

In this short piece, we take to task the notion of ‘individual sovereignty’, which has been invoked by these movements to contest the pandemic powers of the state. Our aim is to point out some fundamental contradictions that underpin such claims-making, from a legal and political-geographic point of view. As Simpson notes in his commentary, the impacts of both the pandemic and of the extension of state powers in attempting to contain it have been profoundly unequal across space and across different bodies, deemed more or less worthy of protection and care. While cognizant of the inherent inequalities (if not directly violence) of state pandemic-politics, we wish to draw attention here *also* to the potential perils that the *contestation* of state powers may bring when it throws into question the very bases of democratic collectivity. By highlighting how the claims of today’s protest movements ably meld neoliberal appeals to ‘individual responsibility’ with a mystified and de-politicized notion of ‘sovereignty’ evacuated of its collective content, we add to Mitropoulos’s argument that the absence of collective action under pandemic circumstances conditions life chances on private wealth.

### Re-claiming ‘fundamental rights’

In articulating their claims to ‘individual sovereignty’, many of the European protesters against COVID-19 measures have appealed to the language of ‘fundamental rights’. In both the German and Dutch contexts, for instance, protesters have invoked constitutional protections in their calls for “the restoration of fundamental rights” (Baumgartner et alia, 2020; NRC, 2020). Likewise, the leaders of the protest in Rome in early June, which brought together the Italian far-right and the *gilet arancioni*, presented themselves as “the guarantors of democracy” (Merlo, 2020).

In the political imaginary of these protesters, ‘fundamental rights’ connote universal moral claims. They are understood as something that pertains to individuals, and that is actionable by individuals. As such, they are envisioned as capable of transcending and restricting, if needed, the political power of the state. Yet fundamental rights, as they are codified by law, are always also an expression of national (or at times supra-national claims to) sovereignty. They are partial, based on a political choice, and subject to politically introduced limits (Ignatieff, 2001). Understood as a formal recognition of certain political values (and not others), codified in a particular way, and backed by the threat of enforcement, fundamental rights are both a confinement and an expression of public powers. This double role of fundamental rights is what

defines their essential role in ensuring that the inherent tension between individual autonomy and collective self-rule, i.e. sovereignty, does not result in the destruction of one or the other. Jürgen Habermas eloquently expresses for pandemic times what this tension is aimed to ensure by: “If democratic citizens only obey the general laws that they have given to themselves, and all together, they cannot agree to policies that, contrary to their equality, jeopardize the lives of some for the sake of everyone else's interests” (Habermas in Habermas and Günther, 2020).

### **‘We are the People’**

Along with the language of fundamental rights, the protests across various European cities have also appealed to another powerful notion, that of ‘popular sovereignty’. Protests in Stuttgart and Berlin have invoked the slogan *‘Wir sind das Volk’* (‘We are the People’) (Höhn, 2020) while in the Italian context, the *gilet arancioni* gathered around the chant of *‘Quando tutto crolla, l’ultima frontiera della democrazia è il popolo!’* (When everything collapses, the last frontier of democracy is the people!) (Berizzi, 2020). ‘The people’ which today’s protesters invoke are the ‘real people’, the ‘silent majority’, contesting an illegitimate state that is simply a proxy for corporate (read: Big Pharma) interests and other sinister ‘elite’ and ‘foreign’ agendas. The ‘Virus Madness’ group leading the protests in the Netherlands (now called ‘Virus Truth’) is indicative, having focused its campaign on ‘giving voice to the will of the people’, through court appeals as well as direct action protests.

We can certainly identify here a continuity with the sort of sovereigntist-populist language that we have become accustomed to in the past years: a political imaginary reliant, as Cas Mudde (2004: 54) has argued, upon a vision of society “separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *‘volonté générale’* of the people”. In this sense, as Nadia Urbinati (2019a) points out, populist rhetoric “violates the synecdoche of modern representative democracy (that is, the claim of a ‘part’ to represent ‘the whole’)” by claiming to embody “one part only, the ‘authentic’ or ‘good’ part, which by this very reason is legitimate to rule for its own good” (Urbinati, 2019a: 80).

The invocations of today’s protesters thus recall pre-COVID populist rhetoric. As Jan-Werner Müller (2020) has remarked, the “claim to monopoly of properly representing the people” has remained “the political business model of populists” in pandemic times. All the while, we would argue, the focus has undergone a transformation: from appeals to an imagined national ‘people’ to an emphasis *also* on personal or individual ‘sovereignty’, that now becomes the site of basic rights to be defended against the ‘sanitary dictatorship’ of state institutions presented as “fundamentally illegitimate” (Müller, 2020). We would like to focus on unpacking this notion of ‘individual sovereignty’ in the remainder of this commentary in order to point out its inherent contradictions, while also cautioning how it may risk giving populist rhetoric another perilous tool with which to contest the modern constitutional democratic state.

### **‘Individual’ sovereignty’**

Within modern constitutional democratic states, individual autonomy is expressed and protected through fundamental rights, which have a double-edged relationship with sovereignty. On the one hand, fundamental rights are, in their specific codified form, an expression of a sovereign choice; on the other hand, they protect individual liberty and autonomy (or self-rule) and limit the exercise of sovereignty. Individual autonomy is thus necessary to create the conditions of the very collective self-rule or ‘collective autonomy’ that is the essence of sovereignty (Habermas, 1996). Indeed, the collective autonomy of any polity is dependent on individual autonomy, in the sense that collective will-forming requires that individual participants actually possess the liberty to make decisions and to determine their actions



(Habermas, 1996). The enjoyment and also enforcement of fundamental rights is central to protecting individual autonomy. Procedural and substantive rights allow the equal and free participation of all in the collective will-forming (Habermas, 1996; Zürn, 2002). They ensure that all participants are treated as individually autonomous. However – and this is crucial to remember in the current moment – individual autonomy requires collective self-rule under democratic procedures, a collective rule that is able to supply the necessary (collective) public goods that can make the individual autonomous, e.g., public safety and public health.

Sovereignty is always an expression of a political relationship between the ruler and the ruled—in the modern constitutional democratic state, between the state and the people (Loughlin, 2003). When the concept of sovereignty is associated with individual autonomy under a different name – namely, the notion of ‘individual sovereignty’ – the core essence of sovereignty, namely the political and collective, is lost. The political and the collective is essential to sovereignty in the very sense of the word: if it is lost, the concept changes its meaning and becomes unrecognizable.

This is not simply a conceptual or terminological problem. As adopted in political discourse, such a notion becomes deeply misleading and charged with a neoliberal conception of the state that denies its fundamental characteristic of being collective. ‘Individual sovereignty’ simply makes no sense in light of the historical and conceptual meaning of sovereignty. Sovereignty, while conceptually blurred and contested, does have a very specific core meaning in the modern European constitutional state. In this core meaning, sovereignty connects state authority with democracy and collective self-rule. ‘Individual sovereignty’, by contrast, equates sovereignty with the *liberal* (rather than democratic) value of *individual* self-rule. It decouples the concept from its very essence and hence robs it of any meaning.

In our pandemic times, when the inherent tension between individual autonomy and collective self-rule becomes particularly stark, it is especially important to protect the collective and the ‘common good’ from terminological usurpation. Italian political philosopher Pier Aldo Rovatti (2020) writing about responses to the pandemic in his essay ‘When the I becomes us’ asks how we can reverse that which Nadia Urbinati (2019b) identifies as the populist ‘me the people’ political style that has dominated European politics in the past few years, now articulated simply under a different rubric, that of ‘individual sovereignty’. Rovatti suggests that while governments may be tempted to ensure compliance with COVID-19 measures through appeals to ‘individual responsibility’, this framing is inherently perilous.

Such an individualized response to the pandemic, which places the individual in the position of the (collective) sovereign, conflates individual autonomy with collective self-rule. In doing so, it obscures the rights of the diverse collective to protection from individual behaviours that can take an excessive toll on the health care system (a common good) and on the individual autonomy of those whose lives will be imperiled by infection.

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## All Activities: Climate, resources and health

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

March 12 | COVID-19 - Rauhe Begegnung mit der Wirklichkeit 

March 16 | Fördert Corona die De-Globalisierung? 

March 19 | The Geopolitical Consequences of the New Oil War 

March 23 | Virus ohne Grenzen - Gesundheit ohne Grenzen 

April 8 | Europe Should Choose a Third Way in Combatting Viruses 

April 17 | NATO, Russia, and Covid-19 

April 21 | Will the Virus Change Our Future? 

April 23 | “Herdenimmunität” hat in der Geschichte nicht funktioniert 

April 24 | Improvise, Adapt, Overcome — Auf der Suche nach der optimalen Exit-Strategie, in Österreich, in Europa, weltweit 

April 27 | COVID-19 and Democratic Backsliding 

May 26 | Das Virus, Klimawandel und soziale Ungleichheit 

May 27 | Öffnet die Corona Pandemie Chance für die Klimapolitik? 

September 28 | ‘Individual Sovereignty’ in Pandemic Times – A Contradiction in Terms? 



## Peace and Arts

In recent years, the IIP extended some of its activities also within the field of arts. The idea behind this approach is that striving for peace, mutual understanding and dialogue is a multidimensional process. It includes expert analysis, diplomacy and political leadership, activism and engagement, but also emotions, individual and collective feelings and past experiences.

Many artists have been victims of war and conflict or are endangered due to their activities by authoritarian states or non-democratic, nationalist and partly even fascist groups. Attacks on artists critical of political regimes in their countries happen frequently and are by no means justified. An example is the attack on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 on the Visual Culture Research Center (VCRC) in Kyiv by right-wing nationalists who destroyed an exhibition depicting right-wing nationalism on both sides of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Another one is the persecution of Ai Weiwei, the Chinese conceptual artist who has been arrested for his critical work and is now living in exile. There are many more examples on how artists are intimidated, persecuted and attacked – verbally and physically, not to mention the dilemma of self-censorship due to their often critical approaches towards government policies or against powerful groups or individuals.

Art, nevertheless, is an extremely important additional tool to bring topics to the attention of people, to show different realities, to examine emotions and experiences and look at events shaping the future. Art can open dimensions of contradictions to people who do not frequently deal with conflicts and wars from a political or expert point of view. Contrary to policies, art does not give recommendations. It places spectators at the center, letting them explore, understand, feel, and conclude.

By giving space to artists at the IIP premises, we offer the public an additional way to perceive complexities of conflicts; to realize that conflicts affect individuals and groups on manifold levels; to deal with a very human dimension of often perceived as abstract origins and consequences of war and conflict. Conflicts do have an impact on individuals and societies, conflicts are always embedded in history, present and future, and to overcome them sustainably, politics, policies and engagement must take all of these dimensions into account.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the IIP had to cancel its planned exhibition on “PEACE: Reflections on Africa”. Nevertheless, shortly before the second lockdown in Austria, we managed to organize a small-scale hybrid exhibition and a talk titled “Namibia: Peace, Freedom, Independence”.

Even though art does not have to be politically motivated, its value often lies within itself, in its esthetics or proficiency. However, it is also the freedom of art to tackle uncomfortable issues, to show alternatives, to provoke and to encourage people to deal with – sometimes also painful – issues and to ask questions.

“If my art has nothing to do with people’s pain and sorrow, what is ‘art’ for?”

(Ai Weiwei, b. 1957)

*Stephanie Fenkart*

## Selected projects

### **Frieden – Freiheit – Unabhängigkeit. Namibia 1990 – 2020 / Peace – Freedom – Independence. Namibia 1990 - 2020**

Namibia wird heute in den österreichischen Medien nur selten zum Thema. Gerade in einer Zeit, in der das öffentliche Bild Afrikas von Flüchtlingskrise, den Auswirkungen der Klimakrise, Bürgerkriegsszenarien und allgemeinem Pessimismus gekennzeichnet ist, stellt Namibia ein Gegenbeispiel dar: ein Land, in dem Friede und nationale Versöhnung eingeleitet sind anstelle eines vielfach befürchteten Blutbads zwischen Schwarz und Weiß: ein Land, das trotz einer leidvollen Geschichte von Völkermord und Apartheid heute Demokratie und Menschenrechte zu leben versucht: ein Land, in dem das schwere Erbe von Kolonialismus und Rassendiskriminierung mit aktiven Reformen im Bildungs- und Gesundheitsbereich überwunden werden soll. Heute ist internationale Solidarität mehr denn je notwendig, um das Vorhaben, ein unabhängiges freies Namibia zu gestalten, in dem soziale Gerechtigkeit herrscht.

Date	8 October 2020
Format	Exhibition opening and panel discussion
Language	German
Curators	TERESA FELLINGER, Künstlerin ELISABETH FRIEDEL, ehemalige UNO Mitarbeiterin und Teil des zivilen Kontingents von UNTAG
Welcome and Moderation	HANNES SWOBODA, Präsident, International Institute for Peace, ehem. MEP ANGELA KANE, Vizepräsidentin von IIP, ehemalige Beigeordnete Generalsekretärin bei den Vereinten Nationen
Participants	NADA KRUGER, Botschafterin der Republik Namibia in Österreich PETER JANKOWITSCH, Bundesminister a. D. und Ehrenpräsident der ÖNG (per Zoom) ASTRID ESTERLUS, Generalsekretärin der Österreichischen Namibia-Gesellschaft (ÖNG) KWAME OPOKU, ehemaliger Legal Adviser des UNO Büros in Wien sowie von UNTAG (per Zoom) ALOIS POMMER, Polizei-Oberst i.R. und ehemaliger Angehöriger der UNTAG





### RECENT HISTORY OF NAMIBIA UNTIL INDEPENDENCE 1989

- 1858 PEACE TREATY OF HOACHANAS**  
The most important political representatives of the different population groups join together and thus lay the foundation for Namibia's later development into a nation.
- 1884 BERLIN CONFERENCE**  
The European powers agree on the division of Africa. Germany, which until then had no colonies, was given among others what is now Namibia, then South West Africa. This was the starting signal for adventurers, merchants and missionaries, who dreamed of wealth, freedom, land or evangelization. The foundation of a state administration was laid, and in 1897/98 a military presence established in the fight against insurgents.
- 1904 - 1907 UPRISING OF THE HERERO AND NAMA**  
The uprising of the Herero and Nama is brutally crushed by German troops. Estimates of the number of dead who fell victim to this genocide vary between 30,000 and 100,000.
- 1915 BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR I**  
At the beginning of World War I, South African troops under the British Crown conquer the country, which is later placed under the mandate of South Africa on behalf of the League of Nations. In violation of international law, however, South Africa begins to make South West Africa its fifth province.
- 1948 APARTHEID**  
After World War II and the election victory of the racist National Party in South Africa, the apartheid policy is transferred to Namibia, e.g. the separation of residential areas in the cities and the establishment of homelands in rural areas.
- 1966 PEACEFUL PROTESTS**  
After years of peaceful protests, the South West Africa People's Organization SWAPO begins armed resistance in the north of the colony.
- 1978 UN-RESOLUTION 435**  
In Resolution 435, the United Nations present a plan for Namibia's transition to state independence, which is initially boycotted by South Africa.
- 1989 FIRST FREE ELECTIONS**  
After long negotiations, the first free elections are held in Namibia under UN supervision (UNTAG). SWAPO wins 41 out of 72 mandates and since then provides the government.



### Matits nî llhûi !khais xa

So thûia ge sata xa lguî nî tanke. So thûi-ûrkhanis ge kaiso a Inoraso.

1. Thûi-ûrkhanis sata lguî nî
2. So lampa lû ra
3. So sarakhanis kaiso nî thûi-ûrkhanis a ra
4. Thûi-ûrkhanis sata lguî nî
5. Naiso sata thûi-ûrkhanis kaiso sata sata
6. Naiso sata thûi-ûrkhanis kaiso sata sata

UNTAG sarakhanis ge thûi-ûrkhanis kaiso nî sarakhanis.  
UNTAGS ge thûi-ûrkhanis lguî nî sarakhanis thûi-ûrkhanis kaiso nî kaiso.

## UNTAG NAMIBIA

!Noraso tsî !hanu-ai thûis



## All Activities: Peace and arts

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

March 2-3 | Neutrality and Nonalignment: Neutrality and Art - The Art of Independence, Pt. I



March 2-3 | Neutrality and Art - The Art of Independence, Pt. II



October 8 | Frieden - Freiheit - Unabhängigkeit. Namibia 1990 - 2020





## Global topics and Multilateralism

*Angela Kane*

For someone who has worked for the United Nations for over thirty years, it is difficult to accept that there are politicians and people who reject multilateralism, yet 75 years after the founding of the world Organization, multilateralism is under increasing challenge.

The UN Charter set the goal of achieving peaceful international cooperation and laid down principles that are non-negotiable. It offers tools, methods and rules for the way forward. The Charter's provisions are interconnected and cannot be used "a la carte", as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once warned.

The experiences as well as the ideals that dominated the drafters of the UN Charter belong to a different generation. What inspired the founders was an international order built on balancing sovereignty with power politics in order to maintain international peace and security. The world that was then has fundamentally changed – and for the UN, the response to change has primarily been to expand the number of organizational entities, creating a network of funds and programs with specific mandates addressing specific issues.

Governance is no longer the purview of sovereign states: we now have multinational companies that dwarf the GNP of most nations. Power shifts have occurred over decades; China has risen to equal the US in power and economic heft. There is a trend towards multi-polarity as expressed by the increasing number of states that act as key players.

The predictability of the Cold War adversaries vanished thirty years ago; the euphoria then over global détente and harmonious relations has given way to at times narrow-minded unilateralism. It has allowed the rise of despots and dictators, of corrupt politicians, of human rights abuses, of an increasing number of conflicts and wars that are waged for power, for access to natural resources, for political domination of one group at the expense of another. "Politics have no relation to morals", Macchiavelli said, and what the recent pandemic has additionally shown is the weaknesses of traditional security approaches and the return of authoritarian leaders who capitalize on the pandemic to further their grasp on power.

We could call this "politics as usual" but what has changed is the growing tolerance of such abuse of power in recent years. Our threshold for accepting such abuses has been lowered, the moral voices speaking out against them are fewer and more muted.

So where does that leave multilateralism, our hard-won shining achievement of the post-war world? Where has the high-minded idealism of "all for one, and one for all" gone? The principle of equality; of one country, one vote? What happened to the faithful adherence to international treaties, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

The decline of multilateralism goes back over a decade but clearly accelerated with the election of Donald Trump as US President in 2016. He questioned international institutions and the value of alliances, pulled out of the UN Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization; he has left international treaties such as the JCPOA and the Paris climate agreement, as well as arms control treaties that ensured security for decades.

The strains on the international community have been deep, compounded by the ongoing war in Syria, the refugee crisis, now the pandemic. Yet we have to recognize that the multilateral system has held together relatively well, with some states (European Union members in

particular) having stepped up to prevent further damage (after all, no other states followed the US in leaving international institutions or agreements), though this often meant assuming higher financial burdens to shore up a crumbling multilateral system.

In the final analysis, it comes down to what value states put on the multilateral system. Despite the strain, it must be maintained: no country can manage global challenges on its own. Solidarity, trust – and yes, idealism – were present at the UN’s creation, but we have lost sight of those qualities. Power is not having power over others; we should think of it not as a zero-sum game but as an issue of strengthening others in order to reach joint goals – goals that we are not able to reach on our own.

Reinforcing multilateralism means creating a balance of power among UN members as well as creating a balance of responsibilities and representation for the people of our planet. The Charter opens with the words “We the peoples of the United Nations”, a stark reminder that states cannot be the only building blocks for effective multilateralism. The future of international cooperation lies with people – and I look towards the involvement of youth. The current generation has grown up with a wider lens on the world, with social media, with an outlook that is international, not restricted by borders. Their activism for the environment, their protests against political repression, make me hopeful that support for international cooperation and multilateralism will grow stronger. The opposite would be too dire to contemplate.

*This text is based on Angela Kane’s presentation at Riga Dialogue 2020 “The Future of Multilateralism in the Era of Great Power Competition”*

*Heinz Gärtner*

President Donald Trump’s presidency was not only unsuccessful, but also left the world in disarray. He abandoned multilateralism and polarized the international system. President Trump stepped out of most of the international agreements, like the nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA) and the Treaty on Intermediate Missiles (INF), and he attacked multilateral institutions, like the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Paris Climate agreement. The great power competition with China and Russia became priority and he imposed heavy sanctions on Iran. He threatened European companies with secondary sanctions if they do business with Iran, although the Europeans considered the JCPOA a masterpiece of “effective multilateralism”. All the sanctions did not change Iran’s behavior according to his request. Neither “maximum pressure”, nor friendly relations between Trump and North Korea’s Kim Jong Un led to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Already before Trump, America had resisted international consensus on land mines, cluster bombs, the rights of women, and more, failing to ratify treaties, even when it signed them.

The Europeans feel betrayed. Over decades they have built up a positive image of the US. The US intervened in both world wars, was the leading Western power against the Soviet bloc and provided the Marshall Plan for some European states. They remained mostly silent in the face of the brutality of the Vietnam War. This was not possible anymore when George W. Bush intervened in Iraq in 2003 under false pretenses. As former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld observed, there was a division between “old and new Europe”. Under the Trump administration again most parts of Europe felt that the US has ceased to be the beloved leading world power.

Will President-elect Joseph Biden change the course? Biden will not bring the US back to the exceptional status. But he will certainly cooperate within some multilateral organizations, like

the WHO, the WTO and return to the Paris Climate Agreement. He will act more diplomatically. There will be no new international treaties, however, because their ratification would require two thirds of the votes in the Senate. Republican senators will not support a Treaty that has been negotiated by a Democratic president. Presidential directives would be an alternative instrument. However, they can be abandoned by the next president.

Joseph Biden will be more committed to NATO and work with US allies in Europe and Asia. He also announced creation of an “alliance of democracies”. Let alone the definition of democracy (what about the US-allies Saudi Arabia or Egypt?), this alliance or association would exclude powers like China and Russia. This concept undermines by definition the multilateralism which is comprehensive and not exclusive. Tensions with China and Russia will remain. The polarity is structural.

As presidential candidate, Biden said that he would return to the nuclear deal with Iran if Iran also abides by the agreement. It is still not clear whether he would attach further conditions, since the Congress will put pressure on him to take a tough position towards Iran. Iran for its part declared it will not accept that the JCPOA is renegotiated. In sum, on the one hand Biden’s foreign policy will be more diplomatic and multilateral. At the same time, great power competition will remain and tensions may even increase.

## Selected projects

### "And the walls remain the same?": Local conflict in Northern Ireland in light of Brexit and the Irish border question

The Belfast Peace Agreement on Good Friday 1998 marked the official end to three decades of armed conflict between the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist and Catholic/Republican/ Nationalist communities in Northern Ireland. However, the efforts to local conflict transformation have born only limited fruit so far. In Belfast and other urban areas, sectarian tensions and violence still flare between deprived working-class interface communities, who remain divided by numerous 'peace walls'. In light of Brexit, the Irish border issue and Northern Ireland's power-sharing impasse the progress in local peacebuilding seems to have stalled.

In his presentation, Dr. Bert Preiss outlined and summarized the main findings from his recently published book: *Conflict at the Interface: Local Community Divisions and Hegemonic Forces in Northern Ireland*. In particular, the panelists discussed the potential implications of Brexit, the Irish border issue and Northern Ireland's power-sharing impasse for the local and overall peace process.

Date	22 January 2020
Format	Panel discussion
Moderation	STEPHANIE FENKART, Director of the IIP
Participants	HANNES SWOBODA, President International Institute for Peace, former MEP BERT PREISS, Department of Political Science, University of Vienna MELANIE SULLY, Diplomatic Academy, Head of Go Governance, Vienna



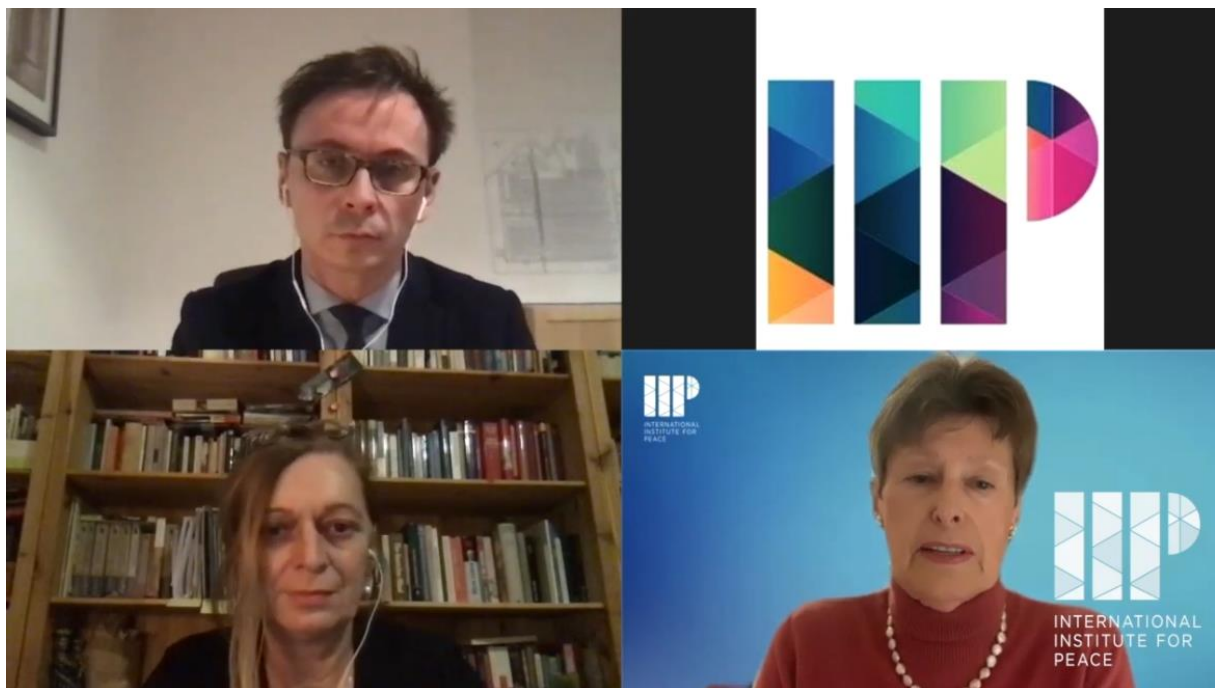
## The World Must Never Forget: In memory of the 75th anniversary of liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp

75 years after the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp we look at the nature of remembrance and the current generation's obligation towards survivors and memorial sites like Auschwitz. COVID-19 and its implications pose new challenges which need to be addressed if we want to take the words of Henry Appel seriously who said: "There is only one thing worse than Auschwitz itself...and that is if the world forgets there was such a place".

For this purpose, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation was established in 2009 in order to create an endowment to finance the conservation of all authentic remains of the former Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp, including personal items of prisoners and infrastructure elements present on the site of the Memorial.

The preservation process is costly but has been supported so far by 38 governments, some major cities and dozens of private donors who support the mission to maintain the testimonies of the Shoah and subsequently to allow future generations to learn from the tragic lessons from Auschwitz.

Date	17 November 2020
Format	Panel discussion
Moderation	ANGELA KANE, Vice President of the IIP, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Participants	WOJCIECH SOCZEWICA, Director General of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation ÉVA KOVÁCS, Academic Program Director at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies

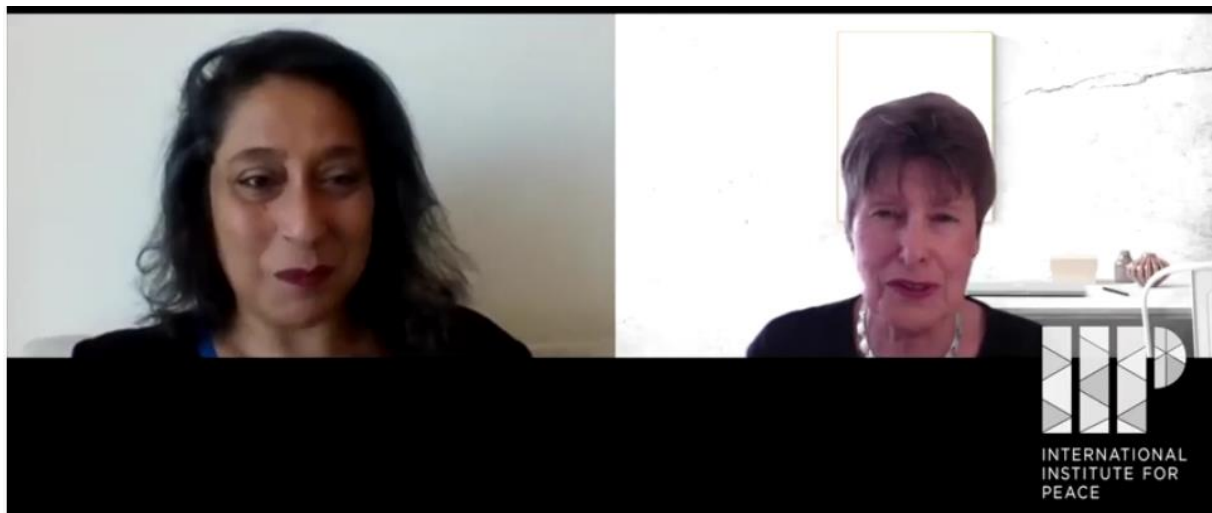




## Reforming the UN Security Council: A Discussion with Mona Ali Khalil and Angela Kane

Angela Kane discussed with Mona Ali Khalil her new report with *Together First* on possible UN Security Council reforms.

Date	28 April 2020
Format	Interview
Interviewee	MONA ALI KHALIL, founder and director of MAK LAW International and the former Senior Legal Officer in the UN Office of the Legal Counsel (UNOLC) ANGELA KANE, Vice-President of the IIP and the former Undersecretary General at the United Nations





## China - Partner or Competitor in Globalization?

Date 3 June 2020  
Format Blog article  
Author HANNES SWOBODA, President of the IIP, former MEP

Who is China? Is it the Communist government? Is it the people? How should we as Europeans treat such a big country that is able to challenge many of our principles and policies? How should Europe position itself in light of the rivalry between the US and China? How should Europeans evaluate the increasing popularity of China in countries not only along the borders of the EU but also inside some founding member states, such as Italy and - if we may believe some recent polls - even Germany? Even if this is simply a consequence of President Trump's erratic and derogatory behavior towards Europe, it is surprising that an authoritarian Asian regime or dictatorship could win such sympathy.

### Domestic control

In reacting to the negative attitude and policies of Mr. Trump, one should not forget the policies of China towards its own people and towards its neighbors. Concerning its citizens, China - or more accurately the present "Communist" or simply authoritarian government - is building up a high and comprehensive surveillance system combined with a strict - both positive and negative - sanction system. Admittedly it is not easy to govern such a large country with such a diversity of people with different cultural and religious orientations. But there is no justification for establishing such a tight control system based on suspicion and prejudice. And, in particular, there is no justification for the "re-education" camps for the Uighurs in Xinjiang.

Chinese "security policy" and its use of modern tracking technologies serve as a negative example, and already other authoritarian governments around the globe are buying the relevant equipment from China. It is not surprising that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has specially good relations to today's Chinese leadership.

### Maritime Expansion

Another aspect of questionable Chinese policy is the extension of its influence and control concerning the South China Sea. Obviously it is possible to hold different opinions about the adequacy of zones of influence in the neighboring maritime areas, especially in relation to the de facto US presence in the neighborhood of China. But China established a policy of continuous expansion via occupation and the militarization of some islands in its wider neighborhood. They did not seek compromise or new contracts but instead relied on confrontation.

The Philippines brought its conflict with China before the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, and the Court decided in 2016 in favour of the Philippines. But China, although a signatory of the relevant treaty, refused to accept the verdict of the Court. In the meantime, the militarization of some islands continues.

### Hong Kong

A special case that has recently become hot again is the relation between the Chinese government and other central authorities with Hong Kong. When Hong Kong was "given back" to China in 1997 - according to the original treaty - the principle of "One Country - two Systems" was to be the foundation of the new relationship between Hong Kong and the mainland. In fact, as Hong Kong never experienced democracy under British rule, the new

status at least introduced some democracy into the live of its citizens. That this system would become an area of potential conflict for China and its authoritarian system could have been foreseen. But there was no legal alternative for the British government to return their “rented” colony. The only alternative would have been to violate international law by not abiding by the promises given in the original treaty.

Soon enough, conflict broke out because the Chinese government would not accept the “privileges” of the Hong Kong people in relation to its own people. And very often it won the support of the majority of citizens in mainland China for their actions against Hong Kong activists. The stubbornness of the Chinese government and its “proxies” in Hong Kong led some activists to extreme and destructive actions. The result was a true spiral of violence.

Recent days have brought another blow to the democracy movement in Hong Kong. A new security law will give the Chinese Ministry of State Security the right to operate in Hong Kong according to Chinese laws. The special authoritarian attitude towards people who endanger “security” will also be introduced in Hong Kong. Some people have argued that this may keep potential investors away from Hong Kong, especially financial investors much needed by China. But the spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry contested these arguments: “The legislation will alleviate the great concern among the local and foreign business communities about the violent and terrorist forces attempting to mess up Hong Kong.”

Some leading businesspeople have shown sympathy towards - or at least acceptance of - the new legislation. One such manager said: “The medicine will hurt for sure but we have no choice but take it now.” He might be right in that evaluation, but any stability would be furthered as the expense of democracy and human rights. And, given that over past years the number of Chinese investors in Hong Kong has been sharply increasing and has even overtaken that from the US, the fear of a backlash from investors is limited.

The last British governor in Hong Kong, Chris Patten - whom I met for the first time in the then-colony and then quite often later on when he became EU Commissioner for Foreign Affairs - argued recently that this new legislation “ripped up the Joint Declaration, a treaty lodged at the UN to guarantee Hong Kong’s way of life till 2047.” His call that “G7 nations must stand up for Hong Kong’s freedoms” will probably not have many consequences, as he himself underlines the necessity to keep good relations with China to deal with global problems.

Necessarily, a decisive and coordinated action by the US together with Europe and democratic Asian nations could put at least some pressure on China to refrain from undermining the basic freedoms of the people of Hong Kong. They could be pressured to respect the upcoming elections of the local assembly and to try to find a compromise with the democratically elected representatives.

But Trump sees China as the main competitor, and thus he is not eager to find a basis for dialogue and compromises and may even challenge the previously-concluded trade agreement. And the Corona crisis and the upcoming US elections have contributed to new tensions between the US and China. Indeed, some experts see the danger of a war between today’s two major powers. They compare the situation with the rivalry between England and Germany before World War I. Martin Wolf wrote recently in the *Financial Times*: “The world as been here before and knows that superpower rivalry can bring only ruin.” Further, the announced “sanctions” by the US officially revoking the special treatments awarded to Hong Kong as an independent customs territory will not help the people of Hong Kong but will instead add to the China-US conflict.

And Europe? Well as is so often the case, the EU is split. Some countries, especially those that are participants of the Belt and Road Initiative, are rather restrained and often even prevent statements criticizing Chinese actions. China is very skillful in influencing different national governments and is offering help in critical situations like the Corona epidemic. As is frequently the case, Chinese help is minimal but done quickly and with much propaganda. It will be hard to influence China's domestic and external policies. But we should be aware of the consequences of the uncritical attitude that is expressed by some authoritarian European countries. And we should not blindly accept China's self-proclamation as a promoter of multilateralism. It has a very selective interpretation of multilateralism.

During all my visits to China, I have always admired China's longterm thinking and strategy. But I always thought that Europe should develop such a strategy, but instead directed toward implementing and fostering democratic principles. So EU representatives should at least express their concerns loud and clear. Otherwise, the virus of authoritarian rule and annexation will spread. And in some respects we can call the unilateral breach of the special status of Hong Kong an annexation equivalent to the abolishment of the autonomy of Kashmir by Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi. And these come on top of Russia's annexation of Crimea and Israel's annexation of Palestinian territory. As the *Financial Times* wrote recently, annexation is contagious.

### **The global scene**

Let us return to the global situation. Ian Baruma has recently recognized that "The prospect of China's global leadership is not inviting. But the US is rapidly fading as an alternative...If China wishes to lead the world, it will have to offer more than money and intimidations." Needless to say, we do not need a single global leader. But certainly China has won tremendous economic heft. Its share of global manufacturing output rose from 5% to 20% in the period from 1980 to 2015. The share of the US shrank from 23% to 18%, while that of the EU went from 34% to 27%. These changes show the dramatic shift in the world economy.

Nevertheless, the EU has enough economic power to play a bigger political role. Of course it would be better to have the US as an ally in this global competition. But this is not possible with Trump as US President. On the other hand, we should recognize the strong and steep rise of China's economic power. And economic power, if combined with a central authority and a strong army, always translates itself into a strong political power. These ingredients - central authority and military - are missing inside the European Union. It weakens the EU's potential. But the EU can at least act as a moral power when it recognizes clear violations of human rights and international law.

So China should and must be a partner in trying to find solutions for global challenges such as climate change. But Europe and Europeans should resist accepting and even admiring the Chinese government's way of treating its citizens and expanding its influence by violating treaties and international law. The starting points for managing globalization are quite different. Europe should not hide these differences. Europeans should be honest and express their concerns and criticisms. But the EU should invite China to work together in order to solve problems where they can find common positions.

## All Activities: Global topics and multilateralism

*(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)*

January 22 | Northern Ireland and Brexit 


March 5 | Hilfe an Flüchtlinge hat Priorität 

March 9 | Frauen. Medien. Krieg. 

April 6 | Wahlen in den USA - Notstand möglich? 

April 21 | American Domestic and Foreign Policy in the Era of Covid-19: An Interview with Heinz Gärtner 

April 21 | What should a feminist foreign policy look like in the 2020s?

May 1 | What is the Belt and Road Initiative? A Chinese “Marshall Plan” or a “Geopolitical Tool”? 

May 1 | Reforming the UN Security Council: A Discussion with Mona Ali Khalil and Angela Kane 

May 8 | Wir müssen die EU neu aufstellen 

May 21 | Hungary’s Emergency Law and the COVID-19 Crisis 

June 3 | China - Partner or Competitor in Globalization? 

June 4 | Die USA vor den Wahlen unter Corona 

June 10 | Guyana’s Nearly Stolen Elections: Polarization, Patronage, and Petroleum 

June 15 | Global Citizenship Education - Erziehung zum Frieden 

June 23 | Without Justice, No Peace 

July 8 | New Geopolitical Challenges and the SCO: Sino-Indian Border Clashes and Covid-19 

July 22 | EU und die deutsche Ratspräsidentschaft 


August 7 | The Death of Two Famous Peacemakers 



September 27 | Europas Herausforderung durch Flucht: Neue EU Vorschläge 

September 28 | 'Individual Sovereignty' in Pandemic Times – A Contradiction in Terms? 

October 13 | Friedensförderung und Gewaltprävention neu gedacht 

November 17 | The World Must Never Forget: In memory of the 75th anniversary of liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp 



## Der Standard Blog: Gesellschaft - Macht – Frieden

The IIP, in cooperation with Sir Peter Ustinov Institute and Think- and Do-Tank Shabka, run an online blog section at one of Austria's largest daily newspapers – Der Standard.

Gesellschaftliche- und Machtverhältnisse schaffen Frieden – wenn sie von Gerechtigkeit geprägt sind. Herrschen Vorurteile und Hass ist es nicht weit bis zu Gewalt und Krieg. Das Sir Peter Ustinov Institut widmet sich der Erforschung und Bekämpfung von Vorurteilen als Grundvoraussetzung für ein friedliches Zusammenleben. Der Förderung eines globalen Friedens hat sich das International Institute for Peace verschrieben und Shabka als strategischer Think & Do Tank versteht sich als zivilgesellschaftliche außen- und sicherheitspolitische Plattform. Zusammen sind wir Teil einer starken Zivilgesellschaft, für die das Streben nach Gerechtigkeit die Voraussetzung für nationalen-, europäischen- und globalen Frieden ist.

Die einzelnen Beiträge spiegeln die Meinungen der AutorInnen wider und nicht zwangsläufig die der Institute.



## All Blogs at *Der Standard*

(click on the activity for more details or use the QR code below)

16 Oktober | Karl Lueger: Stachel der Erinnerung

20 Oktober | Ist die EU eine Gemeinschaft des Rechts?

26 Oktober | 65 Jahre Neutralität, 25 Jahre EU-Beitritt: Ein Widerspruch?

2. November | Der mühsame Weg der EU zur gemeinsamen Asylpolitik

4. November | Yitzak Rabin: Von der Gewalt zum Frieden

5. November | Terror in Wien: Ein Angriff auf unsere Werte?

16. November | Extremismus und Vorurteile: Profile der Täter

18. November | Trump, QAnon, Corona-Leugner: Die US-Demokratie in der Krise?

19. November | Europas Kampf gegen den Islamismus

24. November | Integration von Migrantinnen und Migranten: Möglichkeit Schule

2. Dezember | Macht Biden Frieden?

16. Dezember | Kann man Österreicher, Türke und Kurde sein?

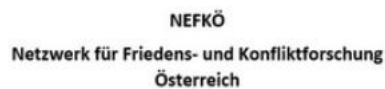
23. Dezember | Russland und die Revolution in Belarus



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International Institute for Peace

Möllwaldplatz 5 / Top 7  
1040 Wien  
Austria

Phone: +4315046437  
Mobile: +436642180623  
Email: [office@iip.at](mailto:office@iip.at)

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