

# Developments in EU-China Political Dialogue in the Global Context

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## Abstract

The paper examines the political relations between the European Union and the People's Republic of China in the context of their differing approaches to global politics. Towards this aim the paper looks, first, at the way in which the EU and China have engaged with different global regions (Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia) and, second, with different international organisations and regimes (UN, G20, IMF, WTO and the post-Kyoto climate change regime). Building on the observation of the different attitudes that either side holds, the paper explores more fundamental differences with regard to some of the key principles of global politics (democratization, security, multilateralism, sovereignty). The paper concludes by arguing that the 'misunderstanding' on principles between the EU and China is at odds with the growing economic interdependencies between the two sides, and beyond that constitutes one of the key challenges of the emerging multipolar global order.

## Introduction

The EU and China celebrated 35 years of diplomatic relations in 2010. An important part of this relationship is the agreement of the two partners for a strategic partnership, which was signed in 2003. But what does strategic partnership mean or entail for the two respective partners,

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given different histories and interests? Relations between the EU and China have often encountered disagreements over human rights, religious freedom or environmental protection. Equally, both powers have diverging attitudes to issues such as international law, territorial integrity and non-interference in domestic affairs. The EU, by its very nature, has a more flexible understanding of the principle of sovereignty and is widely seen as a normative or 'civilian' power whereas, for China, sovereignty and the pursuit of national interest remain an absolutist concept.

Given those differences, what level of cooperation can China and the EU muster on global issues, especially with regard to the future roles of international organisations such as the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, the G20, the form and practice of multilateralism, and the prospects and direction of a multi-core world? This paper will explore what features or values of the world order are preferred or pursued by the EU and China, how both partners approach the role or continuity of leading international organisations, what approach each takes towards regional governance such as in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and whether the two tend to be partners rather than competitors on issues of climate change and energy policy. Having first taken stock of these the paper will be to identify the normative differences between the EU and China in their approach to global issues. The paper will rely primarily on documentary evidence (e.g., joint communiqués on global or regional governance aspects, issued at EU China summits, or separately by each) and partly on UN voting patterns. To bring these aims into focus, the paper will start by briefly identifying some of the main stages of the EU-China relationship.

### **The Institutional Context of EU-China Relations**

Although institutional foundations of EU-China relations began in 1975, these took on greater significance in the mid-1990s, starting with the 'long term policy' set out in the 1995 Communication on EU-China relations and the 1998 European Commission *Communication on Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China*. Of particular note is the 2003 Agreement on *A Maturing Partnership – Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations* in 2003. The 2003 Communication is not only notable for its 'European' focus and its emphasis on strategic changes; it also goes much further than its predecessors in setting out the infrastructure of EU-China relations. Its implicit benchmark for 'maturity' seems to be the quantity of EU-China dialogues, especially sectoral processes and agreements. A further European Commission Communication took place in 2006, entitled *EU China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities*. Thus, in a relatively short period, EU-China relations have become substantially institutionalised and now have become the second most well developed for the EU after EU-US relations (Renard 2011).

At the heart of the 2003 EU-China agreed strategic partnership are references to similarity in interests in each other's affairs and on global issues involving, inter alia, the promotion of international stability, the reduction of world poverty and the safeguarding of climate and resource issues at a global level. Those are important aims and reflect concerns over the negative fallout(s) of globalisation such as the rise of international terrorism. They indicate the need for closer cooperation. However, each partner starts from different histories, economic and political development, geopolitical positions, and interests. China's 5,000 year history has no parallel in Europe. Europe's economic and political development based on capitalism and democracy has no direct counterpart in China. Both Europe and China find themselves surrounded with different geographic and security challenges and belong to different security alliance structures, i.e., NATO or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Yet, in a globalised world, good cooperation among main global partners is vital in coping with today's challenges: the financial crisis and its economic, social and political consequences, climate change, competition over energy and natural resources, nuclear proliferation, the development stalemate, and the challenges of good/democratic governance. China is indispensable to global stability and sustainability. But China is in several respects different from the powers that have so far dominated the world economy and the international system, and its very efficient development strategy is at odds with the 'market democracy' model which prevails in OECD countries.

Even though China and Europe have economically become highly interdependent and therefore sensitive to each other's policies and development, they have distinctive identities and define their value preferences differently. Chinese and Europeans may agree on multilateralism and democratization as international political goals, but their understanding of these concepts differs substantially. Europeans hold on to a concept of multilateralism founded on rule-based management of economic interdependence and political integration, including the pooling of sovereignty in supranational organizations. This 'post-modern' view of sovereignty also makes Europeans believe that states have the responsibility to protect in case of serious breaches of human rights.

### **EU and China: Meeting/Clashing in Different Global Regions**

In view of these different histories, but also of the common concerns for meeting international challenges, what are the practical implications for cooperation between the two partners, i.e., to what extent do EU-China perceptions and actions converge or diverge on issues of regional and global governance? In the following, we will consider the ways in which the EU and China

approach relations with other regions, e.g., Africa and Latin America, as well as global governance institutions. In doing so, we will identify the normative and practical differences in approach between the EU and China and explore the extent to which the two partners cooperate on such issues as nuclear non-proliferation, climate change and international trade. We will start with the position the EU and China take with regard to Africa.

### *Africa*

The EU has a long and varied relationship with the African continent, combining both interregional and bilateral aspects. Interregional arrangements at the African sub-regional level involve, for example, relations with The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). At the African continental level, the EU cooperates with the African Union. Bilateral links exist via the European Neighbourhood Policy, which covers North African countries, and the Cotonou agreement, which includes many states in Africa. In fact, the Cotonou agreement is the EU's longest and most extensive development and aid assistance programme. Starting with the Yaounde convention in the 1960s, and progressing with various Lomé conventions to the current Cotonou agreement, the EU has established a large scale aid and development programme that is linked with requirements for democratic governance and human rights improvements by African countries. This is not different from what the EU is seeking to accomplish in Asia or elsewhere in the world, and is also an integral part of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). However, in the African context, EU aid and development efforts, including the arrangement for Economic Partnership Agreements, have been challenged, at least indirectly, by China, which pursues its African approach free of such conditional provisions (Wissenbach 2010; Wissenbach and Kim 2013). Reasons for this difference can be found in the Chinese adherence to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of countries, but also in its efforts to secure energy needs (especially oil) unencumbered or to gain a competitive advantage over EU energy needs. In terms of energy access, Africa has become China's second largest oil supplier in the world (Lirong 2012: 24). Competition between the EU and China over energy sources is particularly fierce in the Sub-Saharan region, though the EU obtains most of its oil and gas from North African countries. With regard to the principle of non-interference, China is at odds with the EU over sanctions against countries like Zimbabwe, or the various CSDP missions the EU has undertaken on the African continent with the aim of maintaining and promoting peace and stability; the exception is Operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden, in which Chinese and other Asian navy vessels participate. Yet, China has also been constructive and willing to compromise on certain occasions, such as in early 2011 when it helped to ensure that Southern Sudan could

split off peacefully from the rest of Sudan (Grant 2012: 69). China has also sent UN peacekeepers to Liberia and the Sudan.

In 2006 the EU started a dialogue with China on African development challenges. This was further strengthened in 2008 with the EU Commission Communication 'The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation'. However, EU efforts to resolve the conflict of norms and interests through this trilateral mechanism have so far not yielded any substantial results. As Lirong points out, where Africa is concerned, China has little interest in internalizing European values and norms and even less incentive to do so (Lirong 2012: 8-9). Whilst important differences remain in the way the EU and China approach aid and development programmes, the on-going dialogue has contributed to a better understanding of each partner's position on the subject, has promoted EU-China cooperation on the subject at UN and G20 (High Level Forum on aid effectiveness) level (Wissenbach 2010), and has reinforced EU-China relations generally.

#### *Latin America*

EU relations with Latin America represent similar aims and challenges to those found with Africa. In addition to aid and development programmes and free trade agreements with individual Latin American countries, like Mexico, the EU seeks to promote regional integration via existing sub-regional organizations such as Mercosur and the Andean Community of Nations and the regional organization in the form of the Organisation of American States (OAS). Although not part of Latin America, the EU also has cooperative ties with CARICOM through the Cotonou agreement, which covers the Caribbean states. As in the African case, in exchange for aid, Latin American countries are asked to promote human rights, processes of democratization, consolidation of the rule of law, and good governance. Similar to the African experience, the EU's 'positive conditionality' strategy is challenged by China's principle of non-interference. This challenge is once again connected with economic, especially energy, interests. Over the period 2004-08, China's oil imports from Latin America increased from 4.1 million tonnes to 16.5 million tonnes – a massive growth of 302 per cent. With China's influence growing in Latin America (Grant 2012: 22), different outlooks between the EU and China on norms and interests are likely to increase.

Trade relations between China and several Latin American countries have increased significantly in recent years, based not only on Chinese imports of minerals, oil and other raw materials, but also on Chinese investments in large-scale infrastructure projects (often related to the exports of such goods). However, beyond trade, also political relations have improved

between China and individual Latin American countries, driven by a mutual interest to balance US power and influence in the region. The trend towards leftist governments in Latin America has made such realignments more likely, and the Chinese leadership has exploited the opening by forging closer links with, for example, Hugo Chavez' Venezuela. With Brazil, China has a long-standing cooperation agreement and cooperates also in the context of the BRIC group. This has resulted not only in rivalry with the United States, but also with the European Union which – just as in Africa – seeks to link its trade relations and development policy in Latin America to political objectives. The consequence of these developments has been that rising Chinese influence in the region has come at the expense of the EU's standing in the region.

### *Southeast Asia*

Southeast Asia is a region with which the EU has longstanding and comparatively successful relations. Regional cooperation here has had a fairly long history in the shape of ASEAN which now brings together all countries of the region and has been developing closer links also with East Asia (China, Japan and Korea) through ASEAN Plus Three. Even though this organisation was born during the Cold War, it has managed successfully to transform itself into an economic alliance with an expanding membership and a growing range of issues being addressed. The development of institutional cooperation between the EU and ASEAN in the context of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) has further intensified the links between the two regions, which have expanded from economic to political and cultural cooperation. The adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2007, setting out ambitious goals for further integration in the region, has given rise to observations about the similarities between regionalism in Southeast Asia and the European integration process. As Jetschke has argued, while the EU has in fact been providing so-called “integration support” to ASEAN, a greater driving force for member states to work more closely together has been the shared concern about the rise of China and its growing influence in the region.

One specific but important dimension of the potential conflict between China and its Southeast Asia neighbours have been territorial disputes in the South China Sea. These disputes, while having lingered on for decades, have in recent years become more significant with the exploration of oil and gas reserves in the region. In the process, these disputes involving China, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines (as well as additional disputes with Taiwan and Japan in the East China Sea), have become highly politicised, involving not only diplomacy but also popular protests, symbolic political actions, military confrontations and attempts to involve both international organisations and third powers such as the US. Disagreements about the water management in the Mekong region have also added to this mix of mistrust and

belligerence. These multiple disputes together with the continuing military build-up of China's military, have caused concern among the states of Southeast Asia. Their cooperation within ASEAN might be a mechanism to confront China collectively, but as the outcome of the recent summit meeting in Phnom Pen demonstrated, the fact that several Southeast Asia nations also have claims on each other prevents them from organising a common front vis-à-vis China.

The result is that while the close economic interdependence between China and Southeast Asia continues to increase, there are serious political fissures that currently stand in the way of a stable relationship. The European Union, having long been criticised for remaining aloof and not being present enough in the region – including not sending senior representatives to key meetings, is now engaging more firmly with Southeast Asia. In Phnom Penh, Catherine Ashton signed a cooperation agreement with ASEAN, signalling that the EU is now keen to follow up previous economic initiatives with a greater political presence.

#### *North East Asia*

As indicated above, territorial disputes are also rife in North East Asia, not only between China on the one side, and Taiwan and Japan on the other, but in fact also between Japan and South Korea, Russia and Taiwan. Of course, a much bigger question has been, for several decades, the status of Taiwan – an issue that has become more intractable due to the changing domestic politics in both China and in Taiwan, and the growing economic interdependence between them. Closer political cooperation in the region, matching the strong growth witnessed over the past decade in trade, FDI and travel, is hampered by these territorial disputes and other historical scars between Japan, Korea and China which constitute permanent opportunities for politicisation and conflict. Still greater complications arise from the nature and policies of North Korea, which not only South Korea and Japan consider an essential threat, but which due to its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes has ensured that North Korea remains a source of global concern over nuclear proliferation. The presence of US forces on the territories of their allies in South Korea and Japan, on the one hand, and the allegiance that China maintains with its ally North Korea, means that the Korean peninsula and the wider region are still the locus of the confrontation between the US and China. However, notwithstanding differences about North Korea and disputed islands, the three North East Asia states have also held trilateral summits, demonstrating the potential – and opportunities - for closer cooperation.

While the EU remains largely absent from the security issues in the region, it has worked to reinforce its economic ties with Korea and Japan in recent years. A wide-ranging Free Trade Agreement, including also political provisions, has been signed between the EU and South

Korea, and negotiations continue to explore whether a similar agreement can be struck with Japan. China, Japan and South Korea have all been identified as strategic partners of the Union, signalling the attention and significance the EU attaches to this region. The EU is increasingly heavily invested in the region, but its influence here is hampered by its limited (if not non-existent) security role and the way in which its approach to regional cooperation is at odds with the nature of perceptions and reflexes in a region which remains the most heavily militarised parts of the world.

### **European and Chinese attitudes to global regimes**

The EU and China not only 'meet' in various regions across the globe, but also in the context of international organisations and global governance regimes. Here, not only different interests, but also different approaches to global governance itself become evident. In this following, we briefly look at the way in which EU and China view the role of the UN, the G20, the IMF, the post-Kyoto climate dialogue and the WTO. The question that arises in this context, and which we will seek to answer below, is whether the EU, as the world's largest economy and provider of more than half of the world's overseas development assistance, will be able to maintain its strong influence over global governance regimes in the face of challenges from the emerging global power that is China.

#### *United Nations*

The voting behaviour of European countries and China in the UNSC is heavily affected by diverging interpretations of the concepts of sovereignty, peace and security (Wouters and Burnay, 2013). However, China adopts at times a pragmatic approach in the interpretation of those principles. For example, with regard to the political upheavals in Libya in 2011, China did support sanctions despite its long held foreign policy of non-interference in the sovereignty of states. A simple explanation for this deviation might lie in the fact that Beijing was concerned about the safety of its roughly 30,000 citizens being trapped in Libya. Of course, it must also be noted that Europe was divided over the extension of military engagement or what was considered the extent to which civilians should be protected by military means. Moreover, Germany lined up with China of not supporting military actions, and NATO was split over the military intervention with a number of NATO members abstaining from participating in the Libyan operation. In the Syrian conflict, China returned to its hard line approach on sovereignty and non-interference by blocking two UNSC vetoes on Syria. These vetoes can also be partly explained by China's strong condemnation through its public media of the European and



American interpretation of resolution 1973 authorizing the use of force in Libya (Tisdall, 2011). However, China has agreed to humanitarian intervention and to UN cease fire monitors in Syria. China has taken a similar stance on Iran to that on Syria. Although the EU-US diplomatic efforts through a series of talks between EU3+3 (United States, China, Russia, France, United Kingdom and Germany) persuaded China to vote in favour of UNSC resolution number 1929 on Iran, which was adopted on 9 June 2010, Beijing remains sceptical about the effectiveness of sanctions against Iran (Yoon and Suh, 2013). Long-term economic ties with Tehran seem to be one of the important factors which inform the Chinese stance. Thus, in general terms, China, whilst at times practising a certain amount of pragmatism, adheres more strongly than the EU to the doctrine of non-intervention, which includes opposition to economic and political sanctions against countries and to the empowerment of the International Criminal Court. Hence, from an EU perspective, Chinese cooperation at the UNSC level entails unreliability as well as frictions.

The level of involvement in UN peacekeeping operations varies with the EU contributing with around 7,000 military personnel as against the 2,300 of China. The same is the case with regard to financial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, with the EU contributing 41 per cent of the total UN peacekeeping budget and China 3 per cent (Renard, 2011)

### *G20*

China, together with many other so-called emerging powers, has demanded a restructuring of international organizations and to put them on a more equal partnership level. The five Asian G20 members (Australia, China, India, Indonesia and South Korea) see the G20 as a first important response in this respect and point to G20 success in creating the Financial Stability Board (which replaced the Financial Stability Forum) and in coordinating the economic stimulus packages that followed the financial crisis. The Chinese have a particularly strong identification with the G20, and consider it as the only important international mechanism, apart from the UN, that is sustainable, because of its greater representativeness compared to more established international organisations. They are inclined to give it a greater role in the management of the global economy (Grant 2012: 104). Such moves are not necessarily obstructed by the EU. On the contrary, as many European leaders believe that the euro crisis and the international financial crisis are intertwined and need both European and international solutions, they see the G20 as a valuable forum for dealing with this issue. However, whether the G20 promote multilateralism, especially in the form perceived by EU, or will become subject to various block manoeuvres within its ranks, remains to be seen. In any case, whereas EU countries had considerable influence in the affairs of the G7 or G8, their influence is more diluted in the larger setting of the G20.

### *International Monetary Fund*

IMF reforms are another demand by China, calling for a larger share of its votes in this forum. After a redrawing of IMF shares in the spring of 2012, China now has the third largest share of the votes (a rise from 4 per cent to 6.4 per cent); India also became one of the 10 largest shareholders in the Fund (International Monetary Fund 2012). Despite this redrawing of the votes, the Chinese still complain that the US has a *de facto* veto over decisions in this body and that the EU has a disproportionate share of the votes, reservations that also came to the surface in the context of the election of former French finance minister Christine Lagarde as IMF director. The informal arrangements between the US and Europe about the sharing of the top positions at the World Bank and the IMF is seen in China and in other regions as increasingly illegitimate, given the evolution of the global economy. China, like India, is also determined to link financial support for the Eurozone with further IMF reforms. If successful, such attempts would further erode the EU's IMF share; hence raising the spectre of an increasing 'zero-sum' trade-off between China and the EU.

### *The Post-Kyoto climate change regime*

In the post-Kyoto debate on climate change, the EU and China have become two of the players that have most contributed to the development of the climate change regime (Matteis 2012: 14). An apparent shift in China's position on climate change occurred at the United Nations summit in Cancun in 2010, where it accepted a compromise proposed by India on the verification of emissions under which countries would declare their emissions reductions targets and report on their progress towards meeting them, but there would be no international monitors or penalties for countries that failed to reach those targets. This compromise enabled the developed and developing countries to negotiate and take part in a new carbon emissions regime (to replace the Kyoto Protocol) by 2015. They also agreed that it should come into effect by 2020. The EU failed to persuade others to agree that the regime should be legally binding, but there was uniform 'acceptance that it would be a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force' (Grant 2012: v).

### *World Trade Organization*

While both the Europeans and the Chinese consider the WTO to be an important forum for regulating, monitoring and resolving trade matters and disputes, neither has been able to break

the logjam of the WTO Doha round on trade liberalization which was launched in 2001. On the contrary, the EU's efforts to lever open markets and shape regulatory structures have been resisted not only by China but by other emerging powers such as India (Smith 2013). This resistance reflects an apparent shift in the balance of trade power between Europe and Asia and which limits the EU's institutional muscle within the WTO to strong-arm the emerging trading powers of Asia (Smith, 2013). It remains to be seen whether the persisting Eurozone crisis will erode the EU's influence in the WTO still further.

### **European and Chinese Perspectives on Global Governance: *status quo* protection vs. revisionism**

The previous sections have shown that the EU and China have conflicting interests in, and different attitudes to, specific global regions and with regard to international regimes. However, beyond different interests, one can also identify deeper variations between the EU and China with respect to their respective outlooks on principles such as sovereignty and non-intervention. One example of the way in which such different understandings of key principles underlying the global order play out in the manner in which they approach multilateralism. More specifically, the question is: how will the two sides approach the challenge of multilateralism at the global level? The EU identifies multilateralism with the pursuit of universal values, shared sovereignty and a normative foreign policy that encourages other countries to change their behaviour through suasion and conditionality (Grant 2012: 91). In contrast, China puts a strong defence of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention and often sees multilateralism as a way of balancing power (de Vasconcelos 2010). There are also differences over what the two partners mean by 'effective' multilateralism: whereas the Europeans generally promote 'effective multilateralism' in reference to rule-based multilateralism, the Chinese interpret it merely as 'multilateralism that works'.

Similarly, there are different understandings of concepts such as democratisation or security. For example, when the Chinese talk about democratization, their focus is on responsibility, responsiveness and accountability of government authorities; for Europeans it all about empowering civil society, the rule of law and respect for human rights (Geeraerts 2013). Moreover, the EU has a more comprehensive understanding of security than China and disposes of a broader variety of response tools (especially in the field of civilian crisis management) among others through mediation.

Underlying these differences is a more fundamental misperception between the EU and China about the principle of sovereignty. For the EU, the inviolability of national sovereignty has long

been replaced by the recognition that effective cooperation and problem-solving at the regional level requires the pooling of sovereignty and the transfer of key competences of the state to supranational institutions. Indeed, the very nature of the European Union as an organisation with law-making powers internally and legal personality externally is predicated on the general acceptance among states in Europe that a new kind of political organisation needed to be created here. As a result of 60 years of integration, the nature of both international and domestic politics in Europe has been transformed, and now neither the individual states nor the European centre are in any meaningful sense “sovereign”. Instead, power has been distributed across different territorial levels, creating multiple centres of authority and raising the spectre of a neo-medieval European Union (Zielonka 2007). Notwithstanding populist debates in some member states about the “protection of national sovereignty”, there has been much scholarly work pointing to a European departure towards a post-sovereign (or postmodern or post-Westphalian) arrangement. The current crisis in the Eurozone, and the deeper fissures this has revealed in the European construction do not contradict this observation – indeed, the nature of the crisis and the difficulty in resolving it have once again revealed the absence of a sovereign power in the EU, the pervasive presence of different sources of authority and the constant need for negotiated outcomes. A post-sovereign EU may be neither efficient nor popular, but it has nevertheless become part of the political landscape in Europe.

Inevitably, this transformation of politics inside Europe is reflected in the EU’s external relations. The EU has long developed a policy of encouraging the regional cooperation in other parts of the world, giving rise to the so-called ‘group-to-group approach’ between itself and other regional blocs, while also providing consistent support for multilateral institutions globally. This entrenched multilateralism in EU external relations has been a reflection of the recognition that there is legitimate power, including the presence of independent law-making institutions beyond the nation-state, be it at the regional or global level. Both purposefully (as it benefits the EU institutions to deal with interlocutors, and indeed a wider world, that is more in its own image) and unintentionally (through the nature of a foreign policy that is the result of collective compromises and executed by non-state representatives of the Union, the EU’s external relations engages with their partners in a fundamentally different way from the foreign policies of other global powers that are states.

China’s foreign policy is, by contrast, not only reflecting the much more traditional attributes of a state, but in fact can be called hyper-statist. Unlike Europe, China had undergone a long and traumatic period of foreign invasion, colonial occupation and economic exploitation. Long decades of internal strife have only comparatively recently given way to economic growth and the political emancipation of the Chinese state that has come with it. The end of foreign rule in

Hong Kong and Macao has been part of this process of re-establishing Chinese control over the whole of its territory, while sensitivities about Taiwanese independence or foreign 'meddling' in Tibet can be seen in the context of this long and continuing process of state-building. In this process, China sees itself as a state that, while still developing economically, is reasserting itself also in territorial terms. Achieving, maintaining and, if necessary, defending control over territory is seen as an essential aspect of this process, and in this context the principle of sovereignty is of utmost importance.

This Chinese concern for, and defence of, sovereignty is visible not only in the context of its relations with its immediate neighbours, specifically in the way territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas are handled, but also in its attitude towards global regimes. Global governance in the Chinese perspective is seen to be in the service of the states, without violating their sovereignty, as had been demonstrated consistently in Chinese attitudes towards intervention in internal conflicts, be it in the former Yugoslavia or, more recently, in Syria. In a different way, the Chinese position of non-interference in the domestic arrangements of other states is also reflected in its development cooperation with states in Africa, where it eschews the kind of conditionality that is part of the EU's development policy.

These observations about the different meanings that Europe and China attach to the principle of sovereignty, to multilateralism and other concepts indicate that disagreements between the two sides in the global context are not merely the reflection of different interests. The EU and China, two of the pillars in the emerging multipolar order, have fundamentally opposed attitudes to these key aspects of global politics, and these differences are bound to create further tensions in the development of global governance regimes in the future.

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