

CALL FOR PAPERS

China's Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for the OSCE's Comprehensive Security Agenda

OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

Background and relevance

Since its inception in late 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been extended to 27 of the OSCE's participating States as part of the New Eurasian Land Bridge, and the China—Mongolia—Russia and the China—Central Asia—West Asia corridors. The BRI presents a major tool of Chinese influence seeking, and the increasing Chinese presence and activities associated with it have implications for the OSCE's role as a cooperative security organisation that cannot be ignored.

There already are a number of key issues for the organisation across all three of its dimensions which have been, and will continue to be, affected by the BRI. These include, among others, the implications of the presence of Chinese-sponsored private security companies and of Chinese security forces on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, border management, and security sector reform; the OSCE's efforts to enhance economic connectivity (especially through bolstering of trade and transport connections and improving good governance and fighting corruption); and the human dimension of the OSCE (such as social impact assessments for individual BRI projects and the need for meaningful local consultations as part thereof).

The impact of the BRI on these and other issues is likely to vary across different geographical subregions of the OSCE, such as Central Asia, the South Caucasus, the Western CIS, and the Western Balkans. At the same time, there are persistent problems across several subregions, such as the OSCE region's protracted conflicts. The entry, and enhanced presence and activities, of China in the OSCE region adds further complexity to this.

Call for Papers

Understanding the implications of China's BRI for security in the OSCE region is significant for the OSCE's and its participating States' ability to continue working towards sustainable stability within the rules-based environment that forms the foundation of the organisation. To contribute to such an understanding, the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions (www.osce-network.net) will host a workshop provisionally scheduled for the **end of June 2020 in Berlin**. The organisers are inviting abstracts for potential papers addressing relevant questions, including (but not limited to) the following:

- How do greater Chinese presence and activities manifest themselves in OSCE participating States and across different sub-regions? How are they received and perceived locally?
- How do relations between China, the EU, Russia, and the US affect stability in the OSCE area, especially in sub-regions like Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and the Western Balkans? Is the OSCE an arena in which these relations can be managed?
- Is there an emerging picture of a Chinese political strategy being pursued through the BRI?

And if so, does this indicate convergence or divergence of interests between China and OSCE participating States on arms control and cross-dimensional and transnational security issues like, terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime, and cyber security? How could OSCE institutions and participating States best respond to this?

- What is the impact of increased and increasing Chinese presence and activities in the OSCE region on the OSCE's connectivity agenda, particularly in relation to participating States' commitments to a rules-based environment, good governance, and the fight against corruption? Are there synergies that could be explored in order to reinvigorate the OSCE's connectivity agenda?
- What are the human security implications of China's presence and activities in the OSCE region? Is there scope to engage with China in the human dimension, and if so through which mechanisms and in which forums?
- What have been the responses of OSCE institutions and participating States to date to China's BRI? Is there a coherent and strategic approach that enhances comprehensive security in the OSCE region? How can it be strengthened further, including by deeper engagement with China and/or other multilateral organisations of which China is a member?

On the basis of papers, presentations, and discussion at the workshop, the organisers will produce a draft OSCE Network Report for further discussion at a second workshop provisionally scheduled for the **end of September 2020 in Vienna** to inform ongoing discussions within OSCE institutions and participating States.

Logistical modalities

We expect to commission approximately 15-20 working papers.

The deadline for submitting abstracts of approximately 500 words is: **13 April 2020**. Abstracts should include full contact details of submitting authors, a summary of the argument and methodology (including a brief discussion of primary data sources to be drawn on), and an indicative bibliography. Please email your proposals as MS Word attachments to s.wolff@bham.ac.uk.

Authors of accepted papers will be notified by: **17 April 2020**.

Substantial draft papers of between 4,000 and 10,000 words are due: **12 June 2020**. These papers will then be shared among participants of the Berlin workshop and discussed there in depth. Authors submitting a paper and presenting it at the workshop in Berlin (subject to this being held) will receive a symbolic honorarium.

Costs for travel, accommodation, and subsistence for all invited participants will be borne by the organisers.

Complete papers, incorporating feedback and discussion from the workshop in Berlin are due by: **24 July 2020**. Selected papers will be included in a proposal for a special issue of a suitable journal or edited book.