

IPSA RC34 Quality of Democracy  
International Workshop

## **China's Belt and Road Initiative: Curse or Blessing for democracy in Eurasia?**

OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan,  
12-14 March 2021

### **Event Description**

China's New Silk Road Initiative (Belt and Road initiative, BRI) has been spinning its logistical and infrastructural web around the world since 2013. Massive infrastructural investments in tracks and roads as well as in the agricultural and energy sector and logistical centers were made in over 50 countries in Eurasia. BRI is a central component of Chinese investment policies that have affected core public policy areas in over 100 countries in the world. Almost a decade after the official launch of BRI, this workshop will assess its political implications. Contributors discuss the impact that BRI has had, willingly or not, on democratization or autocratization processes in the countries and societies that it invested in, ranging from Europe to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

The workshop will be conducted as an online event. Please register to attend. Registered participants will receive log-in instructions via e-mail!

Registration:

<https://forms.gle/vPcudRUKkCRptF3z9>

Organization:

Brigitte Weiffen (Senior Lecturer, The Open University, Milton Keynes, and Chair of RC34), [brigitte.weiffen@open.ac.uk](mailto:brigitte.weiffen@open.ac.uk)

Anja Mihr (DAAD Associate Professor, OSCE Academy Bishkek), [a.mihr@osce-academy.net](mailto:a.mihr@osce-academy.net)

## PROGRAM

The schedule is in Bishkek local time. Please convert to your local time (for example here: <https://www.thetimezoneconverter.com/>)

### Friday 12 March 2021

- 14:00-14:30    Welcome notes  
Alexander Wolters, Director, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- Introductory remarks  
Anja Mihr, DAAD Associate Professor, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
Brigitte Weiffen, Senior Lecturer, The Open University, United Kingdom
- 14:30-15:30    **Keynote Lecture: Future Impact of BRI in Eurasia**  
Richard Pomfret, Professor of Economics, University of Adelaide, Australia
- 15:45-17:00    **Panel 1: BRI and political and economic transformation**
- The Belt and Road Initiative and Its impact on Human Rights and Democracy – A Mixed-Method Analysis**  
Débora Ramires Pelisson and Marketa Maria Jerabek, Postdoctoral research fellows, International Relations Institute, University of São Paulo, Brazil
- Road to peace or bone of contention? The impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on conflict states**  
Pascal Abb, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Germany, Rob Swaine and Ilya Jones, Saferworld
- Does the Institutional Environment in the Host Country Matter? Determinants of Chinese Outward Foreign Direct Investment in the Belt and Road Initiative Countries**  
Dmitry Erokhin, Research assistant, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria

### Saturday 13 March 2021

- 14:00-15:00    **Keynote Lecture: Official visions of democracy in Xi Jinping's China**  
Heike Holbig, Professor, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in East Asia, Department of Political Sciences, University of Frankfurt, Germany
- 15:00-16:00    **Panel 2: Regime change and BRI**
- Black Knight Rising: China's Strategies to Promote Autocracy around the World**  
Henoch Gabriel Mandelbaum, University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil, and Brigitte Weiffen, Senior Lecturer, The Open University, United Kingdom
- Chinese surveillance technologies in the Eurasia. A catalysator for authoritarian tendencies or enabler of democratic reform**  
Tobias Burgers, Assistant Professor, Cyber Civilization Research Center, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan

16:30-18:00 **Panel 3: BRI and Central Asia**

**Hitting Below the Belt: BRI and China's Grand Strategy in Central Asia**

Srdjan Uljevic, Senior Lecturer, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

**Kazakhstan responses to China's security strategy in Xinjiang**

Elzbieta Pron, Assistant Professor, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

**Chinese foreign aid and Autocratization of Central Asia**

Nurseit Niyazbekov, PhD, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

**China's Belt and Road Initiative and sustainable urban development in Central Asia: challenges for democratization of Central Asian societies**

Artem Dankov, PhD, Director of Confucius Institute and Associate Professor at the Dept. of Global Politics, Tomsk State University, Russia

**Sunday 14 March 2021**

14:00-15:30 **Panel 4: BRI's impact on Regime Change in Asia and Africa**

**Autocratization by Linkage: The de-democratizing effect of Chinese investments in Africa**

Eltion Meka, Researcher, University of New York Tirana, Albania

**Belt and Road Initiative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats: Afghanistan Perspectives**

Abdullah Zahid, School of Public Affairs, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

**China's Belt and Road Initiative: Impact on Democratization and Regime Change in Pakistan**

Gul-i-Hina Shahzad, Doctoral Research Fellow, New Silk Roads Project, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Netherlands

**Does the Belt and Road Initiative undermine democracy? Evidence from South Asia**

Filippo Boni, Lecturer, The Open University, United Kingdom

15:45-17:00 **Panel 5: BRI's impact on Regime Change in Europe**

**China in Central Europe: Threat Perceptions, Influence, and Interference**

Alica Kizekova, Senior Researcher, Institute of International Relations Prague, Czech Republic

**Opportunities and Risks in the Implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: A View from Ukraine**

Yurii Poita, Head of the Asia-Pacific Section at the Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, Ukraine

**Is China's New Silk Road Strengthening the Autocratic Apparatus of Belarus?**

Prakash Raj, Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, India

17:00-18:00 **Keynote Lecture: Varieties of Authoritarianism in Eurasia**

Edward Schatz, Professor, University of Toronto, Canada