

Europe and its Neighbourhood

Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the 21st Century

Thursday 6 December 2018, Chatham House

Organized in partnership by Chatham House, International Crisis Group, Al Sharq Forum and Institut Montaigne



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Overview

Chatham House, International Crisis Group, Al Sharq Forum, and Institut Montaigne will host the fourth annual conference on ‘Europe and its Neighbourhood: Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the 21st Century’, focusing on the political, security and societal challenges that Europe’s leaders must address, and how they can do so at a time when the traditional ties and strategic relations within Europe and between Europe and its allies are under increasing strain.

This year’s discussions will bring together perspectives from across Europe and neighbouring regions to discuss:

- Challenges for decision-making and political leadership in a changing Europe;
- The competition for power and influence in Europe’s neighbourhood; and
- Conflict and instability in key regions and Europe’s capacity to address common security challenges.

Thursday 6 December

0800 Registration and refreshments

0900 Welcome and chair’s opening remarks

Session One | The Future of European Leadership: Implications for Europe’s Role in a Transforming Global Order

0930 – 1100

Traditional institutions and leaders in Europe are under increasing pressure from nationalist and ‘populist’ political ideas and the indecision surrounding a post-Brexit settlement between the UK and the EU is exacerbating a sense of uncertainty for Europe’s decision-makers. This opening discussion will explore what European leadership may look like in the coming years including its impact on conflict prevention and management.

- Amid concerns about the stability of the global ‘liberal order’ and differences over the practical implementation of core EU principles within its membership, what are the values that Europe’s leaders are able, collectively, to protect in Europe and project further afield?

- What kind of EU–UK relationship can be expected post-Brexit? What will it mean for cooperation on foreign and security policy? How will Brexit impact cooperation with the EU on issues of nuclear security and deterrence?
- What is the political climate for European reforms? To what extent can proposed reforms of the EU project, and Franco-German-led attempts to promote them, bridge divisions between member states?
- What is the view of what Europe should be and the contribution it can be expected to make to global peace and security in countries that lie beyond its borders?
- What can Europe do to prevent the collapse of the liberal international order?

1100 – 1130 Refreshments

Session Two | Europe’s Regional Influence: Relations with Heavyweight Neighbours and Traditional Allies

1130 – 1300

Europe’s leaders have interacted largely with the US as the major international power in the neighbourhood, but now they contend increasingly with the interests of other major powers, particularly Russia and China. This generates new questions and challenges for building strategic relationships and competing for regional influence. This discussion will assess Europe’s ability to assert itself and act as a stabilizing force in its neighbourhood in the face of a transforming regional and international order.

- What sort of future role will Europe have in conflict prevention and resolution in its neighbourhood? How far can this stretch?
- To what extent is Europe’s ability to project influence dependent on its relationship with the US? How can the current vulnerabilities in transatlantic unity be exploited by other powers?
- How will Europe’s relationships with China evolve?
- What will happen to EU–Russia relations in coming years in light of the current US–EU dynamics?
- How are Europe’s relations with regional heavyweights such as Turkey and Iran set to evolve?

1300 – 1400 Lunch

Breakout discussions

Discussion A | Contours of Conflict and the Prognosis in the Levant and North Africa

1400 – 1515

This discussion will focus on the current dynamics in countries in the Levant and North Africa – Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria – assessing local policy and the security environment, trends in migration and Europe’s ability and appetite for engagement in the region. The nature of the crises in the region is undergoing a major transformation. This in return necessitates the recalibration of European policy towards the region at a time when it is becoming a theatre upon which established (US, Russia) and emerging (India, China) international players are interacting with each other and vying for influence.

- To what extent is the political and economic instability in North Africa impacting on European countries and their will to engage in new investments in these countries?
- Given the US withdrawal from JCPOA, what alternative path will and can Europe take to prevent the regional arms-race and confrontation?
- What policy goals does Europe have towards the region beyond stemming refugee flows and curbing radicalism?
- Is Europe’s much desired quest for ‘stability’ possible without transformation in its southern neighbourhood?
- What policy options does Europe have in dealing with deepening humanitarian crises (Syria, Yemen, Libya) in the region?
- How is Europe interacting with both old and new international players in the Mediterranean?

- Is a European-wide consensus on dealing with the migration issue possible?

Discussion B | Contours of Conflict and the Prognosis in the Eastern Neighbourhood

1400 – 1515

The conflict in Ukraine is in its fifth year since Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea and backed separatists in eastern Ukraine with military and financial support. A resolution appears difficult to achieve given Russia's continued support for the destabilization and the lack of political will in Kyiv to tackle the Minsk agreement's political provisions. Russia's playbook in Ukraine and its instrumentalization of other conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and the South Caucasus feed deep-rooted concerns elsewhere along Russia's borders.

- What are the motives and forecast for Russia fomenting tension on multiple fronts?
- Are the post-Soviet states around Russia's borders doing enough to justify Western political and donor support?
- Are the EU and NATO living up to expectations of the roles they can play in mitigating tension and promoting peace, and what needs to change?
- What does the current US administration's stance to US-Russia relations and its approach to NATO mean for the reality in the neighbourhood?

Discussion C | Contours of Conflict and the Prognosis in the Sahel Region

1400 – 1515

In February 2014, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger came together to create the G5 Sahel, an institutional framework for coordination and regional cooperation in economic development and security in West Africa. In previous years, criminal and terrorist organizations had benefited from the incapacity of authorities to govern over a region, the Sahel, which is as large as Europe and where the desert geography hinders the operations of armed and security forces.

In January 2013, France launched a military operation to oust Islamist terrorist groups from the North of Mali. Since then, European and mainly French forces have been present in the region to help state authorities develop efficient military capabilities. The stability of the Sahel is crucial for the development and stability of both North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the region is key in the northward migration routes from Sub-Saharan Africa towards North Africa and Europe.

- What are the key objectives European powers should focus on in their policy decisions towards the Sahel region?
- How can Maghreb countries work alongside European countries and the EU to develop cooperation with the G5 Sahel?
- Is the Sahel's current situation an opportunity for European military forces to rethink their permanent presence in the whole African continent?
- Should Europe's financial contribution to the G5 Sahel be increased and what financial efficiency mechanisms could be established?
- How can Europe respond to the political and economic investment of China, Turkey and Gulf countries in Africa?

1515 – 1545 [Afternoon refreshments](#)

1545 [Synopsis from breakout discussions](#)

Session Three | Europe and its Neighbourhood: The Need for a Security Dialogue

1600 – 1730

This closing discussion will assess the contemporary threat landscape for Europe's security and the decisions that need to be taken amidst demands by the US for increased defence expenditure by its NATO partners and questions over President Trump's commitment to the post-Second World War transatlantic security alliance.

- What are the biggest security threats facing Europe? What should be the primary responses?
- What sort of security role will institutions such as NATO have in the future? How might a credible European alternative to US leadership on security matters emerge?
- Given the security interdependency between Europe and its neighbourhood, what are the best ways for Europe and its neighbours to address these shared security challenges?
- How will competition between regional hegemony resist the shift to conflict?
- How will Brexit impact cooperation with the EU on issues of nuclear security and deterrence?
- What is the role of the different options – diplomatic and military - in Europe's deterrence strategies?

1730 Close of conference and post-conference reception