



GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Re-inventing international relations and the role of the EU in the world

One of the key tenets of the FEPS approach to international relations has been a focus on mutual respect and on the potential to learn a great deal from the perspectives of others. This has informed the manner in which FEPS has built networks in many parts of the world with a view to basing progressive EU foreign policy on holistic understanding of strategic partners. Furthermore, FEPS recognises that domestic policy is inherently intertwined with foreign policy in the highly globalised 21st century. Thus, the manner in which the European Union deals with the rest of the world will touch areas such as the environment, energy, civil liberties, trade, economics and finance.

FEPS utilises a number of approaches to facing these complex issues. The foundation has built up a series of networks in various parts of the world through the use of specialist correspondents and like-minded foundations and research institutions. With the increasing role played by countries such as Brazil, India or China on the international scene, the balance in geostrategic relations is quickly shifting. FEPS has sought to improve intercontinental dialogue through a series of projects.

Since 2009, FEPS has established very close contacts with a number of think tanks and research centres in India, which have participated in various activities of the foundation. FEPS has received delegations of Indian experts from the worlds of politics, academia and the media, and in 2011 led a delegation to New Delhi to deepen relations further. Seminars and publications have dealt with a plethora of global challenges ranging from security and global governance to finance and development. In recognition of the growing influence of the world's largest democracy, in November 2011 a whole issue of the FEPS scientific magazine *Queries* was written by eminent Indian writers. Entitled 'Asia: What's Next? An Indian Perspective', this edition sought to add balance to the overarching focus on China when European policymakers deal with Asian politics. It is an attempt to broaden the focus of EU foreign policy.

Of course, there is a reason for the focus on China and FEPS is in the process of cultivating relations with partners in China who have an interest in progressive politics in Europe. The foundation has facilitated study visits and fact finding missions both in China and Europe. In 2012, FEPS President Massimo D'Alema will lead a delegation to China to visit research institutes and policymakers.

Closer to Europe, the Mediterranean research network has assiduously worked on issues pertaining to democratisation in North Africa. With the onslaught of the Arab Spring, the political landscape has shifted considerably. FEPS has hosted numerous activists from across the region for training seminars and information sessions. Further to this, staff members from FEPS have visited Egypt and Tunisia on missions related to issues ranging from political reform and institutional issues to gender equality. In sub-Saharan Africa, FEPS has a wide network of contacts and has run events in cooperation with partners in South Africa, Zambia, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire to name but a few. Throughout these projects, FEPS has sought the most innovative and progressive approaches to development and political reform. Through seeking the opinions of people within the partner countries themselves, FEPS brings a more informed perspective back to Europe.

With the plethora of contacts made with foundations and research centres in the other continents, FEPS wishes to deepen its research activities related to EU's place in world. Furthermore, with the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service, it becomes increasingly necessary to formulate policy proposals on EU external relations. Thus, FEPS is currently developing its International Strategic Circle, composed of experts in foreign policy and security from academia, think tanks, and institutions as well as from partners in international foundations. The circle meets to discuss foreign policy on both a geographical and thematic basis. Rather than reacting to short term issues, it seeks to propose long term aspirations for the European Union in terms of its place in the world. Furthermore, it recognises that foreign policy in Europe has sometimes been defined by a conservative and 'securitocratic' agenda. The International Strategic Circle aims to propose sensible, peaceful and progressive alternatives.

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