INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

International Security in Times of COVID-19

Hertie School – 16 April 2020

Hannah Neumann - _Member of the European Parliament_:

The European Union face a big challenge to keep active **foreign and security policies abroad**. Many **embassies** are close. Most of the **civilian missions** are closed. **Humanitarian missions** are also re-evaluated.

At the **European Parliament**, it is even **harder to work** than in national Parliaments. We try to do it **remotely**, from home. But we see the **limits of IT technologies**, regarding attendance, discussions, voting. Now we limit the work of the Parliament to provide the **COVID19 response**.

There will be a **new drop in defence budget**, and we may see **more cooperation between EU** member states. The **EU bailout package** will be soon voted. It is the best solution we can offer at the moment but not the best thing for the EU policy.

US-China-EU dimension:

- When the pandemic started, major debate within the EU parliament regarding the outbreak. Is it a Chinese domestic problem, both in term of **health** and **human rights**? How will be the **Chinese response**? At the same time we spoke up against **Asian and Chinese racism**, this was a good initial step to deal with it.
- Now the pandemic has spread, we discuss the EU answer. We have to find a way to deal with the **US**. The question of **where to stand between US and China** is not a new one. The Trump administration left a **big void**. It would be very interesting for **EU to fill this void** in **multilateralism**. Few years ago, the US provided a very good response to Ebola. Now there is a void regarding **global response to COVID19**.

As much as we are frustrated with the **Trump administration**, when it comes to economics, human rights and cooperation, the **US** is not as bad as **China**.

Nicole Koenig - _Deputy Director of the Jacques Delors Centre_:

The **pandemic** accelerated the current **geopolitical trends**. There is a **crisis for multilateralism**, we see it with the **US cutting funds to WHO**. But also travel bans and **borders closing**.

EU's lack of internal solidarity was exposed during the crisis, we saw it with **Italy being isolated** at the beginning. 61% of Italians believed the EU did not come to help them during the pandemic.

Half of the member states imposed **state of emergency**, restricting **fundamental rights**. These measures are justified, but the key question is "to what extend there will be a **coordinated strategy during this crisis**?".

European **defence's budget is likely to be cut** in the future. Resources will move away from defence's budget to **crisis management budget**. There will be **more tasks and less money** for hard power.

The EU may get to **act together internally** and coordinate its strategy and takes the opportunity of engaging in **global leadership**, filling the **void left by the US**. The EU have to step in to **lead multilateral efforts and global solidarity projects**. How **China** can be included into multilateral efforts ?

One of the priorities is to **counter the dis-information pandemic ("infodemic**"). What the EU should be doing to **counter this** is to respond with its **own actions** and on the other hand to **counter dis-information** through communication campaign.

The EU has operated a **loosening on the sanctions**, something the US have not done for example.

US-China-EU relations: the EU is still very much **on the side of the US** in terms of values and international position.