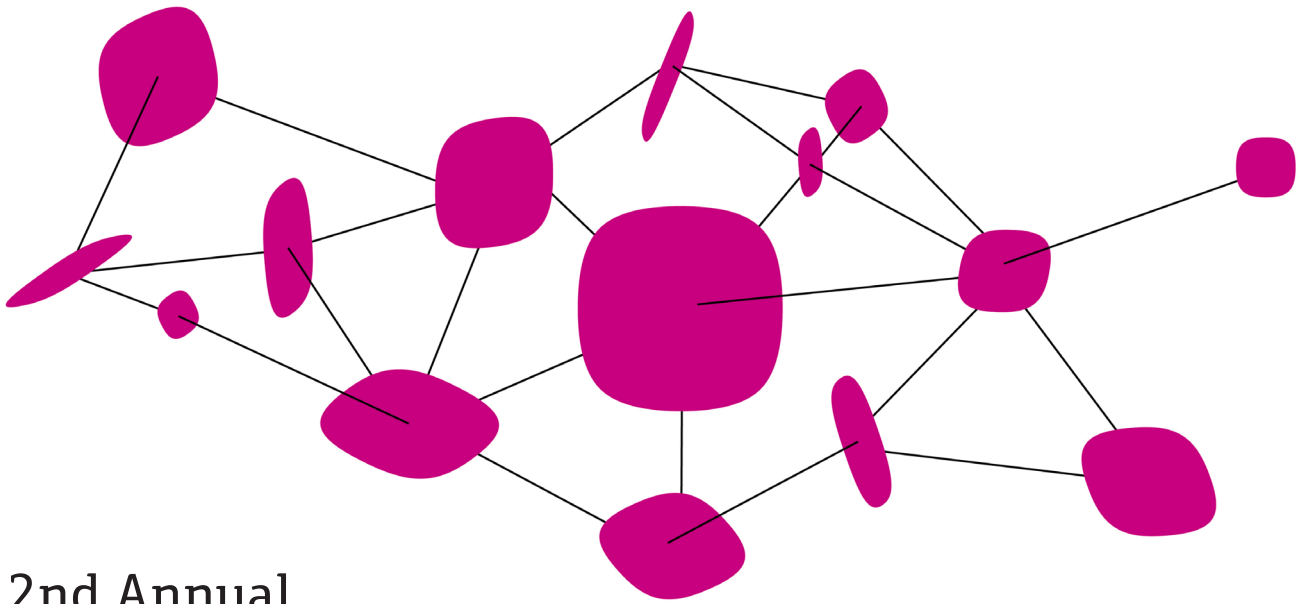




2nd Annual
Interdisciplinary
WZB Conference
2026

Challenges to International Orders: Causes and Consequences

7 – 9 October 2026

WZB 

WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin

Conference Organizers

Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Goethe University Frankfurt / CEPR

Steffen Huck, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University College London

Yasemin Soysal, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

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Timetable

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2026 | AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, PARISER PLATZ 4, 10117 BERLIN

19:30 – 21:00 | CONFERENCE OPENING | PUBLIC DIALOGUE WITH ODILE RENAUD-BASSO, NORBERT RÖTTGEN AND KATHERINE TAI (TBC)
“INTERNATIONAL ORDER UNDER PRESSURE – IS IT TIME FOR TIME FOR READJUSTMENT?”

The international order that emerged after the Second World War is under severe strain. States, both powerful and small, are acting increasingly outside international law, while the authority of the UN Security Council, the WTO, and NATO is eroding. Voices from the Global South are challenging Western dominance, and China and Russia are offering economic partnerships without normative conditions as an alternative model, challenging institutions built on the premise that prosperity and rules-based cooperation go hand in hand. From the wars in Ukraine and Gaza to the growing U.S. disengagement from international organizations, what once appeared to be a stable system now looks fragmented, contested, and poised for significant transformation.

The WZB Berlin Social Science Center invites you to a discussion that examines changing global power dynamics and the evolution of transatlantic relations. It will explore what responsibilities Europe and Germany should assume in safeguarding their own security and fostering a more resilient international order, and what role international institutions – from financial and development bodies to trade and security arrangements – can play in sustaining investment, stability, and reconstruction in the world's crisis-affected regions.

The WZB is delighted to host a distinguished panel for this public dialogue, featuring:

Odile Renaud-Basso, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the first woman to lead a multilateral development bank. Under her leadership, the EBRD has become the main institutional investor in Ukraine while also supporting economic activity in other crisis-affected regions.

Norbert Röttgen, member of the German Bundestag since 1994. A former Federal Minister and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, he is one of Germany's leading voices on international affairs and the author of several bestselling books, including *Democracy and War*.

Katherine Tai (tbc), United States Ambassador and Trade Representative during the Biden Administration. She now serves as Executive Director of the Coalition for New Trade, advocating for a trade policy that preferences the needs of people and planet.

The dialogue will be moderated by **Anna Sauerbrey**, Foreign Affairs Editor of DIE ZEIT.

The event will be followed by a reception, offering a splendid view of the Brandenburg Gate.

21:00 | RECEPTION | CLUB ROOM

8:30 – 9:00 | **ARRIVAL AND COFFEE** | **LOBBY**

9:00 – 9:15 | **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION** | **A 300**

Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Goethe University Frankfurt / CEPR

Steffen Huck, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University College London

Yasemin Soysal, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

9:15 – 10:15 | **KEYNOTE: “A WORLD IN DISARRAY: HOW DID WE GET HERE? WHAT DO WE DO NOW?”** | **A 300**

Charles A. Kupchan, Georgetown University

10:30 – 12:30 | **SESSION 1: WAR, VIOLENCE, AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER** | **A 310**

Chair: Yasemin Soysal, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Roots of Courage: Persistence of Past Repression and Anti-War Dissent

Andrey Tkachenko, Nazarbayev University

Human-on-the-Margin: Lethal Autonomous Weapons and the Reconfiguration of War in a Post-Liberal International Order

Obasesam Okoi, University of St Thomas Minnesota

War and the Unraveling of Order: War as a Causal Mechanism in the Decline of Global Governance

Ann Hirokana, University of California, Irvine

Human Shields and Civilian Deaths: On the Impact of Weakened Enforcement of International Humanitarian Law

Macartan Humphreys, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Trinity College Dublin / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

10:30 – 12:30 | **SESSION 2: INSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY AND THE PUBLIC** | **A 305**

Chair: Swen Hutter, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Breaking Negative Narratives: Long-term Social Progress and Trust in Institutions

Federica Braccioli, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business

Why and How: Public-Sphere Persuasion and Institutional Legitimacy

Laure Athias, University of Lausanne

Technocrats or merely Technicians? Mapping Technocratic Attitudes within International Bureaucracies

Christian Rauh, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University of Potsdam

10:30 – 12:30 | **SESSION 3: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MULTILATERALISM, AND COOPERATION** | **A 110**

Chair: Alexander Schmotz, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Informal Re-Ordering: The Social Purpose of Informal Intergovernmental Organizations

Steve Biedermann, Helmut Schmidt University

Autocracy by Invitation: IO Observer Status and the Diffusion of Autocratization

Maria Debre, Zeppelin University

BRICS Trade Coalitions Under Financial Sanctions

Alishan Khan, Syracuse University

Power Rivalry and Failures in International Cooperation

Ulrike Kornek, Kiel University / Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change / Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

10:30 – 12:30 | **SESSION 4: AUTOCRATIC CHALLENGES TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER** | **B 001**

Chair: Vanessa Boese-Schlosser, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Transnational Divisions and Rule-Based Global Orders: Türkiye's Ruling and Opposition Party Visions

Murat Somer, Ozyegin University

The Structural Sources of Democratic Backsliding, 1960–2022

Steven Mejia, Washington State University

The Conditional Effect of Autocratization: How Regime Change Shapes International Preferences in the Universal Periodic Review

Thomas Sommerer, University of Potsdam

10:30 – 12:30 | **SESSION 5: GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY: CHINA — USA** | **B 002/003**

Chair: Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Goethe University Frankfurt / CEPR

Alignment in Contemporary International Relations: Concept and Measurement

Hyeran Jo, Texas A&M University

Is China Building a Rival International Order and How Would We Know?

Johannes Scherzinger, University of Zurich and **Matthew Stephen**, Helmut Schmidt University

A Quantitative DSGE Model of a Tripolar World Under Fragmentation

Laurentiu Guinea, Universidad Complutense Madrid

The U.S.-China Trade War and the Geography of Global Production

Lei Li, Georg August University of Göttingen

12:30 – 13:30 | **LUNCH** | **WINTERGARTEN**

13:30 – 14:30 | **PLENARY PANEL: “POSSIBLE FUTURES OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER”** | **A 300**

Cristiane Lucena Carneiro, University of Sao Paulo

Xuefeng Sun, Tsinghua University

Lora Anne Viola, Freie Universität Berlin

Moderation: Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

14:30 – 16:30 | SESSION 6: WAR, AUTHORITY, AND SANCTIONS | A 310

Chair: Maja Adena, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Technical University Berlin

Financial Sanctions and the Gravity of International Banking

Ramy Shaban, Science Po

Excessive harm

Steffen Huck, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University College London

Sovereign Gravity: The Military Alliance Effect on Trade

Matteo Neri-Lainé, Centre for Prospective Studies and International Information / Paris School of Economics / University Paris–Dauphine–PSL

14:30 – 16:30 | SESSION 7: INSTITUTIONS, TRUST, AND BELIEFS | A 305

Chair: Swen Hutter, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Unfulfilled Aspirations of Youth in Senegal: Rejecting the International Liberal Order (working title)

Anette Fasang, Humboldt – Universität zu Berlin and **Sokhna Ndiaye**, Université Rose Dieng France Senegal

Defying Decline: The U.S. Supreme Court's Waning Global Influence and its Paradoxical Rise in Brazil's Supreme Court

Bruno Cunha, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

Representing the (II)Liberal Future? Transnational Youth Mobilization and Contested Orders of Age in the European Union

Anna Holzscheiter, Technical University Dresden

14:30 – 16:30 | SESSION 8: EPISTEMIC GOVERNANCE AND GEOPOLITICAL NETWORKS | A110

Chair: Yasemin Soysal, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Epistemic Governance and the Transformation of International Order: Regional Arenas and the Politics of Meaning

Peggy-Jean Allin, Arizona State University

From Intouchability to "Touchability": Cognitive Metabolism, Epistemic Sovereignty, and the Refoundation of the International System

Herizo Andriamisandratoa, Institut Supérieur d'Études, de Recherches et de Pratiques, Madagascar

Filling the Void: How Strategic Information Shapes Europeans' Willingness to Offset U.S. Foreign Aid Cuts

Bernhard Reinsberg, University of Cambridge / University of Glasgow

Strategic Influence in Geopolitical Networks

Bennett Smith-Worthington, Princeton University

14:30 – 16:30 | SESSION 9: TRADE, POWER, ALIGNMENT | B 002/003

Chair: Martin Krzywdzinski, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

The Limits of Maritime Sanctions: Durability, Redeployability, and Shadow-Market Reallocation

Konstantinos Likas, University of Piraeus

Geopolitics and Export Miracles: Firm-Level Evidence from U.S. War Procurement in Korea

Nathan Lane, London School of Economics and Political Science / CEPR

Technological Rivalry and the Allocation of Talent: Evidence from China's College Admission

Lei Li, Georg August University of Göttingen

Addressing Challenges to International Cooperation: The Case of the Euro

Robin Huguenot-Noël, Freie Universität Berlin

16:30 – 17:00 | COFFEE BREAK | WINTERGARTEN

17:00 – 18:00 | KEYNOTE: "HARDENING BORDERS: TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES" | A 300

Beth Simmons, University of Pennsylvania

19:00 | DINNER | RESTAURANT „W66“ (AT MUSEUM FOR COMMUNICATION), LEIPZIGER STR. 16, 10117 BERLIN

for all conference participants

8:30 – 9:00 | **ARRIVAL AND COFFEE** | LOBBY

9:00 – 10:00 | **PLENARY PANEL: “TRADE, TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER”** | A 300

Anita Gohdes, Hertie School

Clémence Lenoir, Economic Advisor to President Emmanuel Macron

Ya-Wen Lei, Harvard University

Moderation: Christian Rauh, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University of Potsdam

10:15 – 12:15 | **SESSION 10: CRISIS AND CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL ORDER** | A 310

Chair: Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Hostile Decoupling and Geoeconomics of Multinationals

Konstantin Egorov, New Economic School / University of Antwerp

Whose Crisis? Selective Recognition and the Challenge to International Order

Alexander Köhler, Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies Pisa

Against Hegemony: International Law in Times of an Irrational Hegemon

Gemma Lligadas Gonzalez, Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nuremberg (CHREN), Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg

Secondary States: Silently Stabilising the International System?

Murad Nasibov, Justus Liebig University Giessen

10:15 – 12:15 | **SESSION 11: NORM CONTESTATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS** | A 305

Chair: Mattias Kumm, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Decline of Global Security Norms and Changing Security Order: A Study of UN Security Council Votes and Resolutions 1990–2023

Hyeran Jo, Texas A&M University

I Stand by You: The EU as a Defender of Norms Against the Use of Force

Oana-Cosmina Mihalache, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA)

Change as Product of Negotiated Authority at the ECtHR

Dana Burchardt, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Navigating Nascent Illiberalism: the OECD Discourse as a Case in Point

Marjaana Rautalin, University of Helsinki and Eetu Vento, University of Helsinki

10:15 – 12:15 | **SESSION 12: DIGITAL FRAGMENTATION AND POWER** | A 110

Chair: Lisa Garbe, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Digital Disasters: The Macroeconomic Costs of Submarine Cable Breaks

Joël Cariolle, Center for Studies and Research on International Development, Clermont Auvergne University (CNRS / UCA) / Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (FERDI)

Sustaining Influence Amid Geopolitical Polarization: Transnational Actors and the UN Cybersecurity Negotiations

Lena Herbst, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg

The Narrative Deficit of Liberal Order: Cultural Disconnection, Financialization, and Digital Fragmentation

Giulia Parenti, University of Bologna

The Global Submarine Cable Network

Jean Imbs, New York University Abu Dhabi / CEPR

10:15 – 12:15 | **SESSION 13: CLIMATE, CONFLICT, AND GOVERNANCE** | B 001

Chair: Alexandra Scacco, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University of Hamburg

Declining TWAIL? Reconfiguring the International Legal Order and South Asian Water Governance

Manini Syali, TERI School of Advanced Studies

Yes, it Matters: Water Conflicts and International Trade

Tchapo Gbandi, University of Lome

From Energy Transition to Resource Competition: Critical Minerals and India’s Legal Strategy

Taniya Malik, Indian Law Institute

Investment Wars: Risk Governance in International Investment Law

William Burke-White, University of Pennsylvania

10:15 – 12:15 | **SESSION 14: FINANCIAL ORDER** | B 002/003

Chair: Steffen Huck, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University College London

The Sunset of King Dollar? A Strategic Evaluation of BRICS Expansion and the Rise of a Multipolar Currency Regime

Mehran Hayat, Albukhary International University

National Payment Platforms as a New Form of Financial Statecraft

Felix Garten, Hertie School

Unveiling the Ripple Effect: US Monetary Policy and Firm Markups in Emerging Markets

Xiaoyu Yan, Geneva Graduate Institute

Trade Finance in Intra-African Trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Ndirangu Ngunjiri, University of Nairobi

12:15 – 13:15 | **LUNCH** | WINTERGARTEN

13:15 – 15:15 | SESSION 15: NORMS, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COOPERATION | A 310

Chair: Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

When Resilience Looks like Fragility: Workarounds and the Elasticity of International Cooperation

Stephanie Hofmann, European University Institute and Alexandros Kentikeleni, Bocconi University

Peace Rules! The Impact of a Rule-based International Order on Peace

Rui Esteves, Geneva Graduate Institute / CEPR

The Logic of Responsibility

Mitja Sienknecht, European University Viadrina and Sassan Gholiagha, Leibniz University Hannover

The Decreasing Legitimacy of Non-governmental Organizations in World Society

Eetu Vento, University of Helsinki

13:15 – 15:15 | SESSION 16: HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTESTATION | A 305

Chair: Dana Burchardt, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Enforcing Human Rights without Institutions? Global Sanctions and the Fragmentation of International Order

Yifan Jia, Geneva Graduate Institute

Selective Scrutiny in a Contested International Order: Country Selection in Human Rights Fact-Finding Missions

Faradj Koliev, Stockholm University

Systemic Discrimination in a Contested Order: Tapayeva and the ECtHR

Inessa Sakhno, Utrecht University

13:15 – 15:15 | SESSION 17: DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND GEOPOLITICS | A 110

Chair: Robert Gorwa, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Strategic Control without Public Leverage: How Semi-Sovereignty Constrains Digital Sovereignty in Europe

Anke Hassel, Hertie School

Market Efficiency and Geopolitical Policies: An Event Study of the Semiconductor Industry

Fatjon Kaja, University of Frankfurt

The Constitutional Cost of Frontier AI

Allison Stanger, Middlebury College

13:15 – 15:15 | SESSION 18: MIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC MOBILITY | B 001

Chair: Alessandro Ferrara, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

The Gendered Cost of Staying: How Gender Inequality Increases Female Migration

Irene Pañeda-Fernández, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Household Sizes and International Migration

Tobias Grohmann, European University Institute

Strategic Ambiguity in Indian Refugee Governance: Ad-Hocism and the Challenge to the Liberal International Order

Saif Rasul Khan, Royal Global University

13:15 – 15:15 | SESSION 19: GEOPOLITICS AND ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING | B 002/003

Chair: Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Goethe University Frankfurt / CEPR

Trading Places: How Trade Policy Is Reshaping Multinational Firms' Location

Alejandro Graziano, University of Nottingham / CEPR

Old Wine in New Bottles? Friendshoring to the Developing World

Lunting Wu, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

Comparative Advantage and Exploitation: Wages and Unequal Exchange in a Ricardian Framework

Soumik Sarkar, VIT-AP University

15:30 – 17:00 | KEYNOTES | A 300

"SHARED PROSPERITY IN A FRACTURED WORLD"

Dani Rodrik, Harvard University / CEPR

"BUILDING A TRADE POLICY THAT WORKS FOR ALL" (WORKING TITLE)

Ambassador Katherine Tai, 19th United States Trade Representative

17:00 – 17:15 | CONCLUDING REMARKS | A 300

Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Goethe University Frankfurt / CEPR

Steffen Huck, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / University College London

Yasemin Soysal, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

Michael Zürn, WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

17:15 | COFFEE AND DEPARTURE | WINTERGARTEN

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Adena, Maja	WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Technical University Berlin	SESSION 6
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Biedermann, Steve	Helmut Schmidt University	SESSION 3
Boese-Schlosser, Vanessa	WZB Berlin Social Science Center	SESSION 4
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Esteves, Rui	Geneva Graduate Institute / CEPR	SESSION 15
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Khan, Saif Rasul	Royal Global University	SESSION 18
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Koliev, Faradj	Stockholm University	SESSION 16
Kornek, Ulrike	Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change / Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research	SESSION 3
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Kumm, Mattias	WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin / New York University School of Law	SESSION 11
Kupchan, Charles A.	Georgetown University	KEYNOTE: "A WORLD IN DISARRAY: HOW DID WE GET HERE? WHAT DO WE DO NOW?"
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Ngunjiri, Ndirangu	University of Nairobi	SESSION 10
Okoi, Obasesam	University of St Thomas Minnesota	SESSION 6
Pañeda-Fernández, Irene	WZB Berlin Social Science Center	SESSION 14
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Sakhno, Inessa	Utrecht University	SESSION 8
		PUBLIC DIALOGUE: "A NEW WORLD ORDER: CAN EUROPE SHAPE IT?"
		KEYNOTE: "SHARED PROSPERITY IN A FRACTURED WORLD"
		SESSION 16

Sarkar, Soumik	VIT-AP University
Sauerbrey, Anna	Foreign Editor, Die ZEIT
Scacco, Alexandra	WZB Social Science Center / University of Hamburg
Scherzinger, Johannes	University of Zurich
Schmotz, Alexander	WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Shaban, Ramy	Sciences Po
Sienknecht, Mitja	European University Viadrina
Simmons, Beth	University of Pennsylvania
Smith-Worthington, Bennett	Princeton University
Somer, Murat	Ozyegin University
Soysal, Yasemin	WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin
Stanger, Allison	Middlebury College
Sun, Xuefeng	Tsinghua University
Syali, Manini	TERI School of Advanced Studies
Tai, Katherine	19th United States Trade Representative
Tkachenko, Andrey	Nazarbayev University
Vento, Eetu	University of Helsinki
Viola, Lora Anne	Freie Universität Berlin
Wu, Lunting	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)
Yan, Xiaoyu	Geneva Graduate Institute
Zürn, Michael	WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Freie Universität Berlin

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PUBLIC DIALOGUE: "A NEW WORLD ORDER: CAN EUROPE SHAPE IT?"

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KEYNOTE: "HARDENING BORDERS: TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES"

SESSION 8

SESSION 4

SESSION 1

SESSION 8

CONCLUDING PANEL

SESSION 17

PLENARY PANEL: "POSSIBLE FUTURES OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER"

SESSION 13

KEYNOTE: "BUILDING A TRADE POLICY THAT WORKS FOR ALL" (WORKING TITLE)

SESSION 1

SESSION 11

SESSION 15

PLENARY PANEL: "POSSIBLE FUTURES OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER"

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PLENARY PANEL: "POSSIBLE FUTURES OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER"

CONCLUDING PANEL