

Is Europe missing the boat to the future?

Will international relations soon be shaped without Europe?

by Ralph Bosshard*



Ralph Bosshard.
(Picture mt)

A diplomatic offensive by the Eurasian countries is currently underway, aimed at implementing China's "Global Governance Initiative" and Belarus's "Charter for the Security of Eurasia".

Once the summer holidays are over, things could really take off, and Europe might be relegated to the role of a bystander. Will Chinese and Belarusian diplomats be governing the pressing conflicts of our time?

ated to the role of a bystander. Will Chinese and Belarusian diplomats be governing the pressing conflicts of our time?

A few days ago, the Chinese government presented its latest *White Paper* on its *Global Governance Initiative* (GGI), entitled "*More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions*", which is intended as China's proposed solution for reforming and improving the global governance system, with the United Nations playing a central role.¹ The GGI was launched in 2025 by President *Xi Jinping* and is now supported by almost 160 countries and organisations.² From China's perspective, the time is therefore ripe to present the document to the UN General Assembly.³

A concerted effort?

It is no coincidence that the Belarusian Foreign Minister *Maxim Ryzhenkov* gave an interview to the Indonesian newspaper *Jakarta Globe* a few weeks ago,⁴ in which he promoted the "Eurasian Charter on Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century", which he had placed at the centre of



Minsk Security Conferences – towards a new security architecture. (Picture www.belta.by)

the Minsk Security Conference last October. The conference itself and the idea for a charter can be traced back to Ryzhenkov's predecessors, *Vladimir Makei* and *Sergei Aleinik*.⁵

These Eurasian initiatives are gaining further relevance at the moment through the mediation efforts of two participants in the Minsk Security Conference – namely Qatar and Pakistan – in the conflict between the US, Israel and Iran; whilst these talks took place at Bürgenstock in Switzerland, the two mediators were allowed to determine the agenda.⁶ Qatar and Pakistan had already been represented by their ambassadors at previous International Minsk Conferences on Eurasian Security and had made it clear that they would participate in multilateral discussions on shaping a new security architecture and a dialogue in the Eurasian region that excludes no one.⁷

Beijing's commitment to the Global South

The GGI was launched in 2025 by President *Xi Jinping* and already enjoys the support of nearly 160 countries and organisations. It represents a Chinese approach to reforming and improving

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See also: <https://www.schweizer-standpunkt.ch/news-detailansicht-en-schweiz/dependence-on-foreign-weapons-systems.html> and <https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-en-schweiz/neutral-mediation-services-or-entering-the-war.html>

the global governance system, with the United Nations playing a central role.⁸

The GGI is a response to a period of profound crises. Key challenges include, on the one hand, geopolitical crises such as the Ukraine conflict – now in its fifth year – ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, and economic fragmentation. Unilateralism, protectionism and decoupling are damaging world trade, with the result that nearly 80 per cent of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are stagnating or even regressing.

Indeed, the United Nations currently assesses global progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda as sobering and, in many respects, insufficient. Ten years after the agenda was adopted, the official UN progress reports show that the international community is lagging drastically behind its targets. Without a massive acceleration, not even one of the 17 goals will be fully achieved by 2030. Only around 35 per cent of the sub-goals are on track or showing moderate progress worldwide; around 47 per cent of the indicators are moving far too slowly or stagnating; and 18 per cent of the goals are even showing a decline: the situation today is worse than in the base year of 2015.⁹

In Beijing's view, this is due, amongst other things, to virtually unchecked power politics and the formation of exclusive blocs, which are supplanting international law. Furthermore, some industrialised nations are blocking necessary reforms of the UN, the IMF and the *World Bank*, with the result that the Global South remains severely under-represented. China is positioning itself as a proactive shaper of the global order by calling for new rules governing artificial intelligence, cyberspace, the deep sea and outer space. Furthermore, Beijing points to its role as a mediator between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as between Palestinian factions. For Beijing, however, the focus is on economic and development issues: further advancing the *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI), the *Global Development Initiative* (GDI) and, more generally, support for the Global South.

Poor marks for Western dominance

The statements by Belarusian Foreign Minister Ryzhenkov sound very similar and can be interpreted as a regional implementation of what the Chinese paper calls for at a global level. He draws a harsh conclusion from 35 years of

Western dominance following the collapse of the so-called Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union: The successful and independent development of Eurasian countries has, he argues, always been hindered by the interference of external actors. However, this had already begun earlier – specifically from the inception of the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe* (CSCE) in the early 1970s right through to US strategies of dominance following the Cold War. The current conflict in the Middle East in 2026 tragically confirms this assumption and provides the latest evidence that external powers are incapable of managing Eurasian security. Indeed, the EU and NATO have so far failed to provide evidence to the contrary.

The patterns of Western "crisis management" have always been the same: one-sided interpretations of international law, disregard for the UN, unilateral interventions, and subsequent fruitless attempts to establish a low-tension end state due to ignorance of local circumstances.¹⁰ The architects of this policy have learnt nothing from the crises and wars in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or Ukraine. The Eurasian states can really draw only one conclusion from this: Eurasia must under no circumstances rely on external guardians of security but urgently needs its own solutions to Eurasian problems. The fact that Qatar and Pakistan are now successfully mediating in the Iran conflict is likely to have been a source of great satisfaction in Minsk.

Ryzhenkov argues that Europe must seek its future through cooperative action within Eurasia. So far, however, only a minority of European states have been represented at the Minsk Security Conference: Hungary, Serbia and Switzerland. If Europe continues to stay away from the negotiations, it will have no say in defining the continent's future rules. This could become highly relevant in just a few years' time, as Ryzhenkov hints at the creation of a new institution that may soon supersede the *Organisation for Security and Co-operation* (OSCE). It is as yet unclear where the secretariat of a new *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Eurasia* will be based. However, the implications of this for the OSCE will be viewed with concern in Vienna, Warsaw, The Hague and Copenhagen.¹¹ The OSCE failed because it was exploited by Western states. One of Ryzhenkov's main objectives will be to establish his new organisation as a regional security organisation in accordance with

the UN Charter. The formal negotiation process is set to begin as early as this coming September during the 81st UN General Assembly in New York. A final text is to be adopted at a summit of Eurasian heads of state and government before the end of 2027.

Common ideas – different levels

In terms of content, a comparison of the statements made by the Chinese and the Belarusians almost suggests a common line of argument, albeit at different levels. Points of common ground include criticism of a Western-dominated order, multipolarity as a guiding principle, the primacy of sovereignty, the rejection of bloc confrontation, and security as a shared, indivisible task.

Whilst China is drafting a comprehensive vision of the world order, Ryzhenkov focuses on the Eurasian continent. Differing perspectives are also evident regarding the role of the United Nations: China sees the UN as central and explicitly calls for the preservation of the UN-centred system and a strengthening of the UN, which it argues is in need of reform. What this might entail will cause further concern in Western European capitals, and particularly in Berlin, as it is foreseeable that Germany's claim to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council will meet with opposition from numerous Asian and African states, which, by virtue of their population size and growing economic strength, have at least an equal claim to such a seat. It is therefore extremely ill-timed that Germany suffered a clear defeat in the recent election for one of the ten non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council.¹²

A tight schedule this autumn

There can be little doubt that China, Belarus and Russia have coordinated their positions on these initiatives, which in itself contradicts reports in German-language media suggesting that a rift has emerged between these states. If the Chinese and Belarusian proposals really do find the support at the UN this coming autumn that Beijing and Minsk are currently hoping for, then three-quarters of the world's states will come to accept the rules which, for the time being, apply to relations amongst the Eurasian states themselves, but which are up for discussion as the principles of a new world order.

The states of Eurasia would then, within just under three years, have reversed the global bal-

ance of power, and Western Europe would then be the only region in which the "rules-based order" still applies – an order whose concrete meaning nobody has really grasped so far. And should the new Eurasians succeed in this, then perhaps it is time to dust off the Chinese peace plan for Ukraine from 2023.¹³

After the summer holidays, the timetable will be tightly packed: during the negotiations at the UN General Assembly in September, the West can continue to indulge in arrogance, stay away from the talks, boycott the *Fourth Minsk Security Conference* in November and watch as it is sidelined by a new global order. Or it may have a change of heart in October and ensure it is adequately represented in Minsk. The list of participants at the Fourth Minsk Security Conference will show which direction things are heading.

Source: <https://globalbridge.ch/verpasst-europa-den-zug-in-die-zukunft/>, 26 June 2026

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

1. See *More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions*, on homepage of the Chinese State Council, 17 June 2026, online at https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202606/17/content_WS6a326192c6d00ca5f9a0bab7.html.
2. This figure was cited by the Chinese Foreign Ministry and pro-government media. See "Chinese Foreign Ministry: Global Governance Initiative broadens the practical path towards building a community with a shared future for mankind", on CGTN, 17 June 2026, online at <https://german.cgtn.com/2026/06/17/ART11781689273246277>. "Was steckt hinter der Vitalität der Global Governance Initiative?", *ibid* 18 June 2026, online at <https://german.cri.cn/2026/06/18/ART11781748976172497> Worldwide some 60 states intend to actively support the initiative.
3. See Bill Jones: *Russia and Belarus to Present a Call for Eurasian Charter at Upcoming UN General Assembly*, by *Executive Intelligence Review*, 22 June 2026, online at <https://eir.news/2026/06/news/russia-and-belarus-to-present-a-call-for-eurasian-charter-at-upcoming-un-general-assembly/>.
4. See Maxim V. Ryzhenkov: *A Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI Century*, by *Russia in Global Affairs* No. 4 2025 October/December 2025, 1 August 2025, online at <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/eurasia-multipolarity-ryzhenkov/>. Cf. "Интервью Министра иностранных дел Беларуси М. Рыженкова индонезийскому изданию, The Jakarta Globe" (Interview with Belarusian Foreign Minister M. Ryzhenkov in the Indonesian newspaper The Jakarta Globe), on the website of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, online at <https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/smi/c371ad208f393e2f.html>, in Russian Language. See also "Q&A: Belarus FM Maxim Ryzhenkov on Building a Multipolar Eurasian Security System", by The Jakarta Globe, 21 May 2026, online at <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/qa-belarus-fm-maxim-ryzhenkov-on-building-a-multipolar-eurasian-security-system>.

5. Cfr. "Europa in der Krise – es ist Zeit für Bescheidenheit", by Global Bridge, 3 December 2023, online at <https://globalbridge.ch/europa-in-der-krise-es-ist-zeit-fuer-bescheidenheit/>. Cfr. "Zweite eurasische Sicherheitskonferenz in Minsk angesichts anhaltenden Strebens der USA nach militärischer Dominanz» bei Zeitfragen Nr. 2, Januar 2025, online at <https://www.zeit-fragen.ch/archiv/2025/nr-2-21-januar-2025/zweite-eurasische-sicherheitskonferenz-in-minsk-angesichts-anhaltenden-strebens-der-usa-nach-militaerischer-dominanz>. (en) "Minsker Sicherheitskonferenz: den Pragmatikern eine Chance geben!", by Global Bridge, 9 November 2025, online at <https://globalbridge.ch/minsker-sicherheitskonferenz-den-pragmatikern-eine-chance-geben>. "Höchste Zeit für einen Paradigmenwechsel", by Zeitfragen Nr. 26, Dezember 2025, online at <https://www.zeit-fragen.ch/archiv/2025/nr-26-9-dezember-2025/hoechste-zeit-fuer-einen-paradigmenwechsel>. (en)
6. See Philipp Scholkmann: Gespräche auf dem Bürgerstock; Iran und USA legen Grundstein für Verhandlungen – das Wichtigste, by SRF, 22 June 2026, online at <https://www.srf.ch/news/international/nahost/gespraeche-auf-dem-buergerstock-iran-und-usa-legen-grundstein-fuer-verhandlungen-das-wichtigste>. "News kompakt: Positive Signale bei USA-Iran-Gesprächen", by Deutsche Welle, 22 June 2026, online at <https://www.dw.com/de/news-kompakt-positive-signale-bei-usa-iran-gespraechen-schweiz-wahlen-kolumbien-aethiopien-hitze/a-77652198>.
7. See «Делегации более 40 государств и 7 международных организаций примут участие в конференции по евразийской безопасности в Минске» (Delegations of more than 40 countries and seven international organisations will take part in the conference on Eurasian security in Minsk), on the website of the Belarusian news agency Belta, 27 October 2025, online at <https://belta.by/politics/view/delegatsii-bolee-40-gosudarstv-i-7-mezhdunarodnyh-organizatsij-primut-uchastie-v-konferentsii-po-745219-2025/>, in Russian language. See also "Participation of Chargé d'Affaires in the activities of the 3rd Minsk International Conference on Eurasian Security", on the website of the Embassy of Qatar in Belarus, 28 October 2025, online at <https://minsk.embassy.qa/en/media/news/detail/1447/05/08/participation-of-chargé-d%27affaires-in-the-activities-of-the-3rd-minsk-international-conference-on-eurasian-security>. "Итоги III Минской международной конференции по евразийской безопасности: взгляд молодых аналитиков" (Results of the III. International Minsk Conference on Eurasian Security: Views of a young analyst), on the website Белорусский институт стратегических исследований БИСИ (Belarusian Institute for strategic studies), 4. November 2025, online at <https://bisr.gov.by/uchastie-v-meropriyatiyakh/itogi-iii-minskoy-mezhdunarodnoy-konferencii-po-evraziyskoy-bezopasnosti>, in Russian language. Cfr. "Ambassador Joins II Eurasian Security Conference in Minsk" on the website of the Pakistani Embassy in Minsk, online at <https://mofa.gov.pk/press-releases/ambassador-joins-ii-eurasian-security-conference-in-minsk?mission=minsk>.
8. See Concept Paper on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry: "Concept Paper on the Global Governance Initiative" from 1 September 2025, online at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/wjbxw/202509/t20250901_11699912.html. Cfr. Gu Bin: *The Global Governance Initiative and New Multilateralism*, by China-US Focus, 9 October 2025, online at <https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-global-governance-initiative-and-new-multilateralism>. Azhar Azam: *Global Governance Initiative lays groundwork for inclusive global system*, by *China's Diplomacy in the New Era*, 18 September 2025, online at https://en.chinadiplomacy.org.cn/2025-09/18/content_118084927.shtml.
9. see "The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025" of the United Nations on its website, online at <https://www.un.org/german/sites/default/files/2025-12/SDG-Bericht-2025.pdf>. See also "Eine positive Zukunftserzählung für alle" on the website of *Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen*, 13 February 2024, online at <https://dgvn.de/meldung/eine-positive-zukunftserzaehlung-fuer-alle>. "Reduzierung von Armut und Ungleichheit in der Agenda 2030", by *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*, online at <https://www.giz.de/de/projekte/reduzierung-von-armut-und-ungleichheit-der-agenda-2030>.
10. The author has taken part in numerous exercises at NATO and EU academies and command centres dedicated to this form of crisis management.
11. In addition to the OSCE Secretariat and the central decision-making bodies (such as the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation), the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media is also based in Vienna. The *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights* (ODIHR) is based in Warsaw, whilst the *Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities* (HKNM) is based in The Hague. The seat of the *Parliamentary Assembly* of the OSCE (OSCE PA) is in Copenhagen. Cfr. website of the OSCE at <https://www.osce.org/de/node/108302>.
12. In the recent election for new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany fell well short of the required two-thirds majority. This was a first: for the very first time, Germany's bid for one of the non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council was unsuccessful. Until now, it had always succeeded in securing a seat whenever it had stood for election. See "Germany fails to secure a seat on the UN Security Council", on the United Nations website, available online at <https://unric.org/de/deutschland-scheitert-bei-wahl-in-un-sicherheitsrat/>. Konstantin Furrer: *Deutschland scheitert krachend bei Wahl zu UN-Sicherheitsrat*, by *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 4 June 2026, online at <https://www.20min.ch/story/new-york-deutschland-scheitert-krachend-bei-wahl-zu-un-sicherheitsrat-103576890>. Hansjürgen Mai: *Wahl um Sitz im UN-Sicherheitsrat. Kein Platz für Deutschland*, by *taz.de*, 3 June 2026, online at <https://taz.de/Wahl-um-Sitz-im-UN-Sicherheitsrat/!6184085/>. "Deutschland scheitert erstmals bei Wahl zum UN-Sicherheitsrat", by *Die Zeit*, 3 June 2026, online at <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2026-06/oesterreich-in-den-un-sicherheitsrat-gewaehlt-deutschland-scheitert>. "Deutschland scheitert erstmals bei Wahl zum UN-Sicherheitsrat", by *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 3 June 2026, online at <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/deutschland-scheitert-bei-wahl-zu-un-sicherheitsrat-200895640.html>.
13. See "Peking ergreift die Initiative im Ukraine-Konflikt", by Globalbridge, 27 February 2023, online at <https://globalbridge.ch/peking-ergreift-die-initiative-im-ukraine-konflikt/>.