

Assessing EU-China Security Interests from Contradiction to Convergence

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Abstract : Why do we observe a shift towards convergence in EU-China security interests? While contradicting attitudes towards key principles of inter-state and region-to-state relations, including state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and intervention policies have ever since hindered EU-China inter-regional cooperation beyond the economic realm, collaboration in peace and security issues is now becoming a key pillar of European-Chinese relations. In addition, the Belt and Road Initiative as most ambitious Chinese foreign policy project explicitly touches upon several European foreign policy and security preferences. Based on these counterintuitive findings, this paper traces the process of convergence of Sino-European security interests. Drawing on qualitative text analysis of official Chinese and European policy papers and documents from the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975 until today, it assesses the striking change over time. On this basis, the paper uses theories of neo-functionalism, inter-regionalism, and securitization and borrows from constructivist views in International Relations' theory, to expound possible motives for the change in Chinese and respectively European preferences in the security realm. The results reveal interesting insights into the decisive factors and motives behind both countries' foreign policies. The paper concludes with a discussion of further potential and difficulties of EU-China security cooperation.

Keywords : belt and road initiative, China, European Union, foreign policy, neo-functionalism, security

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