



GLOBAL SYNERGY

CONFERENCE 2026

This conference receives financial support from the European Parliament.

Power, Partnerships and the Next Global Order

18th March 2026, The Hotel, Brussels



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

Organised by Wilfried Martens
Centre for European Studies

Opening Speech 09:30-09:45

Mikuláš Dzurinda, President, Martens Centre

Panel 1 09:45-10:45**Economic Security in an Age of Rivalry: Trade, Trust, and Strategic Investment**

Globalisation is shifting from efficiency to security. The return of tariffs, geoeconomic pressure, and technological rivalry — particularly between the US and China— is reshaping global trade, investment, and supply chains. Europe must navigate this moment with a renewed strategy: open but protected, competitive yet values-driven. This panel explores how the EU can strengthen economic security through new partnerships with the Global South, Japan, and Asia, by moving from traditional development assistance to strategic, high-standard investment. The discussion will cover trade defence, diversification of supply routes, digitalisation of commerce, and building trust through transparent, rules-based networks.

Jayant Menon, Senior Fellow, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Jorge Jraissati, President, Economic Inclusion Group

Iuliu Winkler, MEP, Vice-Chair, International Trade Committee

Moderator: **Peter Hefele**, Policy Director, Martens Centre

Focused Conversation on India 11:15-11:45

As part of its diversification strategy, the EU is deepening ties with the Indo-Pacific—the epicenter of global economic dynamism. States in the region, including India, are responding to growing geostrategic rivalry by seeking reliable partners to strengthen resilience. Both the EU and India have expressed a clear intent to enhance bilateral cooperation across all sectors. With the conclusion of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement, the implementation phase of this partnership will be pivotal. We will explore these themes in a one-on-one conversation.

Harsh V Pant, Vice President, Studies and Foreign Policy, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

Moderator: **Abigaël Vasselier**, Strategic Coordinator on Asia Pacific, European External Action Service

Panel 2 11:45-12:45**From Sea to Space: Security Partnerships in a Geopolitical Era**

Security today spans land, sea, space, and cyberspace. Europe's security is inseparable from the stability of the MENA region, Africa, India, and Latin America, dependent on everything from maritime chokepoints to undersea cables and cyber networks. This session examines how the EU can strengthen cross-regional cooperation on defence, maritime security, cyber norms, disinformation resilience, and critical infrastructure protection. With a spotlight on Indo-Pacific trade routes and undersea cable security, the discussion will centre on how the EU can provide credible added value through partnerships, capacity building, and a shared commitment to a rules-based order.

Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Shafiah F. Muhibat, Senior Researcher, Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Mehdi Rais, Executive President, Diplomatic Bridge

Arnaud Danjean, Academic Council Member, Martens Centre, former MEP, EPP

Moderator: **Tomi Huhtanen**, Executive Director, Martens Centre

Panel 3**14:00-15:00****East meets West: AI, Competition, and the Future of Global Innovation**

AI is now at the heart of geopolitical competition. The US leads on innovation speed, China on state-driven scale, while Europe aims to lead on rules, ethics, and trust. Asia's advanced tech economies —Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan— offer crucial lessons in balancing competitiveness, security, and democratic values. This panel explores how Europe can partner with like-minded innovators across Asia while managing strategic competition with China, closing its innovation gap, and ensuring the digital divide does not further marginalise the Global South. The discussion points include AI governance, cyber resilience, industrial competitiveness, digital infrastructure, and the role of global standards in shaping a rules-based digital future.

Kristy Hsu, Director, ASEAN Studies Center at Chung-Hua Institution of Economic Research

Baratang Miya, Digital Public Infrastructure Expert, United Nations

Qarrem Kassim, Analyst, Institute of Strategic & International Studies

Moderator: **Dimitar Lilkov**, Senior Research Officer, Martens Centre

Panel 4**16:00-17:00****Shaping the Future: What Should the next Global Order Look Like?**

The global order is being rebuilt in real time. Competing models of governance —democratic, semi-authoritarian, and state-capitalist— challenge Europe's ability to protect its interests and promote stability. The EU must develop a credible strategy that brings partners together around key pillars: strategic autonomy, trade diplomacy, sustainable connectivity, and investment partnerships. This forward-looking roundtable examines how Europe, India, and partners from the Global South can align their perspectives, protect a rules-based multilateral order, and shape global standards in technology, security, and sustainable growth. The aim is to conclude the conference with clear strategic recommendations for the EU's global positioning.

Manoj Kewalramani, Fellow - China Studies; Chairperson, Indo-Pacific Studies Programme, Takshashila Institution

Cheng-Chwee Kuik, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Hunter Marston, Non-resident Fellow, Southeast Asia Programme, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Klaus Welle, Chair, Academic Council, Martens Centre; former Secretary General (2009-2022), European Parliament

Moderator: **Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy**, Visiting Fellow & Academic Council Member, Martens Centre

Closing Speech**17:00**

Antonio Lopez Isturiz White, MEP, Secretary Treasurer, Martens Centre



09:00-09:30 Registration with Welcome Breakfast

10:45-11:15 Networking & Refreshments

12:45-14:00 Networking Lunch

15:30-16:00 Networking & Refreshments

17:15 Networking Cocktail



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