

## **Geopoliticization of European security**

Workshop Convenors:

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The resurgence of geopolitics in Europe, anticipated over a decade ago, has become a defining reality. Geopolitics has re-emerged as a central component of political agendas, reflecting the strategic interests of states as shaped by territorial and geographic considerations. However, contemporary geopolitical thinking is increasingly influenced by politicization, which frames geopolitical dynamics in terms of power distribution, political competition, and the formation of collective identities. This process often entails hidden political dimensions and informal arrangements that shape decision-making.

This workshop focuses on the intricate interplay between geopolitics, politicization, and security on the European continent. These elements form a deeply interwoven and dynamic framework that profoundly influences Europe's security landscape. At its core is the concept of geopoliticization, which serves as a driving force for cooperation, competition, and confrontation, affecting both domestic politics and the international arena, frequently extending beyond Europe's geographical boundaries.

The primary aim of this workshop is to unravel geopoliticization complexities, map nuances, and engage in critical discussions on the EU's security in a geopolitical context. Additionally, the workshop seeks to reinvigorate scholarly debate on the EU's role as an international actor, aspiring to contribute meaningfully to global and regional security and embracing its "collective responsibility to act." The European Union faces the pressing necessity of addressing key security concerns by adopting robust geopolitical strategies.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's ambitious vision of a "geopolitical Commission" has been pursued amid regional tensions, global challenges, and intensifying geopolitical rivalries. Similarly, the "geopolitical awakening" proclaimed by HR/VP Josep Borrell underscores the need for critical reflection on the EU's capacity to confront challenges posed by revisionist powers such as China and Russia. This workshop will also examine the role of collective actors like the EU in addressing nationalistic concerns and prejudices—articulated by populist and nationalist parties—that undermine European cooperation and integration, fuel Euroscepticism, and challenge the viability of a comprehensive European security policy.

Geopoliticization, understood as the discursive construction of an issue as a geopolitical problem, raises several pressing questions for European security that this workshop aims to explore:

- Are state and non-state actors in Europe prepared to engage in geopoliticization as a ruthless exercise in a world governed by "raw power politics"?
- Are geopolitical alliances in Europe destined for politicization, given the rise of nationalism and populist isolationism, which promote a traditional geopolitical vision of European security?
- Can the EU effectively balance its relationships with global powers (e.g., the United States, China, and Russia) while managing internal political divisions among Member States regarding the best approaches to safeguarding citizens and ensuring stability and prosperity?
- Does the "geopolitical awakening" articulated by Josep Borrell in March 2022 provide a relevant and valuable critique of the EU's ability to address the challenges posed by revisionist powers like China and Russia?
- Is hybrid warfare—encompassing conventional military threats, cyber-attacks, disinformation, sabotage, and political interference, particularly from Russia and China—emerging as a growing geopolitical concern that directly threatens Europe's security and stability?