

Global Europe Report 02: Iran nuclear talks detracting from long-term EU engagement strategy

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Attention: diplomatic editors, defence and EU correspondents, comment desks

The Global Europe project was developed by the Foreign Policy Centre (London) in partnership with British Council Brussels. It aims to promote new thinking on the EU's evolution as an international actor and provide concrete policy recommendations for the European Security Strategy from independent experts.

Short-term objectives like persuading Iran to give up its nuclear programme are distracting the EU from developing a coherent strategy of engagement with its new neighbours, according to the latest Global Europe report published by the Foreign Policy Centre and British Council Brussels.

Global Europe Report 02: New Terms of Engagement, by Richard Youngs (ed.) argues that, post-enlargement, the old model of EU engagement with the near abroad through the promise of accession is no longer viable. Although this is 'without a doubt the most successful policy instrument the EU has', Europe must develop a new strategy to promote democratic reform in countries ranging from Belarus and Moldova to Morocco and the Palestinian Authority – or risk overstretch.

'One wonders whether recent gains – the WMD negotiations with Iran most notably – have been bought at the cost of diminished engagement on issues of internal reform,' Richard Youngs states in the introductory essay.

The report sets out policy recommendations for effective engagement with third countries. The EU must standardise the terms of its offers; establish clear benchmarks and norms upon which to make these conditional; and focus on creating "value transmitters" in third countries able to interpret European policy sympathetically.

Karen E. Smith points out that standards must be consistent, or 'some neighbours will want to know why they are subject to conditionality while others are merely "engaged"'. Michael Emerson argues that the EU must add flesh to the "Action Plans" for particular countries produced under the neighbourhood policy; while Richard Whitman stresses that public diplomacy is still 'the Cinderella of the EU's global engagement'.

The report recommends:

- Ending the assumption that the 'accession model' can be extended wholesale to the EU's new periphery; and systematically examining where the similarities and differences with this model reside

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- Offering desirable aid, trade, education and visa benefits tailored to the needs of individual third countries
- Making these conditional on progress made against standardised benchmarks and norms applied equally to each country, so as to strengthen the EU's credibility

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. *Global Europe 2: New Terms of Engagement* by Richard Youngs (ed.) is published in May 2005 by British Council Brussels and the Foreign Policy Centre.
2. The contributors to the report are: Richard Youngs (ed.), Senior Fellow, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE, Madrid), and University of Warwick, UK; Michael Emerson, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels; Karen E. Smith, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, London School of Economics; and Richard Whitman, Director, Europe Programme, Royal Institute for International Affairs.
3. *The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone, and do not represent the views of British Council Brussels or of the Foreign Policy Centre.*
4. Global Europe has been supported by the European Commission Representation in the UK as part of *The Future of Europe* project. It has also drawn on a conference held at Wilton Park on 16-18 July 2004, 'Global Europe: Testing the Limits of the European Security Strategy'. This was the 760th Wilton Park conference.

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