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DISCUSSION #3
APRIL 29
COVID 19
LIBERAL VIEWS AND RESPONSES FROM DEMOCRACIES
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WEDNESDAY WEBINAR SERIES BY CIVIC IDEA
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FNF – SOUTH CAUCASUS
APRIL - MAY' 2020



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DIRECTOR, ASIA AND CHINA PROGRAMME

WEBINAR #3

COVID 19 – Responses from Democracies:
France, Germany. What about China?



TINATIN KHIDASHELI
HEAD OF CIVIC IDEA
FORMER MOD OF GEORGIA

29TH OF APRIL,
AT 12:00 TBILISI TIME



DIDI KIRSTEN TATLOW
SENIOR FELLOW, GERMAN COUNCIL
ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, BERLIN

DISCUSSION # 3

RESPONSES FROM DEMOCRACIES: WHAT ABOUT CHINA?

SPEAKERS:

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Filip Jirous-
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MODERATOR:

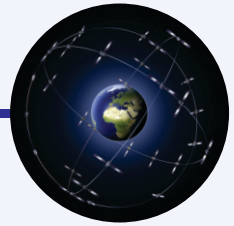
Tinatin Khidasheli
Chairperson of Civic IDEA, Former Minister of Defense of Georgia

COVID 19 - RESPONSES FROM DEMOCRACIES: WHAT ABOUT CHINA? DISCUSSION #3

The third Webinar of Civic IDEA was fully devoted to the role, positioning, responses and strategies of China amid COVID 19 crisis.

Similar to Russia, China with its robust propaganda mechanism is becoming exceptionally interesting state during the COVID-19 crisis. In todays digitalized world we all follow news and twits, read research and analytical articles about Chinese Communist Party's illegal maneuvers coupled with the public health diplomacy and aid policies serving exclusively their national interests and propaganda objectives. Those policies do have positive consequence for many, principally in developing democracies like Georgia, where there is not really much information or discussion about China, CCP or its goals and ambitions outside small expert community.

Not long ago, there was an open letter written and signed by over 200 sinologists, experts, activists from across the globe addressed to Chinese people encouraging them to "rage against the injustice, let your lives burn with a flame of decency; break through the stultifying darkness"[1], pose objective questions and notice the genuine goals behind the actions of their authorities. As it reads, "the open letter exemplifies what the independent intellectual Professor Xu Zhangrun has called the "ridiculous 'Red Culture' and the nauseating adulation that the system heaps on itself via shameless pro-Party hacks who chirrup hosannahs at every turn". In five short paragraphs letter summarizes policies of PRC to be known to all societies across the globe before jumping into assumptions and easy conclusions.



1. See Open letter at https://civicidea.ge/en/open-letter-was-signed-by-more-than-200-scientists-politicians-and-civil-activists-around-the-world-civic-idea-is-one-of-them/

While the western societies are still fighting a fierce battle against the coronavirus crisis, their counterparts, authoritarian states seek to take an advantage from and capitalize on the existing problems, appealing themselves as the exemplary handlers of the crisis. They constantly interfere in the various developments occurring in the West, explaining importance of intention with the best interests of protection or for doing good for the people.



Some argue that, the COVID-19 crisis is not a struggle between the particular states, but between the authoritarian and democratic systems. China not only tries to establish its status as a global economic superpower, but also craves to use the coronavirus for the further promotion of the authoritarian one-party rule demonstrating it as the most efficient regime for fighting against the pandemic.

Discussion during the webinar brings the different approaches and responses of liberal democratic countries that are currently facing the challenges caused by the COVID-19, China's involvement in these processes, digital challenges and the role of the transnational institutions (e.g. WHO, EU) in the crisis management.

DEMOCRATIC RESPONSES TO CRISIS: THE SUCCESSFUL CASE OF GERMANY

COVID-19 pandemic is anthropologically and sociologically very new experience in terms of health-care and personal behavior for the European cultures, like France or Germany. However, rational and organized approach demonstrated by the latter confirms that the crisis can be well--handled. While being very speedy and effective in combatting the crisis internally, it made mistakes on the regional level, such as, shutting borders and moving very quickly to the nationalization of its medical equipment. These policies have been criticized by other actors and raised questions about general European solidarity.

"I actually think that it has been a great strength in this situation to have a scientist (Angela Merkel) at the top, somebody who is actually trained in logical reasoning and thinking."-
Didi Kirsten Tatlow.

Currently, Germany has relatively few deaths and few infected. The argument that is actively discussed nowadays stands about when to open slowly and cautiously loosen the quarantine in order to maintain balance in terms of life protection and economic enhancement. There have been several core changes made in this matter. The shops of 800 square meters or less were given the opportunity to open up again. German government quickly offered the aid to independent free-lance businesses and allocated 5,000 euros to every worker who needed it. Obviously, it is not enough

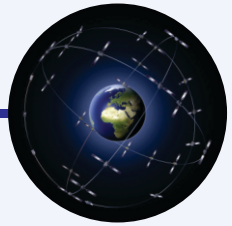
to save a business or free-lancer, but this policy served a nice gesture of support and solidarity, as well as a minimum relief for them.

Regarding the education sector, the schools will be reopened on May 4th letting certain grades (not all) with decreased numbers. The role of political leaders is especially crucial in these hard times. Therefore, they need to ensure that the politicians are also professionally trained for such circumstances, not only playing the political games.

Very quick was a reaction in Ireland as well, where Prime-Minister is also a medical doctor. As the crises broke, have immediately isolates elderly people.

As we speak about the initial policies from western democracies, there is an interesting comparison between Ireland and Sweden.

Sweden has taken the so-called "hard immunity" approach backed by the good health system. While Ireland went with relatively full lockdown. However, as we analyse results of first couple of months, the contrast between the numbers of Sweden and Ireland are surprisingly minimal. By April 29th Ireland had 22,7 deaths per 100,000 people and Sweden around 22.3. The latter, as mentioned did not even enforce the lockdown while Ireland did. The unexpected outcome shows us that we still do not fully acknowledge to what and how we are dealing with.



For the mail discussion theme of our webinar to be emphasized, Germany has not grasped the same kind of drama about the Chinese propaganda efforts and disinformation campaign as we are watching across various democracies, regardless the fact that, China delivered the PPE boxes (including the recent 25 million PPE items landing in Leipzig airport) there as well. It is also true, that there were reports of German government accusing Chinese ambassador and his staff in reaching out to German politicians trying to enforce the expressions of support on them, however he denied all the accusations.

"Chinese ambassador to Germany has been less outspoken in his pushback against criticism than in some European countries, e.g. France..."-

Didi Kirsten Tatlow.

CZECH REPUBLIC CONFRONTING COVID 19 AND CHINESE AID

The health situation in the Czech Republic does not seem to be catastrophic and it is fair to say that so far, the country has been effectively dealing with the crisis. However, we cannot say the same about its political system and the government.

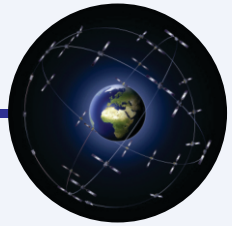
"There has been quite a bit of clumsiness in the political response to the crisis"-

Martin Hala.

As we talk about Chinese interference in responses form various EU member states, it is worth remembering that Czech republic does have its share of politicians serving the Chinese interests. They were in the front rows of those politicizing the pandemic. The most was seen while distribution of PPE supplies from China and using it for pushing PRC's policies in Czech Republic. Politicized gratitude towards the Chinese equipment has been shown from all levels of governing political elite.

> "When one of the cargo planes from the People's Republic of China arrived in the airport in Prague, it was greeted on the tarmac by the top government officials, the prime minister, deputy minister and few other ministers in the presence of the Chinese ambassador and they listened to the speech that was delivered by the Chinese ambassador right there in front of the cargo plane"-
>
> Martin Hala.

It is crucial to mention that the weeks before this event, the same ambassador was accused of meddling in domestic politics of the country. The main point here is that in several weeks the situation totally reversed causing the total dissatisfaction in the population. The issue of Chinese involvement and the politization of supplies has become a very contentious matter for the Czech Republic's internal politics.

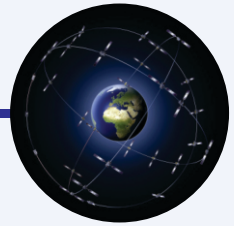


RESPONSE OF GEORGIA – THE STORY OF GOOD, BAD AND UGLY

Georgia's performance in the phase of the global pandemic has been good, bad and ugly all at the same time. To start with the good policies, at the beginning of the pandemic in Georgia, the government managed to put up professional medical experts as spokespersons briefing public about the situation ensuring the safety for Georgian citizens. Together with that, the authorities started to monitor the situation by defining clusters and possible sources of spread of the virus. Moreover, first response social aid was rather speedy as well: government announced payment of three--month utility bills for electricity, gas and water for he most needed part of population. Initial process, with the help of the professional medical staff have been successfully implemented.

However, the bad side of the story goes directly to the government's unsuccessful actions in terms of the business - economic side of the pandemic. On April 21st the state of emergency was extended without any clear explanation or vision of immediate or midterm plans. Only after heavy criticism, two days later from the session of parliament, government initiated some economic measures.

> "That just shows us problems in democratic governance we were experiencing before the COVID-19, and transcended in this situation, creating problems for the good governance in the country"-
>
> Eka Akobia.



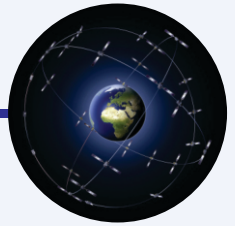
The ugly part of the policies is associated with the double standards exercised by the government. While people are getting fines for violating the emergency rules of social distancing, free passes and other benefits are given to those having close ties with the ruling elite.

As for Sino-Georgian relations during the pandemic, it is highly notable that the latter has been actively involved in this small but strategically important state's struggle against the pandemic. Like in Germany and Czech Republic, Chinese ambassador in Georgia, with her contributions to the Chinese propaganda mechanism, has actively entered the local political arena.

"For the first time in all these years of Sino-Georgian relations, we are witnessing the Chinese new ambassador becoming very active, taking public stand and regularly appearing on media, to the extend that we are seeing sponsored Chinese articles and propaganda in Georgian media"-

Tinatin Khidasheli.

These articles were associated with the "Chinese advantages" with regard to early detection of the virus and early initial warning of the population that "won the time for other countries, brought hope and faith to other people and showed the way" [2]. It all led Chinese towards the victory over the COVID-19 pandemic, concludes ambassador. Even though, the reality shows us that none of these statements convey the reality, they effectively serve the broader goals of the Chinese propaganda narratives.



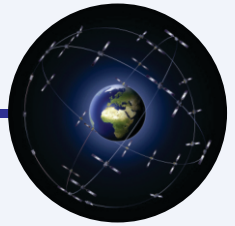
2. See Interview of Chinese Ambassador to Georgia for the largest Georgian online news agency interpresnews.ge - https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/595777-chinetis-elchi-sakartveloshi-chinetma-sakartvelos-koronavirusis-dasadgeni-reaktivebis-nakrebebi-da-420-atasi-ashsh-dolaris-girebulebis-scrapi-testebi-sachukrad-gadasca/

Research by Civic IDEA shows once again the superficial and unprofessional attitude of the government of Georgia when due diligence in execution of more than a million-dollar worth contract was absent.

We, at Civic IDEA, have been monitoring the issue where the Chinese interests merge with the Georgian government's inefficiency in managing the crisis and it linked us to the world famous face masks scandal. Like several European countries, Georgia also made a choice on importing Chinese products, thus, fetching the part of China's "politics of generosity". Despite the unsuccessful precedents, the Georgian government also bought the Shenzhen Bioeasy Biotechnology rapid tests, produced in China, valued at $5.5 each. These rapid tests in sum, without transportation costs, budgeted for $1,182,500, according to Government's official information. It was the same company that was reported by multiple media worldwide in scamming for medical supplies:

> We know that ten countries have been scammed for medical supplies from China: Spain, the United Kingdom, Colombia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and Turkey. –
>
> Wall Street Journal[3]

Regardless several reports in media, deputy minister of Health of Georgia on record said that the Chinese company had a high authority and prestige, thus was one of four the government had expressed trust in and contracted for delivery. Seemingly, the lack of due diligence and the un-

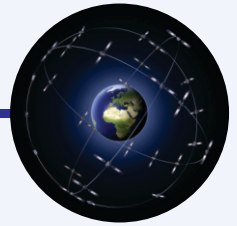


3. for more reporting see https://www.wsj.com/articles/keep-shoddy-chinese-medical-supplies-out-11587682617 or for Ventilators fraud see or for Ventilators fraud see https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-29/ventilator-fraud-is-booming-online-in-china or for Georgia specific see, https://www.georgianjournal.ge/society/36440-false-rapid-tests-from-china-georgia-spain-the-czech-republic-complain-about-quality.html

awareness were the core problems, as even after this unpleasant practice, Georgia's Minister of Health, Ms. Tikaradze refused to disclose the company providing tests in use and blindly relied on the 1000 rapid tests sent directly by the Chinese government as "a gift", assuring their safety, high quality and accuracy. The practice still is at place.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE AUTHORITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

As the pandemic unleashes, China and Russia started the exploitation of the crisis to weaken the democracies all over the world. They have launched the sophisticated disinformation campaigns directed towards the decline of trust in liberal democracies and their institutions. There have been several response strategies floating from Brussels and Washington D.C. against the Chinese policies requiring clear observation and analysis. However, pressured by Beijing, the EU had to soften the reports about the Chinese propaganda and disinformation mechanism. The row escalated last week after the New York Times reported that EU officials had delayed and then rewritten the report after China tried to block its release. "The Chinese are already threatening with reactions if the report comes out," Lutz Güllner, head of communications at the EU foreign service, wrote to colleagues last Tuesday, in an email seen by the paper.[4] In a letter to Josep Borrell, the Dutch MEP Bart Groothuis calls for a "formal and full explanation to the European parliament" about the evolution of an EU report on disinformation, amid emerging evidence it was altered under Chinese pressure.



4. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/world/europe/disinformation-china-eu-coronavirus.html

Letter to HR/VP Josep Borrell on the delayed and rewritten publication on disinformation

Brussels, 24/04/2020

To the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission

Dear mister Borrell,

The New York Times[1] is reporting that the European Union External Action Service (EEAS), for which you are responsible, first delayed and then rewrote a report about disinformation in ways that diluted the focus on China. Other reliable and esteemed media organisations like Politico Europe and BBC News have reported similar findings.[2][3][4] The key take away is that diplomatic pressure and coercion by China allegedly led to the adjustment of assessments as well as redactions that softened the EU's posture on Chinese disinformation campaigns against the EU and European countries during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Previously published reports on disinformation by the EEAS have been instrumental to our parliamentary work.

If the findings in the media are true, we regard this as a very serious matter. As MEPs we must have full confidence that the flow of information from the Commission and other European Institutions to the European Parliament is factual and accurate. Any coercion from non-EU governments successfully leading to adjusting assessment or factual findings would cause damage to the democratic process in the EU. Our political sovereignty is at stake if we allow Chinese coercion to take place in the heart of our European democracy.

That is why we, the undersigned MEPs, would like to ask you to provide a formal and full explanation to the European Parliament at the earliest possible convenience. It is not in the EU's interest to let speculations on the worrying reported findings feed further uncertainty.

Your sincerely,

Bart Groothuis (VVD, RE)
Member of the European Parliament

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/world/europe/disinformation-china-eu-coronavirus.html
[2] https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/brussels-playbook/politico-brussels-playbook-disinfo-warning-money-talks-europes-new-tracking-apps/?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=24f010132a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_24_05_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-24f010132a-189071269
[3] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52404612?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=24f010132a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_24_05_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-24f010132a-190510729
[4] https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/brussels-playbook/politico-brussels-playbook-budget-turned-corona-fund-5g-attacks-corona-vs-the-irish-sendoff/

Abruptly, he tried to express his discontent about the EU's back-off and that the Union needs to be attentive to these hostilities without disguising the information. Letter was backed by the New Europe – -European Li-beral Party in European parliament.

ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE

EU must fight against the Chinese disinformation campaign

29/04/2020



Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, China and Russia are deploying a global disinformation campaign intended to position themselves as global leaders and undermine the trust on liberal democracies and their institutions.

The EU needs to be vigilant and respond to these hostilities. The European External Action Service report on narratives and disinformation of COVID-19 is one step forward, however, the recent allegations regarding the softening of the content upon the request of the Chinese government are of deep concern. The EU cannot let an external country to influence in the information shared.

The EU must find its position in this new global stage and it has all it takes to fight back and lead by example, but unity and cooperation of all member states and stronger liberal institutional powers are needed. The EU can be a leader on the global stage, but it needs to portrait itself as a true Union of liberal democratic states that tackle the crisis collectively, efficiently and transparently.

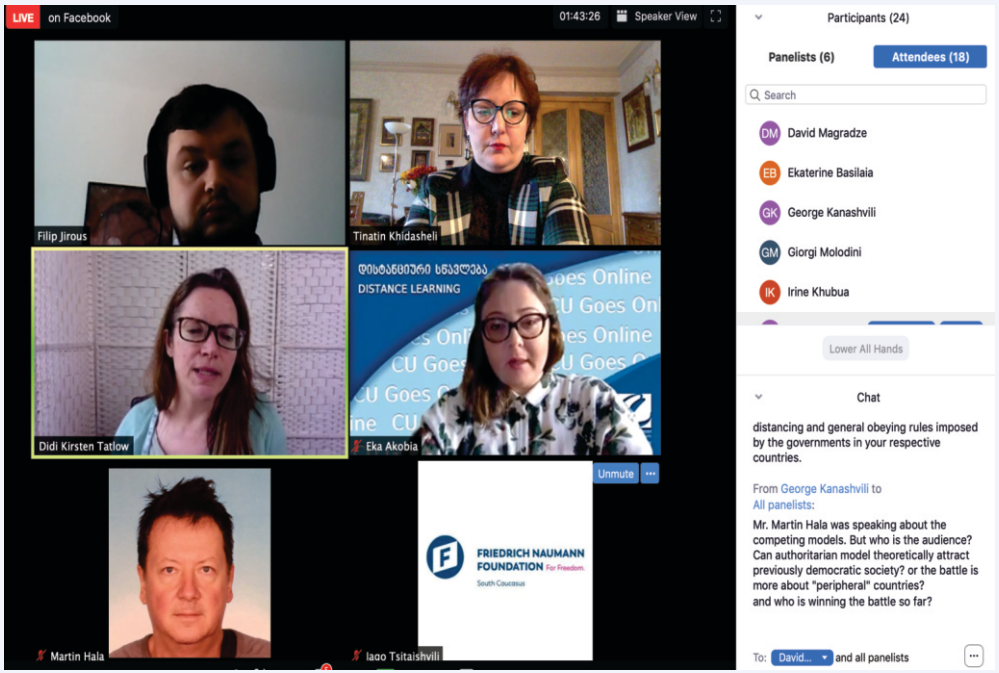
The fight against COVID-19 is a common fight. Authoritarian regimes that cover up and disguise information cannot be the leading example, but liberal democracies that safeguard civil liberties and share transparent and efficient information.

One important aspect that we have to highlight is that this pandemic is not about the big power competition- competition between China and the US, it is better perceived as the competition of systems. In two competing systems, we imply the liberal democracy and the autocracy (one-party dictatorship). But who is the audience of this process? Can authoritarian model theoretically attract previously democratic society? Or the battle is more about peripheral countries? And who is winning the battle so far? This approach essentially matters to the citizens of small states like Georgia or the Czech Republic – questions came from the audience listening our webinar.

Additionally, it will tremendously affect the peripheral countries such as the ones in the Middle East, Central Asia or Africa. Nowadays, the main question is which one of these two systems is better equipped to deal with the coronavirus outbreak? Furthermore, the current reality demonstrates how the PRC's ambitions have grown significantly.

"China has been talking about moving to the center of the international system, taking the advantage of the historical window that opened up with the couple decade of uninterrupted economic growth of the PRC and also with the onset of various new technologies, especially the digital technologies."-

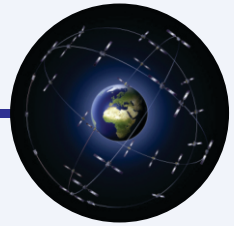
Martin Hala.



Basically, these notions and developments contribute to the establishment of China's position as of a leading country. Normally, political regime of China is not acceptable for the other countries, which regard themselves to liberal democracy as more appealing system for them, thought under changing circumstances and constant talk about waking up in different world post-pandemic question becomes urgent for discussion. The Chinese Communist Party believes that the present-day crisis represents the right moment for them to play a much bigger role in rewriting and reshaping existing international order. The Chinese politicians try to validate the narrative that the autocratic system is better suited to solve the challenges faced by the humanity, including the pandemic. They claim that Chinese approaches towards the crisis allow them to better control the society and information and accordingly, the spread of the virus.

In full honesty, the struggle between the system is not triggered only by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by many other instances involving diverse state-actors at different times. Precedents from previous crises also serve as examples for droving conclusions and creation of new paradigms. If we look at the spread of malaria on the case of two countries - India and China, we will notice that even though both managed to combat and defeat the disease, it took less time for China than India.

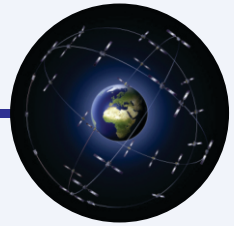
> "Although the picture is more vivid now, China has achieved the global economic supremacy in the situation of liberal order while there were people who were hoping that this would entangle and make China more dependent on the international cooperation"-
>
> Eka Akobia.



China's not so secret perception, transformed into message box by their propaganda machinery, that the democracies are being slower serves as the clear demonstration of their Leninist attitude reflecting "the end justifies the means". It means that everything is justifiable if it produces the outcome. It is undeniable, that there are countries that could be attracted to that concept. For instance, Cambodia is still considered to be a democratic state. Nonetheless, the reality shows us that it has turned to a one-man dictatorship. Hence, Cambodia represents the great example, where China interfered in the state's internal political crisis and decided to support its dictator Hun Sen disguising it as a protection of political stability inside the country.

> "China has been trying to export this model (Leninism)... it has now become their clear policy and there are definitely the segments of societies that tend to listen to them and try to adopt at least some of their parts"-
>
> Filip Jirous.

Basically, the message form this experience says, that democracies are dealing with the system that can cause a lot of damage along the way before it achieves the specific political aims. This approach obviously, is totally conflicting of the democratic system that inhales processes that defend or protect but not harm.



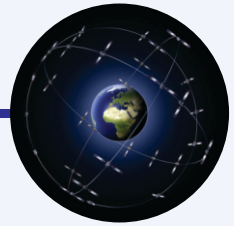
FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

It is absolutely obvious, that COVID 19 triggered not only health related problems, but the economic, budgetary, unemployment, etc. Judging from the realities created and the funds already committed by various states or institutions for the post-pandemic recovery we can project that Europe can intelligently escape from the economic dilemma of the crisis if diligently allocating its financial resources with wider picture at place.

> "Once we open up, lockdowns be lifted and public health diplomacy, so successfully executed by china expires itself other issues will dominate on the world agenda. One of those will be the issue of investments, new financial flows. Today's question is where is the money? Who has the money so needed in post-recovery action? Is the competitive advantage of China or not?" –
>
> Tinatin Khidasheli.

Currently, as announced, the European Union is to commit one trillion Euros to the COVID-19 recovery. With this money they can build-up the strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the actors that are trying to negatively influence the Union. Again, to point out the above-mentioned opinion, the EU needs to think brave and try to protect Europe against the undermining actions of other actors like China.

Nevertheless, the parallel question will raise as to not only about where the money is, but where it actually goas. Are the practices to be changed or state policies implemented for it or not?



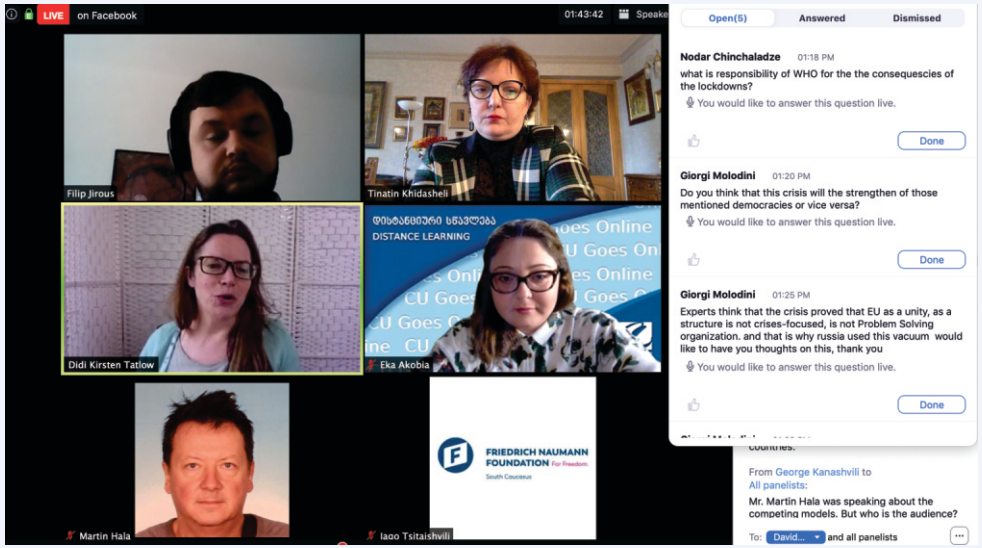
"Presently, the most of the investment money still stays in the countries like the United States and Japan, as well as Europe as a whole, but it is privately owned and controlled independently from the state authorities. Where it actually goes will be key issue. Apparently, the private owners are sending it to China as for the means of investment. Moreover, there were certain breaches noticeable in terms of the foreign investments in China. For instance, some of the US government sponsored retirement funds are also allocated to China, funding very controversial companies involved in human rights violation." -

Martin Hala.

WHO'S ROLE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Another question that came for the audience was about the role of WHO during pandemic. Panel was asked about the responsibilities of the WHO over the consequences of the lockdowns?

The whole United Nations system, including the WHO has been slowly eroded to the elite-capture. The best example brings us back to the Chinese state owned, once fortune 500 and not bankrupt company CEFC which has been involved in corrupt schemes with the Czech and Georgian politicians. Also,

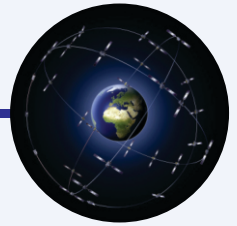


they have conducted the shady bribery dealings with several UNGA top officials. Bribery was not the only well-tested mechanism used by China, it similarly intruded in the elections influencing the senior authorities. It is notable that the PRC does not operate only on the individual state-level, but internationally. For instance, we can remember the case of Taiwan, when the latter lashed out at China for being locked out of the WHO after its critical virus conference. These examples raise the questions about the WHO serving the objectives of the authoritarian power.

It is crucial to mention that several years ago, the scale of the SARS virus emerging in China was less than the one of the coronaviruses, thanks to the WHO leader at that time, showing the severe attitude towards the challenge. During that period, China had to support the containment policies of the World Health Organization. Nowadays, the roles are being reversed. China is seemingly the one dictating the order and impacting on the world, including the WHO that keeps blinding the CCP's attempts to blame other countries.

To sum up the Civic IDEA led panel discussion on China's Policies and Role in Pandemic Challenged World, we need to emphasize several key aspects of the discussion.

- There is the struggle between the democratic and autocratic systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- China's "Public Health Diplomacy" promoting its achievements around the globe while the powerful liberal states (like the US, the EU member states or EU itself, Australia, etc) are trying to boycott its economy and respond to its disinformation mechanism.



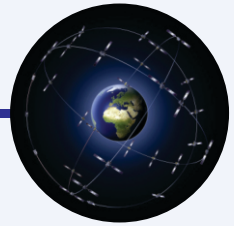
- In this case, small developing democracies (like Georgia) are determined suffer since it is particularly challenging for them to stand strong against, while China still being one of their key economic / trade partners also "generously" contributing with the medical equipment during this crisis.

We believe that the first thing the vulnerable democratic states need to do, is to stand along with their democratic partners, maneuver carefully and simultaneously try to maintain the bilateral relations with every other country measuring and deciding through the prism of the Western values.

THE THIRD WEBINAR WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHERE WE HAVE DISCUSSED CHINA AND ITS POLICIES. IT CAME UP DURING DISCUSSION OF BOTH PREVIOUS PANELS AND HERE WE OFFER SOME OF THE INSIGHTS OF THE PREVIOUS PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

Western democracies VS. the authoritarian regimes in the changing world order

The same goes about the propaganda mechanism that was launched against the Western institutions claiming that the EU and the NATO are unable to cope with the crisis and the eastern authoritarian regimes. Indeed, it is interesting to reflect on the power dynamics and whether it is changing simultaneously with the crisis. As we see on daily basis, the US and Europe suffer more from the crisis than China and other authoritarian states in terms of the health and budget economy. Therefore, the spending priority might change and the less expen-



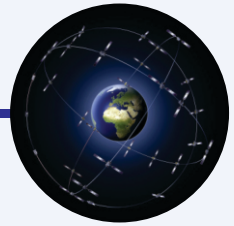
diture might be allocated in the field of defense and security. This leads us to the decline of the NATO financial resources and the European members of the alliance might lose the large amount of funding. This might become a significant problem that the western democratic institutions might confront following the pandemic.

The absence of the US leadership

Following Trump's "America first" self-isolationism politics, we see the decline of the US leadership on the international arena, while China is constantly gaining influences world-wide. Even with the current crisis, during the total absence of the US leadership, the Chinese authorities are sending the medical experts to Italy, they are shipping the medical equipment to Europe and discussing the possibilities of the creation of "medical silk road". In this situation, when the desired power is stepping aside from the leadership while the undesired authorities are offering their assistance, Europe together with its partner states, is in need of the joint European action to counter the threats and avoid the undesirable leadership.

The conclusion of the second webinar on Russia & China

In addition, Russia is displaying the EU and the US as non-efficient actors in sanitary warfare. They claim to send the Russian doctors, Russian military (for surveillance) and the



sanitary equipment to the suffered countries while exploiting the differences, blaming the EU and the US in inactivity. Another great example is associated with Estonia when the latter ordered the medical equipment from the Chinese company that was delivered in Estonia by a Russian plane. While this occasion had nothing to do with the Russian government's aid policies, they managed to disguise this private dealing to their merits. Twisting the narrative is not their only objective, their propaganda mechanism started to create new pages (such as "for the future") targeting their measures taken in Estonia. "These examples have sharpened the attention (towards Russia) in the EU and wider, and there is the understanding that for answering or targeting this kind of measures/problems, the support and the unity needs to be wider... we need to support and share experiences"- Keit Pentus--Rosimannus. Thus, their explicit goal serves breaking the unity of the Western alliances through diminishing the trust in their institutions. In reality, while China and Russia invest millions of dollars in their propaganda mechanism, the western alliances allocate the funding not only to member states but also outside of their borders, in Eastern Neighborhood, in above-mentioned Western Balkans and even on the African continent. The west needs to keep the open eye on Russia's and China's actions, maintain objectivity and distinguish that the latters are the orchestrators of hybrid actions.

WEBINAR #1



MR. TEDO JAPARIDZE
FORMER MFA OF GOERGIA



MR.EDVINAS KERZA VICE
MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE OF LITHUANIA



MR. ROMAN JAKIC
FORMER MOD OF SLOVENIA



MR. SEBASTIAN VAGT
FNF EUROPIAN AFFAIRS MANAGER



HEAD OF CIVI IDIA
FORMER MOD OF GEORGIA

NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES BROUGHT BY COVID-19 AND RESPONSES BY DEMOCRACIES

15 TH OF APRIL
10:00-11:30



ALEXANDR VONDRA
MEP, FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF CZECH REPUBLIC

WEBINAR #2



IVANNA KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE
CHAIR, PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON UKRAINE' S INTEGRATION INTO THE EU



KEIT PENTUS-ROSIMANNUS,
MEMBER OF ESTONIAN PARLIAMENT,
FORMER ESTONIAN MFA



KERSTIN LUNDGEN,
DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE RIKSDAG



GIORGI KANASHVILI
SENIOR POLICY ADVISER AT CIVIC IDEA

ARE RUSSIA AND CHINA CAPITALIZING ON COVID 19 CRISIS ?

22 APRIL, TBILISI 12:00 LOCAL TIME

LANGUAGE - ENGLISH



EMIL KIRJAS
FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL



TINATIN KHIDASHELI
HEAD OF CIVIC IDEA ,
FORMER GEORGIAN MOD



ANDREY PIVOVAROV,
OPEN RUASSIA

SEE TWO WEBINARS ALREADY HELD ON 15TH AND 22ND OF APRIL. FOR FULL VIDEOS AND ANALYSIS CHECK OUT OUR WEBPAGE AT
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საოჯახო იდეა

TUNE IN ON AMAY 6TH AT 18:00, FOR THE III WEBINAR ON RESPONSES FROM DEMOCRACIES, WITH MORE SPEAKERS AND INTERESTING DISCUSSION

May 6, 18:00 Tbilisi Local Time

Join our Zoom Webinar Live

COVID19: LIBERAL VIEWS AND RESPONSES WORLDWIDE

UK / US RESPONSES



TINATIN KHIDASHELI

Chair, Civic IDEA, Former MP & MOD, Georgia



AMBASSADOR TEDO JAFARIDZE

Former MP & MFA, Georgia



AMBASSADOR JOHN HERBST

Eurasia Center Director, at Atlantic Council



LIEUTENANT GENERAL BEN HODGES

Former Commander of US Army Europe, Pershing Chair in Strategic Studies at CEPA



DR. NEIL MELVIN

Director of International Security Studies at RUSI



JAMIE KIRCHICK

Visiting fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe, at Brookings



HEATHER CONLEY

Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia, and the Arctic, at CSIS

FRIEDRICH NAUMANN FOUNDATION For Freedom.
South Caucasus

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