

Values and Tools in the EU's Foreign Policy: EU as Democracy Promoter in Europe and Asia

San-Yi Yang

(Assistant Professor of Department of Political Science, Tunghai University)

Abstract

As an emerging actor in world politics, European Union has learned a lot from its integration history. EU's enlargement has expanded its members to 27 states and this expansion has its roots on democratic and economic reform. The hard-nosed expansion to the East created the prerequisites for aspiring states and EU tried to expand their values to other countries. This experience leads to the formation of EU's external policies mingled with EU's values and interests in way of normative/materialist approach. This is especial the case when EU designed its policy toward its neighbors and other regions. European Neighbourhood Policy and EU's policy toward China are in this category. Clearly, EU's models of consensual democracy, associative human rights, rule of law, equality of genders, sustainable development, and good governance are innate characters rooted in its tradition. In line with European tradition, EU adopts soft diplomatic tools in reaching policy goals: political dialogues, economic aids and other regional cooperation fall in this category. EU aims at the promotion of values in world politics; however, there are still some obstacles in the future.

Keywords: Values, Tools, European Union, Foreign Policy



I. Introduction

Most of studies on European Union (EU, hereafter) foreign policy focus on institutional and decision-making process, the so-called liberalist thought. Moreover, this thought is also the long tradition based on EU expansion history. Since the end of Cold War power politics was liberated from bi-polarity confrontation to a new age, As an important civilian power in Europe, EU tries to expand its soft power to its neighborhood or further areas. The author proposes an analytical framework that values are as guidance of foreign policy behaviors. In order to achieve policy goals, EU will use diplomatic tools and adopt more engagement tactics in its foreign policy.

II. Values as Guidance of Foreign Policy Behaviors

EU is increasing presented a rising power in international political system and its rising is accompanied with principled behaviors in foreign policy. This international image is reinforced by internally the difficulty of members' consensus and externally lack of sufficient coercive policy instruments. Despite of those difficulties, values acting as guidance of EU's foreign policy are undoubtedly.

III. Values: Guidance of Foreign Policy Behaviors

European continent has its long tradition in the realm of political, economic and social affairs. It has developed sophisticated a set of rules, ideas and values floating above social life. In terms of philosophic usage, European norms and values can be understood as the aggregation of European civilization, which has a profound tradition of modern social development mingled with capitalist system, social institutions and respects for satisfactory human rights.¹ Those norms and values has tangible and intangible effects and acts as catalyst on the promotion of European standards at the time when new member states applying for the admission to EU. This process can be regarded as a social learning process, in which members of this group upload their ideas and try to persuade, mobilize or protest others.² Actors are prone to changing their priorities either by voluntariness (because of persuasion) or coercion (because of massive protests). What is more, this change of behaviors is nor merely of strategic thinking; it is also possibly derive from an internal reflection; i.e.,

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1. Anastassia Obydenkova, "Democratization, Europeanization and Regionalization beyond the European Union: Search for Empirical Evidence," *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol. 10 No.1 (2006), p. 5.
 2. Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change," *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No.3 (Summer 2001), pp. 553-588.



political elites or the mass may comply because they have internalized new preferences.³

Most of European values are transformed from historical development, the social institutions, techniques, and ways of thinking (such as tolerance, democracy and respect for human rights) are in this kind.⁴ The respect for democracy and human rights protection are core values: the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam proclaimed human rights to be a cornerstone of EU external policy, and Nice Summit in 2000 launched the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and called for more coherence between the EU's external and internal policies. Put it differently, EU's external actions should be based on values of human rights; EU's political dialogue with other countries and subsequent assistance programs should be relating to this goal.⁵ The composition of EU values is as follows:

1. Peace and stability

When Robert Schuman's speech revealed on 9th May 1950, he depicted the future of European integration "world peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it."⁶ The following Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, the Treaty establishing the European Community and the Treaty on European Union has reiterated this notion. Maintaining lasting-peace and regional stability, i.e., addressing the roots or causes of conflicts, serves as focal point of EU core values.

2. Liberty and human rights

The second EU value is liberty and human rights. "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of the person" is written on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article II-6). The establishment of social liberty should be based on non-discrimination, gender equality, minority protection, and children's right alongside other important aspects. This is because the end of Cold War gave western norms of liberal ideas a high degree of legitimacy. EU aims at the removal of all obstacles to the enjoyment of equal rights and full integration of persons belonging to minorities into society.

3. Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink ed, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

4. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (ed.), *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 7-8.

5. *The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratization in Third Countries*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Brussels, 8 May 2001, COM(2001) 252 final.

6. The Schuman Declaration, presented on 9th May 1950, or see http://www.europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files_emi/oldsite-downloads/download_pub/Schuman_declaration.pdf, accessed 16 June 2009.



Nondiscrimination, therefore, is widely viewed as an important part of individual right.⁷

3. Democracy and rule of law

The third EU value is democracy. The political participation from the people, covering all citizens regardless of genders, classes, wealth, political parties, and religions, etc., is a key feature of modern democracy. The promotion of democracy and rule of law is essential for ensuring the peaceful settlement of internal disputes and the success of other values of liberty.

4. Sustainable development

According to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, sustainable development should “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” And EU’s commitment to reconciling economic and environmental interests has evolved into EU’s values. The December 1988 Declaration on the Environment, the June 1990 Declaration on the Environment Imperative, and the Treaty on European Union all contribute to the Fifth Action programme on the Environment and Sustainable Development.⁸

How EU can promote its values to the world? The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established as the second pillar of the European Union in the 1993 the Maastricht treaty, and the follow-up Amsterdam Treaty (1997) spells out five fundamental objectives of CFSP, they are:

- to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity... ;
- to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways;
- to preserve peace and strengthen international security...;
- to promote international co-operation;
- to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁹

By virtue of CFSP, EU has the ability to construct its international identity.

Moreover, EU’s European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP, based on the Treaty of Amsterdam) called for the progressive framing of a common de-

7. Gaetano Pentassuglia, “The EU and the Protection of Minorities: the Case of Eastern Europe,” *European Journal of International Law*, No.12 (2001), pp. 3-38.

8. Sonia Lucarelli and Ian Manners ed., *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2006), p. 37.

9. Treaty of Amsterdam Amending the Treaty on European Union, The Treaties Establishing the European Community and Related Acts, *Official Journal C 340*, 10 November 1997, Title V, Provision on a Common and Security Policy, Article J.I.



fense policy encompassing the Petersberg tasks.¹⁰ Its tasks ranged from the most modest to the most robust, and included:

- Humanitarian and rescue tasks
- Peacekeeping tasks
- Tasks for combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making

All of the innovations (known as "Petersberg tasks") refer to an important principle: civilian use of force and conflict prevention. EU's attitude is quite clear: the use-of-force should be limited. It seems that the use of force openly contradicts the goal of peaceful international system but from time to time intervention among nations is also necessary evil in some cases. EU has to figure out how to intervene in the case of massive violation of human rights.¹¹

IV. Tools: the Spectrum of EU Diplomatic Means

EU has many tools and incentives to exercise pressure on the recipient countries around EU. For those countries located near EU, Brussels could exert leverage of accession, promise of accession or regional integration with them. But carrots like that will lose attractions to remote countries, China for instance. Traditional instruments of foreign policies are diplomacy, military arm, economic statecraft and culture influences.¹² Diplomatic interaction and summit between countries are places exchange of ideas and promotion of common interests. Weaker states have to strive for survival and stronger states could exert their influences on the shaping the future development. Bilateral/multilateral political dialogue, communication, negotiation, participation in multilateral institutions and the promotion of economic goods are all possible solutions.

EU has long tradition of economic interaction with Eastern Europe and other places. EU's association strategy and aid programs are crucial for aspiring countries. With the help of Copenhagen criteria and the improvement of

10. The Maastricht Treaty was the first to include provisions on the Union's responsibilities in terms of security and the possibility of a future common defense policy. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), new tasks have been included in the Treaty on European Union (Title V). EU's Helsinki Presidency concluded that "co-operating voluntarily in EU-led operations, member states must be able to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least one year military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks, see Alistair Shepherd, "The European Union's Security and Defense Policy: A Policy without Substance?" *European Security*, Vol. 12, No.1 (Spring 2003), pp. 39-63.

11. Karen Smith ed., *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 38.

12. Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of foreign Policy* (N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 127-158.



marketing mechanism in those aspiring countries, most of new member states meet EU's standard and become full EU member after its accession; this may be termed as consolidation of EU-new member states structured relationship.¹³ The cultural exchange between EU and other countries has its place in terms of EU's foreign policy. EU's attraction derived from its cultural heritage and long tradition has profound impacts on adjacent areas. Values and principles floating above culture heritage create spaces for EU's policy-makers designing low and not so sensitive issue area and this promotes a possible low politics interaction between EU and China. The inter-organizational and people to people exchange encourages this development recently.

1. Diplomacy and Military arm

“Diplomacy is the human face of getting your own way in international politics, as well as a crucial instrument for building international stability.”¹⁴ As one of major pillar of European Union and dealing with EU external relations, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) operates as an important vehicle to safeguard EU's common values and fundamental interests. Under the supervision of European Council, EU's CFSP tries to speak in one voice in world politics. Military arm is another instrument for EU's external action. The use of force in other regions may not the priority for Brussels; however, if the Treaty of Lisbon is passed later, it will create a new post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and it will integrate EU's external action more efficiently.

2. Economic statecraft

Economic statecraft/sanction refers to the use of economic instrument, such as embargo on exports, quotas, boycott of imports, restrictions on private business and travel, the imposition of price rises through punitive duties, or aids/withdrawal of aids; the use of economic instruments is quite clear: to pursue external policy goals. Among those instruments, European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) is designed for providing EU assistance to 17 neighbor countries; European Development Fund (EDF) provides the bedrock of EU co-operation with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries; Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) is to provide assistance to South Africa and 47 developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Central Asia, and the Middle East (only those countries not covered by the ENPI or the EDF).¹⁵

3. Culture influence

13. Karen Smith, *The Making of EU Foreign Policy: The Case of Eastern Europe*, second edition (N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

14. Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of foreign Policy*, p. 138.

15. There are several other EU economic instruments, please refer to EU's financial toolkit, or see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/delivering-aid/funding-instruments/index_en.htm, accessed 17 June 2009.



2008 is European year of intercultural dialogue and it promotes culture diversity, mirroring the motto of European Union “united in diversity”¹⁶ Institutions, traditions, cultural heritages, laws, education system, etc., highlight the importance of EU culture influence. EC and its member States dedicate their energies to the promotion of cultural aspects in its external relations with other countries, i.e., the partner countries, new members of enlargement. Moreover, culture can be embedded in the context of other external policies, development and trade policies for example, as a contribution to a world order based on sustainable development, peaceful coexistence and dialogue between cultures.¹⁷

V. EU as Democracy Promoter in Neighbourhood

It is easy to understand that the promotion of human rights (and democracy) is crucial to EU's international identity. EU's civilian power replenishes Brussels with significant “low politics” profile globally on one hand, and constrains EU's action in military “high politics” level on the other hand. Put it differently, EU's democracy strategy has hitherto been based on three pillars: the use of positive incentives (in particular, where applicable, the offer of EU membership) to stimulate reform; the selective use of punitive measures and diplomatic pressure; and the funding of democracy programmes.¹⁸

Countries close to border of European Union are prone to Brussels' influence. The new EU members and prospective EU candidates, such as Czech Republic, Croatia or Turkey, may be swayed by Brussels' “Europeanization.”¹⁹ Countries surrounding EU, Ukraine for example, may not have aspiring status as well as prospective EU candidates, but they also will be affected by European values in a way of implicit/explicit interaction. Finally, EU has limited clout in shaping regional power's future, with special regard to China or Russia. See Table 1 for more information.

EU's policy toward ENP regions are based on the promotion of political development and market liberalization and aim at more closer cooperation; some of partner countries are longing for prospective EU candidates status. The spread of rule adoption between EU and partner countries may not be one-way effect; partner countries will also try to exert its clout in this system before joining the club and wait for the opportune moment to go into next action. Once partner countries become candidates, EU may exert its clouts more

16. <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1842&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>, accessed 17 June 2009.

17. http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1567_en.htm, accessed 18 June 2009.

18. Richard Youngs, “Is European democracy promotion on the wane?” *CEPS Working Document*, No.292 (May 2008), p. 2.

19. Michael Baun, et. al., “The Europeanization of Czech Politics: The Political Parties and the EU Referendum,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.44, no.2 (2006), p.252.



effectively: the negotiation process contains more than 30 policy issues and they were to be reviewed scrutinized and negotiated chapter by chapter (article 6 and 49 of the Treaty on the European Union). In addition to that, under the so-called partnership principle, the implementation of European Neighbourhood Policy should involve close collaboration between the Commission and various levels of government in the partnership states. The EU's promotion of human rights and democracy has many different channels: the EU authority (EU Commission, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Development and Humanitarian Policy, etc.) and member state's foreign policy respectively. The main tools to exercise influences on the recipient countries range from the encouragement of infrastructure and rural developments, support for social and economic reform, the environment and sustainable development, good governance and rule of law.²⁰ The respects for human rights, the protection of freedom and ethnic minority, and a well-functioned politico-economic mechanism are prerequisite for candidates. By virtue of this process, the binding regulations and unwritten impacts influence candidate countries.

Table 1 Distribution of Europe's concentric circles

Circle	Countries in the Wider Europe
No.1 EU Core	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain
No.2 opt-out EU members states	Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, UK
No.3 EU new member states	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania
No.4 European Economic Area non EU members	Iceland, Norway, Switzerland
No.5 prospective EU candidates	Croatia and Turkey; Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia-Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania
No.6 ENP neighbourhood	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine
No.7 special status	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia.
No.8 further and strategic status	America, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia,

Source: Fabrizio Tassinari, "Security and Integration in the EU Neighbourhood: The Case for Regionalism," CEPS Working Document, No.226 (July 2005), p. 3; parts of the table are compiled by the author.

20. EU Commission Working Document, *Country Strategy Paper: China 2002-2006*; or see http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/csp/02_06en.pdf, accessed 27 October 2008.



VI. EU as Democracy Promoter in China

Unlike policy toward ENP regions on the basis of aspiring EU's membership, EU's policies toward further and strategic regions are based on the promotion of democracy and human rights. EU/EC's foreign policy to China can be traced back in 1985 when both sides tried to establish a closer relationship. The treaty "Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the European Economic Community and the People's Republic of China" showed a mutual good will and a desire to encourage and strengthen economic cooperation, which can be done through an enhanced trade volume and technical economic cooperation (including economic assistance).²¹ The document "A Long Term Policy for China-Europe Relations" in 1995 revealed a different and positive way of thinking: to conduct a constructive engagement foreign policy is in line with EU's collective interests; this can be done through political dialogue, the promotion of economic and trade relations, and cooperation.²² A novel attitude has been deployed from merely "low politics" to "high politics", that is, the political contact between EU and China. Eight years later, a new communication was released "A maturing partnership - shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations."²³ Human rights dimension still occupied EU's major concern but regional stability (cross-strait relations), illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, arms proliferation, arms exports, disarmament, and global environmental issues are also on the list.²⁴ Many more documents concerning on EU's China policy have one thing in common: they have a common value-shared purpose in dealing with China issue. Further, we can define "value" as notions laden with an absolute positive significance for the overall order and meaning we try to give to our world. Those concepts, for instance, various freedoms listed on Charter of Fundamental Rights, are the typical values of European tradition.

EU has developed a comprehensive strategy dealing with other non-EU countries; it contains interrelated methods:

- By ways of political and security dialogue both EU and other countries may construct common positions;
- Economic cooperation may foster a closer cooperation among them;
- Cooperation in the sphere of social and human affairs is fundamental concern for EU.²⁵

21. This agreement, which replaced the previous trade Agreement between the European Economic Community and the People's Republic of China of 03/04/1978 (OJ L 123 of 11/05/1978, p.2) covers economic and trade relations, as well as the EU-China co-operation programme.

22. Communication of the Commission: A Long Term Policy For China-Europe Relations, COM 1995/279 Final.

23. A Maturing Partnership - Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations Brussels, 10.September 2003, COM(2003) 533 final.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

25. The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratization in



Dialogues and economic cooperation are designed for the promotion of human rights and democracy. The crucial part of democracy promotion in China is the protection of human rights. By virtue of biannual dialogue on human rights EU and China may construct their platform and share their differences. EU and China held 25th round of Human Rights Dialogue in Slovenia on 15 May 2008, which laid major emphasis on the right to health and children’s rights. EU once again called on China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and reiterate its importance on the road to modernization of political development. Other issues like freedom of expression, the rights to minorities and Tibet’s status are also included.²⁶ Please refer to figure 1 for human rights dialogue.

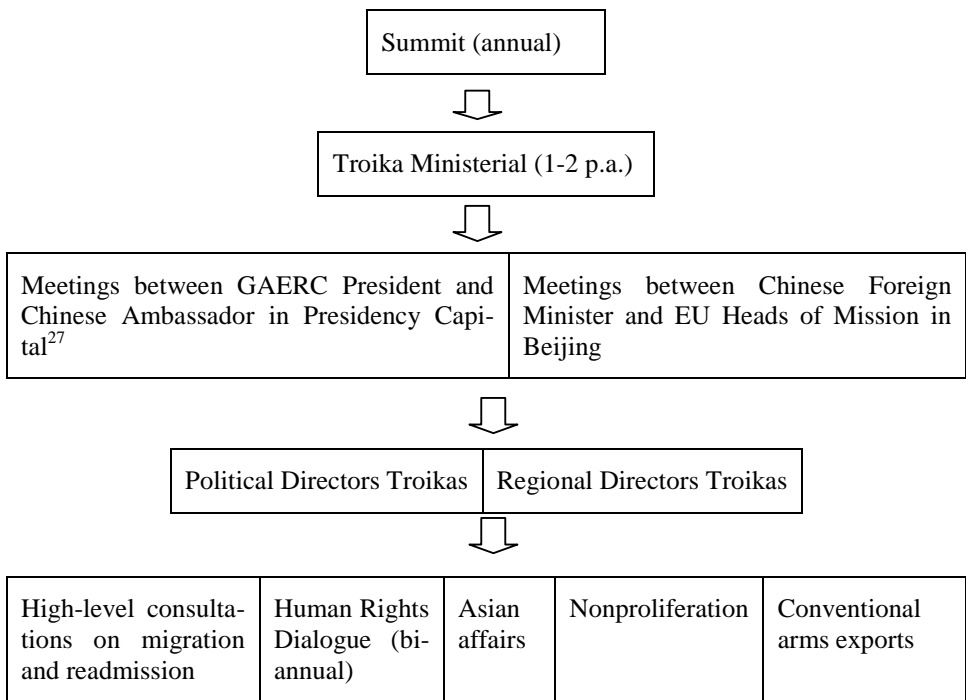


Figure 1: EU-China Dialogue (Political Dialogue)

Sources: European Commission, National Indicative Program, 2005-2006 China, or http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/csp/nip05_06.pdf

Third Countries, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament*, 8 May 2001, COM(2001) 252 final.

26. EU Presidency Press Statement on the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, Slovenia, 15 May 2008, or see http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/May/0516MZZ_China_Human_Rights.html, accessed 20 October 2008.

27. General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC)



EU considered China's continuing improvement on freedom of expression, with special regard to the regulations on foreign journalists as an important step for its international image. EU's human rights policy to China may be summarized as follows:

- Support for China's transition toward a more open and pluralistic society;
- Promotion of sustainable development;
- Improved trade and economic relations;
- Strengthen bilateral cooperation (including science and technology and migration);
- Promotion of regional and international security.²⁸

The EU/China human rights dialogues, together with other international non-governmental organizations, have achieved some progress: visits of UN Commissioner for Human Rights were allowed; the signing but not ratification of ICCPR, the ratification of the UN Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, the release of some political prisoners in some critical moments.²⁹ In spite of these achievements, China's human rights conditions remain sluggish. Some observers even argue that the strategic thinking of Chinese government treated human rights dialogue as bargaining chips in bilateral dialogue; this is the case when International Olympic Games were held in Beijing.³⁰

Dialogue is a crucial part of EU's constructive engagement with China. EU has acknowledged the clashes between two competing values: a rising and strategic important China with poorer human rights standards and a more mature human rights culture EU with insufficient foreign policy tools. EU's constructive engagement policy is on the basis of strategic calculation in the face of the rising power. The differences between EU's eastern enlargement and EU's China policy depict the importance of incentives: aspiring countries like Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) will take EU's values seriously; but regional power like China has competing values and national interests. Moreover, the continuation of human rights violation in China, internet control for instance, exhibits China's reluctance to take measurable steps to improve human rights conditions. Some 50,000 "internet policemen" are

28. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, "The EU and China: Political Development, Human Rights and Global Leadership," *Foreign Policy*, No.162 (September/October 2007), pp. 2-3.

29. It is worth of mention that the ICCPR was signed in October 1998; however, despite repeated representations by the Chinese government of intentions to ratify the ICCPR, ratification is still pending.

30. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/olympics/2557778/Beijing-Olympics-China-in-standoff-over-human-rights.html>, accessed 22 October 2008.



monitoring Chinese websites and bloggers in a wider context of governmental control over freedom of expression.³¹

VII. Conclusion

EU's enlargement process gains ground in its fifth enlargement: most new member states accept common values, human rights protection and principle of civilian use of force. However, the differences between EU's eastern enlargement and EU's China policy depict the importance of incentives: aspiring countries like Central and Eastern European Countries will take EU's values seriously; but regional power like China has competing values and national interests. During the past decades EU has established strategies in tackling with China: the best way to influence China is through engagement and interdependency. Human rights protections and promotion of democracy co-constitute EU's core values; tools like technical assistances and other cooperation (space technology included) are seemed as ways of influences. EU's intention to internalize new preferences to Chinese political elites (or the mass) still has many things to do. This is because the historical development, the social institutions, techniques and ways of thinking are quite distinguishable between two sides. Compared with China's realist thoughts and EU's value-oriented strategy, the clash between values and national interests will still continue in the near future, and we still need more time to figure out the resolution. Finally, in order to achieve an ideal international political system EU may adjust foreign policy behaviors; i.e. some types of intervention to prevent the massive violations of human rights. EU has to think whether it should assume more international responsibilities to influence other countries. EU needs to allocate more resources to China to encourage its democratic development. EU's external relations are based on values of human rights and democracy and gain more grounds on bilateral and multilateral level in the context of overseas assistance. It should be noted that recipient countries of EU's aid programs should follow a modernized path on the basis of pluralism, rule of law and good governance.

31. Marcin Zaborowski ed., "Facing China's Rise: Guidelines for an EU Strategy," *Chaillot Paper*, No.94 (December 2006), p. 107.



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