

The EU and China's engagement in Africa

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Résumé ou extrait : China's engagement in Africa has obliged the EU to re-evaluate its own relationship with Africa. Since 2008, in an attempt to resolve the conflicts of norms and interests, the EU has proposed establishing a trilateral dialogue and cooperation mechanism between the EU, China and Africa, which so far has not yielded any substantial results. The differences between China's and the EU's Africa policies are mainly visible in two areas: aid and security. The contradiction between their respective aid policies lies in China's "no-strings-attached aid" versus European "conditionality" or emphasis on "fundamental principles". The contradiction between their security approaches in Africa lies in China's non-interference policy and the European concept of human security. This paper seeks to analyse the evolution of the conflict of norms and the conflict of interests between the EU and China in Africa as well as the interaction of norms and interests. In the quest for cooperation and dialogue between the EU and China in Africa, the focus should be on seeking common ground and developing a pragmatic approach. Overemphasising the norms debate at the beginning of this process can only lead to misunderstanding and

mistrust, rather than enhancing mutual comprehension and trust. Socialisation is not a process that can be imposed from without. If the objective of the trilateral dialogue is expectation of the unilateral socialisation of one party, the results will inevitably be limited. In competition with other great powers -- and sometimes giving rise to dissensions among the EU Member States themselves -- the EU's attempt to spread European norms and values through the concept of unilateral socialisation will only undermine China's willingness to cooperate with the EU and ultimately weaken the normative power of the Union

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