

DIPLOMACY

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EDITORIAL

A stable world order is a rare thing, especially when the rules that govern the conduct of international relations are constantly called into question by major powers. In times of renewed geopolitical thinking and rapid technological and economic transformation, throwing past certainties into flux, diplomacy becomes all the more important.

We understand diplomacy in a very broad sense. Alongside conventional diplomacy an unprecedented number of new actors and topics have evolved. Most challenges we are facing do not stop at national borders; in an increasingly interlinked and interdependent world, communication and dialogue change, they become faster and definitely also less formal. In this information—or disinformation—flood, the demand for reliable analysis and serious discussion is increasing.

The ‘DIPLOMACY’ series, published at least once a year, is intended to reflect these changes and to contribute from an Austrian perspective to a broad debate of international relations. Every volume of ‘DIPLOMACY’ also includes a revised version of a selected Master’s thesis of a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies (DA).

The core activity of the DA is to prepare its approximately 200 students from nearly 50 countries and all continents to navigate these changes in the geopolitical landscape, and train them for international careers. One of the main pillars of the DA is interdisciplinarity, which is imperative for tackling global political, technological, economic and environmental phenomena that are difficult, but vital issues for our planet. This puts increasing demands on decision-makers, who require a broad knowledge and profound understanding of the political, legal, economic and historical dimensions of geopolitics. In the research activities of our faculty and graduate students we lay

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emphasis on issues that are of particular relevance to the understanding of contemporary international problems.

Additionally, the DA has initiated the “Forum außenpolitische Think-Tanks” (FaTT; see www.fatt.at), a network of more than 30 organisations and institutes seated in Austria which focus on foreign and European policy, to exchange research papers and ideas, and to strengthen the interest of European and foreign policy topics in the public sphere.

Vienna is a host to the UN and a large number of other international organisations, as well as being an economic and cultural hub at the heart of Central Europe. Serving its historical function as a diplomatic forum and bridge builder, it is quite simply one of the best locations in the world to experience and understand what our globalised, yet increasingly fragmented world requires in terms of tradition and innovation. The “Diplomatische Akademie Wien” is the oldest existing institution of its kind. Its very foundation as the Oriental Academy in 1754 was a reaction to the perceived need of diplomacy and dialogue.

Emil Brix

Vienna, July 2020

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