

Outline of Discussions Of “The Japan-Euro Intellectual Dialogue”

The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) co-organized an international symposium titled “The Japan-Euro Intellectual Dialogue: Japan-Euro Strategic Partnership and Future of Asia and Beyond,” at ANA Intercontinental Tokyo on November 11, 2015.

This symposium was attended by seven panelists from Europe, including Thomas GOMART, Director of the French Institute of International Relations, Frederic GRARE, Senior Associate of Carnegie Europe and Markus KAIM, Senior Fellow of German Institute for International and Security Affairs, as well as fourteen panelists from Japan, including Prof. MORIMOTO Satoshi, Director of JFIR (former Minister of Defense), Prof. NAKANISHI Hiroshi of Kyoto University and Prof. HOSOYA Yuichi of Keio University, discussing such topics as “Changing Power Balance in East Asia” and “International Order in the 21st Century” in two sessions.

This symposium aimed to establish shared recognition between the two parties regarding the sea change in today’s international security landscape and to seek ways on how to cooperate in maintaining and developing the established international order. As the symposium was convened behind the closed doors, only the brief summary of the discussions is introduced as follows;

In Session I, the Japanese side pointed out that the ongoing conflicts in South China Sea and East China Sea are consequences of China’s behavior who prioritizes its “core interests” to international norms, which therefore should be understood as challenges to the established international order. Fully aware of this significance, the US implemented its “rebalance” to Asia. Europe is not supposed to be neutral over the issue. In response, the European side responded that Europe is not a homogeneous whole when it comes to devising a unitary foreign policy. And China could take advantage of this. For the time being, Japan and Europe should hasten conclusion of the free trade agreement to underline international norms for trade to set an example to China. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that US should permanently commit to (to prioritize) Asia.

In Session II, the European side pointed out that the biggest challenge that Japan and Europe commonly face is how to respond to the “power vacuum” created after the US retreat from Europe and Middle East. The latter, in particular, relates to energy security that tops the agenda of both Europe and Japan and therefore must not be left unaddressed. The Japanese side responded that Russia has already tried to fill in the “power vacuum” in Europe and Middle East. Japan and Europe, both as biggest energy consumers, should jointly negotiate with energy suppliers, including Russia and Middle East. In this regard, there is an opportunity to cooperate with China.

(JFIR secretariat is responsible for this summary.)