

**Petit-déjeuner IFRI/CFA organised in cooperation with the WIIW  
in the framework of the Rencontres de Schwarzenbergplatz**

## **Global Gateway – the new European Silk Road?**

**Boosting European Connectivity and the EU's strategic autonomy  
against the backdrop of EU-China rivalry**

**15 December 2021, 9h00-10h30 CET (online)**

Registration on <https://form.jotform.com/213392510274349>

### **Context et objectives**

Over the past year, the topic of connectivity has picked up steam in the European Union. Just a couple of days ago, the European Commission launched its Global Gateway, the new European Strategy to boost “smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport and strengthen health, education and research systems across the world”. The initiative, aimed to mobilise up to €300 billion in investments between 2021 and 2027, is new in two ways: it is an attempt to internalise the logic of strategic competition with the China, which has gained ground in the past years; and it is an attempt to increase EU visibility through better branding, given the scope of the EU's existing engagements worldwide. But will this renewed strategy be fit for the challenges the EU ambitions to meet? How will it interact with China's Belt and Road initiative in Europe and beyond?

The wiiw in collaboration with the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe (CFA/ÖFZ) and the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) would like to invite you to discuss these issues and many others. The event will take place in the framework of the Rencontres de Schwarzenbergplatz and at the occasion of the inauguration of the night train Vienna-Paris.

*Working language: English*

### **Programme**

#### **9h00 Opening**

Hans Dietmar **Schweisgut**, Secretary General of the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe and former Head of the European Union Delegation to China

#### **9h10 Panel Discussion**

Romana **Vlahutin**, Ambassador at Large for Connectivity, European External Action Service  
Mario **Holzner**, Executive Director of the Vienna Institute for international Economic Studies  
Plamen **Tonchev**, MERICS European China Policy Fellow and Head of Asia Unit at the Institute of International Economic Relations, Athens

*Moderation:* Hans Dietmar **Schweisgut**, Secretary General of the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe and former Head of the European Union Delegation to China

10h30 end of the event