



FINNISH INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

RESEARCH PROGRAMME OF THE FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FOR 2020–22

General information:

The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) was established by an Act of the Finnish Parliament. According to the law, the purpose of the Institute is to conduct research on international politics and economy as well as matters relating to the European Union. The Institute's research is required to meet high scientific standards. At the same time, the approaches and topics of the research should be conducive to public debate and support political decision-making. Multidisciplinary approaches and interaction between disciplines form a central characteristic of the Institute's research profile. Research is conducted according to established principles of research ethics for human, social and behavioural sciences.

FIIA's research is independent as stipulated by law. The Board of the Institute is appointed by the Parliament, and the Board, in turn, approves the overall research programme. The Institute's director, programme directors and research staff share the responsibility of implementing the agenda in a manner that complies with pertinent scientific criteria and makes a significant contribution to society. The directors and research staff should also procure external funding in order to guarantee the academic credibility of the Institute's work and to consolidate its research agenda.

The diversity of FIIA's target audience is given full consideration in the dissemination of the Institute's research output. Researchers are expected to take part in the debates of their own respective fields by publishing their results in international as well as domestic academic journals and other publications. FIIA's own line of publications is used for effective research-based commentary for policy-making and public debate. The Institute's website, other media and seminars offer a rapid outlet for presenting viewpoints that are backed by research findings.

An inspiring and creative research environment, where researchers have access to sufficient intellectual support for their work, is indispensable for nurturing active research. The research programme shall have an organisation and an administration that encourages interaction and cooperation between researchers and across research teams. The structure of the programme must be clear in terms of job descriptions and responsibilities. It must, nevertheless, also be able to accommodate additional research topics that may arise during the course of the programme term.

FIIA's research programme will be implemented in close cooperation and reciprocity with other Finnish and international research groups and research institutes. FIIA is embedded in a distinctly international framework. The Institute and its researchers are widely networked and its body of researchers spans different nationalities. Visiting researchers on both long and short terms support the implementation of the programme. FIIA's Scientific Advisory Council plays an important role in advancing the Institute's international connectivity and in evaluating the scientific quality of its research.

The structure of the research programme:

The basic structure for implementing the research programme consists of three individual research programmes.

This three-programme structure has proved to be a viable model for an organisation of FIIA's size; during the past programme terms the Institute has managed to avoid the isolation of the research programmes into "silos" – rather, there has been vibrant collaboration between them. To facilitate the management and administration of the programmes, the aim is to make them as equal in size as possible. The Center on US Politics and Power, which relies partly on external funding (current funding until the end of 2020), functions alongside the three programmes.

Enhancing the multidisciplinary character of FIIA's research remains a priority. In addition to political science and area studies, the Institute will seek to increase expertise particularly in political economy and international law, as well as research of history when appropriate. International recruitment of researchers provides more varied perspectives to the research themes studied at FIIA, and supports the Institute's international role.

The thematic focuses and research questions of the research programmes:

The thematic focuses of the three research programmes should be clear and well-defined to maintain the Institute's strong international profile and expertise. Yet the programme must also consider the critical needs of Finnish foreign, security and European policy-making and the expectations that are placed on the Institute in this regard. This means that each of the three research programmes must place adequate weight on research related to Finland's foreign, security and European policies, as well as on the implications that the global and international trends studied in the programmes have for Finland.

The EU research programme

At FIIA, the primary focus of EU research is, on one hand, on the EU's common policies in what the Institute perceives as key areas (external relations, the main developments of the Union, and its core political system) and on the other hand on the policies of the key member states in these fields.

The first focus area of EU research is on the Union's external action and the different dimensions of the Union's global role. FIIA is the only actor in Finland covering this field, as the country's other economic and sectoral research institutes concentrate on the Union's internal policies. The EU's external relations, including their leadership and decision-making, are studied comprehensively in a changing international environment, but a special weight is placed on the EU's relations with great powers. The impact of Brexit and of the Union's internal coherence on its external relations and international role, belong to the key research questions in this focus area. In this context FIIA's expertise on the EU's trade policy will be further enhanced. The study of the EU's international partnerships (incl. partnerships with African countries) and the Union's relations with the MENA region and Turkey continues to provide critical information regarding, among other things, the causes and management of the refugee crisis. Transformation of the Union's neighbourhood policy will be another topic for research.

Another focus of the research on the Union's external relations concerns the Union's security and defence policy. The research supports Finnish decision-making and Finland's influence.

In this area of research, there is an emphasis on the configuration of the field's central actors, as well as on identifying key aspects of the dynamics of, and exercise of power in, this field. The implications of the EU's defence cooperation are studied in a transatlantic context as well as from the point of view of the member states' defence capabilities. The interface between the Union's internal and external security such as border security and countering cyber and hybrid threats play an equally central role. In this context, the topic of Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy is also studied.

The second broad focus area in the Institute's EU research concerns the Union's major developments and the directions of European integration. These include the analysis of the Union's political/governmental character (federalisation), trends of differentiation, and important questions regarding the political legitimacy of integration (opposition to integration, polarisation of EU-opinion and the EU's coherence and common values). Analysing the consequences of Brexit forms a theme cutting across the various fields of EU research.

Questions regarding the exercise of power in the EU (relations between the EU institutions, the democratic system of the Union) form the third focus area of the EU programme. The way these questions are approached depends on the most current issues in the Union at each point in time. FIIA must maintain a strong expertise in questions of EU decision-making, all the more because no other Finnish research institute focuses primarily on them.

The study of the European policies of major EU member states is related to the above-mentioned focus areas of the programme and provides insights into the dynamics between the member states. The research relies on understanding the historical identities of key EU members and the domestic factors affecting their EU policies. A close scrutiny of the EU-policies of the large member states in particular, and anticipation of changes in them, belong to the key topics of research aiming to support Finnish decision-making.

The EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia research programme

The research programme deals mainly with Russia's foreign and security policy, as well as the domestic factors behind these policies. In the study of Russian foreign and security policy, the foremost emphasis is on Russia's policy towards its European neighbourhood, its relationship to EU and NATO, and its policies in the Baltic Sea Region. Attention is also paid to Russia's policy on Asia and developments around the Eurasian Union. On the other hand, Russia's relationship with Finland and Finland's role in Russian foreign and security policy are also covered.

To gain an understanding of Russian foreign policy, it is vital to examine the role of domestic factors. In light of the current development of Russian economy and society, the importance of these factors will arguably only grow in the coming years. During the new programme period, research will be conducted on the impact of domestic factors on the substance of Russian foreign policy, as well as the mechanism of interaction between foreign and domestic policies. The development of the Russian political system and the debates around the constitution with their political implications as well as regional developments in Russia will also be given careful consideration.

The second focus of the research programme is on the EU's Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine and Belarus, and their political developments, foreign policies and relations with the EU and Russia. The regional setting with its power dynamics and the significance of domestic factors in foreign policy also belong to the subject matter of the research in the programme. The focus of research will be extended to cover similar aspects of the Central Asian states as well as the roles of great powers external to the region, such

as China and Turkey, in the Post-Soviet space.

Global Security research programme

The research programme will concentrate first of all on the evolving global power relations and their political dynamics. The focus is on the foreign policy and global role of great powers, in particular the United States and China. Research on great power politics will be carried out in the regional contexts of Europe and transatlantic relations, whereas the Institute's strong scholarship on Asia will deal mainly with the political developments in the Asia-Pacific region. The main trends and changes in the foreign policies of United States and China, as well as the international and domestic factors driving these changes, will be among the topics of research. Due to the strong geoeconomic approach characterising the programme, economic relations and trade play an important role in the study of great power relations.

In order to form a picture of the overall dynamics of the global power system, the programme will also incorporate expertise on other major regional actors (BRICS and especially India) and forms of regional cooperation. The study of Arctic politics falls under the scope of the programme both with regard to its great power dimensions and to the state of international cooperation and governance in the Arctic.

The second focus area of the programme is the study of global governance, including its key institutions in areas of global governance that are of central importance for the EU and for Finland. These include global security policy and the functioning of the UN in particular. The topics of security cooperation and the most relevant institutions and norm systems from Europe's perspective, such as NATO and the arms control regime, will also be part of the research agenda. Research dealing with security political institutions will stress questions such as the institutions' capacity to function, their internal power dynamics and trends of change.

Besides global and European traditional security, the issues of climate and energy policy as well as the evolving cybersecurity regime will receive due attention in the programme. All the elements of global governance being studied will be approached both as political and as normative systems, which is why multidisciplinary expertise has a special significance.

Global large-scale trends, which will influence international politics decisively, and a closer observation of basic research concerning them will form a new emphasis in the Global Security research programme. Technological development (digitalization and artificial intelligence), demographic development and transnational ideological trends are examples of such trends. Understanding the implications of these trends on the actor structure and institutions of international politics is crucial to anticipating the future global order, and they will be actively seized upon in the form of international research projects, for instance.