

Panel: Regional and Trans-Regional Integration

This panel aims to highlight and discuss the need for regional and trans-regional integration within Central and South Asia, along with other regions like the European Union (EU). With a growing demand for establishing and increasing trade networks within Asia, under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by China, this panel also seeks to elucidate the advantages and benefits to be gained by individual countries, and Asia as a whole, by forging regional and trans-regional integration, along with possible disadvantages. Economic, social and political gains and opportunities for participating countries will be discussed, along with possible obstacles and pitfalls that may be encountered in the process. The panel also aims to discuss strategies that can be inspired by the experience and trajectory of the EU, and whether integration in Asia can mimic a similar model, or if the lived experience of the region and its social intricacies require a different approach and policies more embedded in the Asian context.

Some questions which the panel aims to tackle are:

1. What is the current state of affairs and *status quo* in the region?
2. How can countries enhance cooperation and integration within this context?
3. What are some of the parameters to establish and maintain integration?
4. What will the impact of the BRI be? Will it be positive or negative?

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