



Panel 3: For a new global social contract

Date and Time: Saturday 23 January 2021, 15:30-17:00 CET

The backdrop

After the Cold War, the strategic situation evolved from a balance of power between Washington and Moscow, to the awareness that global challenges require some form of more widely coordinated governance. At the same time, the growing reliance on “liberal” economics has led to wider areas of no regulation or self-regulation, at a time when government accountability has weakened in a number of policy areas, to the detriment of the public good.

Recently, public opinion has become more aware of the consequences of current trends such as the growing divide between population growth and resources (water, arable land, energy sources...), the expanding influence of lobbies on the legislative and executive branches of government, and the need for universal principles to meet large-scale issues (pollution, climate change, conflict resolution, terrorism, pandemics, monetary disorder, etc.).

There is an urgent need for a widely applicable social contract centered on human dignity as the ultimate measure of economic development, on global policies compatible with our custody of the Earth’s ecosystem, and on exposing the mortal dangers of ignorance, intolerance and falsehoods.

Future diplomacy must be more attuned to these global challenges. On the basis of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as on best practices in individual countries, and other guidelines, we now have the chance, as well as the duty, to imagine new global governance rules for the common good. This Conference provides such an opportunity.

Key Questions addressed by the panel:

- How can a better balance be achieved between public policy, corporate governance and individual ethics, and how can they be promoted?
- Governments (even in democratic states) have become less accountable in many policy areas, also to the detriment of the public good. How can governments be persuaded to opt into higher standards of accountability?
- Lobbying has become a way of life, but often without sufficient transparency and accountability, for instance in the United States. Are the current European Union regulatory rules applicable elsewhere? What needs to be improved?
- Where does the ultimate responsibility lie for securing the global public good - with individual governments, with intergovernmental bodies, with civil society, or with some combination of these?