

# ***Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Bridging potential in the emerging multi-polar world***

Expert discussion

*3 April 2024  
Minsk, Belarus*

*10.00-12.15*

- Organisers:** Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations and the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Republic of Belarus
- Working language:** Russian
- Format:** Expert discussion under the Chatham House Rule (welcome remarks open to the media)

## **Concept**

The progressing transformation of the system of international relations towards greater polycentricity manifests itself, among other things, in the expanding role of regional multilateral organisations. A trend dominates that increases the disunity and conflict between blocks of states. However, most countries and societies are objectively interested in reducing the intensity of conflict and associated security risks. This can only be done through maintaining and adapting mechanisms of international cooperation.

The specific characteristics of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation provide unique opportunities both for protecting the common interests of the member states amid international tensions and for finding common ground and building contacts with non-SCO states.

During the discussion, the experts will offer their assessments of mechanisms and approaches that can increase the SCO's bridging potential with a view to reducing geopolitical tensions in Eurasia. They will also share expectations regarding Belarus's upcoming accession to the SCO as a fully-fledged member.

## **Agenda**

10.00-10.15

**Welcome remarks**

**Erlan Baizhanov**

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Republic of Belarus*

**“Priorities of Kazakhstan’s SCO chairmanship”**

**Yauheni Preiherman**

*Founder and director, Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations*

10.15-11.15

**Session 1. The SCO’s unique added value in the world of equal blocks of states (political and diplomatic issues).**

- What expectations does Minsk have regarding its upcoming accession to the SCO? How could Belarus adapt the international bridging agenda it offered to the SCO as a dialogue partner to the current international realities?
- How do the SCO member states differ in their attitudes to cooperation with major third actors in Eurasia?
- What risks are the SCO member states facing due to the collapse of the cooperation architecture across Wider Eurasia?
- How could the SCO apply the experience of other regional organisations and initiatives in the field of confidence-building and cooperation with third countries and their associations?
- What unique diplomatic capabilities does the SCO have that it could use to reduce tensions and facilitate increased cooperation in Eurasia?

Moderator

**Yauheni Preiherman**

*Founder and director, Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations*

11.15-12.15

**Session 2. SCO as a tool for maintaining an open world economy (economic and legal issues).**

- The SCO member states declare commitment to maintaining an open world economy, which is based on the WTO rules and multilateralism, as well as the rejection of protectionism and unilateral pressure. How to fit this vision into the transforming context of international relations in Eurasia?
- What specific risks are the SCO member states facing due to deglobalisation, trade wars and the fragmentation of logistical networks and supply chains? Can they be minimised?
- What international legal decisions could contribute to the growth of economic opportunities within the SCO’s framework and in cooperation with other groups of states?

Moderator

**Alisiya Ivanova**

*Analyst, Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations*