EU and Chinese Policies towards African Security: A Common Approach?

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This paper argues that both international actors have different conceptions of security and conflict prevention and management, and that China is more and more involved in security affairs, while the EU seems to be more and more reluctant to support African institutions. Both Europe and China are security actors present in Africa. China started taking part in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa in the late 1980s, and the European Union decided to create its own security structures in 1998, and began to deploy troops in Africa in 2003. How do European and Chinese actors differ in their policies when they address the construction and policies of African continental, regional and national security institutions?

The first section of this paper establishes the extent to which European and Chinese actors are present in African institutions (political advice on the creation of institutions, financial participation, training of troops, planning capacities). The second section compares the positions and interactions between the EU, China on the policies of the African Union (role of the International Criminal Court, policies towards the Ivory Coast, Somalia and Sudan). The third section shows that cooperation between all three actors presents political and logistical problems in the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean. This paper concludes that power politics is a relevant concept in order to understand motives for Chinese and European security policies, as each international actor is using its policies towards Africa as an instrument for power and recognition at the United Nations.