



Round table on the Special issue of RSPi on BRICS

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REPORT



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Introductory remarks

By Enrico Molinaro

E. C. Director of the Italian Network for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue (RIDE)

Welcome to everybody.

At the beginning, the organization of this event seemed to be like a mission impossible, in such a hot week-end in Rome. On the contrary, this room full of esteemed people shows the general interest for the BRICS even increased after the tragic event last night in Nice. Also in view of the BRICS' potential positive contribution to the issues of security and terrorism in Europe and in the Mediterranean area, I would like to ask you few seconds of silence for the victims of yesterday terror attack in Nice.

The *Journal of International Political Studies* (RSPI) and the *Embassy of India* in Rome in cooperation with *EURISPES*, *Mediterranean Perspectives* and the *Italian Network for the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue* (RIDE) have organized the present Round Table. *EURISPES* Secretary General Marco Ricceri led the multidisciplinary research group of experts and scholars whose articles, published in the special issue of the *Journal of International Political Studies* devoted to the BRICS, are the occasion of the debate today.

The Institute for Political, Social and Economic studies *EURISPES* chaired by professor Gian Maria Fara is a private, no profit think tank working in Italy since 1982 in the political, economic and social research field.

Mediterranean Perspectives is an association established in the year 2000 in Jerusalem promoting activities and research about cultural, political and religious experiences, with regard to the forms of coexistence of the Mediterranean collective identities.

The *Italian Network for the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue* (RIDE – *Anna Lindh Foundation*) gathers civil society organizations and Institutions actively committed in the promotion of dialogue among cultures, in order to implement the visibility and the action of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, both at national and international level.

Indian Ambassador Anil Wadhwa's generous hospitality is particularly important for Italy and welcomes the development of our new open relationship with these strategic countries. As *EURISPES* President Fara illustrated in his conclusions to the debate, we wanted to launch a cultural, political and emotional message after a difficult period of bilateral relations between Italy and India, now apparently over.

I would like to thank also the Representatives of the other four BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa. In particular I would like to inform the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to FAO, Ambassador Niu Dun, that the *EURISPES'* international relations office already developed contacts with the BRICS' University of Fudan in China.

Thanking the Excellencies and particularly the Indian Embassy, I would like to give the floor to the lady who published the journal, Professor Maria Grazia Melchionni, editor of the RSPI.

Introductory remarks
MARIA GRAZIA MELCHIONNI
Editor, Journal of International Political Studies - RSPI

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

I am very honoured to present here – at the Embassy of India, who holds the annual Presidency of BRICS – the special issue of RSPI focused on them.

The BRICS phenomenon – due also to the fact that the group had been an elusive player at the world stage so far – appears to be more ignored than discussed in the debates on the future of the global governance.

However the emergence of a group of influential States pursuing multi-polarity in international relations deserves attention, because by the time it is going to have effects upon the world order, and consequently upon the development of international law, bringing about a reconceptualization of international relations and the use of a new terminology. In a multipolar world, an evolution of the western concept of democracy can also be expected, going beyond the game between political parties towards the issue of solidarity.

That's why, when Prof. Marco Ricceri proposed to me to publish the papers of the working group he was coordinating on behalf of *EURISPES*, I was in favour of giving them the chance to appear all together as the articles of a monographic issue on a respected journal having a global audience.

RSPI is a peer review, and the articles have been duly approved as competent and properly shaped. Of course, opinions and judgements expressed by the Authors are their responsibility, because the journal is only concerned whether they are seriously grounded and convincingly formulated.

Before giving the floor to Minister Plenipotentiary Giorgio Bosco, member of the Scientific Council of RSPI, for a quick survey of the issue, I wish to thank Ambassador Anil Wadhwa for his kind and lovely hospitality, and the distinguished diplomats who readily accepted to contribute to the Round Table discussion with their comments on how the BRICS were described from outside by the Authors of the articles and most interestingly saying how effectively they look at themselves from inside. Great thanks go to my friends of *EURISPES* and *Prospettive Mediterranee* and with them to the Authors of the articles for their fructuous collaboration to this nice issue and to its presentation here, and to all of you, dear Participants to this meeting, who share my desire to know more on BRICS.

Introductory remarks

GIORGIO BOSCO
Italian Plenipotentiary Minister (R)

I am very pleased to take the floor in this event, organized, among others, by the “Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali”. The “Rivista” founded in 1934, has practically accompanied all my life of study and of diplomatic work. Apart from the publication itself, the magazine has some side activities; the editing of specialized books and the organization of events like the one for which we are here. Normally these events take place after one issue of the “Rivista” was focused on a particular subject. In recent times one of these events was dedicated to the Russian Federation, another to the migration problems, and today to the BRICS.

It is always interesting to note how the same subject is considered differently by various authors. This is inevitable: the historian, the economist, the sociologist, each of them is conditioned by his or her profession. From my point of view, if I had to study the BRICS phenomenon, I would examine it under the angle of international law, and I would begin by trying to establish the legal nature of the BRICS. Is this an international organization or not?

The scholar knows that there are some fundamental requisites that an international organization must fulfil to be called as such. The first of them is an international agreement concluded by three or more States, aiming at the creation of the new entity; in Italian we call it “accordo istitutivo” (institutional agreement). No such agreement exists among the BRICS. But international law is continuously changing and evolving, and so the lack of an institutional agreement could be compensated by the existence of important “joint declarations” that have been approved and signed by the five States each year, at the summits of the group.

Another element normally considered in connection with the international organization is the existence of a structure: a plenary meeting, an executive council, a permanent Secretariat. What have we in the case of the BRICS? We have only a “virtual Secretariat”: a joint website. This website is the product of a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MoU) signed by the Five in July 2015 (Enrico Molinaro’s article in the RSPI illustrates very well the MoU’s provisions in this respect) . In this document we can already witness a first attempt at an organized structure because its modular texture is devoted to, inter alia, “the incumbent BRICS chair, the BRICS Official Documents Archive and national modules of the BRICS Member States”. Here we find the expression “Member States”, which is typical of an organization, and leads the way to the institutionalization. (It is useful to remember here that the C.S.C.E., Conference on the Security and Cooperation in Europe, was born as a

group of “participating States”, and only many years later became O.S.C.E., O for Organization).

Finally the scope. The specialized organizations have each a scope: UNESCO the culture, WHO the health, etc. The scope of the BRICS is wide, and we can deduce it from the document entitled “Concept of the Russian Federation’s Presidency of BRICS in 2015-2016”: “Developing cooperation among the BRICS countries in the socio-political, economic, scientific, cultural and youth sphere”.

Of course, all I have said until now is just to give an idea of the complexity of the problem. But if we have in mind this concept, that the BRICS is an organization “sui generis” which cannot easily be placed in the well-known patterns, we can have a very useful key of reading for a better understanding of the essays contained in this issue of the “Rivista”.

I will endeavour to find a common element in these essays: do the authors try to foresee what the future of the BRICS will be? After all, this seems a natural question. The other organizations have existed for many years, and it does not seem that they would give us some shocking surprise. But the BRICS are very young, they have some peculiar characteristics, we cannot call them neither a regional organization nor a universal one. Where will they be heading to?

The crystal ball is not advisable in politics. But there are methods: given and ascertained some circumstances, a certain result can reasonably be expected. I found recently an interesting demonstration of this methodological approach. I was reviewing for the “Rivista” a book by Zoltan Barany, entitled “How armies respond to revolutions and why”. The author has tested a method that in every case has proved successful: by examining carefully the armies in question, the State to which they belong, the society in which they move, their internal cohesion, how the regime treats its armed forces, the nature and dimensions of the revolutionary movement, he has been able to foresee the outcomes of some revolutions, and the “Barany method” has been used by the U.S. Department of State.

The human endeavors depend on so many factors that success is as likely as failure. For this reason it is hard to say if a method of the Barany type should be helpful in the case of BRICS. This uncertainty is reflected in the conclusive considerations of most of the articles contained here. De Robertis gives a political warning: something unpleasant might happen if the West goes on ignoring the political aspects of the collaboration among the BRICS. Raimondi underlines that the international political and economic stability is in serious danger and would require a joint action of all the world actors, in particular the BRICS and the European Union. Molinaro makes a clear prediction in his cyclical Glocalist/Statalist geopolitical trends’ analysis, highlighting the upcoming success of the Statalist BRICS’ challenge vis-à-vis Glocalist financial instability, at least in the short-middle term.

Each of the following articles is focused on one of the five Member States. For Russia, China and Brazil the conclusions are cautious: Ricceri notes that the Russian international strategic action will be conditioned by the validity of its specific model of economic and social development. According to Zucca, the evolution of the scenario for China will depend also from the growth in the rest of the world. Boni pinpoints the political crisis that in this moment hits Brazil and makes it divided on the choices to select. The other two members, India and South Africa, inspire a little more optimism: Scridel quotes President Obama's assertions that India is no more an emerging power, but a full-titled power, and Martino praises the South African choice to put the stress on study and research by the BRICS Think Tank Council, which can elaborate long term plans.

Is there any common conclusion to draw after having read the last page of the magazine? I think there is not, but this must not make us feel discouraged. We live in a difficult world, in which the situations are continuously changing, and we can say no more, as Rudyard Kipling did, "East is East and West is West".

Embassy of the Republic of India

ANIL WADHWA
H.E. The Ambassador

Dear Fellow Ambassadors from the BRICS
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be present here this evening on the occasion of presentation of the special edition on BRICS of the Journal of International Political Studies, an outcome of the contribution by several experts. I am told that it is probably the first time that such an initiative focused solely on the BRICS has been organized in Rome. I would particularly like to thank Prof. Enrico Molinaro, Executive Committee Director of RIDE for putting all this together.

Friends,

2. The BRICS countries today represent over 3 billion people or 42% of the world population and have a combined nominal [GDP](#) of US\$ 16 trillion, approximately 20% of the global GDP. In its short journey, BRICS has left an indelible mark on the global economic and financial architecture. The establishment of New Development Bank and Contingency Reserve Arrangement has been a landmark achievement in this regard.

3. Over the years, the BRICS agenda has expanded considerably to include topical global issues such as terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, trade, WTO and Doha Development Round. Health, Education, Science & Technology, Agriculture, Communication & IT, Environment, Energy, Labour, Disaster Management and Anti-Corruption are other areas the BRICS has brought into its fold. The BRICS Business Forum and Business Council have provided a platform for BRICS B2B engagement.

4. In addition to the annual Summits, BRICS exchanges take place at multiple levels including Parliamentary visits, Ministerial Meetings, Working Groups/SOMs/Experts' Meets, Seminars/Conferences, Business, People-to-people exchanges and Track II.

5. India is the current chair of the BRICS. The next BRICS Summit, the 8th in line will be hosted by India in October in Goa, a state in western India, famous for its churches, beaches and cuisine. The theme for India's BRICS Chairmanship this year is Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions.

6. Our objective during India's BRICS Chairmanship is to further consolidate Intra-BRICS cooperation by adopting a five-pronged approach –

- (i) **Institution building** to further deepen and sustain BRICS cooperation;
- (ii) **Implementation** of the decisions of previous Summits;
- (iii) **Integrating** synergies among the existing cooperation mechanisms;
- (iv) **Innovation**, i.e., new cooperation mechanisms; and
- (v) **Continuity**, i.e., continuation of mutually agreed existing BRICS cooperation mechanisms. In short, the Indian approach towards its BRICS Chairmanship could be captured by 'IIIC or I4C'.

7. People-dimension, youth, and dissemination of BRICS across the country are a priority for our Chairmanship. A series of BRICS events is being organized across the cities and provinces of India in order to further enhance their participative and people-centric role. These include BRICS Under-17 Football Tournament, Youth Summit, Young Diplomats' Forum, Young Scientists' Conclave, Film Festival, Urbanization Forum, Smart Cities Workshop, Friendship Cities Conclave, Local Bodies Conference, Convention on Tourism, Wellness Conclave, Digital Conclave, etc.

8. About 95 meetings – Ministerial, Senior Officials, Working Group, Technical Levels, are scheduled to take place during India's BRICS Chairmanship. Meetings and events have been planned outside the Capital in the cities and provinces in order to expand BRICS catchment across the country and to disseminate BRICS brand among the people.

9. BRICS is working actively on several new initiatives directed towards setting up New Development Bank Institute, BRICS Rating Agency, BRICS Agricultural Research Centre, BRICS Railway Research Institute, BRICS Sports Council, BRICS Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement; & Regulations on BRICS Customs

Cooperation Committee, MoU on Cooperation among Supreme Audit Institutions, MoU on Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies of BRICS Countries.

10. BRICS has, over time, internalized the practice of involving other regions through Outreach Summits so that each host can avail of the BRICS Summit to project its leadership role among the countries from its region. So far, leaders from Africa, Latin America and from SCO and Eurasian Economic Community have attended these Summits. India has invited BIMSTEC, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation Leaders as special invitees to the 8th BRICS Summit

11. Friends, with these words, I would like to thank all of you for sparing your valuable time to attend this event.

Thank you.

Embassy of Brazil

RICARDO NEIVA TAVARES

H.E. The Ambassador

Dear Ambassadors,
Members of the diplomatic corps,
Prof. Molinaro
Ladies and gentleman

Allow me first to congratulate the Embassy of India in Rome, as well as *EURISPES*, *Prospettive Mediterranee* and *Rete Italiana Dialogo Euromediterraneo*, for organizing this important event. Let me also compliment *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali* for the publication of a special issue dedicated to the BRICS.

The BRICS was initially an acronym coined due to common thriving economic projections. The vision and will of our governments turned it into much more than that. Nowadays, it is one of the prime examples of the new “variable geometry” of international relations, one that impacts not only its members, but the international community as a whole.

Since its 2006 first informal meeting in New York, in the margins of the UN General Assembly – attended by the ministers of foreign affairs of Brazil, Russia, India and China, and myself as the advisor to the Brazilian Foreign Minister –, and later through its annual summits (the first one held in Yekaterinburg, in 2009) the BRICS took the center stage of an ongoing and profound transformation process of the international order. Our countries have been active in order that the international institutions are reformed and the global governance is equipped with the means and mechanisms necessary to cope with the daunting challenges facing the international community in the 21st century.

These challenges unfold in a number of areas, each one requesting specific measures. For instance, in the economic and financial area, the BRICS group of countries have founded the first post-Bretton Woods global institutions.

The New Development Bank (NDB) started its operating activities recently and has already launched its inaugural projects. The NDB will mobilize resources for infrastructure projects and sustainable development in BRICS countries as well as other emerging economies and developing nations. This will enhance cooperation with existing and new financial institutions and will put our nations in a central position in terms of the promotion of international development.

The establishment of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), in turn, is a concrete contribution to the stability of the global financial system, consistent with the weight of our economies on the world stage. The CRA is a framework for the provision of support through liquidity and precautionary instruments in response to actual or potential short-term balance of payments pressures. It strengthens the global financial safety net and complements the existing international monetary and financial arrangements. Thus it enhances the soundness of the global economy and mitigates the risks of contagion due to financial shocks that could affect the economies not only of our countries, but also of our main partners and, ultimately, of the whole world.

We need strong multilateral financial institutions that are legitimate and effective to meet the challenges of a changing international economic landscape. The coordination of the BRICS countries in the G20 has proved key to achieve our common goals and visions. We must therefore maintain our coordination under the G20 in order to implement the commitments in terms of governance reform of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The growth potential of the BRICS economies remains high, and our prominent role in the international economy will certainly extend into the foreseeable future. Weaker results in the last couple of years, therefore, did not establish a pattern: the BRICS will continue to be one of the main engines of the world economy in the coming decades. Three quarters of the global economy growth in 2014 are the result of the direct contribution of developing countries and emerging economies, of which more than 40% correspond to the BRICS countries, representing 24% of the territory, 42% of population and 23% of GDP of the world.

Ladies and gentleman,

The recent accomplishments by the BRICS in the financial area demonstrate that our partnership is committed to a more just, prosperous and democratic international order. Nonetheless, the intensification of some geopolitical risks to the stability of the world, such as terrorism and the increase in the use of force as a means to solve interstate conflicts, will require from the BRICS countries a growing level of commitment and political coordination in matters of peace and security.

This is certainly possible, for our countries traditionally give great importance to multilateralism and to the international rule of law. Moreover, our visions coincide on the central role to be played by the United Nations on issues related to peace and security.

Indeed, the BRICS have a clear contribution to make in this area, as demonstrated when all of our countries were in the Security Council at the same time, in 2011. During that period, in a number of occasions, we had the opportunity to support the

prevention of conflicts and to foster the notion that the use of military force should always be avoided unless it is the very last resort. That was a unique circumstance that helped to strengthen the coordination capacity of the BRICS and gave renewed dynamism to the Security Council.

As we transition towards a multipolar world order, fraught with new issues, one stark reminder to be confronted is that either multilateralism remains at the center of the international order, or there will be no order at all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Some critics may argue that our five countries are too different to translate our common vision into concrete policy-making. I would say, on the contrary, that our strength lies precisely on our differences being coupled with our shared goals.

There are many challenges and threats in the international arena currently. No country can face them alone. I thus congratulate India for the choice of core-theme for its BRICS Chairmanship: “Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions”. The special focus being put on institutions-building, implementing past commitments, and exploring innovative solutions in a spirit of continuity with consolidation leave no room for doubt as to the strength of the partnership among the BRICS and its vocation as a forum to contribute for a robust, inclusive and sustainable development in our countries and worldwide.

Thank you very much

NIU DUN
H.E. The Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to FAO

Your Excellences,
Dear colleagues,
Good afternoon,

It is my pleasure to participate in this round table on the special edition of the *Journal of International Political Studies*, and exchange our views on the cooperation between BRICS countries, Italy and Europe. Now, please allow me to share my perspective on the role of BRICS countries in the growth of world economy, the opportunity and vision of cooperation between BRICS countries and Italian Network for the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue (RIDE).

First, the BRICS countries are and will still be the engine for world economic recovery and development.

BRICS countries are the new engine of the world economy, accounting for 42% of the world's population, 16% of global trade, 40% of global foreign exchange reserves. Its market is more than 4 trillion US dollars, equivalent to the level of the whole euro area. Nowadays, BRICS countries account for 21% of the global economy, contributing more than 50% to global economic growth over the past decade.

In 2015, BRICS countries were influenced by the slow recovery of world economy, especially the low international price of staple commodity. Then, some voices doubted that the BRICS cooperation mechanism might be outdated. Several international research journals, magazines and media detracted from BRICS countries' role in the global economy. Some of them even claimed that emerging economies, led by BRICS countries, could trigger a new round of global recession.

In the case of both internal and external intertwined challenges, and unfavorable external environment for development, it is even more important to strengthen the cooperation between BRICS countries, Europe and other economies in the world. The seven BRICS Summits marked a solid progress of BRICS cooperation mechanism. The fruitful cooperation on multiple fronts has become and will continue to be a crucial platform for dialogue of emerging markets and developing countries in economy, finance and development; a key player in increasing economic growth, improving global economic governance, strengthening multi-lateralism and promoting democracy in the international relations.

The steady development of BRICS countries fought back the unjustified talk about the “BRICS are dead”. As Chinese President Xi Jinping said, as long as we stay together and work in concerted effort, the BRICS will spread its wings, fly faster and farther.

Looking forward, the BRICS countries can – and will – promote the reform of itself with greater courage and efforts, expand mutual cooperation and integration of new partners and channels, continuously enhance the resilience of emerging economies, and jointly safeguard the long-term interests of developing countries. In this regard, China proposed the “Belt and Road” initiatives according to our own development needs and new changes of the region. Through focus countries, focus areas and focus programs, the Chinese government will actively strengthen the cooperation between BRICS countries and countries along the “Belt and Road”, which, I believe, is a catalyst for South-South cooperation and a complementary model for South-North cooperation.

To this end, China will work with other BRICS countries to give full play to the important role of BRICS cooperation mechanism to further expand cooperation areas, and highlight the key cooperation projects. China will actively link the “Belt and Road” initiatives strategy with BRICS development strategy, strengthening South-South and Triangular cooperation by summarizing the valuable experience of cooperation mechanism among BRICS countries.

Second, the cooperation between BRICS and RIDE will provide historical opportunities.

Mediterranean is one of the origins of the human civilization. It also has become an area of intensive conflicts. With European sovereign debt crisis not being put off, the refugee flooding over the borders, and the severe anti-terror situation, Mediterranean area is now facing a complex period. RIDE, will play a very important role in promoting dialogue and cooperation among countries so as to boost the political, economic and social development in this region.

While Italy, in this region, is a key player in this dialogue. As one of the important economy, Italy played an important role in European Economic Integration. In the end of 2015, it was stressed by the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi that it’s important for countries to collaborate together to change the severe situation of Mediterranean region. Dialogue is an inevitable approach to solve the different crisis and find a new developing path.

BRICS can provide options for the path. In recent decade, BRICS investment in Italy increase rapidly in the share of Italy FDI, to say, from 0,5% to 9,1%, raised 17 times. About 3000 enterprises have been partly or completely merged and acquired by BRICS countries. China’s investment in Italy increase significantly too, which

contributes to the Italian economic development and creating thousands of jobs. These investment brings BRICS and Italy more commercial opportunities, forming a win-win and all-win situation.

I believe Italy will also take this opportunity with its advantages such as technology and expertise to develop both domestically and regionally. I know that the Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies (*EURISPES*) was founded 34 years ago, with prestigious reputation in policy research and consultation. The institute is one of the most influential agencies of culture, politics, economics and media in Italy.

The *Journal of International Political Studies*, firstly issued in 1934 Florence, is an influential journal in Italy. I hope and believe it will provide valuable policy advice to facilitate pragmatic cooperation between BRICS countries and Italy, and even the whole Europe.

This special edition is of great significance for its first initiative made by Italian think tank on BRICS mechanism, especially the BRICS summit this year. In this regard, I commend and congratulate its publication, and will also read carefully.

Third, I sincerely wish that this cooperation between BRICS and RIDE a bright future

BRICS Cooperation has strong vitality. I would like to share my following views on how to further strengthen the cooperation between BRICS and RIDE.

First of all, please let me congratulate India on the Presidency of BRICS. I sincerely wish that the 8th BRICS Summit keeps enhancing the BRICS countries to reach more common understanding on cooperation and development, as well as pushing forward cooperation with other mechanism such as RIDE. The 8th BRICS Summit to be held in India will definitely provide an opportunity for RIDE.

Second, I would like to suggest more cooperation in food and agriculture between BRICS and RIDE. UN General Assembly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September of last year. There is no doubt that both BRICS and RIDE should take active roles in implementation of this significant agenda. Common cooperation initiatives such as agricultural science and technology (S&T), South-South and Triangular Cooperation, public and private partnership (PPP) can be proposed to contribute to the implementation especially in food and agriculture area.

Third, I think it is important for *EURISPES* to continue taking its knowledge research advantages, and for the special edition of the Journal on BRICS to disseminate the experiences and exchanges of BRICS countries, especially in application of Information and Communication Technology (ITC) in rural areas for smallholders, E-commerce, internet plus such kind of new types of business, to share good practices

and advanced technologies of Europe. As a media platform to share successful experiences in South-North Cooperation and South-South Cooperation, the *Journal of International Political Studies* will play an important role in introducing the cooperation development between BRICS and RIDE. Meanwhile, the journal's impact will further increase in BRICS countries and globally.

Your Excellences, dear colleagues,

BRICS countries should cherish the current active cooperation. All our countries have before them new opportunities and challenges in their respective national development. With similar stages of development, the BRICS countries may share somewhat similar features in their opportunities and challenges. It is, therefore, necessary for us to explore and expand cooperation with more partners and mechanism. Today, we have RIDE, a starting point to make coordinated and comprehensive efforts together, to optimize the investment and resources allocation, to push forward the cooperation between BRICS and RIDE so as to set a good example in the world multilateral cooperation.

With the BRICS presentation in this special edition of the journal, I look forward to reading more contents including the significant achievements of BRICS development and contribution that BRICS have made to world economy, and positive energy that BRICS showed to the international community. Finally, I wish the *Journal of International Political Studies* a great influence and success!

Thank you!

Embassy of Russian Federation

BRICS – The “big” Five of the global stage

ALEXANDR ZEZYULIN

Minister, Counsellor for Political Affairs

Contrary to the speculations that some critics in the West like so much to circulate these days (about the imminent demise of BRICS, about the Group losing its breath, slowing down dynamics and therefore downgrading its standing and relevance in international affairs) the Group has proven that its participants value the efficiency, viability and importance of this format.

When the world economy experiences hard times and the Group countries go through temporary economic difficulties the intra-BRICS cooperation becomes even more important for its participants as a factor of financial and economic stabilization, opportunity to find additional resources, solutions to ease infrastructure problems by pooling the potentials and acting jointly to address common challenges. BRICS is in big and practical demand in this sense.

A bit of history. Only 10 years after the first meeting in this format has passed. Nevertheless, it has grown to be a major element of the system of global management. Despite all challenges of today currently there is hardly any other international interstate group that is more dynamic and rapidly strengthening its positions than the BRICS. Its participants are countries with emerging market economies having a high potential of growth and oriented to modernization and innovations.

There have been already seven BRICS Summits, the last one in Ufa Russia, in July 2015. This year the VIII annual BRICS Summit will take place in Goa, India. The long-term objective of Russia and its BRICS partners as stated in the Durban Declaration of the Group (2013) is to turn Group into a full-fledged mechanism of strategic and current interaction on key issues of world politics and economics.

Naturally, each BRICS country is unique in many respects. But we are close and united by similarity of development tasks facing us, solidarity in the strengthening of international stability based on international law, principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference into internal affairs of nation-states.

It's very important to say that cooperation in BRICS is not aimed against anyone, has no “anti-western” focus or any other “anti” element. The Group is always “pro”, never “contra”. The Group does not threaten anyone, but provides an example of how

to reach the goals set through dialogue based on mutual respect and consensus. The brand of BRICS from its very inception has been its openness and common will to agree on all issues of mutual concern on the basis of equality and consensus.

All BRICS members are equal, there are neither dominating nor subordinate participants. Each country of the Five makes its own contribution to the common cause on the basis of the principle of complementarity of the participating State's capabilities. BRICS is a democratic format and there is no compulsion and strict bloc discipline inherent to archaic military-political alliances.

The current rotating Indian BRICS Chair has been preceded by the Russian Chairmanship in the Group in 2015—2016. Activities carried out during this period enabled the BRICS countries to make a large step forward in intensifying, diversifying and institutionalizing their cooperation.

BRICS has strengthened its global standing as an important factor in international affairs and an efficient mechanism for harmonizing the five countries' positions on the modern-day most pressing challenges. The Group has been continuously improving its extensive architecture of cooperation mechanisms intended to promote hands-on enhancement of the global financial system's stability and reliability, the strengthening of trade, economic and investment cooperation between the BRICS participants and with other countries.

The new high level of intra-BRICS strategic cooperation is reflected in the documents adopted at the Group's forums and meetings of different formats during that period. The common understanding, as confirmed by the BRICS Leaders at the informal meeting on the margins of the G20 Summit in Antalya in November 2015, that the fight against the terrorist threat will be effective only on the basis of concerted efforts of the international community, reflects the essence of the approach guiding the BRICS' activities.

The Five share the joint position in favor of peaceful resolution of conflicts on the basis of the international law and the UN Charter, advocate stronger UN central role. Our common approach towards working out long-lasting solutions to regional conflicts and global problems is based on the principles of indivisible security and the inadmissibility of any attempts to strengthen one's security at expense of the others, to apply double standards or unilateral sanctions, especially the use of military force to resolve international problems.

BRICS financial and economic cooperation has made considerable headway. The New Development Bank and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement have been established. The task at hand is to fine tune their operating mechanism and procedures. This year the NDB has taken decisions on the financing of the first batch of projects, notably, in the area of sustainable energy and energy efficiency.

Participants in the Ufa summit approved the Strategy of BRICS Economic Partnership and supported the Russian idea to draft a roadmap of trade, economic and investment cooperation until 2020.

Cooperation has been launched in such new areas as immigration, energy, industrial safety regulation, environmental protection and climate change, efforts to combat infectious diseases. Considerable impetus has been given to the enhancement of soft power mechanism of the Group.

Over 100 events were held over the ten and half months of Russia's Chairmanship, including over 25 events at the level of ministers and heads of specialized line agencies. Also a number of major forums (parliamentary, civil, trade union, youth, young diplomats), as well as the Global University Summit, have been held. The agreement on cultural cooperation between the BRICS countries has been signed.

In April 2016 the Handover Report on the Russian BRICS Chairmanship in 2015-2016 has been published and presented to India, as the next Group's Chair. Now India has taken over the rotating BRICS Chairmanship. Our Indian friends and partners defined its theme as "Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions" – the first letters of this slogan match the BRICS acronym.

We support them fully in this large-scale and multifaceted endeavor, which would be in practical terms based on the right balance, as described by New Delhi, between two mutually reinforcing principles – continuity and innovation.

We are confident that the Indian Chairmanship is focused not only on maintaining the already achieved dynamics of intra-BRICS multilateral cooperation but also on giving new impetus to our strategic partnership in order to intensify the teamwork of the "big" Five to address common tasks and challenges. Our Indian partners can count on our friendly support.

Russia remains optimistic and convinced that the processes of globalization have advanced far enough and cannot be overturned. The attempts to divide our common global space by erecting walls – physical, virtual, economic or ideological – are doomed to fail. BRICS countries are convinced that to overcome such negative trends it is important to build international relations on the firm basis of observing international law according to the principles of the UN Charter, including equality, mutual respect, non-intervention into internal affairs and full respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

Embassy of South Africa

ANNA-MARIE MOULTON
Counsellor, Multilateral Affairs

Your Excellencies,
Dr. Molinaro,
Ladies and gentleman,

South Africa is part of the African Continent. As such, our wellbeing is closely interlinked with that of the Continent as a whole. In South Africa we believe that you can't have an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty

South Africa's membership of BRICS is, therefore, aimed at promoting the interests of Africa as a whole and not only those of South Africa itself.

As a member of the South, our cooperative partnership with emerging economies complement other existing platforms which we utilize to pursue the African Agenda.

Since we joined the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) formation, Africa's developmental needs and aspirations have been fully incorporated in to the BRICS agenda.

As you are aware, the BRICS's New Development Bank (NDB), headquartered in Shanghai, has recently started operations and its African Regional Centre will be located in Johannesburg.

As has been reported, the NDB approved its first tranche of projects in April 2016. Each member state has been allocated a project to implement and South Africa has been allocated 180 billion US dollars for renewable energy. Through this decision, the NDB has commenced to discharge its mandate, namely the funding of infrastructure projects that promote sustainable development. Africa's partnerships with the United States of America, India, Korea and Japan are also yielding positive socio-economic results.

South Africa believes that all BRICS members share a common goal, namely to ensure a more equitable world order that is better able to address the development needs and challenges of our respective peoples.

In September 2015, Agenda 2030 was adopted in New York setting out the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. South Africa welcomes the outcome document of the post-2015 development agenda. We are particularly pleased that the outcome document recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and

dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. BRICS countries worked closely together on many issues during the negotiations towards this outcome.

In 2013, Africa adopted Agenda 2063 and its first ten year plan. The goal of Agenda 2063 is to realize the Africa we want, including a peaceful and prosperous continent.

While we attach importance to groupings such as BRICS, the G20 and the G77 and China, South Africa's main priority is the United Nations, which is fully representative of all Member States at the international level. We work within smaller groupings to achieve our priorities in the multilateral system.

It is of vital importance that we have an inclusive, transparent and representative multilateral system, in order to better address the urgent global challenges of sustainable development today. It is in this contest that South Africa supports continued efforts to reform the United Nations, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which corresponds to the collective interests of developing countries. South Africa prioritizes the transformation of the system of global governance to make the system more responsive to the needs of the developing countries and ensure fair representation in global governance structures.

In this regard, South Africa is pleased that BRICS members support the position that Africa deserves to be in a reformed and expanded UN Security Council, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

It is good also that BRICS ensured that the unfinished business of the MDGs was carried forward into the SDGs to ensure a continuum of development. We are further pleased that the outcome document recognizes the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. For developing countries, it is important that our different national realities, capacities and levels of development, as well as respect for our national policies and priorities, are taken into consideration.

South Africa is committed to working together with our BRICS partners to ensure strong collective policy action to raise growth, mitigate risks inherent in the current global and financial situation, and to promote the sustained growth and resilience of the global economy.

We are particularly mindful of continuing sluggish global growth, reflecting a further slowdown in the economies of many developing countries and a weaker than expected recovery in developed country economies. It is therefore very important that, as BRICS countries, we work together to promote the economic interests of emerging market and developing countries. This is especially important for Africa. We should also work more proactively together to make use of the high-level

platform provided by the formations, such as the G20, to influence the global economic agenda and to advance global economic and financial governance reforms.

BRICS is a relatively young organization, but one with huge potential. Working together, BRICS countries believe we can make an even greater impact in the international field.

I thank you.

Concluding remarks
Why a BRICS – LAB by *EURISPES*?

GIAN MARIA FARA
President of *EURISPES*

Dear Ambassador Anil Wadhwa,
first of all, on behalf of *EURISPES* and the BRICS' Laboratory of experts, I want to thank you for this important occasion of analysis and reflection that you have offered to us all, for your kindness and for your hospitality.

EURISPES, Italian Institute for political, economic and social research, has always been very attentive to the profound geo-political and geo-economic changes taking place on the world stage, because of the repercussions that these changes have on the European as well as the Italian situation.

Our goal is very simple and clear: we would like to fully understand the reality of the BRICS, of this important international coordination among states, such as Brazil, China, Russia, India, South Africa, which since long time are playing a leading role on the world stage. We would like to study this complex reality, its objectives, its evolutionary process, its potential. We try to do it with an analytical approach that is typical of our Institute; applying, ie, a multidisciplinary and systemic approach.

So far, based on our analysis and reflections, we are convinced that the international coordination of the BRICS can make a very important and positive contribution to the organization of a new governance system of the global development processes.

For years, inside the international institutions and summits, which have actively participated from Italy, the representatives of governments and states are looking for a new system of governance able to give an order to the chaotic process of economic globalization, with the precise goal to ensure to all people a sustainable, more harmonious and balanced development. The search for this new governance system requires the promotion of initiatives aimed at convergence, a sincere spirit of cooperation, actions aimed at the reconstruction of a general framework, which is currently too messy and confused. Here, our interpretation of the BRICS reality is just the following: we see in the BRICS coordination an important initiative of recomposition of the complex process of the global development, an original contribution to the construction of a new world governance.

According to common and shared estimates, in 2050 the BRICS, along with some emerging countries such as Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey, will have an economic weight higher than that of all the G7 countries (US, Japan, Canada, UK, Germany, France and Italy); in terms of gross domestic product-GDP it is expected that China

will become the world's largest economy by 2020 and that India could become, by 2050, the faster growing economy. Additional elements that will affect global balances, linked to the BRICS, evolution, are linked, for example, to demographic processes, migratory movements, the conditions of poverty and social inequalities. These new evolutionary processes that are drawing a multipolar world system, are intended to strongly affect the growth conditions of Europe and Italy. A proof is the fact that the BRICS, with their initiatives, are changing the balance as well as the same development conditions of the entire Mediterranean region. It is a new element that emerged clearly in a study conducted by *EURISPES* several years ago in collaboration with SINDNOVA, an Institute of studies, linked to the Italian trade unions, that I want to thank publicly.

Therefore, with the analysis of the BRICS system, *EURISPES* intends to give a contribution in this two main directions: on the one hand, to understand the scope of the complex change processes in the international scene as well as in the Mediterranean area and, on the other hand, to strengthen the initiatives that Italy promotes internationally.

I am convinced that with the BRICS Chairmanship in 2016, India will give a major boost to the construction of more advanced balance in political, economic, social, cultural sphere, needed to build a better world. For years, India plays an international leading role, as protagonist of global growth; a role that has been built over time, since, seventy years ago, the Republic of India was founded, of which next year we will celebrate the anniversary. This orientation has thus the roots far back in time.

And here I want to conclude, dear Ambassador Wadhwa, with some elements of reflections that have been offered to us by the Chairman of the Centre for the Book Promotion, which I thank sincerely. Already in II World War India was present and active in Europe and in Italy where helped our country to free itself from fascism. That is proved by the high price in blood that was shed by thirty thousand Indian soldiers - about six thousand dead people- who fought in Italy to liberate from nazi-fascism important cities such as Florence, Ferrara and many towns in central Italy. It is a "forgotten history", as has been said; and it is good to recall the attention of all of us to this history just on this occasion dedicated to the meaning of the BRICS reality and the value of India's presidency.

ANNEX I

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WEB REFERENCES

Click [here](#) to find the links to the following documents:

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