

Dr. Alexandra Sitenko

# The BRICS before and after the summit in Russia

*Goals, interests and perspectives*



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January 2025

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# The BRICS before and after the summit in Russia

## Goals, interests and perspectives

In January 2025, Indonesia became the tenth full member of the BRICS group. In addition, the BRICS group was expanded to include eight 'partner countries'. This is a new category, similar to the OSCE's 'Partners for Co-operation', which allows countries to cooperate with the BRICS without immediately becoming full members. The new partner countries are Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

The introduction of the new category was decided at the sixteenth BRICS summit, which was held from 22 to 24 October 2024 under Russia's chairmanship in the city of Kazan. The participation of 36 delegations, 22 heads of state and government and representatives of several international organisations was not lost on UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who also took part in the BRICS Summit 2023 in South Africa. On the sidelines of the Summit, he also met bilaterally with Russian President Putin for the first time since 2022. The Summit consisted of two parts: a meeting of the nine full members of the group and a BRICS+/Outreach session on „BRICS and the Global South - Building a better world together“.

More than 200 events were held in several Russian cities throughout the year in preparation for the summit.

*Moscow's efforts were aimed at showing that it is by no means internationally isolated following the aggression against Ukraine and at demonstrating the growing economic and political influence of this group of states whose aims and significance have, however, been the subject of controversial debate for years.*

This policy paper examines the beginnings of BRIC(S) as well as its evolution in recent years, and analyses the internal balance of power as well as the results of the BRICS summit in Kazan. It concludes with an assessment of the body's current and future potential.

## From basket case to geopolitical challenge

„In 2014, both The Guardian and Time magazine both ran the headline „Forget the BRICS“. The publications argued that most of the BRICS countries, with the exception of China, had lost the momentum of the economic growth from 10 years ago and thus the potential to decisively shape the global order. Instead, we should look to the PINE countries (the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria and Ethiopia), the Guardian concluded, and, according to Time, accept that the new world order will be dominated by US-China relations anyway. Indeed, in 2014, the year of Brazil's chairmanship of the group, there was significant uncertainty about the future development of BRICS. This was due to slowing growth in most member countries, China's economic dominance and political differences among members. All these factors fuelled doubts about the group's future political development.

Skip to the present, ten years later, and the perception of the BRICS has since changed fundamentally, even switched course entirely. From the European Union's perspective, the group is now considered to be a „geopolitical challenge“. This sudden paradigm shift is mainly due to the expansion of the group from five to nine (and now to ten) members, underlining its growing importance, which, however, few anticipated at all just a decade ago. Yet this expansion was not the first in the history of BRICS.

## Russia and the evolution of BRICS

The acronym ‚BRIC‘, coined in 2001 by Goldman Sachs chief economist O'Neill, consists of the initials of the major emerging economies of the time: Brazil, Russia, India and China. The first major meeting in this quadripartite format took place at Russia's initiative on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 20 September 2006, when the foreign ministers of Russia, Brazil and China, as well as India's defence minister, agreed to develop multidimensional cooperation. Two years later, at Russia's initiative, the foreign min-

isters of the BRIC countries met in Yekaterinburg. The first summit of the leaders of the four countries was also held in Yekaterinburg a year later.

*Russia was thus a driving force behind the creation of BRIC as a political entity from the outset.*

In 2010, South Africa accepted an invitation to join, and since 2011, it has participated as a full member in the annual meetings of the group, whose acronym was changed to 'BRICS'.

Since then, the five countries have met regularly at the level of heads of state and government ahead of major international summits for the purpose of coming to agreement on common positions. The 15th Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2023, marked the biggest milestone so far, when six emerging economies or rising middle powers – Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – were invited to join the group on 1 January 2024.

Despite this move toward increasing the diversity within the group and further complicating efforts at reaching consensus, BRICS would not have been able to gain in importance and popularity among the countries of the so-called Global South without this remarkable expansion.<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case, as BRICS had previously been more of a platform for exchange and coordination between regional leaders, without the presence of representatives from the MENA region.

*As the growth and international competitiveness of most BRICS countries had lost traction, limiting the BRICS to five members threatened to diminish their power for global discourse and competitiveness compared to traditional cooperation mechanisms led by industrialised countries, such as the G7.*

According to some analysts, this would have been detrimental to Chinese interests, in particular, but likewise undesirable for Russia, which is at odds with the West and has been a strong supporter of BRICS from the outset. In the joint declaration of 4 February 2022, Russia and China expressed their intention to strengthen the BRICS+/Outreach format as an effective mechanism for dialogue with regional integration associations, organisations of developing countries and emerging economies. Unsurprisingly, both have pushed hard for BRICS' expansion, which ultimately fell short of initial projections. Specifically, Argenti-

na's new president, Javier Milei, rejected membership after taking office in December 2023, while Saudi Arabia decided to forgo formal membership for the time being and instead participate in the BRICS+/Outreach format. The fact that such flexibility is built into the group may be one of the reasons why NATO member Turkey is seeking cooperation with BRICS as well, and why Indonesia became the first ASEAN member to join the group.

Indonesia's recent acceptance as a new member of BRICS has sparked differing opinions within the group regarding further expansion, as confirmed by Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov. He noted that some current members support maintaining the current number of members for the time being, while others advocate for admitting additional full members. Since the group operates on the principle of unanimity, expanding the membership would also increase the number of potential veto players, which may explain some of the concerns surrounding further expansion.

*The question on the number and structure of members is the most recent example of internal differences. In the past, however, the BRICS have also had differences that depart from the publicly proclaimed common vision.*

## **The BRICS balance of power: anti-Western or non-Western?**

*The BRICS platform is largely perceived in the West as an alliance that promotes anti-Western and anti-US sentiment. In its original form, however, the group wanted to avoid being seen as a challenger to the West.*

Russia itself was a member of both BRICS and the G8 until 2014. The purpose of the group was to hold informal consultations among members rather than to formulate and implement alternative, structured policy initiatives. In their statements after the first summits in 2009 in Yekaterinburg and 2010 in Brasília, the participants emphasised the central role of the G20 in solving global economic problems and expressed their commitment to multilateral diplomacy, with the United Nations playing a central role in addressing global challenges. In this context, they stressed the need for comprehensive reform of the United Nations and an international commitment to advancing reform of the international financial institutions.<sup>2</sup> Overall, the issue of global stabilisation in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2007/2008 dominated the agenda.

<sup>1</sup> Since then, more than 30 countries, mainly from the Global South, have expressed their interest in cooperating with the BRICS: <https://www.dw.com/ru/v-2024-godu-v-briks-vojdut-oae-iran-egipet-i-ese-tri-strany/a-66619870>.

<sup>2</sup> See declarations of the previous BRICS summits at: <https://www.nkibrics.ru/pages/summit-docs>.

However, geopolitical tensions between East and West increased from 2013/2014. With its economic rise, China's geopolitical and foreign policy ambitions also grew. Xi Jinping's accession to the presidency and the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 accelerated this trend, leading to geo-economic competition with the US, while the conflict between Russia and the West came to a head after Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014. These developments were reflected in the BRICS agenda insofar as the BRICS Declaration of 2015 (Ufa, Russia) condemns unilateral economic sanctions as contrary to international law and, furthermore, affirms that no state can enhance its own security at the expense of the security of others. It also contains the first criticism of double standards in global politics. A year later in India, the BRICS countries reaffirmed their „shared vision of the great changes taking place in the world towards a more just, democratic and multipolar international order“. Overall, the range of issues covered during this period has broadened with security policy becoming more prominent than in previous years, which has, in turn, had an impact on interaction within the group.

In 2017, Brazilian sources stated that the BRICS economic agenda was progressing, while cooperation on political or value-based issues was more complex due to ideological differences. The implication was that Russia and China saw BRICS as a geopolitical tool in their confrontation with the West, while the other members continued to prioritise economics, trade and development. They emphasised that Russia and China were sometimes able to coordinate more easily, but also noted that Brazil was closer to China than to Russia in the political and especially the economic development discourse.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, as early as 1993, Brazil had declared reform of the global financial institutions and the development of relations with Russia, China and India for the purpose of joint political articulation as one of the priorities of its foreign policy in 1993.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it was during Brazil's presidency in 2014 that the New Development Bank (NDB)<sup>5</sup> was created as an alternative to traditional Western institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with a capital of USD 100 billion and headquarters in Shanghai, and at the same time, the BRICS pledged another USD 100 billion for the so-called Contingent Reserve Arrangement – a special fund designed to protect their economies from financial instability and currency speculation.

<sup>3</sup> See Sitenko, Alexandra (2021): Strategic Partnerships in Foreign Policy. Relations between Russia and Latin American countries in the 21st century (Barbara Budrich Verlag), pp. 144-145: <https://shop.budrich.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/9783966650243.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ministério das Relações Exteriores (1993): Reflexões sobre a política externa brasileira, Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, pp. 27-28. <https://funag.gov.br/biblioteca-nova/produto/1-590>

<sup>5</sup> Despite the differences in the size of their economies, the five founding members of the NDB - Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa - have an equal share of 19 per cent in the bank's financing. They are joined by Bangladesh, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates with 1-2 per cent each.

Several Brazilian interviewees also pointed out that the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) forum, which was established in 2003, features a greater convergence of values and interests than the BRICS.<sup>6</sup> In terms of value compatibility, such an assessment may still be true today. Like Brazil and India, South Africa appreciates the economic and development opportunities offered by BRICS. It has already received USD 5.4 billion in loans from the NDB for five projects.

*In addition, Pretoria also seeks strategic autonomy in a multipolar world and, together with India and Brazil, supports reform of the UN Security Council. However, in terms of other parameters, the balance of power between those three and within the BRICS looks markedly different today.*

India's growth today is not only many times higher than that of Brazil and South Africa, but also higher than that of the largest economies. By 2023, India will overtake the UK as the world's fifth largest economy and, according to analysts at Morgan Stanley, is on track to overtake Japan and Germany to become the world's third largest economy by 2027. As a result, India's political prominence is also growing significantly and this trend is likely to continue in the coming years. India hosted a successful G20 summit in 2023 and in the same year became the first country to send a spacecraft to the South Pole of the moon. In doing so, it is vying for a permanent place in the pantheon of spacefaring nations and, by extension, great powers. The South Asian country is being courted by the US and the EU as a valuable partner. India, however, does not wish to choose between West and East or North and South in its foreign policy, preferring to keep all these options equally open based on its own national interests.

*Given India's growing global influence, it cannot be ruled out that the country will seek to play an increasingly prominent role within the BRICS, alongside China and Russia, as the voice of the Global South and in influencing the internal balance of power.*

The recent Indo-Chinese agreement on military patrols along the demarcation line in the Himalayas, moreover, represents an important step towards defusing their border conflict, which could, in turn, contribute to improving bilateral relations and consequently to better overall cooperation within BRICS. Russia has traditionally been a very important partner for India and will remain so, according to the Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaisankar. He stated:

<sup>6</sup> Sitenko, Alexandra (2021): Strategic Partnerships in Foreign Policy. Relations between Russia and Latin American countries in the 21st century (Verlag Barbara Budrich), pp. 144-145.

*„I can say with confidence and knowing that no one in this room can contradict it, that Russia has never done anything to impact India's interest negatively.“*

He added that there were not many major countries in the world for whom such a statement could be made.

*Meanwhile, for their part, new entrants such as the UAE and Egypt are pursuing a foreign policy balance between partnering with the West and maintaining strong economic and political ties with China and Russia.*

Ethiopia also maintains close ties with Russia and China, which are its main trading partners, and is a long-standing partner of the US, although relations with Washington were temporarily strained during the two-year conflict in the Tigray region, which ended in November 2022. According to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, his country's membership of the BRICS group will help deepen South-South cooperation. For all the new members with the exception of Iran, BRICS therefore stands as an alternative to the West, but not an expression of an anti-Western policy. The majority of BRICS members aim to maintain an alternative platform that gives a voice to their political and economic interests commensurate with their growing weight in the world.

*Moscow and Beijing are taking account of these countries' interest in foreign policy in equal measure, at least verbally. It is no coincidence that the Russian president, echoing the words of Indian Prime Minister Modi, declared before the start of the summit in Kazan that BRICS constituted a non-Western but in no way an anti-Western group.*

Among other methods, this was undoubtedly his way of reaching out to the new and potential new members.

## **BRICS summit in Kazan: Global South meets East**

The summit in Kazan took place under the motto „Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security,“ which explicitly emphasises the concerns of the so-called Global South, including justice, development and adequate participation in global governance. It is ironic that the BRICS meeting began their proceedings almost simultaneously with the autumn meeting in Washington of the two Bretton Woods institutions

dominated by Europe and the US – the IMF and the World Bank. This is all the more remarkable given the fact that the call for a reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, including greater representation of developing and emerging countries in leadership positions, is specifically outlined among the first of the 134 points of the BRICS' final communiqué.

*An alternative, global intergovernmental body, such as BRICS, inherently gives these countries the opportunity to coordinate on global issues and brings them to the table of decision-makers.*

It allows them to have a greater say in global political and economic issues, which they have so far lacked in traditional Western institutions. During its presidency, Russia has sought to address this need on the part of the countries of the Global South. The Russian initiative to create a platform for grain trade (the BRICS Grain Exchange) and later to expand it to other agricultural sectors has the same aim at its core. The initiative has been welcomed by the other members.

The creation of a single currency for the BRICS group, which was still the subject of speculation a year ago, was not, however, on the agenda in Kazan and will not be for the foreseeable future. According to the Russian side, such a project would require economic integration to such an extent that does not currently exist. Instead, the current focus is on extending the use of national currencies and creating electronic instruments that would make such a process possible. In this context, member states have agreed to explore the feasibility of an independent payments and reserves platform (BRICS Clear). By focusing on the use of local currencies, a self-sufficient and more sanctions-resistant financial infrastructure could be created which would benefit Russia and Iran in particular, but also the other BRICS members and partners who are in some way affected by the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia and Iran. In this case, the currencies would be convertible. This is particularly relevant, for example, for Brazil, which relies on imports of Russian fertilizer, or for India, which is currently the largest buyer of Russian oil. Due to increased oil imports, India has a large trade deficit with Russia, but sanctions imposed on Russia pose an obstacle to Indian exporters. A rupee payment mechanism or a local currency payment system could help boost exports.

The use of national currencies in financial transactions between the BRICS countries and their trading partners was unanimously endorsed, and the call for the lifting of unilateral economic sanctions was enshrined in the final document. What's more, Russia's state development and investment company VEB.RF has signed agreements with China and South Africa to provide credit lines in local currency.



BRICS members have also commented on the current wars and conflicts in the world. Most of them do not share Russia's position on the war in Ukraine and want it to end as soon as possible.<sup>7</sup> For his part, China's President, for example, urged de-escalation as soon as possible to pave the way for a political solution. „We support dialogue and diplomacy, not war,“ said the Indian Prime Minister. This was nevertheless not a priority shared by most of the summit's guests. However, as the final declaration states: „We recall national positions concerning the situation in and around Ukraine as expressed in the appropriate fora, including the UNSC and the UNGA. We emphasize that all states should act consistently with the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter in their entirety and interrelation. We note with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices, aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.“

The final declaration devotes more attention to events outside Europe, namely, in the Middle East as well as in Sudan, Haiti and Afghanistan. Israel's actions are strongly criticised, while Hamas (without being explicitly named) is urged to release the remaining Israeli hostages. Furthermore, the urgent need for an immediate, comprehensive and lasting ceasefire in the Gaza Strip is stressed.

*The Global South is the addressee of most BRICS initiatives. However, the East, with Russia, India and China (RIC), constitutes the original, strong core of the group.*

From Moscow's perspective, the establishment of the RIC format in St. Petersburg in 2006 paved the way for the BRIC exchange platform, as Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov pointed out in his briefing for the BRICS summit. Putin can count as a diplomatic success the fact that the leaders of India and China met bilaterally in Russia again after an almost five-year icy period due to a border dispute.

All in all, the summit clearly reflected the priorities of Russian foreign policy enshrined in the 2023 Concept – building up the Greater Eurasian Partnership and expanding relations with the Global South which do not contradict the intentions of the other BRICS members and partners. It is no coincidence that Russia is organising the meeting in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, which has hosted the

<sup>7</sup> Iran's position is ambivalent. Since the first year of the war, there have been repeated reports of Russian use of Iranian drones in its war against Ukraine. In November 2023, Washington claimed that Iran was possibly considering providing Russia with ballistic missiles: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/22/ukraine-claims-downing-barrage-from-russia-rare-iranian-made-drone>. In fact, according to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Chamenei, the United States started the war in Ukraine: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/21/irans-khamenei-says-us-wants-to-keep-ukraine-war>. According to Iranian government officials, Russia's attack also serves Tehran's interests and overlaps with Iran's strategy of fighting the U.S. Nevertheless, Tehran has neither officially supported nor condemned the Russian invasion. It has rejected information about arms deliveries to Russia every time it has been reported and asserted in 2023 that it is opposed to the continuation of the war. On Iran's position in the war against Ukraine, see Elaheh Koolae and Somayeh Zangeneh (2023): Iran-Russia Relations after the Ukraine War, *International Studies Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (78): [https://www.isjq.ir/article\\_180567.html?lang=en](https://www.isjq.ir/article_180567.html?lang=en).

Russia - Islamic World Forum since 2009<sup>8</sup>. The choice of venue is a gesture towards the Asian continent and the Islamic world, where Russia can count on important allies.

## State of play and future potential

### State of play

Despite the scepticism with which the BRICS's potential for political action has been viewed over the years due to its heterogeneity, its influence should not, however, be underestimated, based on several parameters. Even before Indonesia joined, the BRICS accounted for 35 per cent of global GDP (measured in purchasing power parities), a larger share than the Group of Seven (G7) (29 per cent).

The BRICS also represented a significant share of the world's population at 45 per cent, compared with just under 10 per cent for the G7. Together with Indonesia, the ten full-fledged members of the BRICS now generate around 38 per cent of global GDP (measured in purchasing power parities) and account for almost half of the world's population. However, more than half of this output is accounted for by China, highlighting internal disparities. Other factors determining BRICS' influence: with Iran and the United Arab Emirates as new members, the bloc now accounts for almost 30 per cent of world's oil production and more than 40 per cent of global grain production. Indonesia is the world's largest producer of nickel, an important mineral for renewable energy technologies such as solar panels.

*Beyond the meaty economic and demographic shifts on their side, belonging to a group with considerable international representativeness can be seen as a status symbol in itself, and the BRICS can thus be seen as a decisive prestige factor in global politics.*

For the emerging middle powers, in particular, international status and recognition are of great importance and may be more important than material interests.<sup>9</sup> These actors also compete with each other for status and try to improve their global standing with membership in various alliances and groupings such as the BRICS.<sup>10</sup> This also explains why middle powers such as India or Turkey pursue belonging in both Western (Quad, NATO) and non-Western clubs. Indonesia's accession reflects the changing balance of power in the Asian region: Jakarta does not want to cede the prominent role entirely to Beijing and New Delhi.

<sup>8</sup> It is the main platform for economic cooperation between Russia and the countries of the Islamic world. The aim of the Forum is to strengthen economic and cultural relations between Russia and the countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Mukherjee, Rohan (2022): <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/politics/rising-powers-and-their-desire-for-status>.

<sup>10</sup> Welch Larson, Deborah (2019): „Status competition among Russia, India, and China in clubs: a source of stalemate or innovation in global governance.“ *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 549-566.

However, BRICS would certainly not have the appeal it has today if it were reduced to merely a status symbol. Originally conceived as a global platform for dialogue, it has evolved in terms of content and institutions over the past decade. Founded in 2015, the NDB, is the first global bank created by emerging economies. As of 2018, it has financed more than 100 projects worth USD 33 billion, including, for example, a project to improve the electricity supply system in Brasília, the construction of a metro line in the Chinese city of Qingdao and the construction of 24 rural water supply systems in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.<sup>11</sup> However, projects in Russia are no longer being considered by the NDB as it complies with the sanctions imposed on Russia.

The less formal and so far less bureaucratic nature of the group's work also contributes to its attractiveness. The chairing country and its priorities determine the group's agenda, but leave room for different views and initiatives.

*The BRICS principle of consensus among countries with different histories, cultures, mentalities and political preferences could, moreover, if successful in the long-term, serve as an example of constructive decision-making.*

## Future potential

The BRICS' potential for resolving international conflicts, solely on account of its membership and partner structure, should not be ignored. In Kazan, for example, this platform was used for political dialogue between conflicting parties, for example, by China and India in a bilateral meeting on the sidelines or by Armenia and Azerbaijan during a plenary session. The presidents of Iran and the UAE also met for the first time on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia, following tensions between their countries over three islands. Although the Ukraine issue was not prioritised at the summit, Russia's most important partners, China and India, unequivocally urged Moscow to end the war in Ukraine as soon as possible. Although there is no joint BRICS initiative to end the war so far, the Chinese-Brazilian proposal is supported by several BRICS countries and is at least being considered by Russia, as Putin indicated in the post-summit press conference. In the same vein, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on BRICS to help create a fairer global financial system, promote climate protection, improve access to technology and work towards a just peace. The Summit of the Future had laid the groundwork for strengthening multilateralism for global development and security,

and the BRICS could play a very important role in this endeavour, he said.

*Creating synergies between the goals of the UN's Pact for the Future and those of the BRICS group could indeed be a possible approach for the West for constructive engagement with the BRICS.*

After all, in the final Kazan declaration (as in all previous ones), the BRICS states are not seeking a total reorganisation of the world, but rather a thorough reform of existing multilateral institutions.

The creation of a single means of payment among the BRICS countries is not anticipated for the time being. However, it is likely efforts will be made to achieve greater financial integration between the BRICS countries and that trade in local currencies will increase. Over the past two years, the share of transactions in local currency between Russia, China, India and the UAE has already increased. The creation of a unified payment infrastructure that allows payments to be made in local currency is likely to be pursued by Brazil. In Kazan, Brazilian President Lula da Silva was particularly vocal about the need to develop new payment methods for BRICS countries. Although such a discussion must be conducted with due seriousness, caution and technical soundness, it cannot be postponed any longer, he said. Incidentally, the idea of a common BRICS currency for trade and investment in 2023 was not put forward by Russia or China, but by the Brazilian head of state in Johannesburg.

The states that joined as BRICS partner countries in 2025 are potential candidates for admission as full members. However, this could take time and will depend on the global geopolitical situation as well as the capacity to act and attractiveness of expanded BRICS. In principle, no adverse effects on bilateral contacts with the countries should be inferred from their membership in the BRICS. Despite belonging to this club, the old and new members continue to pursue their respective national interests and would not allow these interests to be compromised by the priorities of Russia, China or any other BRICS country. Ultimately, both the dynamism and success of the BRICS group will depend existentially on the economic strength of its members and their ability to peacefully resolve or overcome existing or emerging differences and rivalries in the long term.

<sup>11</sup> Information on completed and ongoing projects: <https://www.ndb.int/projects/all-projects/page/5/#paginated-list>.

## About the author

**Dr Alexandra Sitenko** is an independent researcher and analyst based in Berlin. She works on issues related to the global peace and security order, geopolitics with a focus on Eurasia, and Russia's relations with the Global South.

## The BRICS before and after the summit in Russia:

### *Goals, interests and perspectives*



Today, the BRICS grouping is largely perceived in the West as an alliance that promotes anti-Western and anti-US sentiment. In its original form, however, the group wanted to avoid being seen as a challenger to the West. Its purpose was to hold informal consultations among members rather than to formulate and implement alternative, structured policy initiatives.



An alternative, global intergovernmental body, such as BRICS, inherently gives countries of the Global South the opportunity to coordinate on global issues and brings them to the table of decision-makers. It allows them to have a greater say in global political and economic issues, which they have so far lacked in traditional Western institutions. New entrants such as the UAE and Egypt are pursuing a foreign policy balance between partnering with the West and maintaining strong economic and political ties with China and Russia.



Beyond the meaty economic and demographic shifts on their side, belonging to a group with considerable international representativeness can be seen as a status symbol in itself, and the BRICS can thus be considered as a decisive prestige factor in global politics. Creating synergies between the goals of the UN's Pact for the Future and those of the BRICS group could be a possible approach for the West for constructive engagement with the BRICS.

Further information on this topic can be found here:

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