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CHINA'S ROLE IN ARCTIC GOVERNANCE: MAPPING CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES

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China's increasing presence in the globalized world is being accompanied by a growing interest for the Arctic region. Although not a priority of the Chinese government, the Arctic region represents a new geopolitical and geo-economic region in which the Asian state has various economic interests and is acquiring leverage and influence in the region. China has been granted observer status to the Arctic Council in 2013 and is expecting a greater role in the governance of the region, in particular as a rule maker.

This presentation examines to what extent and under which conditions is China taking part in the governance of the Arctic region and can increase its role. It first examines China's rights and duties under main international law instruments (UNCLOS, most important WTO agreements and IMO conventions). A second part analyses the political and institutional constraints for China to extend its participation in the governance of the region, both with regard to the Arctic Council rules of procedure, as well as with regard to the current features of Chinese's foreign policy.