



Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen
Institute for Human Sciences

Press release – 20 April 2026

Who Controls Whom? The New Global Balance of Power

The Institute for Human Sciences is delighted to invite you to its next Geopolitical Talk with Thomas Gomart, director of the Paris-based Institute of International Relations (IFRI). On 29 April, Gomart will join IWM Permanent Fellow Ivan Krastev for a discussion on the shifting global balance of power.

The world stands at a historic turning point where the international order established in 1945 is tilting. As the era of “naive globalization“ fades, a piercing question emerges: who controls whom in today’s interconnected system?

Geopolitics is now shaped less by isolated crises than by the interaction of systemic rivalries, often expressed through high-stakes personal duels. The struggle between Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy over Ukraine, the friction between Donald Trump and Ursula von der Leyen on the transatlantic alliance, and the clash between the Vatican and Silicon Valley over humanity’s future illustrate this shift. These rivalries reveal how power dynamics increasingly eclipse legal frameworks. For Europe, the situation is urgent. The continent faces triple pressure: military and technological strain from the United States, industrial competition from China, and aggression from Russia. Europe has the economic, military, and technological capacity to confront Russia by 2030—if it shows political will. It is no longer sustainable for 510 million Europeans to rely on 340 million Americans for security against a Russia that has chosen war.

Beyond borders, rapid technological change—especially artificial intelligence—is disrupting the global balance. In this environment, conflict and competition shape international relations, and identifying rare opportunities for cooperation requires recognizing the gravity of the moment and the narratives shaping the future.

The discussion will be moderated by IWM Albert Hirschman Permanent Fellow **Ivan Krastev**.



About the speaker:

Thomas Gomart has been director of the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) since 2015. He is a member of the scientific committee at the Institute of Advanced Studies in National Defense (IHEDN) and the editorial board of the French journals *Politique étrangère*, *Revue des deux mondes*, and *Études*. Gomart was also a member of the French Ministry of Armed Forces’ strategic review committee for the 2017 Strategic Review of Defense and National Security. A prolific author, he most recently published *Qui contrôle qui? Les nouveaux rapports de force mondiaux* (Paris: Tallandier, 2026). Gomart has been awarded the rank of Knight of the National Order of Merit.

About the event:

Geopolitical Talks is a series of public debates with leading foreign policy experts and former politicians, initiated by IWM Albert Hirschman Permanent Fellow [Ivan Krastev](#) in 2018. Previous speakers include the former Foreign Secretary of the Republic of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu; the former Foreign Secretary of India, Shivshankar Menon; and Comfort Ero, President of the International Crisis Group. The talks are organized in cooperation with the [Austrian Federal Ministry of Defense](#).

Save the date:

Who Controls Whom?

Geopolitical Talk with Thomas Gomart

29 April 2026, 18:00 CEST

IWM Library, Spittelauer Lände 3, 1090 Vienna

[Click here to register.](#)

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