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EXPERTS ASSESS GLOBALISATION LEADERSHIP

UNCERTAINTY LOOMS OVER OPEN GLOBAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Jean-Pierre Lehmann, Emeritus Professor at IMD and Founder of the Evian-Group on current issues of globalisation. Photo: AH

© “The global narrative of the 21st century will be written in Asia.” Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Lehmann, Emeritus Professor at IMD and Founder of the Evian Group, believes the current trend towards protectionism in the west, particularly with the election of Donald Trump, demands a re-evaluation of the future of the open global economic order. Lehmann and other experts examined the changing role of leadership in globalisation during the Preparatory Seminar. As the USA might be taking a step back from globalisation, China in particular may take on a more prominent role.

This assertion was echoed by Janwillem Acket, Chief Economist at Julius Bär. If Trump does not withdraw from his planned policies of isolationism, Acket believes China is ready to take the lead of shaping globalisation and has already staked a claim for the leadership role. With its “One Belt One Road” initiative the Chinese government realised the importance of connectivity and opened a new path for globalisation with its. The project consists of massive investment in the development of trade routes in Eurasia. “The trade routes alone will be a growth-enhancing

element, which will be considerable for all the countries concerned,” claims Acket.

However, Acket added, China's current heavy reliance on the global economy and its aims to reduce its dependency must not be ignored. In the midst of a major overhaul, China is transforming into an internally focused consumer-driven economy taking the USA as its role model.

Amid growing concerns about the current trend toward protectionism in the west, proponents of globalisation can find reasons for optimism, as Lehmann stated, referring to the key message of Chinese President Xi Jinping at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos. There, Xi urged the world to embrace free trade and investment liberalisation, while positioning his nation as the responsible promoter of globalisation.

“No one will emerge as a winner in a trade war,” Xi warned in his speech to the world's elite. The leader of the second largest economy spoke three days before Donald Trump gave his inauguration speech on