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The Architecture of China's Resilience: Planning, Law and Global Stability

As part of the Trento Festival of Economics 2026, the panel “Beijing’s Resilience” brought together leading international experts offered a timely perspective on China’s resilience and evolving trajectory. Moderated by Rita Fatiguso (Il Sole 24 Ore), the panel featured distinguished speakers including Zhang Chenggang, (Consul General of the People’s Republic of China in Milan), Kerry Brown (Lau China Institute, King’s College London), Ivan Cardillo (Institute of Chinese Law) and Yang Wang (The University of Hong Kong).

The dialogue focused on China’s resilience across planning, law, and stability. Firstly, Consul Zhang Chenggang greeted the audience officially: “China will continue to provide stability and certainty for the world economy, and we look forward to working together with Italy and other European countries for a new phase of pragmatic collaboration and development”, he stated.

Then the panel discussion began: asked what lies at the core of China’s resilience, **Kerry Brown pointed to “desire” as the key driving force.** China has built a strong narrative around overcoming challenges, supported by visible economic progress. Brown also highlighted the external environment, describing recent relations with the US as “a meeting of equals”. At the same time, he acknowledged the challenges: ageing population, environmental issues, and the limits of a centralised political system. While robotics and technological innovation may offer solutions, he described China as “an enormous social experiment” whose future resilience will depend on its ability to continue meeting the expectations of its people. Agreeing with Brown, **Yang Wang described resilience as the essential condition for sustained success.** It is the result of long-term planning, which includes being prepared for both internal and external adversities in case they arise - leading to “probably the most complete industrial ecosystem in the world in human history”. Wang also emphasised the need for international cooperation to manage changes; in his view, China is already putting this issue “on the table” with a pragmatic, non-ideological approach to collaboration. **Addressing the role of legislation in China, Ivan Cardillo argued that resilience is deeply embedded in the country’s legal and institutional system.** Echoing Yang Wang’s remarks, he explained that the Chinese approach to social transformation is not aimed at blocking change, but at becoming part of the transformation. “China has institutionalised resilience”, he stated, through a legal framework designed to support both governance and society in periods of rapid development. He emphasized that Chinese law is not defined solely by legislation, but also through interpretation and practice, creating an efficient balance between long-term planning and flexibility in the face of unexpected events.

On the role of the Communist Party, Kerry Brown argued that, in a complex society such as China, institutions are essential in providing unity, stability, and coherence. He described the Chinese Communist Party as “a cultural as much as a political organization”, with a century-long history and an extensive network that is almost as “a state within a state”. While acknowledging that the system is not pluralistic and remains controversial internationally, he stressed that China’s predictability and institutional coherence are particularly significant “in this moment of instability”. **Discussing whether China’s resilience is becoming increasingly attractive, Yang Wang** pointed to a growing movement of international academic talents. Many Chinese scholars who had built careers in the US are now returning, attracted by new opportunities and discouraged by a deteriorating academic environment there. This trend increasingly involves scholars from Europe and other Asian countries. According to Wang, China understood a long time ago that talent

development would become central in the age of AI and has invested heavily in attracting researchers and innovators. **Asked whether China could anticipate future regulations in emerging sectors, Ivan Cardillo** argued that the country's legal system is designed to support social and technological transformation rather than slow it down. In his view, resilience itself becomes "a way to boost innovation", allowing China to develop legal solutions earlier than other countries. He suggested that China is already emerging as a potential superpower in terms of legislation.

In closing, **on the question of what would happen if China lost its resilience**, Kerry Brown stressed that the world relies on China's predictability, warning that the consequences of instability would be significant. Yang Wang echoed this view, rejecting the idea that China is uniquely centralized and adding that similar perceptions could be applied elsewhere. Finally, Ivan Cardillo emphasised that resilience must be continuously nurtured across generations, concluding that it is essential to keep working on these values over time.

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