

# The EU's Endeavors to Achieve a Discernible Political and Security Role in Asia in the Framework of ASEM: The Taiwan Issue\*

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*Regionalism and interregionalism have become tools for diplomacy in the post-Cold War era. Successful European integration has heightened the European Union's (EU) desire to become a more effective global actor in international security. The Taiwan Strait is one of the most dangerous flash-points which might trigger a war in Asia. Escalation of the crisis in the Taiwan Strait would undeniably have severe economic, political, and perhaps even military implications for the EU. In the light of the EU's emerging regionalism with East Asia and its efforts to achieve a discernible political and security role in the region, there is an increasing awareness in the EU of the need for it to develop its own security perspective on China and to form its own approach toward the contentious cross-Strait issue.*

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\*For the purpose of this paper "China" is the People's Republic of China (PRC) and "Taiwan" is the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC). The term "East Asia" refers to the thirteen member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three (APT) (Brunei, Cambodia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam).

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Many would still argue that foreign policy beyond Europe's periphery is not really of interest to many of the member states of the European Union (EU). Nevertheless, it is apparent that the EU is taking an increasingly active role on the world's stage. After agreeing on their first *European Security Strategy* (ESS),<sup>1</sup> the EU governments managed to reach a consensus on various global challenges, and they are now striving to strengthen their common foreign policies. Proposals for a constitution allow for the establishment of a new EU diplomatic corps and the appointment of an EU foreign minister who would be responsible for implementing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>2</sup> An ardent debate is in progress among European policymakers regarding Europe's commitment in the field of international conflict resolution, and mounting attention is being given to increasing the EU's military capabilities and the deployment of multinational military forces (EU Battlegroups and Rapid Reaction Forces) for out-of-area operations. Even though the EU sees itself primarily as a civilian power, it does not ignore the need to endow itself with a military capacity in order to be a more effective and credible player in the global arena.

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<sup>1</sup>See *A Secure Europe in a Better World: The European Security Strategy* (Approved by the European Council, Brussels, December 12, 2003).

<sup>2</sup>The CFSP provides the central framework for EU foreign and security affairs. The Treaty of Maastricht, in force since 1993, created the EU as a structure consisting of three pillars: the European Communities, the CFSP, and the Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (PJCC). The CFSP has five key objectives: (1) to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence, and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter; (2) to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways; (3) to preserve peace and strengthen international security; (4) to promote international cooperation; and (5) to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. See European Commission, *External Relations: Common Foreign and Security Policy* (2002), [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm) (accessed October 2, 2006).

In the wake of progressive EU-Asia interregionalism, the EU has intensified its CFSP and has, as a rising global power, become more able to deal with security issues in East Asia. Increased interaction with East Asia has raised European concern for stability in that region. The Taiwan Strait is one of the three most dangerous flash-points in Asia which might trigger a war, and in a worst-case scenario, this could involve a nuclear exchange.<sup>3</sup> Various analysts have recently begun to criticize the EU's lack of depth and expertise in Asian and, more specifically, Chinese affairs. They have raised concerns about the EU's Taiwan policy and are calling for the EU to take a more active role in cross-Strait relations. Furthermore, they believe that a new, more prudent policy should be actively pursued in all relevant international fora, especially in the context of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the EU-China summits.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this article is to elucidate the EU's aspirations to be a global actor in Asian security affairs and the deficiencies in its strategy toward one of the most volatile spots in Asia—the Taiwan Strait—and to discuss the most recent changes in the EU's approach toward the issue. I will argue that the processes of regionalism and interregionalism have to some extent influenced the EU to engage more deeply with the Taiwan issue and respond to mounting calls to develop a more robust strategy toward China. Although Taiwan is not part of these thriving regional

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<sup>3</sup>The other two being the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula.

<sup>4</sup>See, among others: Günter Schubert, "Towards a New European Taiwan Policy? Some Preliminary Reflexions," *Asia Europe Journal* 1, no. 2 (May 2003): 263-280; Günter Schubert, "Becoming Engaged? The European Union and Cross-Strait Relations," *Asien*, no. 89 (October 2003): 5-25; Willem van der Geest, "Shaping Factors of EU-East Asia Relations," *Asia Europe Journal* 4, no. 2 (August 2006): 131-49; Axel Berkofsky, "EU-Taiwan: It's All Business," *Asia Times*, April 5, 2006; Axel Berkofsky, "Setting Course by the Trade Winds," *Taiwan Review*, June 1, 2006; David Shambaugh, "The New Strategic Triangle: U.S. and European Reactions to China's Rise," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 7-25; Adam Ward, "The Taiwan Issue and the Role of the European Union. Remarks to Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik" (CSIS Conference on China's Rise: Diverging EU-U.S. Perspectives, April 2005); Marcin Zaborowski, "Developing a European Security Perspective on China" (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, March 3, 2006), <http://www.iss-eu.org/activ/content/rep06-06.pdf> (accessed October 22, 2006); and Sebastian Bersick, "Strategic Considerations in the U.S.-China Relationship: A Role for Europe?" *Asia Europe Journal* 4, no. 2 (August 2006): 251-64.



processes, it is affected by them; socialization among European and Asian actors is developing norms of peaceful conduct which offer spillover benefits for Taiwan's peace and security. The EU's growing interregional influence could catalyze more open community-building in East Asia. The EU model of regional integration demonstrates an open regionalism that aspires to peace, prosperity, and democracy across and beyond the European region and thus presents a powerful stimulus for community-building in East Asia as well as for reconciliation and cooperation between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. I will base my arguments on the newly projected phenomenon of interregionalism. This concept will help to explain the recent impetus toward cooperation between the two regions as well as intraregional cooperation among the European and East Asian nations themselves. Since ASEM is the main multilateral venue for communication between Asia and Europe, I will focus more specifically on this interregional mechanism and its role for Taiwan. I will highlight the importance of ASEM for the EU's bilateral and multilateral engagement with China and the projection of its soft power. Social constructivism provides an avenue for utilizing this soft power. The theory of social constructivism will help me to show how interregionalism is enhancing regional collective identities and interests and explain the role of norms, identities, and power relations in the interregional processes.

In addition to examining the external dynamics reflected in the EU's comprehensive interregional policy, I will also examine the alteration in the EU's relations with Asia in terms of the EU's internal dynamics, epitomized by the progressive CFSP and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Interregionalism has encouraged the EU to unify its foreign policies and external relations and enhanced the development of the CFSP and ESDP. The EU's increasing concern about the cross-Strait issue will be demonstrated by examining two recent EU documents that might indicate a deeper involvement in cross-Strait relations by the EU in the future. Thus, this paper will feature both theory- and policy-oriented research in a normative form.

## **Progressive EU-Asia Interregionalism**

### *Assessing Regionalism and Interregionalism*

Studies on regionalism seem to have attracted a lot of attention in the last decade, primarily on account of developments in regional integration in Europe and East Asia. Nevertheless, there is still no coherent definition of regionalism or interregionalism among scholars. For the purposes of this paper, I define regionalism as a multidimensional political process of integration occurring between two or more countries in a specific international or global region.<sup>5</sup> This paper will follow the approach adopted by Van Langenhove and Costea in using the term "generation" when dichotomizing regionalism in order to avoid inconsistencies in comprehension.<sup>6</sup> Generally, most academics differentiate between "old" and "new" regionalism, and some perceive the evolution of regional integration in Europe as approaching a "neo-" or new regionalism, or—as Van Langenhove and Costea term it—a "third generation" regionalism, emphasizing the role of regions as global actors which may have deep repercussions on world order and global governance.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas first generation regionalism consisted of trade and economic integration, second generation region-building became more multidimensional and extended cooperation into the political domain and the development of regional foreign policies. Third generation regional integration is more extravert in nature, focusing on the external projection of the region and interregionalism, thus accentuating the region's own identity.<sup>8</sup> Thus, interregionalism can be seen as a product of second generation regionalism.

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<sup>5</sup>See Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell, eds., *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>6</sup>See Luk Van Langenhove and Ana-Cristina Costea, "The EU as a Global Actor and the Emergence of 'Third Generation' Regionalism" (United Nations University/Comparative Regional Integration Studies [UNU/CRIS] Occasional Paper O-2005/14); and Luk Van Langenhove and Ana-Cristina Costea, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity: From 'New Regionalism' to Third Generation Regionalism?" (Network of European Studies Centers in Asia, July 2006), <http://www.ieem.org.mo/nescap/papers.html> (accessed October 4, 2006).

<sup>7</sup>Van Langenhove and Costea, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity."

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



In general, interregionalism is divided into bilateral interregional and trans-regional relationships. Bilateral interregionalism refers to group-to-group relationships between two distinct and separate regions. Transregionalism implies more diffuse membership patterns or, as defined by Dent, "the establishment of common 'spaces' between and across regions in which constituent agents (e.g., individuals, communities, organizations) operate and have close associative ties with each other."<sup>9</sup>

Interregionalism has been seen as an important driver for the EU's foreign policies and external relations. It is argued that interregionalism constitutes an additional level to regionalism for interacting in the world system, as new avenues for region-to-region interaction provide new opportunities to deal with security issues.<sup>10</sup> The EU is the most prominent regionalist entity utilizing these avenues for managing its economic and political relations with Asia. Its ambition to play the role of a full-fledged global actor, its increasing efforts to externally project the region as a unified entity with its own foreign policy identity, and its support of interregionalism, coupled with the strengthened role of regions as global actors at the United Nations, are evidence that the present EU is on the threshold between second and third generation regionalism.<sup>11</sup> It is not my intention here to theorize about regionalism or interregionalism. This has already been done by many eminent scholars.<sup>12</sup> Bringing up these key concepts

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<sup>9</sup>Christopher M. Dent, "From Inter-regionalism to Trans-regionalism? Future Challenges for ASEM," *Asia Europe Journal* 1, no. 2 (May 2003): 224.

<sup>10</sup>Fredrik Söderbaum, Patrik Stålgren, and Luk Van Langenhove, "The EU as a Global Actor and the Dynamics of Interregionalism: A Comparative Analysis," *European Integration* 27, no. 3 (September 2005): 365-80.

<sup>11</sup>Van Langenhove and Costea, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity."

<sup>12</sup>For further conceptualizations and elaborations on different characteristics of regional integration processes, see Andrew Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics," *Review of International Studies* 21 (1995): 331-58; Byörn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, "The New Regionalism Approach," *Politeia* 17, no. 3 (1999): 6-21; Byörn Hettne, Andreas Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, eds., *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 2000); Jürgen Rüländ, "The European Union as an Inter- and Trans-regional Actor: Lessons for Global Governance from Europe's Relations with Asia" (Paper presented at the conference on the European Union in International Affairs, National Europe Centre Paper, no. 13 2002), <http://www.anu.edu.au/NEC/Archive/ruland.pdf> (accessed October 1, 2006); Jürgen Rüländ, "Inter-

will, however, provide a solid foundation for examining the implications of inter- and intra-regional cooperation among European and East Asian actors with a specific focus on the Taiwan Strait.

### *Social Constructivist Perspective*

According to the theory of social constructivism, there is a reciprocal interaction between human subjects and the social world. Institutions and actors are mutually conditioning entities and there is always the possibility that each can bring about change in the other.<sup>13</sup> Normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures and exert a certain degree of influence on social and political action. International relationships are "socially constructed" by subjective factors such as identities, strategic cultures, and norms.<sup>14</sup> Through practice, countries form norms of behavior which are, according to constructivists, just as essential to the structure as material resources such as military strength or economic resources. Structures are formed by actors' discursive practices and habituation processes, and their normative dimensions reciprocally affect actors' behavior. The actors both form and are formed by the normative structures of society. Therefore, there is always a possibility that people can change the world by changing how they think. The ongoing and dynamic process of social

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regionalism and the Crisis of Multilateralism: How to Keep the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Relevant," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 11, no. 1 (March 2006): 45-62; Dent, "From Inter-regionalism to Trans-regionalism"; Christopher M. Dent, "The Asia-Europe Meeting and Interregionalism: Toward a Theory of Multilateral Utility," *Asian Survey* 44, no. 2 (March-April 2004): 213-36; Jörn Dosch, "Changing Security Cultures in Europe and Southeast Asia: Implications for Interregionalism," *Asia Europe Journal* 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 483-501; Julie Gilson, "New Interregionalism? The EU and East Asia," *European Integration* 27, no. 3 (September 2005): 307-26; Söderbaum, Stålgren, and Van Langenhove, "The EU as a Global Actor"; Van Langenhove and Costea, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity"; Luk Van Langenhove and Ana-Cristina Costea, "Interregionalism and the Future of Multilateralism," UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers, O-2005/13; Fredrik Söderbaum and Luk Van Langenhove, "Introduction: The EU as a Global Actor and the Role of Interregionalism," *European Integration* 27, no. 3 (September 2005): 249-62; and Michael Reiterer, "Interregionalism as a New Diplomatic Tool: The EU and East Asia," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 11, no. 2 (June 2006): 223-43.

<sup>13</sup>Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 335-70.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425.

interaction continually creates and re-creates identities and interests and the perceived social reality. According to social constructivists, actors' identities and interests are shaped through the mechanisms of imagination, communication, and constraint.<sup>15</sup> Institutionalized norms and ideas condition actors' consideration of how they should act, what they believe is necessary and possible to achieve a certain goal. Interactions define people's perceptions of what is acceptable and what is not, which thereby eventually become an unconscious part of our identity. People's behavior is normally (communicatively) justified by referring to a certain international normative precept which is morally forceful in a given social context. As Reus-Smit argues, since appealing to established norms and ideas to justify behavior is only a viable strategy if the behavior is in some measure consistent with the proclaimed principles, the very language of justification is a constraint by itself.<sup>16</sup>

In order to understand the behavior of a state, we need to understand the international social context in which it evolves. Since state actors define social structures such as the international system, they are also able to re-define it. Social facts are dependent on existing human agreements at a given time but they are treated as objective facts. For example, the internationally dominant model of "sovereignty" should not be taken as a given and determinate norm but as something we have created and thus something that could also be re-created or modified. The international norms that uphold the phenomenon of sovereignty only exist and persist because of the continued practices of the international community. National sovereignty is among the most robust of international legal principles, exercising a powerful influence on national behaviors. Nevertheless, like other international norms, it is evolving and is being redefined by the forces of globalization and international cooperation. The issue of Taiwan's contested sovereignty and its identity formation is crucial in Taiwan's inter-

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<sup>15</sup>Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, by Scott Burchill et al. (London: Palgrave, 2001), 218.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 219.



national relations since it forms the psychological foundation for its role and behavior patterns in the international arena. The "one China" policy and its various versions adopted by the international community have had a significant impact on Taiwan's international participation, since recognition of China automatically denies the existence of Taiwan. Taiwan is being deprived of full international recognition which is a core element of international legal sovereignty and a manifestation of statehood. According to constructivists, recognition is merely the "intersubjective understandings and expectations" that other nations have toward the nation they recognize.<sup>17</sup> Being a social construct, sovereignty does not precede the international system; it is constituted by the international system. For example, Slovenia, which declared its independence from Yugoslavia in June 1991, could only exercise the rights and privileges of statehood after being recognized by the European Community in January 1992 (other nations gradually followed suit). The reason behind the recognition was a change in the attitudes and beliefs of European governments. Therefore, changes of practice and changes in beliefs can bring about a change in international affairs.

Turning to the phenomenon of regionalism, constructivists would analyze it in terms of norms and identities wherein regional socialization fosters regional consciousness and regional identity-building. Inter-regional links would therefore be seen as helping to further define regional identity formation, and ASEM is an instrument for promoting these collective regional identities.<sup>18</sup> Socialization in the East Asian region through ASEM should therefore gradually lead to the development of norms of peaceful conduct that would reorient the regional actors away from resorting to war as a means of problem-solving. As a result, such a process, although Taiwan is excluded from it and is not addressed in the meeting's agenda, would offer spillover benefits for Taiwan's peace and security

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<sup>17</sup>See note 14 above.

<sup>18</sup>Julie Gilson, ed., *Asia Meets Europe: Interregionalism and the Asia-Europe Meeting* (London: Edward Elgar, 2002).



owing to the normative power of multilateralism and cooperative security.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, sympathy for Taiwan among the regional and international community and China's desire to be perceived as a "responsible stakeholder" in the international community would also, according to constructivists, exert a certain degree of pressure on Beijing's behavior. The international context certainly plays an important role in how China defines itself and how it defines the world.

Social constructivism helps to explain how the EU utilizes inter-regionalism as a tool for projecting its soft power to East Asia and China, especially. Soft power refers to the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion. Means of exercising soft power include culture, political values, and foreign policies.<sup>20</sup> Ikenberry and Kupchan argue that normative persuasion occurs through "ideological persuasion and transnational learning through various forms of direct contact with elites in these states, including contact via diplomatic channels, cultural exchanges, and foreign study."<sup>21</sup> It is undoubtedly in the interest of the EU to be able to persuade or induce China, as opposed to using coercive strategies that might be very costly in terms of material resources, human lives, and the stature and credibility of the EU. In fact, the EU's role as a normative persuader is frequently heard; its China policy explicitly states that "the EU's fundamental approach to China must remain one of engagement and partnership"<sup>22</sup> and that the EU wishes to continue and further intensify its comprehensive engagement. Nevertheless, because of the normative nature of the constructivist theory and the variability of the con-

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<sup>19</sup>Amitav Acharya, "International Relations Theory and Cross-Strait Relations" (Paper presented at the International Forum on Peace and Security in the Taiwan Strait, Taipei, July 26-28, 1999).

<sup>20</sup>Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup>John G. Ikenberry, and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 290.

<sup>22</sup>European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament EU-China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities* (2006), [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/china/docs/06-10-24\\_final\\_com.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/china/docs/06-10-24_final_com.pdf) (accessed October 25, 2006).

stitutive forces it emphasizes (ideas, norms, culture, identity), arguments cannot be easily verified and require further debate and argument. This paper will, however, provide enough evidence to argue that constructivist mechanisms do have observable effects and that ideationally based processes might play an important role in the Taiwan-China relationship.

### **Taiwan: An Ignored Member of East Asia**

East Asia is the most important subregion of the Asia-Pacific in terms of its political, economic, and military power, and one of the world's most dynamic and fastest-growing regions, based on its impressive economic growth<sup>23</sup> and vast energy reserves.<sup>24</sup> Although regional cooperation in East Asia got off to a late start, the region is emerging as a new core engine of politico-economic growth and development and is expanding its role and influence in the world community. The most significant recent developments in regional cooperation include the proliferation of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs),<sup>25</sup> the emergence of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT)<sup>26</sup> framework, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),<sup>27</sup> and

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<sup>23</sup>From 1980 to 2003, East Asia's average annual GDP growth was 9.3 percent compared to 5.9 percent for the rest of the world. See Denis Hew, "Economic Integration in East Asia: An ASEAN Perspective" (Paper presented at the APEC 2005 International Symposium "Towards a New Asian Order and Solidarity," hosted by the Hankyoreh Foundation for Reunification and Culture, Busan, South Korea, November 11-12, 2005).

<sup>24</sup>China, for example, has the potential to become the world's biggest wind energy market by 2020. See Greenpeace, "China Has Potential to Be World's Biggest Wind Energy Market by 2020," <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/china-has-potential-to-be-worl> (accessed September 5, 2006).

<sup>25</sup>By the end of 2004, there were seventy-two FTA projects in the Asia-Pacific and of these, fifty-two projects involving the East Asian states have been signed or are being negotiated. See Christopher M. Dent, "Bilateral Free Trade Agreements: Boon or Bane for Regionalism in East Asia and the Asia-pacific?" *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2005): 287-314.

<sup>26</sup>APT is the dialogue process that brings together the ten ASEAN countries plus China, Japan, and South Korea and thus presents an exclusive Asian regionalism. It is one of the most notable initiatives in building an EAC, aimed at greater regional economic coordination. The cooperation was formally institutionalized in 1999 (see ASEAN official website).

<sup>27</sup>The SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization established in Shang-

the East Asian Summit (EAS)<sup>28</sup> framework, aimed at achieving deeper political and economic integration and establishing an East Asian Community (EAC).<sup>29</sup>

Taiwan, not being recognized as an independent state, is excluded from the processes of regionalism in East Asia. Its inability to participate in East Asian FTAs and the region's accelerating integration is certainly a major concern. In fact, Taiwan is excluded from almost all multilateral political and economic mechanisms in the region.<sup>30</sup> Continued intimidation by China has prevented Taiwan from engaging in such key mechanisms as the APT and FTA processes. Up to now, Taiwan has only succeeded in negotiating FTAs with some of the smaller countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations, and those are not part of the East Asian region.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Taiwan is the only East Asian country which is excluded from the major first-track multilateral security mechanism in the region, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEM.

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hai on June 15, 2001, by six countries—China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The SCO arose out of the loose security group, the "Shanghai Five," formed in 1996 as a confidence-building measure that comprised every current SCO member except Uzbekistan. The SCO is primarily a security mechanism, aimed at expanding and addressing the social and economic concerns of the region and thereby becoming an influential multilateral organization. See SCO official website <http://www.sectSCO.org/html/00026.html> (accessed October 20, 2006).

<sup>28</sup>The EAS was originally devised by the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and the East Asia Study Group (EASG) in 2001. Its aim is to build an EAC. The EAS is supposed to gradually replace the APT Summit, with the objective of creating an East Asian Free Trade Area (EAFT) and thus becoming the dominant regional institution in East Asia. The first EAS was held on December 14, 2005, in Malaysia, and its membership included the ASEAN countries, China, Japan, and South Korea, as well as India, Australia, and New Zealand. See Geung Chan Bae, "Towards the East Asia Summit and the East Asian Community" (Paper delivered at the APEC 2005 International Symposium "Towards a New Asian Order and Solidarity," Busan, South Korea, November 11-12, 2005).

<sup>29</sup>The impetus behind the establishment of the EAC is coming from ASEAN, whose economies were seriously damaged by the 1997-98 East Asian financial crisis. After the formation of APT, the EAC idea was discussed more deeply at the first EAS in Malaysia.

<sup>30</sup>APEC is the only international body in the Asia-Pacific region of which Taiwan is a regular member (under the name "Chinese Taipei").

<sup>31</sup>Christopher M. Dent, "Taiwan and the New Regional Political Economy of East Asia," *The China Quarterly*, no. 182 (June 2005): 385-406.

## **The Role of ASEM**

ASEM is the largest Europe-Asia grouping, with thirty-nine members encompassing the (now-enlarged) EU, all the ASEAN countries, and China, Japan, and South Korea.<sup>32</sup> Established in 1996, ASEM is the highest-level forum for dialogue between Europe and East Asia, covering cooperation in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. ASEM's main purposes are considered to be the fostering of closer interregional ties between East Asia and the EU, the facilitation of increased socialization between the European and East Asian peoples, and the development of ASEM's multilateral utility functions.<sup>33</sup> ASEM has been one of the most important instruments for consolidating the EU's role on the global stage. Consequently, it set off a process of intraregional cooperation within East Asia, helping to define and encourage a new East Asian identity and regionalism.<sup>34</sup>

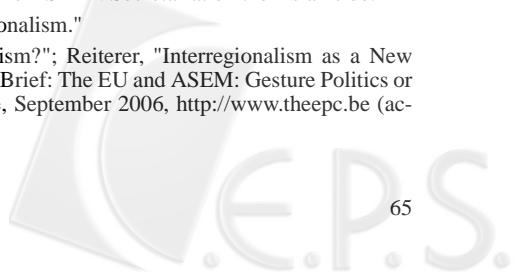
Although ASEM serves as the main medium for EU-Asia interregional cooperation and it is increasingly covering security issues, the highly volatile Taiwan Strait issue is not included on the ASEM security agenda and has never been officially brought up due to China's persistent opposition. The rising importance of ASEM and its potential for acquiring the authority to set the agenda for EU-Asia interaction in both the economic and political spheres has caused Taiwan to be more vigilant of the effects of this emerging partnership. Taiwan sees ASEM as a threat that serves to increase the island's geopolitical and geo-economic marginalization. However, there is a growing consensus that the status of Taiwan should be reconsidered, and that Taiwan should be allowed to be a part of ASEM

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<sup>32</sup>By the next ASEM Summit, to be held in Beijing in 2008, the number of cooperation partners will have increased from thirty-nine to forty-five—Bulgaria and Romania from Europe, and India, Mongolia, Pakistan, and the ASEAN Secretariat on the Asian side.

<sup>33</sup>Dent, "From Inter-regionalism to Trans-regionalism."

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. See also Gilson, "New Interregionalism?"; Reiterer, "Interregionalism as a New Diplomatic Tool"; and Jonas Knops, "Policy Brief: The EU and ASEM: Gesture Politics or Fruitful Dialogue?" European Policy Centre, September 2006, <http://www.theepc.be> (accessed October 5, 2006).



either as an associate or a full member. To circumvent the EU's "one-China" policy and Beijing's objections, Taiwan would need to adopt a flexible approach to avoid transgressing the limits of its contested sovereignty. Taiwan has already demonstrated flexibility in adopting a "pragmatic" strategy for accessing international organizations, applying less politically contentious titles such as "Chinese Taipei" to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and the Olympic movement, and "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu" (台澎金馬個別關稅領域) to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>35</sup>

Social constructivists see norms and identities as crucial components in the making of foreign policies and region-to-region relations. From the European perspective, awareness within and among member states of the EU about the Taiwan Strait issue is increasing. The ASEM process has structurally affected the EU members' foreign policies so that they address the realities in East Asia, and it has greatly enhanced their interest in the region,<sup>36</sup> particularly its security issues. Only recently, the incumbent EU commissioner for external relations acknowledged for the first time that the situation in the Taiwan Strait is one of the three major threats to peace and stability in East Asia and that the issue will dominate the EU's political agenda in East Asia.<sup>37</sup> European people are now more inclined to appreciate the importance of Taiwan's participation in the international community, and as a result they are more concerned that the Taiwanese people are being taken care of. The European Parliament, which is directly elected by the people of Europe, has been more outspoken on the Taiwan issue over the years, and has established its own approach. It strongly supports Taiwan's participation in ASEM, assuming that its participation in a multilateral forum would facilitate cross-Strait dialogue by encouraging

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<sup>35</sup>Chih-Chieh Chou, "Taiwan's Tasks to Face the Emerging Interregional Partnership between the European Union and East Asia," *Views & Policies* 1, no. 3 (March 2005): 1-38.

<sup>36</sup>For a detailed analysis see César de Prado Yepes, "The Effect of ASEM on European Foreign Policies," *Asia Europe Journal* 3, no. 1 (April 2005): 25-35.

<sup>37</sup>Benita Ferrero-Waldner, "Security in the Far East" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, SPEECH/05/421, July 6, 2005), [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/news/ferrero/2005/sp05\\_421.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/news/ferrero/2005/sp05_421.htm) (accessed May 2, 2007).

Taiwan and China to build a constructive channel of communication. It has recommended to the European Commission that the political pillar of the ASEM process should include a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peace-keeping—e.g., supporting cross-Strait political dialogue—urging it to propose that a dialogue be started within ASEM on security matters with a view to defining conflict prevention mechanisms.<sup>38</sup>

From the normative side, ASEM is providing a useful mechanism for promoting democratic values and the pursuit of human rights as well as for balancing geostrategic interests in a sensitive region and thus providing regional stability. No matter how much it is criticized for its limited power,<sup>39</sup> ASEM is an important mechanism through which the EU can engage with China and project its soft power through its norms, values, rules, and principles, which are releasing the invisible forces which will gradually transform development and affect China's thinking. Consequently, this facilitates the further peaceful transformation of China into a more open society that is integrated into the new world order. Whereas the formalized annual EU-China summit enables heads of government to express their views on a bilateral level, ASEM is the main venue for high-level multilateral exchanges, as well as being a platform for people-to-people contacts involving nonofficial sectors and civil society at large. As the broader forum provides a less contentious framework for dealing with sensitive trade-related issues such as human rights and pollution, ASEM offers a channel for enhancing EU-China bilateral relations.<sup>40</sup> With such a multi-channel approach to China and both bilateral and multilateral engagement, the EU is employing a very distinctive strategy.<sup>41</sup>

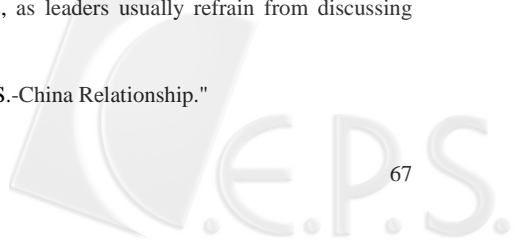
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<sup>38</sup>European Parliament, *European Parliament Resolution on the Commission Communication on Europe and Asia: A Strategy Framework for Enhanced Partnerships*, COM (2001) 469-C5-0255/2002-2002/212-(COS).

<sup>39</sup>Like the ARF, which has up to now not been able to deal with sensitive security issues such as cross-Strait relations, ASEM has been unable to achieve any meaningful political and security dialogues or policy initiatives, as leaders usually refrain from discussing contentious issues.

<sup>40</sup>Gilson, *Asia Meets Europe*, 74.

<sup>41</sup>Bersick, "Strategic Considerations in the U.S.-China Relationship."



ASEM offers an opportunity for the EU to implement its priorities by utilizing its soft power capabilities among East Asian actors and thereby create an opportunity for not only the integration of Taiwan into the East Asian economic and political arrangement but also the peaceful resolution of the cross-Strait issue.<sup>42</sup> With these considerations in mind, Taiwan has been very attentive to the emerging EU-Asia partnership, evaluating both its negative and potentially positive effects on Taiwan's future status in the region.

### EU-Asia Interregionalism on Security Issues

#### *The European Security Strategy*

The EU's desire for a more prominent role in global security and a more substantial commitment in the field of international conflict resolution has led to the development of military and civilian capacities for effective conflict prevention and crisis management not only in the EU's immediate neighborhood but also in regions far beyond. Conflict prevention and crisis management tasks (the so-called "Petersberg tasks") are defined in the Treaty on European Union (Article 17) and the EU's first-ever security strategy (the ESS) adopted in December 2003. These cover the following: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, crisis management and peacemaking, joint disarmament operations, support for third countries combating terrorism, and security sector reform.<sup>43</sup> With the creation of the ESDP within the overall framework of the CFSP, the EU acquired concrete operational capabilities and military means and transformed itself into a nascent military actor. The ESS, which provided some kind of political framework for the future development of the ESDP, started to concep-

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<sup>42</sup>Sebastian Bersick, "The Role of Taiwan in the EU's East Asia Strategy" (Paper presented at the International Conference on EU Relations with Taiwan and China, hosted in Taipei by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December 1-2, 2006).

<sup>43</sup>See note 1 above; and Western European Union, "Petersberg Declaration" (1992), <http://www.weu.int/documents/920619peten.pdf> (accessed October 23, 2006).



tualize European foreign policy in a more strategic sense, identifying and responding to threats to European security.<sup>44</sup> The guidelines include both long-term, essentially civilian measures, as well as short-term measures which may include both civil and military instruments such as those under the ESDP. The development of a European Rapid Reaction Force<sup>45</sup> within the ESDP has for the first time given the EU a military capability that it can use to restore security and establish stability when its traditional soft power instruments for conflict prevention prove ineffective.<sup>46</sup>

### *The EU-Asia Security Agenda*

Interregional cooperation has become an important component of EU foreign policy and external relations. An important milestone in EU-Asia relations was passed in 1994, when the EU endorsed the "New Asia Strategy" and became a full member of the major regional security forum in Asia, the ARF. Since then, interregional relations have steadily intensified through different types of agreements, showing growing complexity and diversification.<sup>47</sup> The EU's general policy toward Asia is one of engagement, aimed at enhancing partnerships; increasing the political and economic presence of the EU within Asia; balancing economic, political,

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<sup>44</sup>The ESS seeks to provide a framework for future EU external action, and for the use of its external policy instruments toward that end; it identifies terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime as the key threats to the EU's security. See note 1 above.

<sup>45</sup>In 1999, the EU was aiming to develop a 60,000-strong military force that could be deployed within sixty days for a period of one year from 2003 on. However, in 2004, with the "Headline Goal 2010," this was scaled down considerably to the creation of nine rapidly deployable battlegroups, with 1,500 troops each by 2007, for deployment to international hotspots. The battlegroups are to be ready to respond to a UN request anywhere in the world within fifteen days and should be able to secure an area for up to thirty days, possibly three months. The plan also calls for the EU to coordinate strategic lift equipment by 2005, with fully efficient air, land, and sea strategic lift capabilities by 2010, and to make available an aircraft carrier with an air wing and escort by 2008. See European Commission, *External Relations: Common Foreign and Security Policy*.

<sup>46</sup>European Commission, *External Relations: Common Foreign and Security Policy*.

<sup>47</sup>The most important EU Asia policy documents are: "Towards a New Asia Strategy" (1994), "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnership" (2001), and "Asia Strategy Paper" (2004), in the European Commission, *External Relations: The EU's Relations with Asia*, [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/asia/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/asia/index.htm) (accessed August 2, 2007).

and sociocultural relations; and dealing with Asian states and groups as equal partners.<sup>48</sup> The EU's main focus is on contributing to peace and security; strengthening mutual trade and investment flows; promoting the development of the less prosperous countries; contributing to the protection of human rights and the spread of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law; building global partnerships and alliances with Asian countries; and strengthening the awareness of Europe in Asia.<sup>49</sup> The EU has been intensifying its political and security dialogue with the key Asian countries at both summit and ministerial level, and through joint cooperation committees, expert-level discussions, and multilaterally via the UN bodies. The security agenda stresses the need for stronger engagement on regional and global security issues, stronger dialogue and cooperation on conflict prevention issues, and enhanced cooperation on justice and home affairs issues.<sup>50</sup> The EU's Asia Strategy Paper, which provides a single strategic framework for all multi-country programs in Asia, is aimed at supplementing bilateral programs in areas where support is more effectively provided on a multi-country basis. The paper focuses on the areas of trade and investment, higher education, the environment, anti-terrorism, and support for specific subregions. On peace and security, the paper stresses the common challenge of guaranteeing political stability and avoiding conflict, as well as common objectives in areas like anti-terrorism, conflict prevention, drugs, and migration, and the need to reinforce dialogue on these issues through ASEM, ARF, or the UN.<sup>51</sup> The new Regional Strategy Paper for Asia, which will set out the strategic and financial perspectives for the years 2007-13, has been delayed and is still under preparation.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>The European Commission, *Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme for Multi-Country Programmes in Asia 2005-2006*, [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/asia/rsp/rsp\\_asia.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/asia/rsp/rsp_asia.pdf) (accessed August 2, 2007).

<sup>52</sup>See John Quigley, "Europe's Asia Strategy for 2007-13 Floundering," *EurAsia e.Bulletin*, June 21, 2007, [www.eias.org/publications/bulletin/2007/articles/Asia\\_Strategy\\_210607.pdf](http://www.eias.org/publications/bulletin/2007/articles/Asia_Strategy_210607.pdf) (accessed August 8, 2007).

Söderbaum, Stålgren, and Van Langenhove outlined three important roles for interregionalism in the EU's foreign policy and external relations: the promotion of liberal internationalism, building the EU's identity as a global actor, and the promotion of the EU's power and competitiveness.<sup>53</sup> On the European side, EU-Asia interregionalism has provided an impetus to integrate the EU members' foreign policies and enhance the collective power of the EU. Since joining the ARF, the EU has attempted to integrate the issue of security cooperation into the ASEM process, where EU-Asia interregionalism is best manifested.<sup>54</sup> The ESS, likewise, envisions a security role for Europe in Asia. Essentially, the first successful example of EU conflict mediation in Asia is considered to be its initiative for a new round of inter-Korean talks in May 2001.<sup>55</sup> The first ESDP crisis management mission in Asia was launched in Aceh province, Indonesia (Aceh Monitoring Mission) in 2005. The Aceh mission gave the EU new confidence in its ESDP, and created a precedent for future such deployments (both civilian and military) elsewhere in the world.<sup>56</sup> In my view, however, this developing military capability will not affect the structural nature of European power; it is not aimed at engaging Europe in power politics, and it will remain a resource of soft power, not hard power.

### **The EU's Evolving China and Taiwan Policy**

When analyzing the EU's policy toward China and Taiwan, we should keep in mind the specific characteristic that determines the EU's rela-

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<sup>53</sup>Söderbaum, Stålgren, and Van Langenhove, "The EU as a Global Actor and the Dynamics of Interregionalism."

<sup>54</sup>European Commission, *Perspectives and Priorities for the ASEM Process into the New Decade* (COM 2000 [241], April 18, 2000), [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/asem/asem\\_process/work\\_grp2000htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asem/asem_process/work_grp2000htm) (accessed May 8, 2007).

<sup>55</sup>See Stephanie Anderson, "The Changing Nature of Diplomacy: The European Union, the CFSP, and Korea," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 6, no. 4 (December 2001): 465-82.

<sup>56</sup>John Quigley, "ESDP in Asia—Aceh Mission Extended," *EurAsia Bulletin* 10, no. 1 & 2 (January/February 2006): 17.



tionship with this issue. Although the EU is the most advanced regional political and economic entity in the world equipped with sovereign powers, it is still far from constituting a European state which could act as a single unitary actor. The term most frequently used to depict it is "supranational organization." Thus, being a political entity under construction, comprised of member states which do not always agree on foreign, security, and defense issues due to their own selfish national interests, especially in a face-off with Beijing over Taiwan, it is very difficult for the EU to build and follow a common foreign policy toward China and the Taiwan Strait. Before the EU can attain efficacy and credibility as a global power and make any significant impact on developments across the Taiwan Strait, member states need to harmonize their individual national policies and work together in a coordinated manner. The combined weight of all the member states would give the EU a more effective leverage role and make it less susceptible to retaliation from China.

In addition to these complexities, which are due to the different levels of European governance, the EU's relations with Taiwan are also characterized by the "institutional triangle" of the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament.<sup>57</sup> The divergence between the foreign policy lines of the Parliament and the Council is the most evident. Whereas the Parliament favors the enhancement of EU-Taiwan relations on a practical basis, the Council is more concerned about China's growing importance in the world market and the international arena. While there are various factors behind these divergent positions, the crucial cause lies in the composition of these institutions: while the Council, representing heads of state and governments, is sensitive to economic and commercial matters and has to adhere meticulously to the "one China"

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<sup>57</sup>The EU's decision-making process in general involves the European Parliament, which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them; the Council of the European Union, which represents the individual member states; and the European Commission, which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole. In principle, it is the Commission that proposes new laws, but it is the Parliament and Council that adopt them. See European Commission, *European Union Institutions and Other Bodies* (2006), [http://europa.eu/institutions/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/institutions/index_en.htm) (accessed October 25, 2006).

policy,<sup>58</sup> keeping Taiwan at a distance politically so as not to irritate Beijing, representatives of the European peoples sitting in the Parliament are less concerned about such political sensitivities. To be sure, the Parliament is not a genuine legislative assembly and has no legally binding powers to impose its decisions and thus still plays a rather marginal role with respect to the EU's external relations.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, it is a unique institution of political governance which embodies and represents the political perceptions and views of the European public and its civil society. Moreover, it has gained more power and influence over the years and has proven to be more sovereign in expressing European concerns on the Taiwan issue.

The EU has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan as it pursues a "one China" policy and recognizes the government of the PRC as the sole legal government of China.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the development of formalized links and dialogue is constrained. The institutional framework for nonpolitical exchanges is based on a network of nonofficial representative offices<sup>61</sup> developed both in Europe and in Taipei. Currently, sixteen of the twenty-seven EU member states have trade offices in Taiwan and there are nine-

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<sup>58</sup>The "one China" notion is the foundation stone of the PRC government's policy on Taiwan. The PRC interprets this as the existence of only one China in the world—the People's Republic of China—whereas the Taiwan government considers "one China" as consisting of two equal political entities on either side of the Taiwan Strait. The governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) maintains that: "Taiwan is a nation with independent sovereignty, named as The Republic of China... Taiwan is not part of The People's Republic of China" and that "Taiwan and the People's Republic of China are two nations that do not have mutual ownership, mutual reign, or mutual jurisdiction." See DPP, *China Policy White Paper* (March 6, 2007), <http://www.dpp.org.tw> (accessed May 4, 2007). The EU is committed to ambiguity on the "one China" issue and consciously notes the difference between the EU's "one China policy" and the orthodox "one China principle" imposed by China.

<sup>59</sup>Yuchun Lan, "The European Parliament and the China-Taiwan Issue: An Empirical Approach," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 9, no. 1 (March 2004): 115-40.

<sup>60</sup>Cooperation between the EU (then the European Economic Community) and China originates in the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975. Ever since, the EU has supported the government of the PRC. See European Commission, *External Relations: The EU's Relations with China* (2007), [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/china/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/china/intro/index.htm) (accessed May 03, 2007).

<sup>61</sup>Representative offices perform most of the functions of embassies, but remain informal. Taiwan's missions abroad are placed in the general category of "representative office"; however, the great majority of these are actually called the "Taipei Economic and Cultural Office" (TECO).

teen Taiwan representative offices in various EU states.<sup>62</sup> The opening of the European Economic and Trade Office (EETO) in Taipei in 2003 was an important milestone in the development of Taiwan-EU relations, as it gave the EU a presence in Taiwan and to some extent normalized (non-diplomatic) relations. Nevertheless, the office has no diplomatic status and is headed by a "principle administrator" dispatched by the Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission, rather than the Directorate General for External Relations.<sup>63</sup> Annual consultations between the European Commission and Taiwan have been held alternately in Brussels and Taipei and are no longer secret; however, they are strictly limited to commercial, cultural, and scientific topics.<sup>64</sup>

Taiwan is not treated as a political entity but merely as a separate economic and commercial entity. The experience that economic development can flourish without government involvement has boosted the two sides' economic and commercial relations which remain very close. Formal contacts between the EU and Taiwan go back to 1981, when the two sides reached agreements on a variety of trade-related issues.<sup>65</sup> Since 1988, European business interests have been represented by the European Chamber of Commerce in Taipei (ECCT) which provides a bridge between European companies and all levels of government in Taiwan and promotes bilateral commercial relations.<sup>66</sup> By supporting Taiwan's membership of the WTO in 2002 the EU facilitated the integration of Taiwan into regional arrangements and further strengthened economic cooperation. The WTO is the first official international organization that Taiwan has joined since being excluded from the United Nations. WTO accession authorized Taiwan to participate in international economic activities and it has had a

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<sup>62</sup>See Bureau of Consular Affairs, *ROC (Taiwan) Embassies*, <http://www.boca.gov.tw> (accessed November 27, 2006).

<sup>63</sup>Shaocheng Tang, "EU's Taiwan Policy in the Light of Its China Policy," *Asia Europe Journal* 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 511-25.

<sup>64</sup>See note 59 above.

<sup>65</sup>Robert Ash, "Economic Relations between Taiwan and Europe," *The China Quarterly*, no. 169 (March 2002): 178-79.

<sup>66</sup>The European Chamber of Commerce official website [www.ecct.com.tw](http://www.ecct.com.tw) (accessed October 20, 2006).

significant impact on Taiwan's diplomatic relations, cross-Strait relations, and its economic development in general.

Despite adhering to the "one China" policy, the EU firmly supports the peaceful resolution of differences over sovereignty between Taiwan and China and rejects the use or threat of force, insisting that any arrangement between Beijing and Taipei can only be achieved on a mutually acceptable basis.<sup>67</sup> Since the EU's interests are best served by the maintenance of stability in the Taiwan Strait, the EU has recently shown signs of getting more actively involved in the China-Taiwan issue. The European Parliament, which has been issuing friendly statements on behalf of Taiwan since the 1980s, has in the last two years become more vocal in expressing concern on the Taiwan issue, as observed in a number of its recent resolutions.<sup>68</sup> These resolutions request the EU to recognize the importance of a democratic Taiwan for other Asian countries, to support Taiwan's participation in international organizations (WTO, the World Health Organization [WHO], and the World Health Assembly) and in ASEM, to oppose the lifting of the EU arms embargo<sup>69</sup> against China, and to raise objections to

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<sup>67</sup>European Commission, *External Relations: The EU's Relations with Taiwan* (2006), [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/taiwan/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/taiwan/intro/index.htm) (accessed October 20, 2006).

<sup>68</sup>See the following European Parliament resolutions: on relations between the EU, China, and Taiwan and security in the Far East (July 7, 2005, Document P6\_TA [2005] 0297); on prospects for trade relations between the EU and China (October 13, 2005, Document P6\_TA [2005] 0381); on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Union — 2004 (February 2, 2006, Document P6\_TA [2006] 0037); on Taiwan (May 18, 2006, Document P6\_TA [2006] 0228); and on EU-China Relations (September 7, 2006, Document P6\_TA [2006] 0346).

<sup>69</sup>The EU imposed an embargo on arms exports to China to signal disapproval of Chinese actions during the June 1989 Tiananmen Square (天安門廣場) incident. In 2003, the EU declared its intention to lift the embargo; the embargo remained, however, due to strong pressure from both inside and outside the EU, especially from the United States and various human rights groups, and due to China's enactment of the ASL. China's policy paper on the EU stated that the EU should "lift its ban on arms sales to China at an early date so as to remove barriers to greater bilateral cooperation on defense industry and technologies," and since then China has progressively intensified its campaign to have the embargo lifted. There are three crucial reasons why the embargo remains intact: the human rights issue (despite some progress, human rights in China are by no means satisfactory from an EU standpoint); the security issue (the pace and scope of China's military buildup are closely observed); and pressure from other countries, especially the United States (lifting the embargo would greatly aggravate the transatlantic relationship).

Beijing's Anti-Secession Law (ASL).<sup>70</sup> The EU Presidency itself was the first to express concern about stability in the Taiwan Strait in response to the enactment of the ASL and as a consequence it decided to continue with the arms embargo on China.<sup>71</sup> From this perspective as well, the EU is playing a role in maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait.

### **Increased Interest in the Taiwan Strait?**

The new agenda for the EU-China relationship proposed in the 2006 Communication of the European Commission to the Council and the Parliament devotes an unprecedented amount of attention to the cross-Strait issue, although the extent of its ability to affect the EU and its member states in the formulation of policies is hard to measure.<sup>72</sup> In terms of security, the Commission believes that China should be leveraged on the basis of values and engagement into the full range of EU policies. It cautions China about its untenable foreign policy of "non-interference." Recognizing that the strategic security situation in East Asia is of "significant interest" and that the EU has a "significant stake" in the maintenance of cross-Strait peace and stability, the Commission calls for a more effective, publicly guided foreign and security policy with regard to its strategic interests in the region. The Commission emphasizes that the EU's policy should be clear to both sides of the Strait, taking into account (1) the EU's opposition to any measures which would amount to a unilateral change of the status quo; (2) its strong opposition to the use of force; (3) its encouragement for pragmatic solutions and confidence-building measures; (4) its support for dialogue between all parties; and (5) its continuing strong

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<sup>70</sup>The Anti-Secession Law was adopted at the Third Session of the Tenth National People's Congress on March 14, 2005. See "Anti-Secession Law," *People's Daily Online*, March 14, 2005.

<sup>71</sup>European Council, *European Presidency Declaration on the "Anti-Secession Law" by China* (March 3, 2005, CL05-072EN), [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_4470\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_4470_en.htm) (accessed May 02, 2007).

<sup>72</sup>European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament* (2006).



economic and trade links with Taiwan.<sup>73</sup>

The Communication signals the EU's desire to play a more responsible role in the Taiwan Strait. The first two points reflect the EU's strategy of deterring Taiwan or China from redefining the status quo in response to China's extending its missile deployments across the Strait from Taiwan or President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) of Taiwan calling for a referendum on independence. The EU opposes steps that could lead to increased tension. Points three and four express the EU's firm stance toward a peaceful resolution of the cross-Strait dispute based on an arrangement acceptable to both parties. By supporting dialogue between the parties, the EU implies that Beijing should talk with the government in Taiwan and not just the opposition parties. The last point reveals the importance of the EU's economic ties with Taiwan.

The Commission further calls on China to increase its transparency regarding military expenditure and objectives, and expresses the need for the EU to improve its capacity to analyze China's military development. In connection with the arms embargo, improvement of cross-Strait relations is put forward as a precondition for its lifting.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the Commission's proposal includes a recommendation for enhancing academic expertise on China in the EU and for the establishment of a new independent EU-China Forum.<sup>75</sup> In the last few years, the EU has increased its investment in research on Asia, especially in the area of regional security, so that it can develop its own independent approach toward the region and more specifically toward China. This is evidence that the EU recognizes that it can no longer neglect China's impact on its own national security. Parallel to that, EU-Taiwan academic exchange has been strengthened (the Erasmus Mundus Program, the Seventh Framework Program for scientific research and cooperation),<sup>76</sup> and seminars and workshops on cross-Strait relations

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>European Economic and Trade Office, [http://www.deltwn.ec.europa.eu/EN/eu\\_taiwan/overviewofeu\\_taiwanrelations.htm](http://www.deltwn.ec.europa.eu/EN/eu_taiwan/overviewofeu_taiwanrelations.htm) (accessed May 2, 2007).



and the role the EU can play in them have increasingly appeared on the agendas of major European think-tanks such as the European Institute for Asian Studies, the European Alliance for Asian Studies, the Asia-Europe Foundation, the European Policy Centre, the Europe-China Academic Network, and the EU Institute for Security Studies. The Europe-China Academic Network, for example, was assigned an important role in offering policy advice to the EU Commission in 2006, with a special emphasis on relations between the EU, China, and Taiwan.<sup>77</sup> This network's potential policymaking influence, combined with lobbying by the Parliament and the Commission's recent initiative which was preceded by the Council's conclusions on the future EU-China relations, are good signs that the EU is engaging more thoroughly in the Taiwan issue.

Although the more authoritative conclusions on EU-China relations adopted by the European Council on December 11-12, 2006, are not as explicit as the Commission's initiative, this document emphasizes the importance of stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourages both sides to "take all possible measures to resolve differences peacefully through negotiations between all stakeholders concerned" as well as to "jointly pursue pragmatic solutions related to expert participation in technical work in specialized multilateral fora."<sup>78</sup> The EU's official China policy has not changed, but the EU has revealed that it is not indifferent to the situation in the Taiwan Strait and is interested in being involved in the issue. Taiwan has become more present in EU statements.<sup>79</sup> Whether or not these documents indicate a change in the EU's involvement in the Taiwan Strait issue has yet to be seen. The lack of concrete and legally binding acts is often

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<sup>77</sup>The Europe-China Academic Network (ECAN) website, <http://www.ec-an.eu> (accessed October 10, 2006).

<sup>78</sup>Council of the European Union, "EU-China Strategic Partnership – Council Conclusions Provisional Version" (16291/06, Presse 353), Brussels, December 11-12, 2006, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu> (accessed December 12, 2006).

<sup>79</sup>For a more detailed analysis of the EU's official documents and statements see: Finn Laursen, "The Politics and Economics of EU-China/Taiwan Relations: A European Perspective"; and Shaocheng Tang, "Recent EU's Policy towards Taiwan: Continuity and Change" (Papers presented at the 23rd Taiwan-European Conference on the Emerging Global Role and Tasks of the European Union, Taipei, December 19-20, 2006).

mentioned as one of the reasons for the weak commitment of European governments to the Taiwan Strait issue. Nevertheless, these two documents reveal that the EU is able to deal with the Taiwan issue in a non-contentious way. Given that they form a precursor to the negotiation of a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which will outline the future EU-China relationship, the earnestness of the EU's interest in stabilizing cross-Strait relations has yet to be confirmed.<sup>80</sup>

### **The EU's Role in the Taiwan Strait**

As previously outlined, the EU has been progressively developing its military and civilian capacities for carrying out conflict prevention and crisis management tasks. It has developed a sophisticated set of schemes to prevent, de-escalate, and resolve conflicts which can be employed in any coordinated CFSP effort. Given the increasing importance of the EU's global posture and its international responsibilities, it will be able to play a prominent role in the security of the Taiwan Strait, using the civilian and military instruments conceptualized in the guidelines of the ESDP. Even a credible domestic military buildup might exercise considerable leverage on Beijing.

The United States plays a key strategic role in cross-Strait relations due to its military presence and its "dual deterrence" policy toward both China and Taiwan, and therefore Washington cannot be neglected when framing conflict resolution mechanisms for the Taiwan Strait. The current global security partnership between the EU and the United States does not commit the EU to any deployment of the European Rapid Reaction Force alongside U.S. forces in the event of an outbreak of armed conflict across the Strait.<sup>81</sup> However, the NATO alliance system would make it

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<sup>80</sup>European Commission, *External Relations: The EU's Relations with China* (2007).

<sup>81</sup>European Commission, *External Relations: The European Union and the United States - Global Partners, Global Responsibilities* (2006), [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/us/intro/docs.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/us/intro/docs.htm) (accessed October 21, 2006).



difficult for the EU to act independently in a Sino-American crisis, since nineteen out of the twenty-seven EU countries are members of NATO. Moreover, as early as 1995, the United States and the EU pledged to "work together to reduce the risk of regional conflict over the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan, and the South China Sea,"<sup>82</sup> and there are increasing calls for a deepened EU-U.S. strategic dialogue which would include the Taiwan issue and discuss the possibilities for a peaceful solution to the cross-Strait dispute.<sup>83</sup>

Stability in the Taiwan Strait is sustained by an implicit collective defense arrangement involving Taiwan, the United States, and Japan, and its foundations are very ambiguous in security policy terms. Many scenarios can be developed for cross-Strait conflict, and the risk of misperception, miscalculation, and misjudgment is high.<sup>84</sup> In the event of a Taiwan Strait crisis, the EU would undoubtedly face a major dilemma regarding its position in the conflict and responsibility for crisis management or conflict resolution. According to Coppieters, the EU's specific strategic culture, as observed in its individual historical experiences and political culture, implies that its approach to conflict management and conflict resolution is prudent, and this will continue to restrain its involvement in the cross-Strait issue.<sup>85</sup> It is likely that the only circumstances in which the EU would justify an explicit declaration of independence by Taiwan would be if China used force against the island and subsequently committed serious human rights violations. Nevertheless, the EU's varied

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<sup>82</sup>"Presidency of the European Union, Joint EU-U.S. Action Plan" (December 3, 1995), [http://www.eu2006.at/en/The\\_Council\\_Presidency/EU-USSummit/ImportantDocuments/ActionPlan.pdf](http://www.eu2006.at/en/The_Council_Presidency/EU-USSummit/ImportantDocuments/ActionPlan.pdf) (accessed May 2, 2007).

<sup>83</sup>See, for example, note 41 above and Michael Reiterer, "Japan and the European Union: Shared Foreign Policy Interests," *Asia Europe Journal* 4, no. 3 (October 2006): 333-49.

<sup>84</sup>For a detailed analysis see Masako Ikegami, "Risk of the Cross-Strait Conflict and the EU's Role for Conflict Prevention" (Paper presented at the International Conference on EU Relations with Taiwan and China, hosted in Taipei by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December 1-2, 2006).

<sup>85</sup>Bruno Coppieters, "The European Strategic Culture on Secession and the Cross-Strait Relations" (Paper presented at the International Conference on EU Relations with Taiwan and China, hosted in Taipei by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December 1-2, 2006).

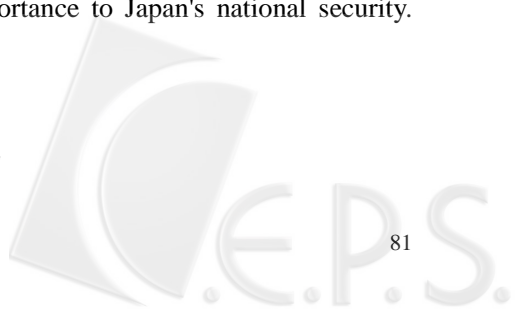
approaches to a number of secessionist conflicts make predicting how the EU and its member states would react to a cross-Strait armed conflict an extremely arduous task.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, notwithstanding the EU's firm support for a peaceful resolution of the issue, it remains unclear how or if the EU, despite the ASL, would oppose the use of force by Beijing against Taiwan in the event of a change in the status quo by the ruling DPP.<sup>87</sup> The ESS, from 2003, which serves as a framework for the ESDP, does not mention the Taiwan question and keeps the EU's strategy toward the issue ambiguous. Moreover, the operational strategy on hard security issues is still in the process of development, and the ESDP still requires more political and economic commitment from the member states, especially in elaborating the ideas within the security strategy.

Generally speaking, the strategic dimensions of the Europe-Asia partnership are rather underdeveloped, and the EU has yet to draft a coherent strategy for regional security and stability and enhance dialogue on security. As regards the Taiwan Strait, the EU has yet to figure out how to evaluate the "Taiwan issue" in the context of its Asia strategy. The EU remains uncertain about its security role in East Asia and especially about how closely it should coordinate its policy with that of the other two great powers in the region, the United States and Japan. Taiwan has emerged as a new factor in the EU's relationship with the United States and Japan, and coordination on this issue with these two states remains vital. Although the EU and the United States frequently find themselves at a "strategic cross-roads," their views of China as an actor in global security affairs have gradually become more congruent, especially as regards encouraging China to acquiesce to responsible international actions. Engaging a rising China will certainly be one of their greatest common challenges. The EU is aware that Japan will also be very attentive to the EU's China policy when assessing its own relations with the EU. Stability in the Taiwan Strait is of vital importance to Japan's national security.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Tang, "Recent EU's Policy towards Taiwan."



Thus, coordinated strategic dialogue on security in East Asia between the EU, the United States, and Japan is to be strongly welcomed. In-depth strategic discussions surrounding the issue of Taiwan could in many ways contribute to an understanding of their mutual concerns and their comprehension of the dynamics in the Taiwan Strait, and thus promote regional stability and cooperation.

Although the EU has no direct strategic or political interests in the Taiwan Strait, nor does it have the kind of military power necessary to exert its influence on Beijing (unlike the United States), it may still possess enough leverage to prevent a potential cross-Strait crisis. Most analysts suggest that the EU's influence should continue to come from its soft power.<sup>88</sup> Despite its deficiencies, the EU has sufficient instruments of persuasion to set its political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others.<sup>89</sup> To what extent this "normative power" is affecting China is not clear; nonetheless, China has made enormous progress in transforming itself into a responsible international actor, and as long as it remains engaged, democratic reforms are inevitable. Accordingly, a policy of engagement oriented toward democratic change through trade, aid, diplomacy, and cultural influence is considered to be the best route forward in dealing with China. If it becomes actively engaged in the issue, the EU could have a positive influence on the political stalemate that currently exists between China and Taiwan, and could contribute to a sustainable solution acceptable to both parties. The EU could play a more important role in developing initiatives that contribute to resolving the conflict. As Schubert maintains, the EU is in a better position to assume the role of a mediating third party than the United States. He argues that "any U.S. attempt to be more than a caretaker of non-aggressive behavior would most certainly provoke strong reactions by the PRC," whereas an EU attempt to influence

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<sup>88</sup>See note 42 above; Zaborowski, "Developing a European Security Perspective on China"; Ikegami, "Risk of the Cross-Strait Conflict and the EU's Role for Conflict Prevention"; and Coppieters, "The European Strategic Culture on Secession and the Cross-Strait Relations."

<sup>89</sup>Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

the mediation process with its "soft power," given its lack of geostrategic interests in Asia, would face milder resistance.<sup>90</sup> Pressure from the EU would not be looked upon as skeptically as that exerted by the more feared "unilateralist" United States. Moreover, as previously outlined, the ASEM regime offers a powerful channel for projecting the EU's soft power in Asia through its norms, values, rules, and principles, thereby facilitating the integration of China into the new world order.<sup>91</sup> Interregionalism and the ASEM process in particular constitute a unique element of the EU's approach toward China, providing the EU with an additional diplomatic tool for engaging China and promoting the norms of peaceful conduct and open regionalism and thus contributing to stability in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>92</sup>

The EU could also make use of its conflict prevention and crisis management instruments, which embrace not only peacekeeping but also peacemaking measures. The EU has been rather successful in building peace and stability since World War II.<sup>93</sup> This valuable experience in resolving tensions and achieving successful economic and political integration could be employed in constructing an East Asian Community as well as serving as a model for future cross-Strait relations.<sup>94</sup> Although there are

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<sup>90</sup>Schubert, "Towards a New European Taiwan Policy?" 278.

<sup>91</sup>Bersick, "Strategic Considerations in the U.S.-China Relationship."

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Van Langenhove and Costea, "EU's Foreign Policy Identity."

<sup>94</sup>A number of scholars have discussed the applicability of the EU model to East Asia and cross-Strait integration. See, among others: Peter Drysdale and David Vines, eds., *Europe, East Asia, and APEC: A Shared Global Agenda?* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mordechai E. Kreinin and Michael G. Plummer, *Economic Integration and Asia: The Dynamics of Regionalism in Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific* (Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2000); Schubert, "Towards a new European Taiwan Policy"; Craig Parsons and J. David Richardson, "Lessons for Asia? European Experiences in American Perspective in Legitimizing Market Integration," *Journal of Asian Economics* 14, no. 6 (January 2004): 885-907; Dong-ching Day and Alvin Yuan-ming Yao, "EU Model and Cross-Strait Integration," *East Asia* 21, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 3-24; Michael G. Plummer and Erik Jones, "EU and Asia: Links and Lessons," *Journal of Asian Economics* 14, no. 6 (January 2004): 829-42; Kiyohiko Fukushima, "Building East Asia Community: Learning from Europe" (Tokyo Club Foundation for Global Studies, Conference paper November 8-9, 2004), <http://www.tcf.or.jp/> (accessed October 15, 2006); Berkofsky, "EU-Taiwan"; Zaborowski, "Developing a European Security Perspective on China"; Xiaokun Song, "Cross-Strait Integration à la Européenne? Perceptions of Relevance of the European Experience in the Region" (Paper presented at the conference

many limitations to applying the EU model to other areas, it does provide some valuable lessons. The prevention of war and the securing of economic growth are major drivers behind European integration, and they can be a source of inspiration for cross-Strait integration too. The EU model is a gradual and voluntary integration process in which each state's sovereignty and will is fully respected by other member states, and it suggests that integration could be institutionalized on the basis of common interests and ideology. Verbal and military intimidation, combined with preventing Taiwan from joining world organizations, will not help Beijing befriend the Taiwanese people. The EU model also provides learning opportunities for economic relations between Taiwan and China.<sup>95</sup>

Taiwan is the EU's fourth most important individual trading partner in Asia with total trade amounting to US\$47.7 billion.<sup>96</sup> Given that economic relations remain the driving force behind the development of its relations with Taiwan, the EU could project its soft power into Asia by further enhancing economic ties with the island. After all, the EU's economic presence in the area and the trade-related instruments at its disposal are not negligible. Strengthening economic and trade relations with Taiwan would not threaten relations with China. One positive step toward Taiwan's participation in the East Asian regionalization process was the EU consenting to Taiwan's membership of the EU's Asia-Invest Program<sup>97</sup> in 2006. Allowing Taiwan to participate in the Asia-Europe Business Forum, which

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Taiwan-China Cross-Strait Relations: What Role for the EU? hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, September 20, 2005); Der-Chin Horng, "What Lessons from the EU Model for a Taiwan-China Free Trade Agreement" (Paper presented at the International Conference on EU Relations with Taiwan and China, hosted in Taipei by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December 1-2, 2006); and note 42 above.

<sup>95</sup>Horng, "What Lessons from the EU Model."

<sup>96</sup>Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, "Trade and Economic Relations between Taiwan and the EU" (Brussels, February 2007), <http://www.roc-taiwan.org/public/Attachment/731918481171.pdf> (accessed August 2, 2007).

<sup>97</sup>Asia-Invest Program was launched in 1998 and aims to promote the internationalization of European and Asian small and medium-sized enterprises. See Europe Aid, *Asia Invest*, <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/asia-invest/html2002/main.htm> (accessed May 3, 2007).



runs parallel with the ASEM process and provides it with valuable business input, could be a first step toward implementing the aims outlined in the latest EU documents. This initiative could be a sign of sincerity behind the EU's rhetoric on Taiwan and could reflect its interest in playing a more visible role in maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to the EU's economic weight, its maintenance of the arms embargo also carries a symbolic political meaning that is greater than would be the immediate military impact of its lifting.<sup>99</sup> Lifting the embargo might suggest that the EU is willing to ignore the original reason for it—China's human rights violations—and to ignore also China's arms sales, its encouragement of an arms race, the upgrading of China's military capability, and the increasing imbalance of power in the Taiwan Strait, and might even be seen as a tacit acceptance of any future resort to force by China against Taiwan. Thus, the arms embargo is seen as conveying a message about the state of the EU's relations with China and Taiwan, as well as with the United States and Japan.<sup>100</sup> While many analysts believe that it is only a matter of time before the embargo is lifted,<sup>101</sup> others are of the opinion that the member states are in no hurry to change the present situation and that they view the embargo as one of very few levers the EU can use to exert pressure on China.<sup>102</sup> The embargo serves as a diplomatic mechanism for criticizing China's human rights situation and its policy toward Taiwan. China is very sensitive about how it is perceived by the

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<sup>98</sup>See note 42 above.

<sup>99</sup>Pascal Vennesson, "Lifting the EU Arms Embargo on China: Symbols and Strategy" (Paper presented at the International Conference on EU Relations with Taiwan and China, hosted in Taipei by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December 1-2, 2006).

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>See, for example, Kristin Archick, Richard F. Grimmett, and Shirley Kan, "European Union's Arms Embargo on China: Implications and Options for U.S. Policy" (CRS Report for Congress, May 27, 2005), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32870.pdf> (accessed November 23, 2006).

<sup>102</sup>See Zaborowski, "Developing a European Security Perspective on China"; Vennesson, "Lifting the EU Arms Embargo on China"; and Frans Paul van der Putten, "The EU Arms Embargo, Taiwan, and Security Interdependence between China, Europe, and the United States," in Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, ed., *China and the World*, special edition of *The Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* (July 2007).

international community and is not pleased to be put into the same basket as Sudan, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe, the other three countries against which the EU maintains an arms embargo.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, as a total consensus by all twenty-seven EU member states is needed to lift the embargo, it is unlikely to be lifted in the near future.

### Conclusion

EU-Asian relations have strengthened enormously in recent years and are increasingly gaining a role in defining and shaping international politics. Interregionalism, and ASEM especially, has nourished a common identity and coherence not only among East Asian actors but also among the EU member states. At the same time, interregionalism has structurally affected the EU members' foreign policies and increased their interest in East Asia. It has empowered the EU to act collectively in pursuing its agreed foreign policy goals within the framework of its CFSP and thus enhanced its global weight. Consequently, the EU has become more capable of dealing with security issues in East Asia and stability in the Taiwan Strait. It has also become more competent in engaging China and more able to project its soft power. By utilizing its soft power capabilities, the EU is facilitating the integration of China into a new multi-level world order and simultaneously assimilating Taiwan into East Asian regionalism by catalyzing a more open community-building, thus enlarging Taiwan's international space. The European people, as represented by the increasingly attentive European Parliament, have become more concerned about China's suppression of Taiwan and its national well-being. They have become more sympathetic to Taiwan, for example, by openly endorsing Taiwan's bid to join the WHO.<sup>104</sup> That Taiwan should be allowed to par-

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<sup>103</sup>van der Putten, "The EU Arms Embargo, Taiwan, and Security Interdependence."

<sup>104</sup>See Charles Grant, "The EU, the U.S., and Taiwan" (Centre for European Reform, April 16, 2007), <http://centreforeuropeanreform.blogspot.com/2007/04/eu-us-and-taiwan-by-charles-grant.html> (accessed July 30, 2007).

ticipate meaningfully in the international community, regardless of its official title or circumstances, has gradually come to represent the general consensus of the EU, especially where participation in the technical work of the WHO is concerned.<sup>105</sup> The increasing attention that European academics are devoting to Taiwan and their potential influence on policy-making has not gone unnoticed. Debates among EU officials and analysts regarding re-assessment of the EU's Taiwan policy have been growing more intense.

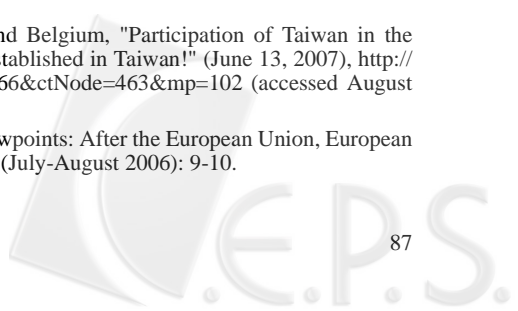
Although modification of the EU's general policy on Taiwan does not seem to be a realistic prospect, Taiwan, which is a significant factor in regional security, cannot be ignored in the EU's strategic calculations. There are at least two good reasons why it is in Europe's interest to get involved in the Taiwan issue. First, the EU's increasingly important role in maintaining global stability calls for it to shoulder the burden of global responsibility. The EU realizes that it needs to engage in matters of Asian security and play a more active role in resolving problems in the Taiwan-China relationship. Although the EU enjoys the opportunities offered by American regional engagement in Asia, it certainly does not want to be strategically excluded from Asia. For both Asia and Europe, the United States has been and continues to be a key partner; however, they both feel the need to temper the perceived U.S. unilateralism and strengthen a multi-lateral international system and improve global governance. Second, any crisis in the Taiwan Strait would undeniably have severe economic and political implications for the EU. Therefore, its involvement is essential if it desires peace and stability, since building peace requires proactive efforts.

The EU is still seen as a political pigmy as it lacks the means to implement a competent independent foreign policy.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, many

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<sup>105</sup>Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, "Participation of Taiwan in the WHO: A Focal Point of the WHO to Be Established in Taiwan!" (June 13, 2007), <http://www.roc-taiwan.org/be/ct.asp?xItem=31966&ctNode=463&mp=102> (accessed August 3, 2007).

<sup>106</sup>Malcolm Subhan, "Other Voices, Other Viewpoints: After the European Union, European Dis-Union," *Eurasia Bulletin* 10, no. 7 & 8 (July-August 2006): 9-10.



scholars remain skeptical about whether the EU will be either willing or capable of more vigorous engagement in the resolution of the cross-Strait conflict, since its means for intervention are confined to statements by the EU institutions.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, the EU has no independently derived strategic assessment and security perspective on China and Taiwan to inform its policy, and the new Council conclusions on EU-China relations adopted according to the Commission's proposal are not as explicit as would be desired by some security analysts. To be sure, it is questionable whether this ambiguous diplomatic formulation is sufficient to prevent a cross-Strait crisis and preserve the status quo. It is uncertain how long the current state of relations between China and Taiwan can be sustained; after all, the "status quo" is not static and will be influenced by changes within China and Taiwan and how they are interpreted by the other side.<sup>108</sup> What is clear, however, is that the EU has recognized the need for a more coherent and focused security policy toward East Asia, and believes that its pragmatic soft power approach, combined with its limited military and civilian capabilities to prevent and mediate worldwide conflicts, will in the long run compensate for its lack of hard power instruments. The lack of military means of persuasion could be compensated for by the EU's economic power, diplomatic skill, and political credibility. The EU's ambitions in relation to security and crisis management, headline goals, battle groups, and an increasing orientation toward civilian capabilities have gained increasing impetus. If the EU's constitutional treaty is ratified and adopted, Europe's capacity to conduct a more consistent, coherent, and effective diplomacy will be greatly enhanced, bringing the EU closer to its aim of becoming a unified global player. Nevertheless, with further enlargement still to come, it would be premature to analyze the potential effects of the treaty since there are too many unknown variables.

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<sup>107</sup>See, among others, Laursen, "The Politics and Economics of EU-China/Taiwan Relations"; and Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Cross-Strait Relations: What Role for the European Union?" *ECAN Policy Brief #4* (May 2006).

<sup>108</sup>See, for example, June Teufel Dreyer, "The Fictional 'Status Quo'," *Taipei Times*, December 20, 2006, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2006/12/20/2003341215> (accessed May 2, 2007).

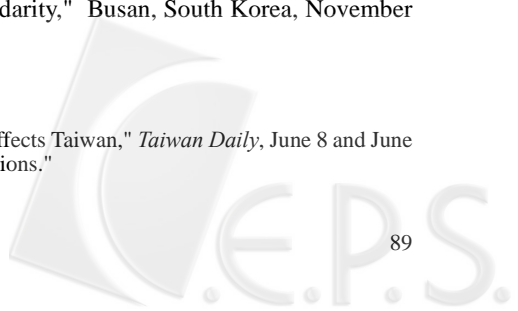
Whether the EU's steadily increasing interest in East Asian security and stability in the Taiwan Strait has anything to do with the impact of regional and interregional processes is not clear and should not be over-exaggerated. However, the continuing progress of EU-Asia relations will have far-reaching implications for the EU's drive to integrate the foreign policies of its member states, for the EU's global role, and thus for its attentiveness to relations with China and Taiwan. The Taiwan Strait conflict is an extremely complex, sensitive, and dynamic issue and requires close observation by the institutions of the EU and its respective member states. For many observers, the "one China" policy, which has become a sine qua non for dealing with Beijing, is merely a diplomatic fiction in flux.<sup>109</sup> And as such, it is not unsusceptible to being re-defined with reference to evolving international realities.

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<sup>109</sup>I-chung Lai, "How the One-China Policy Affects Taiwan," *Taiwan Daily*, June 8 and June 14, 2004; and Cabestan, "Cross-Strait Relations."



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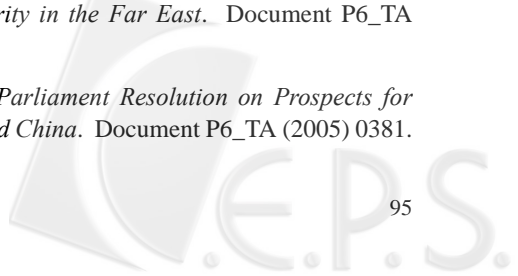
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