

Multilateral Co-operation and Building Trust: Ideas for EU-Asian Relations

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Summary

This paper considers the relationship between the European Union and Asia with the purpose of developing new ideas for multilateral co-operation and building of trust in the area of comprehensive security. Specifically, this paper focuses on cooperation between Europe and Asia in three multilateral institutions: Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. The paper notes that Asia is a contested concept and that none of the institutions is universal in its membership. Next, the paper reviews the recent history of Europe-Asia relations and notes that extensive areas of cooperation have already been mapped out. The paper therefore argues that Europe must prioritize immediate and long-term challenges to Asian regionalism and regional security. Six major issues are then highlighted: the ASEAN Charter and community building, Australia's proposal for the creation of an Asia Pacific Community, the situation Myanmar, conflict resolution in regional hot spots, mitigation of the impact of climate change and developing safe nuclear energy. The paper way to address these issues and build trust is through the cluster where individual European and Asian states take the lead on issues of particular concern.

Keywords: Asia, European Union, multilateral co-operation, comprehensive security, ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEM, regionalism, regional security

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on multilateral co-operation and building of trust between Europe and Asia with a specific focus on cooperation in multilateral security institutions. Three major institutions are considered: the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia-Europe Meeting process (ASEM). The concept of security is considered in its broadest or most comprehensive sense to include both traditional and non-traditional security challenges and threats.

This presentation is one of three comprising Session 3, „Ideas for an EU-Asian Agenda“. Previous sessions have addressed the drivers and impact of globalization and change on Southeast Asia. Suffice it to say that globalization generates both centripetal and centrifugal forces. Globalization, for example, has created a chain of production networks and economic linkages than span East Asia. Globalization has also accelerated the spread of democratic norms and universal values of human