A ROAD MAP TO STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:
EU Security-Policy Options in Southeast Asia

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Executive summary

The strategic significance of Asia has become a central element in all substantive thinking on European defence and security, albeit not as a first-order concern. In recent years, the European Union has significantly upgraded the quality and breadth of its relations with the region, consciously incorporating issues of defence and security, while also investing in regional partnerships such as that with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Yet there is a clear gap between the EU's narrative on its role in Southeast Asian security and the more dismissive attitudes that some within the region continue to hold. This matters to the EU in its search for strategic relevance and recognition, not least in its ambition to become a member of two of the region's emerging key strategic forums: the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM–Plus).

In a marketplace crowded with potential partners for ASEAN, this report provides a road map for the EU as it strives to bridge the evident gap in narratives and strengthen its strategic relevance to the region. The challenge is one not just of substance but also of perception. This report therefore looks at how the EU might better leverage its current efforts, and provides new policy proposals for consideration. EU ambitions and prospects for engagement in the assorted ASEAN–Plus processes are also examined.

Part One: Working within existing capacities

While the EU may not be as visible in Southeast Asian security as it would like, the organisation already sponsors a range of activities in this area. The 2012 ASEAN–EU Plan of Action lists 22 points in political and security cooperation alone. Thus, there is not necessarily a requirement for more activity, but rather for better targeting of activity that is in turn more effectively promoted and perceived as sustainable by the EU's partners within the region.

Target

Building on its current broad base, EU engagement in ASEAN security now needs to progress beyond workshops to more targeted activities. Priorities for EU-sponsored activities should be judged ruthlessly. They must either deliver tangible results on matters of operational detail – making substantive contributions to ASEAN security and thereby building up a body of evidence on what the EU has been doing – or aim at a more strategic level by holding the attention of senior policymakers, particularly those in EAS member states. One way to link the two could be to pursue more joint activities in the ASEAN region in partnership with other (non-ASEAN) EAS members. Japan is one obvious partner, Australia another. Here, dialogue needs to progress from talking to each other about the region to talking *together* with others and *in* the region.

Promote

While useful targeted activity will have its own impact, this report makes several proposals aimed at increasing the visibility of what is already going on. This includes the selection of a strictly limited number of flagship programmes for EU engagement in the region, designed to help draw the attention of ASEAN states and to make the EU's assorted 'packages' of 'new initiatives' more accessible and comprehensible to the majority of observers within the region whose focus is not on the EU.[1]

Another suggestion for boosting the EU's profile on defence and security is to improve credibility by maximising the use of uniformed interlocutors, where possible and appropriate, including those from the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the EU Military Committee (EUMC). The EU's outreach courses on its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), designed to explain the EU's broader profile in defence and security to ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) country officials, appear to have been particularly well received. It is

likely that more could be made of these courses, including perhaps through the development of an alumni network of participants and with a follow-up event in Southeast Asia in a few years' time – nominally to provide updates on the EU's CSDP activities, but also to promote the EU's contributions and to cultivate its network in the region.

The EU could also consider embracing with greater enthusiasm its position in the South China Sea as a non-claimant but interested party, and one lacking any hard-power aspirations in Asia. This report proposes a four-point strategy to that effect, which includes EU funding for real-time public documenting of the militarisation of the sea, as part of a wider strategy of 'name and shame' designed to impose a reputational cost on states that violate the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

Sustain

The EU needs not only to sharpen but also to sustain its commitment to Southeast Asia, positioning itself as a reliable partner, if not a primary power. It needs to persuade ASEAN states of the importance of their role in ensuring the success of the EU's 'beyond China, beyond trade' agenda. This includes ASEAN's consideration of imaginative approaches to loosening the dilemma in which the EU perceives itself as being caught – namely, that it is being asked to do more to demonstrate its utility on issues of peace and security without gaining access to the major forums at which these issues are being discussed (the EAS and the ADMM–Plus). This dilemma is further heightened by the EU's perception that ASEAN states are deprioritising the ARF, the one ASEAN-centred regional forum to which the EU has access. This report offers no judgement on the validity of EU ambitions with regard to the EAS and the ADMM–Plus, but it does address the handling problems such ambitions present to the EU's partners in the region. Greater flexibility and imagination could ease this tension. Could the ADMM–Plus invite the EU to participate in its next exercise on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), in recognition of EU interests and capacities in this field? Can EU sensitivities on the choreography of ASEAN summits be addressed?

Part Two: Working with ASEAN-centred institutions

ASEAN–EU interactions are likely to form the focal point for much of the implementation of the principles and plans agreed at the ARF. More than any other form of EU multilateral engagement in the region, ASEAN–EU relations have to focus on delivering results and promoting practical cooperation in accordance with clear priorities. In this format, substantive targeted action could establish a body of evidence on the EU's strategic utility to the region (or lack thereof).

Meanwhile, there will be limits on how much momentum the EU can lend the ARF while ASEAN attentions appear to be focused elsewhere. Strategies for empowering the forum include inviting defence officials to participate in ARF-related activities wherever possible, as well as building capacity at the core. The latter involves strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat, including through focused programming on its security-related capacities, and support for its coordination of the activities of the ARF, the ADMM–Plus and the EAS, particularly on issues where mandates overlap, such as HADR. As the ARF is still the premier platform for Asia-Pacific HADR, could the EU offer to co-host an ASEAN disaster-relief exercise?

There are considerable challenges in expanding the membership of the ADMM–Plus, even if the issues here appear to be less politically charged than the equivalent debate around the EAS. The EU would do well to frame the presentation of its engagements on issues of defence and security in language that mirrors the three membership criteria of the ADMM–Plus. The EU will also need to be honest with itself about its reasons for seeking membership of the forum. While the EU may feel that applying for observer status inadequately reflects its status and contribution, there is some logic to taking such a course if the EU's aim is to ensure participation in discussions at one of Asia's leading strategic forums.

The broader agenda of the EAS appears to be a reasonable match for EU capabilities and interests, not least on issues such as connectivity and education. But while some Asian states' negative reactions to the EU's ambitions in this area seem, at times, to be more reflexive than considered, the danger is that mutual

diplomatic frustrations about the fulfilment or otherwise of these ambitions will begin to undermine the impact of positive investments being made in other aspects of ASEAN–EU relations.

More generally, the EU will do well to remember ASEAN's intergovernmental nature, recognising that the effective cultivation of close relations with individual member states can be both a springboard and a safety net for effective multilateral cooperation.

Part Three: New policy proposals

This report provides a series of policy suggestions for boosting the substance and profile of the EU's engagement in Southeast Asian security affairs. It calls for the appointment of uniformed security liaison officers to key EU delegations within the region, including to ASEAN. If no capacity can be found for postings within the EUMS, then personnel could perhaps be seconded from supportive member states. Alternatively, an EU liaison presence could be offered to key centres of strategic weight in the region – for example, at the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in Jakarta, or the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre in Singapore.

Three themes for engagement are suggested as priority areas, based on three key selection criteria. Maritime security, countering violent extremism (CVE and HADR) are all issues in which the EU has significant interests and expertise, and that register high on the strategic agendas of the EU's key partners in the region and across the Atlantic. Consideration is therefore given to the options for further expanding engagements in these key areas.

Other outlined proposals include clearer strategic packaging around European arms sales, and more imaginative engagement in regional exercises and in the promotion of military-to-military efforts – including, for example, through a (possibly EU-brokered) meeting of the Chiefs of European Navies (CHENS) and their Southeast Asian counterparts. More use could also be made of '2+2' formats to help connect defence interests with the broader picture of the foreign- and security-policy engagements of the EU and its member states. And greater effort could be made to capitalise on the impressive reach of the EU and its member states in the provision of training, including through the orchestration of follow-on events or discussions aimed at turning one-off encounters into more dynamic networks.

Consideration could also be given to a bold, clear statement of the EU's belief in the contribution of civil society to long-term peace and security. As part of this, EU foreign ministers or even heads of state could commit to meeting a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or other civil-society actor on the first full day of any visit to the region that lasts longer than one day, as a means of providing visible support for the values espoused by the EU. Such a meeting could take on a multitude of forms, according to the interests of sovereign states and the sensitivities of their hosts. Moreover, this commitment would provide greater strategic impact to a practice that is, to a large extent, already under way.

Part Four: Recognising constraints

While this report focuses on the positive contributions to Southeast Asian security that the EU can make, the limitations and risks of such engagement also need to be acknowledged. Four risks are highlighted, including the internal difficulties the EU faces in engaging substantively on defence and security issues, as well as the challenges of EU engagement in the region where this involves partnerships with autocratic governments. The EU's significant exposure in Myanmar is also considered as a potential reputational risk, in light of the leading role it has taken there, while China's attitude towards EU engagement in the region is acknowledged as a powerful factor shaping the environment in which much of this activity is unfolding.

Conclusion

Ultimately, there is no shortage of policy options – a great deal is already happening, and this report proposes opportunities for still more engagement. All this activity contributes to the EU's road map to strategic relevance; the differences between the respective effects of the assorted programmes and proposals are less significant than the challenge of ensuring – whatever the area of engagement – that they are

implemented substantively and followed up accordingly. A record of action in this regard will create its own strategic leverage. Faced at times with diffident partners, and with all policy overtures closely tracked by China, the EU's strategic arrival in Asia, and its recognition by Asia, will depend as much on the political will and stamina it can muster as on the creativity of its engagements.

Introduction

European engagement in Asian security in the past decade could be characterised as a struggle of head versus heart. The head appreciates that, as European interactions with Asia have increased, so Europe has become ever more exposed to, and at times dependent on, the region – not least during the eurozone crisis, during which Asia became the largest holder of euro-denominated assets.[2] This logical mindset also appreciates that global security challenges necessitate global security partnerships. And it acknowledges that the prosperity of Europe is intricately bound up with the preservation of an open, liberal and stable financial order, complemented by stability not just within European borders but also among its key trading partners and along its major trading routes.[3] And so, as strategic tensions in Asia have risen, along with European exposure to these tensions, the head has come to understand that an agenda overly focused on trade promotion and overly captive to China's mesmerising markets is unlikely to be in the EU's long-term interests. As a consequence, the EU has been attempting to conduct a significant multidimensional upgrade of its strategic relationships across Asia.[4]

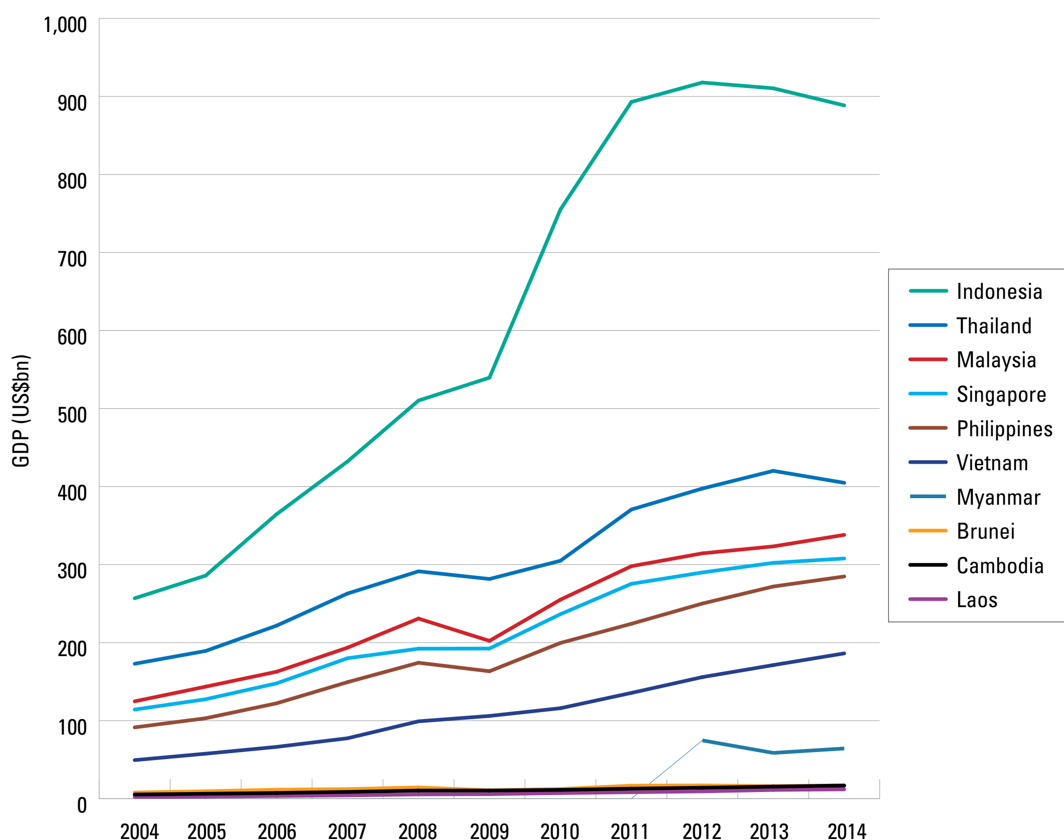
However, gripped by crises within the Union, and constrained by a lack of financial and political resources as well as geography, the heart has occasionally wavered. It has sometimes seemed more practical to devote scarce EU resources to security challenges closer to home, leaving the US, the primary security guarantor in Asia, freer to focus on its 'pivot' to the region. And there have been doubts about how credibly the EU can engage in defence and security, particularly in a part of the world where traditional security threats rank alongside, and even eclipse, non-traditional ones. The EU has also had to work to counter the stereotypical narrative that it does not have the capacity, interest or staying power to make a substantive contribution to Asian security. Meanwhile, as China's regional influence and ambition grows, so too does the challenge of containing negative strategic spillover from the commercial competition between EU member states for Beijing's favour.

Happily, as the development of a European Global Strategy partly reflects, the dispute between head and heart has largely been settled. Even if there are still some doubts, the two are now more or less aligned. Regardless of the immediate first-order challenges the Union faces, the significance of Asia now forms a key part of any substantive discussion on issues of European security and defence. When it comes to the much-touted new centre of gravity of international relations in the twenty-first century, most European strategists now agree that Europe cannot be the primary actor in Asian regional defence and security, but it cannot afford to be a peripheral one. An upgrade of relations across the board is therefore under way, targeted at states as well as regional multilateral institutions. For example, the EU has a formal dialogue with China on security and defence, and a strategic dialogue on security with Japan. Across the region, the EU promotes itself as a key partner, particularly in relation to the challenges of non-traditional security. And while it attempts to re-energise Asia's enthusiasm for, and engagement in, the ARF, it is also pushing, in recognition of the unfolding strategic dynamic, for a seat at the EAS, as well as at the ADMM–Plus.

Focusing on Southeast Asia

As the EU's determination to move beyond China and beyond trade has taken hold, one sub-region has been attracting particular attention for the opportunities and challenges it offers. Southeast Asia, and in particular the grouping of ten countries who together form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has long been identified as a natural partner, not least thanks to the combination of the EU's unique experience in community building and ASEAN's enthusiasm for inter-bloc dialogue.[5] However, as suggested by the rising interest in ASEAN among other powers – from the US and China to Russia and Japan – there is more

ASEAN Economic Growth, 2004–14



Source: World Bank. Prices in current US$, April 2016. Myanmar's 2004–11 data unavailable.

to this dynamic than the value of mutual support and the vanity of mutual identification.[6]

Naturally, there are the numbers. With a combined population of 600 million and a GDP of US$2.6 trillion, a favourable demographic structure, a growing urban class and an increasingly integrated 'community', Southeast Asia offers one of the more promising sources of economic growth in the world today. As EU average annual growth rates in recent years have remained stuck at around or even below 1%, ASEAN has been recording growth rates of closer to 6%, suggesting that it has the potential to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2050.[7] Already, the numbers make for encouraging reading, with ASEAN being the EU's third-largest trading partner outside Europe (after the US and China) and the EU being ASEAN's largest investor (accounting for some 24% of total foreign direct investment in the region) and its second-largest trading partner (after China).[8]

Yet even these figures are insufficient explanation for the momentum that has developed behind engagement with ASEAN, at least among the EU's Asia hands.

More significant is the sense of strategic compatibility and purpose. The strategic compatibility emanates from Southeast Asian states' and ASEAN-centred regional institutions' wide range of non-traditional security concerns, and their relative need for, and openness to, the type of capacity-building support in security affairs that the EU is well positioned to deliver.[9] The sense of strategic purpose relates to the geography of Southeast Asia, situated as it is at the confluence of great-power competition, between the US, an established superpower, and a rising China. Thus, the region is the most immediate testing ground for strains on the international order created by changing great-power relations. What unfolds in Southeast Asia will ultimately help shape not just Europe's security environment, but the world's. The clues and concerns are everywhere: how will a rising China behave in disagreements with smaller, weaker neighbours in areas such as the South China Sea? What are China's ambitions

for its immediate region? How will, and should, the US and others react to these ambitions? How can smaller states in the region manage, and protect themselves from, the dynamic of great-power relations?

The only sensible reaction to such a dynamic is constructive engagement. Engagement to understand what is going on in the region. Engagement to build the capacities of Asian states to manage China's economic influence in ways that allow them to support the fundamentals of a rules-based, rather than a power-based, international order. Engagement to complicate, to positive effect, the strategic field on which great-power intentions are being tested and tensions played out, internationalising issues in ways that recalibrate the unhelpful image of a zero-sum struggle for influence between China and the US. And engagement as a means to protect and project the EU's influence.

It is this sense of strategic compatibility and purpose that lead this report to focus on Southeast Asia, the security challenges it faces and the EU's search for a road map to relevance in that regard. The EU's narrative on its role in Asian defence and security is noticeably different from that commonly held in much of Southeast Asia. What more can be done, on the part of the EU and interested member states, to narrow this gap, both in substance and in form? How can the EU position itself as a relevant, consequential and desirable partner for the region in its quest for security and stability?

Some themes are consciously not addressed in this report. For example, supporting ASEAN connectivity, building resilience, promoting prosperity through strategically supported free-trade agreements and working on the world's first inter-bloc aviation agreement – all of these activities are important, worthwhile and ultimately feed through to issues of security and stability. The same is true of the €299m or more that the EU spent on humanitarian assistance in the ASEAN region between 2007 and 2013, and the €2 billion it will spend in bilateral programming with ASEAN countries between 2014 and 2020.[10] Successful economic and development policies are key components of political stability, and the EU's record on both needs to be acknowledged, even as it searches to bring more coherence to the economic and security aspects of its external engagements, including those with its ASEAN partners. Yet this report deliberately leaves all of these issues to one side, as an overly expansive interpretation of security appears out of sync with events in the region and beyond – which involve far more hard-nosed issues of security, geopolitics and power. The focus of this report, therefore, is fixed on security issues that are of direct, immediate relevance to Southeast Asian regional stability.

As part of this approach, the report avoids dealing with broader aspects of EU engagement in the region. There is little substantive examination of transatlantic coordination on Asia, beyond the recognition that finding the right balance there will be fundamental to the EU's strategic relevance in the region. Similarly, while the report references certain NATO operations, it does not deal with the debate on a global NATO and the European role within that concept.

The aim of this report is not to catalogue or score EU security activities in the region but to consider the EU's options for pursuing its strategic interests in Southeast Asia, and for boosting its engagement with, contribution to and impact on security affairs there. In a region crowded with rising powers and potential partners, this report attempts to provide a series of policy suggestions intended to offer the EU a road map towards strategic relevance.

Setting the context: What hard power?

While defence remains a sovereign issue – and therefore firmly within the competencies of individual European member states – so too do many of the military interactions between Europe and Southeast Asia, limited as they are.

European armed forces have only a minor presence in Asia, and certainly nothing that threatens meaningfully to impact the calculations of the military powers there. The US Seventh Fleet, or the increasingly capable Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), are unlikely to be interested in the 4,300 troops France has prepositioned in its territories in the Indian and Pacific oceans – including French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Réunion Island – even as Paris moves to bolster these forces with more regular deployments of major naval assets to the region.[11] Less consequential

still is the British military presence, which has been pared back to a fuel depot and berthing dockyard at Sembawang, in Singapore, and a Gurkha garrison in Brunei (which barely exercises with the regional armed forces).[12] And while the United Kingdom tries to re-energise and even subtly expand the operational relevance of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, it is far from clear that all of its partners in this agreement are equally enthusiastic.[13]

More could be said, for example, on cooperation between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the armed forces of some European countries, especially those of the UK, or on collaborative anti-piracy work between Asian and EU navies in the western Indian Ocean, or even on important instances of past cooperation, such as the 2005–06 Aceh Monitoring Mission. Yet the reality is that there is little European military power on permanent, or even regular, display in Asia, and that many of the EU–Asian security partnerships that exist are still relatively embryonic.

However, a greater number of European states are involved in the export of military equipment to the region, and their influence is more significant.[14] The UK, France and Germany are all major suppliers to Southeast Asia, accompanied, to a lesser extent, by others such as Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Vietnam, for example, has in recent years begun a deliberate policy of diversification to include Western sources of supply. Faced with the complications of an ongoing US arms embargo, Hanoi's orders from European companies have mushroomed. A joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance satellite project (VNREDSat-1b) is under way with Airbus, headquartered in France. Vietnam also continues to consider the merits of the Saab *Gripen* as opposed to the Eurofighter *Typhoon*. Meanwhile, Germany has become a particularly important arms supplier for Singapore. Already holding the world's largest inventory of *Leopard* II main battle tanks, Singapore's order book also includes two Type-218SG diesel-electric submarines, being built by ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems, as well six A330 multi-role transport tankers on order from Airbus.[15]

The significance of such activities will be addressed later in this report, in relation to how these might be considered and then presented in a more coordinated and strategic fashion. For now, they are noted simply to demonstrate that European military power has some substantive impact on Southeast Asia.

Cultivating security partnerships

The picture of EU engagement with the region changes for the better as the emphasis shifts away from military power and towards security partnerships. Indeed, as the EU has worked up a programme of security-related activities within the region, analysis of the range and detail of these undertakings has sometimes struggled to keep up with new realities.[16] While, as this report makes clear, there is much that can be improved and more that can be done, outdated stereotypes that dismiss out of hand the EU's contribution to security in Southeast Asia ignore not just the potential but even the current state of affairs. A lot has happened in a few years, initially at the policy level and latterly at the working level.

In 2012 alone – the EU's Year of Asia – the European East Asia policy guidelines were upgraded to include and even highlight issues of geopolitics and security. The EU's signature on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) was quickly followed by the adoption, at the 19th ASEAN–EU Ministerial Meeting in April 2012, of the Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action, designed to strengthen this 'Enhanced Partnership' in 2013–17, through measures such as a 'substantial' EU contribution to regional security capacities and cooperation.[17] Meanwhile, Catherine Ashton – then-high representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy, and vice-president of the Commission (HR/VP) – attended the ARF for the first time, issuing there a joint declaration with then-US secretary of state Hillary Clinton on Asian security, and offering to cooperate on security agendas.

Today, the message from the EU to ASEAN is clear. As Federica Mogherini, Ashton's successor, told the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in 2015, 'please, please, don't look at us just as a big free-trade area; the European Union is also a foreign policy community, a security and defence provider'. EU–ASEAN engagements occur through multiple mechanisms, both direct and as part of a broader format. But one rule seemingly applies

across the board: all now include a self-conscious effort to develop cooperation on issues of security policy.[18]

But to what effect?

However, the degree to which this is being noticed by the EU's partners in Asia, or taken seriously on a strategic level, is far from clear. Those specialising in these relations will be aware of the detail, but their broader impact has remained limited. Indeed, it is telling that in countries otherwise open to Western security partnerships, such as Singapore, the narrative on EU contributions to Asian security remains politely dismissive; the EU is believed to be consumed by its own crises and lacking in the political will to follow through in any substantive or sustained fashion on the activities now under way.

The road map to a substantive security partnership is therefore a complicated one, beset by obstacles as much of perception and strategy as of detail. On the one side stands the EU, persuaded of its interests in the region, already taking steps to support ASEAN states' efforts to manage their security environment and convinced that it has something to offer. The EU should therefore be a credible candidate for EAS membership. On the other side stand the ASEAN countries, which find themselves somewhat in vogue and therefore with many potential partners, but never trusting that any resulting partners will endure. Precisely what, some ask themselves, does the EU offer on matters of security? Why do parts of the EU, and some of its member states, feel so sure that they deserve a seat at one of Asia's premier strategic forums?

If the benchmark for substantive engagement in Asian security affairs is the US – with its web of defence alliances and security partnerships, and its array of military assets deployed in the region – then Europe is destined to fall short.

However, in a region that suffers, in many ways, from a surfeit of military power, there seems little utility or purpose in the EU pretending to be something that it is not. More interesting than masquerading as a military power, and within the bounds of credibility, is offering substantive security partnerships. Military power may determine the outcome of the game, but security more broadly defined, including soft security, is at least a factor in whether and how that game is played. Skills in risk management, mediation and crisis preparation and prevention are crucial aspects of defence and security policy. Likewise, issues of non-traditional security – threats that emanate from sources other than the military – play particularly well to the EU's unique configuration, experienced as it is in bridging civil–military divides, and partnering as much with local NGOs as with local militaries. With no competing claims on territory or aims to become a military power in Asia, the EU can speak with objective authority on the importance of respect for international law. It can also act as a neutral convener, encouraging cooperation on important issues of non-traditional security between ASEAN members still to some degree impeded by mutual mistrust.

This is rarely headline-grabbing activity. Yet, if effectively and enthusiastically implemented, it can have a positive impact on regional security in two key ways. Most obviously, it can build capacities to prevent, predict and contain crises, thereby contributing directly to issues of regional stability and security. And, due to its inclusive nature, such preparatory work also acts as an informal confidence-building measure, engaging with states on common projects at a time when the underlying geostrategic pressures are pushing them in the opposite direction.

As the EU looks to develop exactly this sort of meaningful engagement, and to reap the potential strategic rewards of doing so – such as, for example, membership of the EAS – it will have to consider matters not just of substance but also of presentation, and programmes that have both long- and short-term effects. This report therefore bears these parameters in mind as it considers EU engagement with ASEAN and the key ASEAN-centred multilateral bodies, as well as with individual Southeast Asian states.

Part One: Working within existing capacities

Target

Those involved in the details of EU–ASEAN relations can point to activities involving an array of security-related themes, including HADR, border management, peacekeeping, maritime security and anti-piracy. In boosting EU security engagement in Southeast Asia, therefore, the challenge is not necessarily to generate more activity, but rather to find ways that existing activity might produce more tangible results and have greater strategic effect. New policy proposals often require new resources, or at least political attention. And since the availability of these resources cannot be taken for granted, any analysis grounded in reality must look for ways to achieve more within current capacities.

At the risk of oversimplifying, the complex array of EU security engagements in Southeast Asia can be described as an extensive programme of workshops, seminars and table-top exercises that, for example, promote best practice on important issues such as maritime security, countering radicalisation and HADR. These are a welcome starting point. But the next steps are to move this engagement downwards to the operational level – to create outcomes that substantively contribute to regional security – and upwards to leveraging these outcomes with high-profile policymakers at a more strategic level, thereby enhancing the EU's presence, and ultimately influence, in the region.

One method that would support this two-pronged approach is to utilise the EU's established tradition of working with local partners, while giving greater focus within this to the development of joint operational initiatives with EAS member states.[19]

Japan, for example, is an obvious partner. It has an established profile in development work across the region (having pledged to spend ¥2trn in official development assistance in Southeast Asia during 2013–18, on top of the activities of its Japan–ASEAN integration fund, which has US$400m at its disposal for assisting ASEAN integration and community building). Furthermore, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made it clear that Japan is now looking for opportunities to make 'proactive contributions to peace', potentially in ways that were previously off limits.[20] European member-state activities along these lines are already well under way; in January 2015, the UK ran its first joint capacity-building project with Japan – a seminar in Manila on HADR with ASEAN, involving 50 participants from all ten ASEAN states – and more joint exercises are in the pipeline. As Japan moves further into security capacity-building, for example in the provision of training to the Indonesian, Malaysian and Philippine coastguards, the challenge will be for the EU and its member states to find other opportunities for collaboration in areas of common interest.

Australia is another natural partner for the EU; there is already substantive bilateral security cooperation, but this could be targeted towards more joint initiatives within the region. This would require a policy of not just talking to each other about Southeast Asia, but also talking together, with others, in the region.

Another useful strategy that could be further developed involves a shift beyond talking to Asian partners exclusively about Asian security problems. This approach is increasingly outdated, as the borders of Asian security issues have become more fluid – as evidenced by China's construction of its first overseas military-logistics post for its navy in Djibouti, around 7,800 kilometres from Beijing. In the same way that Europeans find themselves drawn to Asian security dynamics, so Asian security concerns extend to the shores of Europe, Africa, Latin America and, of course, the Middle East. This means that ASEAN states are likely to judge the EU on its actions on security issues beyond Southeast Asia. The behaviour of the EU in one part of the world feeds into its image, and therefore its influence, in another. This is as true for EU responses to Russian aggression and the ongoing management of the Ukraine crisis as it is for the persistence of European-led efforts to manage Iran's nuclear

ambitions. In this context, it was encouraging, in both substance and form, to see HR/VP Mogherini and Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi coordinate diplomatic messaging on tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, in advance of the latter's January 2016 visit to both countries.

Promote

Useful, targeted activity will have an impact on regional peace and security, and therefore on the EU's reputation in this area, regardless of how well these activities are publicised. Similarly, the effect of any such promotion is of course tied to the substance of the activity in question. Indeed, as seen in some of the commentary on the 2012 US–EU joint statement on the Asia-Pacific, claims of strategic intent can be undermined if the promoted activity is perceived as a one-off lacking substantive follow-up.

Carefully presenting activities as being in line with a broader strategy, while also harnessing the cumulative engagement of EU institutions and member states, would have a positive impact on the popular narrative on the EU's security role in Southeast Asia. And this is important because narratives depend on far more than just detail for their power. While experts may immerse themselves in the latest ASEAN–EU 'Plan of Action', such initiatives often go relatively unnoticed in the popular discourse.

Consider, in contrast, the media operation around the 2016 US–ASEAN Sunnylands summit, generating as it did impressive coverage for an event which the hosts long anticipated would be unlikely to produce many reportable results. Instead, the mantra ran, 'the summit was the message'. The media operation drew journalists in with a host of briefings and background documents, all aimed at building interest and ensuring coverage.

Of course, information campaigns are easier to run when they involve high-level events rather than a broad spread of working-level engagements on capacity-building, training or the sharing of best practice. Effective branding gets more complicated still when activities are, for a host of sensible reasons, implemented through local partners. However, there are opportunities for the EU to present more effectively its engagements with ASEAN, such as in the run-up to the ARF and other summit meetings. And if Asian news correspondents in Brussels pick up these briefings with more enthusiasm than their European counterparts, so be it. After all, the former are as much, if not more, the target of these efforts.

The cultivation of a broad base of activities certainly has its uses. But, as is explored later in this report, the elucidation and political sponsorship of a select number of flagship programmes could help focus the public's attention, while making the EU's efforts more comprehensible to its partners.

Moreover, the EU could better explain its strategies for pursuing its interests in Southeast Asia. For example, there is little clarity about its strategy in the South China Sea, beyond reiterating its principled support of international law. In this area, the EU could put forward a set of policies to highlight:

- key littoral states – such as Vietnam and the Philippines – as favoured partners for capacity-building, particularly with regard to domain awareness;
- EU support for the clarification of claims, including their legal basis;
- EU sponsorship of the impartial, real-time mapping of land reclamation, construction and militarisation in the sea by claimant parties, as well as of investigation into the environmental impact of this activity; and
- EU promises to support the imposition of a reputational cost on claimants violating the principle of non-militarisation, by repeatedly bringing these violations to public attention at international forums and elsewhere.

Only the third idea listed above would require new resources. Satellite technology has the necessary capability for such a task, and an information-dissemination service could record the real-time impact of these activities, allowing for a valuable database of documented evidence to be built up over time. All other suggestions already lie entirely within existing EU capacities.

Yet the EU tends to stick to bland lines calling on 'all parties' (rarely with further details) to respect principles

of international law, as HR/VP Mogherini did in her March 2016 statement on recent developments in the South China Sea. While the act of issuing such a statement was welcome, the EU failed to detail what these developments actually were; it called out no parties, offered no facts and, far from exerting the diplomatic pressure presumably intended, simply sounded naïve by looking 'forward to a swift conclusion of the talks on a Code of Conduct'.[21]

Difficult as it might be to tell from such statements, what happens in the South China Sea is of fundamental strategic importance to the EU. The sea poses immediate risk-management challenges: there is arguably nowhere else in the world where an accidental conflict is so likely to occur. Furthermore, China's activities in the sea create 'hairline fractures' in the existing order by attempting to challenge and redefine international legal norms.[22] And the issue also affects the EU's regional agenda: if the EU wants to position itself as a relevant player in the evolving security order, it has to find a way to use its role as a non-claimant, non-threatening neutral party to greater strategic effect.

One obvious crunch point looming in this regard will be the forthcoming legal verdict by the International Arbitral Tribunal on the seven-point case that the Philippines has been permitted to argue against China, related to the extent of Chinese maritime entitlements in the South China Sea.[23] ASEAN states – which are already on the receiving end of an impressively insistent lobbying campaign by China – will look carefully at the respective statements and follow-up actions of the US and the EU, ready to translate this (fairly or unfairly) into a broader interpretation of partner reliability. Substance and timing will matter, both in terms of how quickly the EU can issue its statement following the verdict, and of when the verdict is delivered within the calendar of ASEAN-related activities. For example, the closer the ruling occurs to the ARF meeting in Vientiane on 26 July, the more damaging the symbolism of any 'no show' by HR/VP Mogherini.

The EU's reactions on this issue will form part of a growing body of evidence on partner interests and reliability. As China likely continues to view even the discussion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea as a valve to be turned on and off in accordance with ASEAN behaviour, further cycles of reclamation, construction and militarisation are to be expected. These could include further calibrated deployments of oil rigs into contested waters, and perhaps an announcement of an Air Defence Identification Zone over the South China Sea. The EU will need to get its pre-emptive and reactive statements ready, and be prepared to deliver them with conviction.

The EU could more effectively promote its activities by providing its partners with something akin to sensitisation training. What is EU security policy elsewhere in the world, and where and how can prospective partners best work with the EU to capitalise on its capabilities? Such training would not centre on explaining complicated organograms of decision-making structures in Brussels, nor would it offer long historical lectures on the origins of the CSDP. Instead, it would show what the EU actually does, and how it presently combines military and civilian missions to support 19 different theatres of operations around the world, involving more than 7,000 personnel. The training would explain that the EU may not have a minister of defence or an army, but it knows all about the challenges and rewards of defence cooperation, including in its own littoral. At the time of writing, the EU's CSDP *Operation Sophia* involved the deployment of a light aircraft carrier (Italian), around eight warships (UK, French, German and Spanish) and seven air assets, supported by personnel from around 24 member states.[24] Moreover, the EU also works with an array of partner countries – including Chile – that are formally integrated into EU military operations.

One welcome example of this kind of outreach is the training courses on the CSDP that have been run by the European Security and Defence College, which aim to talk to officials from ARF countries precisely about the security profile and activities of the EU. These courses seem to have created a positive impression among their participants and could perhaps be scaled up in tempo and size. A kind of alumni network could even be created to facilitate a follow-up event in Southeast Asia in a few years' time – nominally to provide updates and share experiences but also to promote the EU's work and to facilitate its networking within the region.

The importance of a regular high-level presence in the region, particularly at key set-piece events, is well established. Consider the local media coverage generated by Italian President Sergio Mattarella's November 2015 meeting with the ASEAN Secretariat – which ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh quickly noted was the first such visit by an EU head of state.[25] Now consider what other opportunities of this kind might be used to publicise EU interests. Imagine that the French and German defence ministers, and even others among their European counterparts, followed up their trips to Singapore for the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue with a coordinated a visit to the ASEAN Secretariat, and perhaps the peacekeeping centre there or the EU-supported AHA Centre.[26] In line with this approach, more could be made of visits to the region by members of the EUMS, especially its director general, and by the chairman of the EUMC – even while recognising that the latter has already held several meetings with assorted ASEAN chairs.[27]

Of course, visits demand resources, and competition for attention is intense. Ideally, the 28 member states of the EU would better capitalise on their increasing flow of high-level visitors to Southeast Asia by presenting these trips as part of a more coordinated programme of activities. In reality, this is unlikely to happen. But some basic structure or minimum commitment could be considered in a foreign-affairs meeting of the European Council or among chiefs of the defence staff within the EUMC – and could be announced in published conclusions. Importantly, however, the objective would not be to up the tempo of visits; in fact, a lower benchmark could be to set to ensure that targets are always hit. The aim would be to give what is already happening the appearance of greater cohesion.

If this is too ambitious, then, at a minimum, it would be helpful to flag the cooperation between EU member states that does occur. For example, at the 2015 IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, it was encouraging to hear HR/VP Mogherini's supportive reference to an earlier speech by German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen, but it might have been even better to present this concurrence as the product of deliberate planning rather than happy coincidence.[28] This is not the EU 'ganging up', but rather smart public diplomacy designed to counter the impression that EU Asia policies are defined more by competitive commercial interests than collaborative political–security approaches. For while the former undoubtedly exist, the extent of the latter is sometimes underappreciated – even when it comprises little more than meetings between the local heads of EU missions.

Sustain

In a region all too familiar with wavering political commitments, memories are long – where convenient – and consistency is king. When questioned about EU ambitions for a seat at the EAS, Singaporean interlocutors often still refer to the minimal European presence at the EU–ASEAN anniversary summit of 2007 that it hosted.[29] Thus, a key challenge for the EU is to find ways not just to target and promote but also to sustain the momentum of these efforts, even as crises outside Southeast Asia continue to compete for attention. If the EU can sustain its overtures to the region, and leverage its activities accordingly, there should be considerable mileage in positioning itself as a reliable partner.

However, the challenge of sustainability is one not just for the EU but also for the region. If ASEAN is serious about welcoming greater security engagement from the EU, then it has a role to play in helping facilitate this interaction efficiently and effectively, encouraging the success of the 'beyond China, beyond trade' approach (what the UK calls its 'all of Asia' policy). This includes thinking about the make-up and outreach of the region's key strategic security forums, and either re-engaging in a substantive manner with the ARF, or considering the EU's medium-term ambitions for the EAS and the ADMM–Plus. And, even if it doubts that the EU can make a significant contribution to regional security, ASEAN will still need to manage EU ambitions in Southeast Asia if it values the broader partnership or even just European money. After all, the EU has earmarked €170m to flow through the ASEAN Secretariat from 2014–20 in support of regional integration, with another €26m allocated to thematic programmes. In different circumstances, this funding could have easily been given to other intergovernmental projects, such as the development of the Lower Mekong or further bilateral projects with individual ASEAN states.

The challenges are clear. Through what avenues can the EU demonstrate its utility as a substantive security partner when it is excluded from the region's most important security forums? How can ASEAN members that are relatively unenthusiastic about EU membership of the EAS or even the ADMM–Plus, such as Singapore, ensure that the EU continues to pay attention to the issues where they do value its cooperation?

One obvious issue for ASEAN is the choreography of its summit meetings, in which some minor adjustments in schedule could conceivably make a large presentational difference. As an ASEAN dialogue partner and a member of the ARF, but not of the EAS, EU representatives are required to show up for a one-hour meeting with ASEAN on one day, then wait until the following afternoon before being invited back into the room for the ARF – often as EAS attendees are leaving, having already completed their key business transactions at the morning session. There are several ways in which the choreography of these events could be adjusted without inviting the EU to the EAS, while still helping facilitate EU participation at the appropriate level and in no way undermining the centrality of ASEAN states.[30] Effecting such changes requires little more than the political will to do so.

At the very least, it would be beneficial for all parties to avoid a repeat of events in 2015, when EAS foreign ministers discussed the progress of nuclear negotiations with Iran and issued a statement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the E3/EU+3 while the lead negotiator was kept outside the room.[31] Circumstances such as these arguably require pragmatic imagination or flexibility in format – albeit on a one-off, issue-specific basis.

Furthermore, ASEAN states can, if they wish, create opportunities for outreach between the EU and the EAS or the ADMM–Plus, perhaps in informal arrangements. For example, there might be opportunities around the 40th anniversary of EU–ASEAN relations in 2017. Could the ADMM–Plus even consider inviting the EU to participate in its next HADR exercise, in recognition of the EU's interests and capacities in the area?

Part Two: Working with ASEAN-centred regional institutions

As the EU continues to engage with Southeast Asia – in a manner that is targeted, promoted and sustained – it will need to work out not just what policies to focus on, but also where and with whom. This will require further consideration of the full range of EU–ASEAN interactions, as well as of the ambitions of many in the EU and some of its member states for membership of the ADMM–Plus and the EAS.

Partnering with ASEAN

While the EU is far from the only regional bloc engaging in dialogue with ASEAN, the substance of this relationship is reflected in the fact that the EU is the only regional organisation recognised as a formal ASEAN dialogue partner.[32]

ASEAN–EU interactions are conducted through a variety of mechanisms, including the ASEAN–EU Ministerial Meeting, the ASEAN–EU Senior Officials' Meeting and the ASEAN–EU Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC). There are also an assortment of broader formats for interaction, such as the ARF, the Post Ministerial Conference and the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM). Furthermore, there have been meetings between the ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives and the EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives in Brussels. And, while relations span a range of activities, part of the remit of the Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN–EU Enhanced Partnership (2013–17) was to boost cooperation on strategic issues, including political and security affairs, by encouraging tangible contributions on the issues ranging from maritime security to counter-terrorism. The 23rd meeting of the JCC in Jakarta in February 2016 welcomed the plan's 'substantial rate of implementation'.[33]

The establishment of an EU mission to ASEAN has been an important step forward in relations. The EU presence there offers valuable outreach opportunities not just to ASEAN, but also to ASEAN's other dialogue partners. Moreover, the mission is increasingly overseeing a range of activities that are becoming more concrete, and even intrusive, in their level of detailed support (requested and directed). Meanwhile, 25 EU member states now have ambassadors to ASEAN.[34]

Inter-bloc dialogues on security issues have tended to focus on non-traditional security, at the (convenient) expense of hard security. This is in part a consequence of the fact that many traditional security issues are still controlled by EU member states, more than a few of which struggle to help or even allow the EU to package their activities as a more collective offering. But this focus on non-traditional security issues has also provided something of a convenient 'safe space', not only because it suits EU capabilities and expertise, but also because it lies within both the EU's and ASEAN's comfort zones. However, the return of geopolitical rivalries within Europe's strategic space, as highlighted by Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, offers a potential opportunity to address this problem. Both ASEAN and the EU now need to find ways to manage regional powers apparently unhappy with the status quo and prepared – albeit to differing degrees and in distinct ways – to use coercion to achieve their aims.

Nevertheless, issues of non-traditional security are likely to continue to take centre stage in EU–ASEAN security interactions. And, while a hard-security presence will always be a key measure of security engagement, it should not be the only one. There needs to be some recognition of the value of capacity-building in non-traditional security, as well as of the strategic spillover effect created by the more collaborative environment it engenders. But such a narrative on the benefits of EU contributions to non-traditional security only works if these activities have substantive impact. And so, while ASEAN-centred forums such as the ARF might sensibly provide a diplomatic platform on which engagement is naturally framed, EU–ASEAN relations should usually provide the focal point for implementation. These relations, more than any other form of EU multilateral engagement in the region, must centre on

ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise 2013, Cha-Am, Thailand, May 2013 (최광모)

producing results and on practical cooperation with clear priorities, supported by regular, honest assessments of the deliverables behind the diplomacy.

Partnering with ASEAN-centred institutions

i) Re-energising the ARF

For the EU, the value of the ARF is undoubtedly increased by the fact that it is the only ASEAN-centred forum with a mandate for security issues of which the EU is a member (the US, Japan, China and Australia are all members of other such forums).

The informal, 53-member ASEM may have its uses – not least in facilitating bilateral meetings between ASEAN and the EU, as occurred in 2014 – but ASEM has lost a lot of its intended informality and flexibility, and it has been further constrained by deadlock over the crisis in Ukraine.

Lacking membership of the EAS or the ADMM–Plus, the EU is forced to use the ARF as its diplomatic docking point for engagement in Southeast Asian political and security issues, including those related to confidence-building and preventative diplomacy.[35]

Yet the problems of the ARF are widely recognised. They are linked not only to the fact that it has 27 members but also to the diversity of these members, which include countries as different as Australia, North Korea and Pakistan. Due to the resulting lack of coherence, the ARF struggles to gain traction on the substantive strategic issues of the day. This is especially true when the major players, including ASEAN, appear to be prioritising other forums, albeit informally. As a result, the strategic significance of the ARF has shrunk as it has been marginalised by the actions of its own members, and caricatured – with some justification – as an inefficient talking shop.

So what can the EU do to re-energise the one broader regional strategic forum to which it has access, and at which it can therefore demonstrate its commitment and relevance on issues of Southeast Asian security? It might seem an odd requirement after more than 20 years of engagement, but further patience and perseverance will be needed, including in showing up, where possible, at the appropriate level.[36] There remain open questions as to whether tensions between the members of the ADMM–Plus will permit the organisation to address the substantive issues of the region – for example, through an exercise on preventative diplomacy in the South China Sea – or if resistance to such moves will confine its activities to further exercises on military medicine (as valuable a starting point as these may be).[37] Likewise, there is evidence of growing concern within the region that the ADMM–Plus's relatively small number of members makes it vulnerable to being hijacked by great-power relations. This concern was clear following the third meeting of the ADMM–Plus in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015, when ASEAN unity held and yet there was still no joint declaration as a result of tensions between China and Japan. So, while the limitations of the ARF should not be papered over, nor its relative de-prioritisation by ASEAN ignored, it is at

least conceivable that there will be some rebalancing of strategic heft among the forums within the region's complex security architecture.

Meanwhile, some aspects of the ARF's limitations are also strengths. Its broad membership ensures that it remains the primary confidence- and capability-building exercise in security cooperation in Southeast Asia. The ARF may not be the forum at which issues will be resolved, but it is an important one for their initial (and repeated) airing – as seen with regard to concerns over the militarisation of the South China Sea. Moreover, in convening the largest concentration of foreign ministers outside the United Nations General Assembly, the ARF provides the EU with a broad platform for engagement through which it can advertise not just its interests but also its investments.

Furthermore, all the key areas of EU security engagement and interest are covered by the ARF – from counter-terrorism to cyber affairs and maritime security – even if many of these conversations are looser versions of discussions taking place in parallel within the EAS or the ADMM–Plus. However, the ARF has not been just a talking shop in the work it has done to support greater HADR capacity-building and the integration of member states' efforts across the Asia-Pacific. At the apex of this activity are the ARF disaster-relief exercises, which have taken place every two years since 2009. The five-day ARF DiREx 2015 exercise involved more than 8,000 participants from 21 ARF member countries, alongside eight international and regional organisations.[38] Co-hosted by one ASEAN country and one non-ASEAN ARF member, these exercises offer an opportunity for outreach, in terms of not only participation but also potentially in the offer to co-host one such exercise, with all the preparatory work that would entail.

Efforts to engage with and re-energise the ARF are already under way, as seen in the EU's energetic interaction with the ARF's Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD) and the Inter-Sessional Support Group (ISG). For example, in 2014 the EU hosted meetings of both groups in Brussels for the first time. However, there is only so much enthusiasm one partner can inject into the process. ASEAN defence officials remain non-committal regarding the DOD – instead favouring the ADMM and its related processes (which are controlled by their ministries) as their primary framework for engagement – and this imposes limits on the DOD's reach and effectiveness. Indeed, the frequency of DOD meetings has already been reduced, from three per year to one per year, partly because attention has shifted to the ADMM–Plus. Likewise, the ISG – charged with coordinating the working groups and providing a link to the DOD – now meets only once a year rather than twice. And, while a reduction in meetings is not necessarily a bad thing, there is little evidence that the substance of the events has improved.

Given the broad agenda of the ARF, one challenge for the EU is to be clear about its engagement with the forum's security agenda, rather than allow this to be seen as a secondary concern. In this, the EU has, at times, been behind the curve. The first ARF exercise on HADR in 2008, for example, involved ASEAN, Australia, the US and Japan. As such, the EU's co-chairing of initiatives such as a workshop on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation, as well as on operationalising confidence-building measures during cyber incidents, is to be welcomed.

Meanwhile, one way of empowering the ARF is to support its close collaboration with the ADMM–Plus, complicated as this is not just by its diverse membership, but also by the limitations of ASEAN capacity. This effort can be helped by, where appropriate, inviting defence officials to participate in ARF-related activities, thereby promoting coordination between ASEAN officials involved in these forums.[39] Another method is to focus on strengthening the core, the ASEAN Secretariat, whose roster of less than 300 staff face the Herculean challenge of coordinating more than 1,000 meetings a year, on a budget of less than US$19m.[40]

Indeed, strengthening the secretariat has to be a key part of the EU's strategies for developing its relations with ASEAN, re-energising the ARF and even bidding for membership of the EAS or ADMM–Plus. However, this is not just about the EU continuing to make more resources available to the ASEAN Secretariat – as it has done by, for example, becoming the only donor to contribute directly to the budget of the secretariat, as well as through the programmes that have been developed by individual EU countries with the secretariat.[41] The EU could also be clearer in targeting its partnership with

10th East Asia Summit, 2015 (government.ru)

the ASEAN Secretariat to include security-related issues – through, for example, greater focus on the empowerment of the secretariat's Political–Security Community Department.[42] The EU could provide further support for centralising the dissemination of information on ASEAN-related activities by ASEAN, thereby assuming responsibility for updating colleagues across different departments – a task currently carried out by individual member states, some of whom appear to face cultural and logistical difficulties in this regard.

ii) Bidding for membership of the ADMM–Plus and the EAS

Before considering the EU's options for promoting its interactions with the ADMM–Plus and the EAS, it is worth directly addressing one of the standard criticisms of EU ambitions in Southeast Asia: that the EU wants membership of these forums only for membership's sake.

While it is reasonable for existing members of the ADMM–Plus and the EAS to question what new partners would contribute to the organisations, the EU's reasons for wanting to join them are sound. If Asia is the new centre of gravity in international relations, then any power with global ambitions will want a seat at the table of its key strategic forums – particularly at the EAS, which looks capable of emerging as the Asia-Pacific's leading multilateral strategic forum. To accept any less would be to risk further marginalisation, at a time when the regional security order is being worked out and Europeans finally agree that the region matters to them.

Yet there is simply little appetite among Asian countries for expanding the membership of the ADMM–Plus and the EAS. Of course, this does not prevent the EU from adopting strategies to shape this environment, but it will need to show real political commitment, insistence and stamina if it is to influence what is in danger of becoming a more reflexive than considered 'no'. In all likelihood, this is at best a medium-term game, as indicated by the fact that the EU only acceded to the TAC in 2012, despite lodging its initial application in 2006.

So, in the interim, can the EU find a way to support the work of the ADMM–Plus and the EAS in promoting regional stability, while simultaneously bolstering its case for future membership?

Room to support the ADMM–Plus?

As a platform for ASEAN and eight of its ten dialogue partners, the ADMM–Plus draws some of its traction from its status as the newcomer in the region's security architecture, having held its inaugural meeting in Hanoi in 2010.[43] It also benefits from the cultural differences that predispose foreign ministries to talk and defence ministries to exercise, meaning that activity around the ADMM–Plus has quickly appeared more substantive than that around the ARF.

The politics of ADMM–Plus membership appear to be, at least for the time being, less politically charged than those involving the expansion of the EAS.

Moreover, progress in the EU's relations with the ADMM–Plus could bolster its case on the comprehensive nature of its strategic contributions – which would also be relevant to its EAS interests. The three guiding principles for ADMM–Plus membership, as stipulated in the Concept Paper adopted at the third ADMM meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, in 2009, are revealing:

- The Plus country must be a 'full-fledged Dialogue Partner of ASEAN'.
- It should have 'significant interactions and relations with the ASEAN defence establishment'.
- It should work with the ADMM to 'build capacity so as to enhance regional security in a substantive manner'. This is defined as bringing 'expertise, perspective and resources to bear on shared security challenges'.[44]

Apart from the legal obstacle of the EU not being a country (navigated already, albeit slowly, in the instance of TAC accession), and depending on how narrowly the 'region's shared security challenges' are defined, the EU appears to have viable credentials in relation to the three key criteria. As the EU proposes future security-related initiatives, it would do well to reference and mirror the language of the criteria. The EU can also consider more imaginative ways to engage directly with the defence establishments of ASEAN states, such as by increasing its use of uniformed security liaison officers (as discussed in more detail in Part Three).

Opportunities for non-members to engage with the ADMM–Plus will likely come in the form of offers of support to the six expert working groups covering maritime security, counter-terrorism, HADR, peacekeeping operations, military medicine and humanitarian mine action. Despite the fact that its offers to provide experts to these groups have received little response, the EU should persist in and publicise these efforts. It should also follow the core strategy of targeting its capacity-building support of the ASEAN Secretariat to promote closer coordination of the overlapping security activities of the ARF, the ADMM–Plus and the EAS.

In the short term, the EU could also consider seeking observer status at the ADMM–Plus, even if this falls short of its grand ambitions and necessitates a more limited form of participation. There are often opportunities to inform and influence even in the margins of a main event, especially in a more process-driven format. In this way, the EU could ensure it is at least in the room, helping it to understand ASEAN priorities and to gain greater knowledge, including of how it might support the development of a more coordinated approach by the ASEAN-centred regional architecture.

And the EAS?

The EAS – which deals with regional political, security and economic issues of common concern – has become ever more strategically significant since it expanded to include the US and Russia in 2011. Furthermore, the push by the US and other countries for the EAS to add global issues to its agenda suggests that the dynamics propelling the forum to the forefront of Asia's strategic architecture are unlikely to change any time soon. Indeed, the 2015 chairman's statement specifically referenced the substantive discussions that took place on an expanded agenda at the 2014 and 2015 EAS meetings.[45]

There are already six priority areas for regional cooperation under the EAS framework: environment and energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, natural-disaster management, and ASEAN connectivity. At the 10th EAS meeting, held in November 2015, officials adopted a Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation and were tasked to report back on adding maritime cooperation as a seventh priority area.

The advantage of the broad range of EAS priority areas is that many of them naturally play into EU interests and expertise. Indeed, institutions in Brussels have been noticeably comfortable in, for example, absorbing and providing support for the ASEAN agenda of 'connectivity' in all its dimensions (physical, institutional and people-to-people). The EU is the largest donor of development finance globally, and its drive to focus more on projects that produce tangible results has led to increased engagement with undertakings such as infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia.[46] The EU has also supported the Mekong River Commission, aiding regional responses to the challenges of climate change and helping close the ASEAN development gap.[47]

Remembering the importance of ASEAN member states

While the forums mentioned above are valuable, it is important to avoid exaggerating their usefulness. All of them have advantages and limitations, not least because at the centre of them are ASEAN member states, which are still to some extent constrained by mutual suspicion and differences.[48] While it might currently appear that the EAS is emerging as the premier strategic forum in the region, there is no guarantee that this will come about. With nothing certain, the EU will need to remember its fundamentals. ASEAN may now be a 'community', but it remains very much an intergovernmental organisation. Any successful regional strategy must therefore involve the development of a series of engagements with ASEAN member states. Effective engagement at the bilateral level is both the springboard and safety net for effective multilateral cooperation.

Part Three: New policy proposals

EU activities should be clearly targeted, either delivering on the detail and creating facts on the ground or accessing and influencing policymakers. These activities can be better packaged to reach the right audiences of policymakers and policy-shapers. And they should be sustained, committed and reliable in both their presentation and delivery. The EU should also be mindful of the importance of engagement with ASEAN member states even while it focuses at the multilateral level on building ASEAN capabilities to better coordinate between ASEAN-centred forums, with a particular emphasis on engagement in ASEAN-related activities and capacities.

But is there anything more that could be done? The ideas below attempt to contribute to such a conversation rather than promote fixed, inflexible proposals. Some are clearly more ambitious than others, but they all involve a level of commitment that should be realistic for an EU seeking to become involved in ADMM–Plus and EAS processes.

i) Arms sales: Get strategic

Commercial interests may be the driving force behind bids by European defence companies for Southeast Asian contracts, but these bids are also strategically significant, partly because one of the main factors propelling much of this procurement is concern over China's military build-up, including its adventurism in the South China Sea. Moreover, many of the deals potentially have positive consequences for broader agendas of military cooperation, as they bring the contractors closer together through deals in areas such as technology transfer, after-sales servicing and training.

One challenge for EU member states is to find ways to think more strategically about these arms sales, even while continuing to view them through the prism of human rights. Once more, this does not necessarily mean more activity, but rather better coordination of existing activity, including between the requisite ministries, to mobilise and explain political support for key bids already under way.

For example, a political commitment to maritime security – outlined by the EU and then implemented by its member states – could extend to explicit political support for the sale of military equipment that enables ASEAN states to police their territorial waters more effectively. In many ways, this is a logical extension of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Enable and Enhance Initiative, or the European train-and-equip agenda. Furthermore, as European member states such as France and Germany strengthen their positions as major players in Southeast Asia's and Australia's growing submarine markets, these countries in particular have an opportunity for greater strategic engagement. There could also be opportunities for developing core skills in anti-submarine warfare, including through the provision of conventional submarines for exercises. This kind of effort could help ASEAN countries develop a better sense of the challenges and doctrines of such warfare.

Naturally, any attempt to give strategic support and meaning to commercial activity will inevitably have repercussions, especially on bilateral relations with China. Yet China is not the only reference point for engagement in capacity-building programmes in Southeast Asia. Effective HADR capacities also require a military component. Likewise, where they are allowed by human-rights considerations, arms sales can contribute to domestic security. As such, the UK frames some of its growing defence sales to Malaysia in the context of support for security in Sabah and the ungoverned spaces that are so attractive to terrorist group the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) and other destabilising actors.[49]

European states are also having a strategic impact in Southeast Asia by *not* selling specific types of equipment to some parties. Although viewed by many as increasingly leaky in its enforcement, the EU embargo on the export to China of 'arms and related materials' continues to make an important contribution to regional security.[50]

Table 1: **Selected Arms Procurements to ASEAN Countries from European Defence Companies**

Indonesia

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
103 *Leopard* 2A4/2 *Revolution* main battle tanks	Rheinmetall (Germany)	Ordered in 2012; deliveries ongoing
42 *Marder* 1A3 armoured infantry fighting vehicles	Rheinmetall (Germany)	Ordered in 2012; deliveries ongoing
37 CAESAR artillery (155mm, self-propelled)	Nexter (France)	Ordered in 2012; deliveries ongoing
2 SIGMA 10514 frigates	Damen Schelde Naval Shipbuilding (Netherlands) PT PAL (Indonesia)	Ordered in 2012; first delivery due in 2016
9 C-295M light transport aircraft	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2012; deliveries ongoing
11 AS565 MBe *Panther* anti-submarine-warfare helicopters	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2014; first delivery due in 2016
6 H225M medium transport helicopters	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2012; deliveries ongoing
12 H125M multi-role helicopters	Airbus Group (international)	Deliveries ongoing

Malaysia

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
4 A400M *Atlas* heavy transport aircraft	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2006; deliveries ongoing

Myanmar

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
20 G120TP training aircraft	Grob Aircraft (Germany)	Ordered in 2014; deliveries ongoing

Philippines

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
1 OPV 270 offshore patrol vessel	OCEA (France)	Ordered in 2012; first delivery due in 2016
2 AW159 *Wildcat* anti-submarine-warfare helicopters	Finmeccanica Helicopters (Italy)	Ordered in 2016; first delivery due in 2018

Singapore

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
2 Type-218SG attack submarines	ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (Germany)	Ordered in 2013; first delivery due in 2020
6 A330 MRTT tankers/transport aircraft	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2014

Thailand

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
1 P.180 *Avanti* II intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft	Piaggio Aerospace (Italy)	Ordered in 2014
6 H225M medium transport helicopters	Airbus Group (international)	Ordered in 2012; first delivery due in 2016

Vietnam

Equipment	Supplier	Timeline
1 VNREDSat-1b intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance satellite	Airbus Group (international) VAST (Vietnam)	Ordered in 2012; first delivery due in 2017

Source: IISS

European political leaders need to feel more confident in engaging in discussions about these sales and their strategic effects, not just with their Southeast Asian partners but also with their American interlocutors working on Asian security issues. Indeed, greater ownership of the conversation on arms supplies is particularly important to transatlantic discussions on Asian security, particularly due to the increasing integration of the Western defence industry, which now bears little relation to national or even continental boundaries. For example, there is a significant European component in the manufacture of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which is destined to play a major role in Asia-Pacific security as it enters service with the air forces of the US, Australia, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

And, if such conversations are still too uncomfortable for European leaders, then greater prominence can also be given to initiatives for clearing mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in countries such as Laos; efforts to combat illegal transfers and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons; and programmes for mitigating the risks associated with CBRN materials – all of which contribute to regional stability.[51] The EU has long been one of the major donors for UXO-clearance initiatives in Laos, and this is supplemented by the contributions of individual member states. But perhaps more could be done to diplomatic effect, as China demonstrated in December 2015 with its relatively modest donation of US$500,000 in mine-clearing equipment and start-up funds to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre in Phnom Penh.

ii) Exercises: Get active

Another concern that lies more within the remit of the EU's member states than of the organisation itself is the strategic effect of more targeted involvement in regional exercises and military-to-military exchanges. This applies not only on a bilateral basis – with more invitations to observe and participate flowing in both directions between the EU and ASEAN – but also with regard to prominent, high-intensity multilateral exercises.

As the world's largest maritime exercise, RIMPAC involved in its 2014 iteration 23 nations, 48 surface vessels, six submarines, more than 200 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel. The exercise provides an opportunity for a country to highlight its interests in the Pacific, familiarise itself with the security environment there and nurture a web of defence relations across the region. Yet European participation is normally limited to the French, British and Dutch navies (although, at RIMPAC 2014, the Norwegian navy participated for the first time, while its Dutch counterpart was absent). Participation can occur at a low level: France was the only Western European nation to deploy a vessel to RIMPAC 2012. Given that, for example, the German navy regularly deploys frigates to South Africa for *Exercise Good Hope*, there would surely be some value in involvement in a similarly long-range exercise that looked eastwards (where financial constraints allowed), with other member states, including Germany, requesting participation, or at least observer status, in RIMPAC.

More ambitiously, the EU could propose a meeting between the Chiefs of European Navies (CHENS) and their ASEAN counterparts. There might be interesting alignments in interests and experiences, especially considering that one of the mandates of the CHENS is to raise awareness of the maritime domain among EU member states. And, if a stand-alone event requires too much political coordination, the EU could instead invite Southeast Asian representatives to participate in a CHENS meeting with an agenda deliberately formulated to be of interest and relevance to the guests.

In a similar vein, could more be done to engage with Southeast Asia through NATO? Given the archipelagic nature of the region and its rising concern over terrorism, NATO could invite ASEAN states to reflect on its experiences from *Operation Active Endeavour*, its long-running effort to combat terrorist activity in the Mediterranean. Of less strategic significance, but perhaps easier to orchestrate given the nature and size of its membership, NATO's Channel Committee (CHANCOM) could reach out to countries on the Malacca Strait.[52]

Encouragingly, the EU is already undertaking some of these efforts, having been granted observer status in several regional exercises. One of these is *Komodo*, Indonesia's first multilateral naval exercise, which involved the navies of ADMM–Plus countries in a

An Indonesian LVTP-7A1 amphibious assault vehicle participates in an exercise at Pyramid Rock Beach during RIMPAC 2014 (Tiarra Fulgham/US Navy)

multi-day exercise on disaster relief in April 2014, and another on maritime-peacekeeping scenarios two years later.

iii) Liaison officers: Get engaged

One mournful refrain of the EU's ASEAN enthusiasts is that Southeast Asian countries can find it difficult to understand the Union's capacities as a security partner. So what more can the EU do to make itself accessible and comprehensible to local partners? Along with the ideas already discussed in Part One, an undertaking that would have lasting impact would be to post military personnel, seconded from European states, as security liaison officers in key EU delegations in Southeast Asia. This would ideally include the EU Mission to ASEAN.[53] These EU security liaison officers would have several responsibilities: tracking local priorities and scouting opportunities for productive engagement; acting as local envoys for the activities the EU is already undertaking (ensuring engagement at the right level and raising the profile of these activities); offering a point of coordination for the in-country security-related activities of the EU and its member states; and, where internal EU sensitivities allow, attending local meetings of the defence attachés from EU member states.[54]

Another approach to this latter proposal would be to post security liaison officers to key centres of strategic traction in Southeast Asia. This suggestion is based on the experience of the British Royal Navy, which appointed in 2014 a permanent liaison to the US Seventh Fleet in Yokosuka, in Japan. This officer also served as a liaison to the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. The move was an important symbol of the UK's commitment to increased engagement and, while that symbol had to be backed up by action, it is widely believed to have helped increase the momentum of UK–Japan security cooperation.[55]

In posting an EU security officer to the region – from the EUMS if resources allow, but more likely from an interested member state – the key centres of strategic traction could be:

- US Pacific Command, the hub for all US military activities in the Indo-Pacific.
- Canberra, as a means to become involved with US–Australia cooperation and to benefit from Australian expertise on the region.
- Beijing, as China is the driver for many of the action–reaction security dynamics within the region. This would give the EU insights that would make it a more attractive interlocutor for Southeast Asian partners. Furthermore, a better understanding of Beijing's outlook would enable the Union to calibrate EU activities accordingly.
- Indonesia and/or Singapore, due to the presence of HADR facilities there. The EU could explore the possibility of posting a senior liaison

officer to Jakarta's AHA Centre (which has ties to the EU's Emergency Response Centre) or the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre. Alternatively, EU states with maritime expertise could coordinate a proposal to post an officer to one of these centres on a rotating basis.

iv) Training: Get networking

European member states already run an influential array of military-training courses. The British Royal Navy's Flag Officer Sea Training provides lifelong operational training to an impressive roll call of naval partners, involving officers from 58 countries in 2015.[56] Meanwhile, Germany's Fuhrungsakademie der Bundeswehr (General Staff College) has a substantial network of former pupils across Asia, thanks in part to its ten-month LGAI course for staff officers from non-NATO, non-EU countries.[57] The EU is building on this tradition by providing training in areas such as preventative diplomacy and risk management, activities in which Southeast Asian states sometimes have significant capacity problems. For example, the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation – established in 2011 to conduct research on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution – has yet to make much of a mark (although the relocation of its governing council and advisory board to Jakarta suggests that there is an effort to boost its relevance). To this end, initiatives such as the EU's one-week mediation workshops for mid-career ASEAN diplomats can contribute to local capacities, as well as to European networks.

Such efforts could be further leveraged by increasing follow-on contact, with the aim of establishing new networks. For example, there will be other courses suited to the development of the alumni network this report has proposed for ARF participants in the EU's CSDP training programme.[58] More generally, the EU is a major actor in education in ASEAN states. It funds more than 4,000 students and researchers from ASEAN countries to study on EU scholarships in Europe every year. But more could be done to sponsor the development of expertise on security affairs, with targeted scholarships that provide future ASEAN leaders, including military officers, with exposure to the EU and its security capacities, or that sponsor the development of similar networks between ASEAN member states. A model for such a programme could be the European Initiative for the Exchange of Young Military Officers, which is inspired by the Erasmus Programme and is designed to share knowledge and help promote the inter-operability of European armed forces. Might ASEAN be interested in a partnership with the EU on a similar initiative, as an ongoing contribution to regional confidence-building measures? Alternatively, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative launched by the US could be adapted to Southeast Asian military officers, who would be invited to take up placements at the European Security and Defence College, or at the training academies of European member states, with the EU playing a coordinating role.

v) Values: Get visible

One key aspect of the EU's soft power lies in its commitment to the 'indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms'.[59] This includes support for civil society, which plays a valuable role in the promotion of peace and security. Yet one major criticism of EU member states and the way in which they engage with Asia is that commercial interests often take precedence over principles. The EU therefore requires a policy that includes a minimum benchmark for interweaving its human-rights agenda into commercial and political inter-state discourse.

At a Foreign Affairs Council meeting or in another forum, an EU state could propose that all official visits by European foreign ministers lasting longer than one day involve a meeting with an NGO or other civil-society actor on the first day of any visit, thereby providing visible support to the values espoused by the EU. This commitment could be implemented in a multitude of forms, both public and private, to reflect the sovereign prerogatives of European states to set their own agendas and manage the sensitivities of host states. Once established, the practice would be familiar to all sides, and it would therefore become a formal part of the process for dealing with EU member states. A similar public commitment could be made by senior European officials.

Since there are already many such meetings with civil-society organisations, this proposal focuses on

the reformulation, for greater effect, of what is largely an existing practice (albeit with the additional requirement that any such meetings happen on the first full day of any visit). HR/VP Mogherini has called for the EU's commitment to human rights to be 'more visible'; the EU's second Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy specifies the inclusion of human rights in all EU policies.[60] The public declaration proposed here is simply a strategic extension of this logic.

Of course, such a policy would be unlikely to end mutual recriminations between competing EU member states, as they seek ever more innovative ways to raise human-rights issues with China while minimising the commercial consequences of doing so. But the practice would be a matter of record in the agenda of the visit – a concrete measure of support for a set of principles that the EU believes are key to long-term security and stability.

vi) Thematic engagements: Prioritise more clearly

There are three key criteria to consider when selecting the handful of priority areas for EU engagement with ASEAN that this report has proposed developing as part of a strategy to make EU activities more comprehensible. Is the proposed activity a priority for the EU? Is it an area in which the EU has significant expertise? And is it sufficiently high on the agendas of ASEAN and the EU's transatlantic partners to attract the attention of senior policymakers?

There will be many worthy issues that do not meet all three criteria, and that the EU should therefore continue to support without making them flagship programmes. Peacekeeping might appear to be a promising area for engagement, given that there are more than 4,800 peacekeepers from ASEAN countries involved in UN operations around the world, and that there were positive interactions with local forces during the EU's Aceh Monitoring Mission.[61] However, short of another Aceh-style reactive requirement, peacekeeping initiatives are likely to lack immediate impact or strategic visibility, confined as they often are to issues of training and cooperation, such as that involving peacekeeping centres. Meanwhile, any talk of an ASEAN–EU deployment is likely to be time-consuming in its conceptualisation, and there is no guarantee that it will produce results.

Cyber security certainly qualifies as a key challenge, and one of significant interest to the US and at least some ASEAN states. But the EU will need to be brutally honest with itself about what it has to offer in the area. Southeast Asian countries that are interested in cyber affairs, such as Singapore, tend to look to the US and Israel for the requisite technological equipment and expertise. And while there is a cultural element to the challenges of cyber security, the EU does not have all the answers on this issue, partly because of the significant differences in EU member states' attitudes towards issues such as data protection. Although there is some potential for engagement through the EU Agency for Network and Information Security, it is likely that the EU can make a more valuable contribution to other issues of security and defence.

Work on border management and undocumented migration is another area in which there is an alignment of concerns – and much has been done, with a second phase of the EU–ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme begun in 2015, in cooperation with INTERPOL. Indeed, the EU is the only dialogue partner cooperating with ASEAN in this area, and as migration challenges increase, EU–ASEAN interactions should gain momentum.

Yet this is all relative. Three areas of activity stand out from all others as meeting the criteria outlined above: maritime security, CVE and HADR. So what more can the EU do in these areas?

a) Maritime security

One feature that marks the EU out from other partners of ASEAN is its collective experience in coordinating maritime activities between sovereign member states. This includes the formulation of an EU Maritime Security Strategy. Moreover, European member states have their own rich history of territorial and resource disputes. For example, Germany and the Netherlands signed in October 2014 the Ems–Dollard Treaty. The agreement, which updated an earlier version of the treaty, addressed a disputed border in the Ems estuary, providing legal certainty for the maritime economy there with the aim of promoting investment

and growth in the area.[62] The non-defence aspects of maritime security are an obvious point for EU engagement – from combating illegal fishing to managing the consequences of rapid industrialisation and increasing population pressures. These are issues of particular importance given that more than 60% of Southeast Asia's population live in coastal and maritime areas.

There is already an ASEAN–EU High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation, whose meetings conclude with recommendations on further areas for study.[63] The EU recognises that the key challenge will be to ensure that discussions on capacity-building develop into sponsorship of operational activity, although this is likely to occur in niche, albeit important, areas such as port security.[64] Likewise, when it comes to improving domain awareness, there will need to be increasing emphasis on helping build maritime-surveillance systems – within the boundaries of partner interests and EU resources – rather than simply discussing how this might be done. This is a question not just of financial resources but also of support for information-sharing through capacity-building with local bureaucracies, and in accompanying administrative and logistical issues. For example, while domestic preoccupations may have prevented Indonesian President Joko Widodo from developing his vision of Indonesia as a 'global maritime fulcrum' into substantive policy prescriptions, the effort has not been helped by the requirement to coordinate any initiative between the 12 separate national agencies involved in maritime issues.[65]

More radically, there is also increasing interest in whether and how the experiences, knowledge and operational benefits of *Operation Atalanta* in the western Indian Ocean might be translated into a broader mission with long-term potential. The movement of the piracy threat away from the Horn of Africa and further out into the Indian Ocean means there is already momentum behind such a concept, but it would require real political stamina to plan and operationalise such a mission. Nonetheless, as piracy spreads across the Indian Ocean into Southeast Asian waters, EU and ASEAN navies may share an interest in pursuing such a course.

Meanwhile, NATO's mission to counter people smuggling in the eastern Mediterranean should prompt further discussions on maritime security, likely producing more lessons for EU and ASEAN countries alike.

b) Countering violent extremism

Southeast Asia has considerable experience in confronting the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism. Malaysia faces Sulu-inspired security threats off the coast of Sabah, and looks with some concern at the potential for ISIS to exploit an existing insurgency and weak governance in the Sulu Islands of the Southern Philippines. Thailand has long struggled with an insurgency in its southern provinces that has claimed more than 6,000 lives since 2004 – even if the violence has tended to be rooted in various issues of identity among the Malay Muslim majority there. Indonesia has for many years been forced to deal with Islamic extremism. However, the emergence of ISIS has pushed such concerns to a new level, particularly as the organisation has actively targeted recruits from Malaysia and Indonesia. Concerns about the threats posed to the region by returning foreign fighters mean that CVE is now a major strategic issue in Southeast Asia. And this is unlikely to change in the near future. Indeed, as a three-way battle for leadership of the Indonesian and Malaysian wings of ISIS appears to be playing out, there is concern that the group will announce the establishment of a base somewhere in Southeast Asia, possibly in the Sulu archipelago.[66]

This is therefore an issue of strategic importance, in which engagement will not only contribute to regional security but will also be noticed as doing so. Once more, the reality is that EU contributions to this agenda are likely to be overshadowed by the substantial direct and indirect investments the US is making in Southeast Asian counter-terrorism capabilities.[67] Nevertheless, the effort is of such importance to all parties that the EU and its member states simply have to find ways to engage, albeit in a supporting role. The EU's co-chairing of an ARF workshop on this issue in 2016–17 is a good start. But further areas for productive work must be identified. These could include supporting the implementation of a broader CVE agenda beyond law-enforcement measures, including consistent, careful partnerships with civil-society organisations, such as

Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia. It could also involve support for significant US initiatives in the region, such as Malaysia's Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communication Centre. Other useful efforts could entail support for more operational- and tactical-level coordination between the armed forces of Malaysia and the Philippines, aimed at helping promote cooperation on shared security problems.

A focus on supporting administrative and logistical capacities for coordinating ASEAN states' counter-terrorism agendas could be particularly helpful, given the potential for problems in this area to exacerbate regional mistrust. For example, Singapore is concerned about how a successful terrorist attack might test the unity of its somewhat divided society, and remains privately unconvinced that Malaysia and Indonesia are dealing effectively with the counter-terrorism challenges they face. Indeed, as populous Muslim-majority nations within ASEAN, the latter countries warrant particular attention on the CVE agenda. The Malaysian government has done much to highlight its contributions and capacities in the area, hosting an international conference on deradicalisation in Kuala Lumpur in January 2016. However, it is unclear whether the approaches showcased at such conferences have become part of mainstream law enforcement. More generally, the country will need ongoing support and encouragement in sustaining its historically tolerant brand of Islam, and resisting the creeping influence of the narrowly prescriptive Saudi Wahhabism – in line with Prime Minister Najib Razak's stated commitment to a 'Global Movement of Moderates'.[68]

Given the threat of maritime terrorism in Southeast Asia, further exchanges could be encouraged between the naval special forces of the region and those of EU member states, on issues such as doctrine and best practice. This could be done bilaterally, or through a format coordinated by the EU.

c) Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief

The EU's significant expertise in HADR is especially relevant to Southeast Asia, in light of the region's frequent experiences with natural disasters. The EU is also well suited to HADR because, while the area has an important military component (as seen in the post-tsunami operations and the search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370), it also operates across civil–military lines. There are also direct interests in play: each year, 7m EU citizens travel to ASEAN nations for tourism, business, study or other activities.[69] Lastly, HADR has taken on greater strategic significance within the region, as it has been used in public to justify new defence investments, including those involving amphibious capabilities.[70]

Once more, perspective is important. Ultimately, the limited capacities of the EU and its member states mean that, in the event of a crisis, they are likely to do less than the US, which has assets prepositioned across the region.[71] The training and disaster-preparedness expertise that the EU has to offer may not be high profile, but this expertise can still make a valuable contribution to Southeast Asian security.

Much progress has already been made in HADR management in the region: the AHA Centre has a strong presence, while regional coordination is also improving, partly thanks to the work of the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre. The EU is following through on the Plan of Action by supporting capacity-building and information management, drawing on its experiences in developing the European External Action Service Crisis Response System. However, there remains more work to be done on building and maintaining contact databases to enable better coordination in future crises. Conveniently, work to promote information sharing is best conducted through the ARF. While regional HADR procedures have been established, they would benefit from further testing. The UK and Japan are already cooperating in this area, but such engagement could be expanded, with the EU offering a cross-ASEAN table-top exercise to identify shortfalls in procedure.

vii) Ministries: Coordinate more effectively

As individual EU member states seek to emphasise the comprehensive nature of their interest in Southeast Asia, more of them should consider the presentational and substantive merits of adopting a '2+2' format, which is favoured by Japan in its dialogues on security cooperation, as well as by others.[72] By combining

meetings between foreign and defence ministers, the format can increase the visibility of the high-level strategic discussions taking place. However, the policy would not necessarily need to be implemented at the foreign-minister level. For example, a joint visit to Southeast Asia by the heads of policy planning in an EU member state's foreign and defence ministries could still help send a message of strategic intent from that state. Brussels could consider a variation on this approach by arranging visits to the region by HR/VP Mogherini and her military adviser, albeit with some adjustments in protocol.

Part Four: Recognising constraints

To date, this report has been largely positive about the EU's potential engagement with ASEAN, its member states and associated institutions, and about the general direction of travel in EU–ASEAN relations. This is partly because much of the more dismissive commentary on the subject is either out of date or based on the false premise that crises closer to home prevent the EU from dealing effectively with issues further afield. In fact, few EU officials charged with devising Asia policy are also responsible for dealing with problems within or around the eurozone. However, this report would be remiss if it failed to highlight at least a few of the significant systemic challenges that the EU still faces.

i) The limits of the EU's multilateral relations in Southeast Asia

Widespread public discussion of the EU's uncertain future creates complications for ASEAN countries that are difficult to ignore, especially when they are being asked to consider allowing the EU to join the EAS.

Meanwhile, not all of the EU's member states are equally clear on the strategic importance of outreach to Asia in general and ASEAN in particular. Some, such as Germany and Sweden, readily focus on ASEAN. Others, such as the UK, place the promotion of bilateral relations with ASEAN member states at the core of their Asia strategy. Still others, particularly countries in Eastern and Central Europe, may not view any of these objectives as major priorities.[73]

Substantive constraints on EU engagement also result from the sensitivities of some member states, most noticeably the UK, with regard to almost any EU activity perceived as encroaching on sovereign defence policy. This poses practical problems for the EU – not least in relation to the ADMM–Plus – and therefore limits this report's proposals for demonstrating a more cohesive EU position on military issues.

Even if the EU does start meeting all of ASEAN's requirements on its engagement in regional defence and security, ASEAN may still wish to avoid expanding the membership of the EAS or the ADMM–Plus out of a fear that this would make the organisations less effective. The risk of mounting mutual frustration and recrimination is clear. To ASEAN states, the EU may appear presumptuous in demanding membership, and even neocolonial in its expectations. To the EU, ASEAN may appear to be strategically unimaginative, and interested in little more than a free ride – happy to take EU funding, but unwilling to make investments in kind.[74]

ii) The limits of the EU's bilateral relations in the region

Myanmar's admission to ASEAN in 1997 complicated ASEAN–EU relations, as the EU's interventionist measures against the country's ruling junta – which included arms embargos, export bans, visa bans and asset freezes – contrasted with ASEAN's principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.

This tension eased when, after five decades of authoritarian rule, Myanmar began to enact reforms that included the appointment of a nominally civilian-led government under Thein Sein. As reforms have progressed and elections have been held, Myanmar has changed from being an obstacle to ASEAN–EU relations to being a showcase for them.

However, other sources of tension have arisen with different ASEAN states. Military rule in Thailand threatens to hamper ASEAN–EU engagement – especially since August 2015, when the country became the coordinator for relations between the two blocs. Meanwhile, the claim of the People's Revolutionary Party in Laos that it will establish a state subject to the rule of law by 2020 has been undermined by developments such as the unexplained disappearance of NGO activist Sombath Somphone in 2012 and the enactment in 2014 of a law criminalising dissent on social media. Moreover, the press release issued following the December 2015 Human Rights Dialogue between

Martin Schulz, president of the the European Parliament, presents the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Aung San Suu Kyi in Strasbourg, on 22 October 2013 (Claude Truong-Ngoc)

the EU and Vietnam listed more than a few sources of 'concern' and 'regret'.[75]

Of course, the EU has considerable experience of integrating these difficult but important messages on human rights with a broader set of productive and dynamic bilateral relationships. However, it is undeniable that such tensions have strategic ramifications, including for EU–ASEAN engagement.

iii) Reputational risk in Myanmar

Since around 2012, Myanmar has become something of a showcase for the EU's ability to engage actively and productively with issues of Southeast Asian peace and security.[76] But, perversely, the scale of the EU's involvement, and its visibility on the ground, is in danger of becoming a source of reputational risk. The speed and scale of the EU's entry into Myanmar allows little room for a 'plan B' in the event of any substantive backsliding by the Tatmadaw (the country's armed forces). Rahkine State is still in crisis, and only eight of the 16 ethnic armed groups officially involved in peace negotiations actually signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement. Myanmar's constitution still enshrines the army's involvement in politics, and the commander-in-chief still appoints the heads of the country's three major ministries: home affairs, border affairs and defence. The military leadership talks disconcertingly of a 'discipline-flourishing' democracy in which the army will continue to play a key role. And tensions are likely to rise between the Tatmadaw; the federally minded, ethnic-Burmese government led by the National League for Democracy (NLD); and Myanmar's large ethnic minorities, which favour a more decentralised approach.

Moreover, it remains to be seen how the international community, which in Myanmar is led by the EU, will interact with the NLD now that it is in government. For years, close coordination with the NLD and particularly Aung San Suu Kyi has formed part of the fabric of the EU's Myanmar policy. While these relations will naturally continue to be cultivated in government, so contacts and capacity-building projects will now also have to extend to include the new opposition. This means being ready to handle likely NLD objections to the EU's continuing engagement with organisations such as the pro-democracy 88 Generation Students Group and even hardline Buddhist-nationalist parties.

iv) The inescapable presence of China

Any decision to pay greater attention to the EU's security engagement in Southeast Asia will have consequences for the management of its relations with Northeast Asia, especially China. 'What will China think?' is the inescapable calculation factored into much activity in the region by local and external actors alike. This creates challenges. Beijing may like to talk about mutually beneficial relations, but it can quickly adopt a zero-sum approach on issues involving non-Asian countries' engagement with the region's security

affairs. Such an approach needs to be repeatedly and earnestly rejected. More partners means more stability. China's rise can indeed be good for its partners. But so too is adherence to international law.

Suspicions, and even mutual accusations, are part of diplomacy. While China tracks with some concern the EU's cultivation of closer partnerships with Southeast Asian countries, ASEAN member states can be quick to criticise the EU and its individual members for perceived hypocrisy in their dealings with China. When the UK sought 'neutral observer' status at the UN arbitral tribunal handling the Philippines case against Beijing's excessive maritime claims, it was accused by some commentators of being China's stooge. Confusingly, London then chose not to exercise this right after it was granted, only to be accused by others of placing its relations with China before its support for international law.

Managing these messy dynamics will not be easy. Southeast Asian states can testify to the persistency and strength of China's lobbying efforts on issues that displease it.[77] As the EU steps up its engagement in Southeast Asia – at times, faced with disinterested partners and considerable scrutiny from China – it will need confidence, clarity of purpose and political stamina to stay the course.

Conclusion

Ultimately, there are many options available to the EU as it seeks to sustain and strengthen the development of closer cooperation on security affairs with its partners in Southeast Asia. The relative prioritisation or novelty of any proposal that is taken forward will matter less than its substance and the exercise of real political will to ensure it is implemented sustainably.

Meanwhile, despite having some influence on the military dynamics of the region through its arms exports, the EU will continue to be attracted and suited to lower-level initiatives at the softer end of the security spectrum. This is not activity that naturally attracts attention, although its visibility can be increased by smart choices – such as by targeting the right location or technical expertise for a specific activity. But if reliably and consistently pursued as part of a genuine bilateral or multilateral partnership, such initiatives will amass an influence of their own.

The gap between the ways in which ASEAN and the EU perceive European activities in Southeast Asia should be a source of concern. A road map to strategic relevance in the eyes of ASEAN is required. Much of this report has therefore focused on ideas that might bring these two narratives closer together by strengthening the EU's credentials as a relevant and reliable partner in the region's security affairs. But if the EU's perceptions of what it has to offer the region – and what it is already offering – are accurate, then persistence, patience and even some self-promotion should produce the desired strategic results.

Notes

1 For an example of one such 'package' on non-traditional security, see European Commission, 'EU Proposes to Scale Up Its Partnership with ASEAN', 19 May 2015.

2 And when key Asian countries, like Japan, mobilised to buy bonds issued by the eurozone's temporary rescue fund, as well as making key purchases from its successor, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

3 In 2012, the EU and Asia became each other's biggest trading partners.

4 This is referred to by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as its 'all of Asia' policy.

5 The Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia identified ASEAN as a 'natural counterpart' for the EU. Definitions of Southeast Asia vary, but ASEAN states are the focus for this report. It is recognised, though, that this excludes Timor Leste, which is a part of Southeast Asia but not currently a member of ASEAN (while Papua New Guinea, also not mentioned here, is an observer to ASEAN).

6 It is sometimes forgotten that the EU was ASEAN's first partner to express an interest in acceding to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, lodging its application back in 2006. For examples of growing Russian attention, see William Kucera and Eva Pejsova, 'Russia's Quiet Partnerships in Southeast Asia', Institut de Recherche sur l'Asie du Sud-Est Contemporaine, April 2012, available at http://www.irasec.com/ouvrage.php?id=35&lang=en.

7 Speech by Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President Stephen Groff, Berlin, Germany, 23 June 2014, http://www.adb.org/news/speeches/keynote-speech-asean-integration-and-private-sector-stephen-p-groff.

8 European Commission, 'The EU–ASEAN relationship in facts and figures'. The EU has an investment stock of over €194bn in the region. The EU–ASEAN two-way trade in goods in 2015 was €201bn.

9 Agendas such as ASEAN 'connectivity', with its dual benefits for prosperity and security, are also particularly well suited to the EU's own historical experiences and current outlook and competencies.

10 Fact Sheet: The European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140722_03_en.pdf.

11 See, for example, the five-month deployment of the *Mistral*-class amphibious assault ship, the *Dixmude*, in early 2015, or the visit, on its inaugural deployment, of the French navy's second *Aquitaine*-class Frégate Européenne Multi-Missions (FREMM) frigate, the *Provence*, in early 2016.

12 Although there are none present, there is also, in theory, a mandate for UK troops on the Korean Peninsula under the UN Command Military Armistice Commission and the UN Status of Forces Agreement.

13 Malaysia, for example, is providing some challenges in this regard. The UK's agenda is also not helped by the trend within ASEAN towards bilateral defence engagement, which affords plenty of opportunities for Malaysia to develop its armed forces through bilateral exercises, including with Australia and the US.

14 Five of the world's top ten arms exporters are European, and of those five, three have their largest market in the Asia-Pacific (and the remaining two have their second-largest market there).

15 For more details, see the IISS *Military Balance 2016*. Or, for a broader commentary, see Robbin Laird, 'America pivots to Asia, Europe arms it', *Diplomat*, 16 August 2013.

16 See, for example, Kishore Mahbubani, 'If it stays on that course, Europe will become geopolitically irrelevant', Europe's World, 1 October 2013. Whilst many of the points are valid and well made, the argument that 'Europe should embrace ASEAN' is an echo of what was, by then, already happening.

17 This, in turn, built on the five-year action plan from 2007–12, 'ASEAN–EU Plan of Action to Implement the Nuremberg Declaration on an EU–ASEAN Enhanced Partnership'. For the 2012 document, see http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/document/BSB%20Plan%20of%20Action%20to%20Strengthen%20the%20ASEAN-EU%20Enhanced%20Partnership%202013-2017.pdf.

18 See, for example, the package of new initiatives announced around the May 2015 European Council Conclusions on 'The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with strategic purpose'.

19 The diversity of these states is important, because one reason the EU likes working through NGOs as partners is because it facilitates a more neutral engagement.

20 Further drivers of a greater focus on security in its partnership with Japan include its hosting of the G7 this year and its non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2016–18.

21 'Declaration by the High Representative on Recent Developments in the South China Sea', EU Press Release 126/16, 13 March 2016.

22 Peter Dutton, 'Cracks in the Global Foundation: International Law and Instability in the South China Sea', in Patrick M. Cronin (ed.), *Cooperation from Strength: The US, China, and the South China Sea* (Washington DC: Center for New American Security, 2012), p. 69.

23 For details of the seven points submitted and accepted, see http://globalnation.inquirer.net/130215/south-china-sea-arbitration-philippines-china-spratly-islands-west-philippine-sea.

24 'Around' since exact force profiles and representation change. These are the figures from October 2015, Phase 2 of the operation.

25 It should be noted that then-EU high representative Catherine Ashton had already visited the ASEAN Secretariat in November 2013, inaugurating the EU–ASEAN office there.

26 The EU, France, Germany, the UK and other European governments all participate in the annual IISS Shangri-La Dialogue on an ad hoc basis.

27 As part of the implementation of the EU–China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, the Chair of the EUMC already co-chairs a dialogue on security and defence with China. The EUMC has also attended the IISS's Shangri-La Dialogue as well as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable.

28 Indeed, it is understood that the offices of HR/VP Mogherini and von der Leyen were in fact in contact about the content of their respective speeches prior to the Dialogue.

29 Even whilst such interlocutors tend to forget the repeated warnings Europeans delivered beforehand on the practicality of a summit celebrating the same anniversary only a few months after the celebration of this anniversary at the EU–ASEAN summit in Nuremberg.

30 For example, meetings between ASEAN and its dialogue partners could be moved to the morning following the ARF meeting.

31 Of course, HR/VP Mogherini busied herself with other important bilateral meetings, but these were arranged specifically to fill the schedule and to help avoid embarrassment, and presumably easily could have been set for another time.

32 There are also meetings between ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), ASEAN and Mercosur, and ASEAN and SAARC, to name a few.

33 For the full press statement, see: http://www.asean.org/storage/2016/02/Joint-Press-Statement-as-of-4-Feb-2016-final.pdf.

34 Latvia, Estonia and Malta are the only EU members without their own accreditation.

35 These were the two key objectives set out in the first ARF Chairman's statement in 1994 and they remain the focal point for ARF activities today.

36 It is recognised that this is not always possible, and that just as the EU has had to learn the hard way about the importance of protocol to the region, so the region will have to absorb some of the concerns on process required for the European External Action Service (EEAS) officials to continue to win the internal arguments on prioritisation.

37 The ADMM–Plus is already planning its third exercise on military medicine. Of course, this is something of a caricature – there have been other exercises, for example on counter-terrorism (Sentul, 2013), and a table-top exercise on peacekeeping operations (Manila, 2014). Likewise, it is recognised that the same restrictions apply to the ARF with regard to moving on from 'stage I' confidence-building measures to 'stage II' actions on preventative diplomacy.

38 Blake Berger, 'The critical role of the ASEAN Regional Forum in building co-operation and trust', Europe's World, 7 August 2015.

39 It is, of course, recognised that these defence officials themselves are increasingly stretched and that such invitations are therefore not always accepted. Likewise, there are further complications of hierarchy in some ASEAN countries where the defence ministry is considered higher in the domestic pecking order than the foreign ministry, making defence participation in a foreign-ministry-led process less likely.

40 The annual budget is clearly out of proportion to the more impressive ambitions ASEAN holds. However, it does represent a serious if gradual increase given that the budget in 2007–08, prior to beginning the implementation of the ASEAN charter, was a mere US$7m.

41 ASEAN rules require its budget to be self-funded. The EU helps with salary payment for seconded staff, in particular in the Integration Monitoring Office. For one example of a bilateral programme of support for ASEAN Secretariat capacities, see the project run by Germany's development agency, the GIZ, from 2008–15 on 'Capacity building for the ASEAN Secretariat'. For details, see https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/16385.html.

42 It should be noted that in the case of German funding referred to above, the support provided for the establishment of ASEC's legal department also included the training of staff focused on the operationalisation of the ASEAN Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism.

43 The EU and Canada are the only Dialogue Partners presently excluded. The ADMM itself had its inaugural meeting in 2006.

44 For the full paper, see: https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/7.%20ANNEX%20E%20ADOPTED%20Concept%20Paper%20ADMM-Plus%20Membership%20Principles.pdf.

45 Prashanth Parameswaran, 'What did the 10th East Asia Summit in Malaysia achieve?', *Diplomat*, 1 December 2015.

46 For one positive perspective on contributions made here in the period 2007–13, see the 'Evaluation of the European Union's regional cooperation with Asia', commissioned by the Evaluation Unit of the DG for development and cooperation, EuropeAid contract number 2012/305114.

47 This has included, for example, the donation in 2013 of €4.95m to the Mekong River Commission.

48 These differences were highlighted most notoriously by the failure of ASEAN foreign ministers to issue a joint communiqué at the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012, as a result of irreconcilable differences over how to allude to Chinese activities in the South China Sea, and specifically with regard to a stand-off with the Philippines at Scarborough Shoal.

49 During the 2013 Lahad Datu stand-off, five BAE Systems *Hawk* 208s were deployed in airstrikes against the militant organisation Royal Security Forces of the Sultanate of Sulu and North Borneo.

50 In Spring 2013, Japan protested the sale of on-board helicopter-landing grids to China by French company DCNS. France argued that this was a civilian item and therefore beyond state regulation.

51 The EU runs a Centre of Excellence Initiative, involving more than 60 countries across eight different regions, with centres supporting the development of national response plans and encouraging coordination on these threats. The Centre for Southeast Asia is in Manila and all ASEAN states are partners in this initiative.

52 Composed of the Chiefs of the Naval Staff, or their representatives, from the UK, France, Netherlands and Belgium, CHANCOM is responsible for control of the Channel and the southern waters of the North Sea.

53 It is noted with interest that the US has had a dedicated military adviser/liaison officer in their mission to ASEAN since 2011.

54 There is, of course, the stumbling block of UK opposition to EU engagement in the sovereign area of defence. This issue is covered later in the report, but it means that any such initiative cannot simply refer to an 'EU defence attaché'.

55 This includes joint development and production of defence equipment, joint exercises and even the possible deployment of UK aviation assets to Japan for a joint exercise. For more details, see, for example, Beth Stevenson, 'Japan and UK Joint Discussions around further missile development', FlightGlobal, 11 January 2016.

56 For details on participants, see http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2016-02-10.26807.h. For details on Flag Officer Sea Training, see http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/~/media/royal%20navy%20responsive/documents/idt/flexible%20training%20options/ost/ft012_ost.pdf.

57 Lehrgang Generalstabs/Admiralstabsdienst mit internationaler Beteiligung (LGAI).

58 Could more be done, for example, with the training on mediation or SSR provided by the ESDC, or with their Senior Mission Leadership Courses or their advanced POLAD courses?

59 Article 21, Treaty of the European Union.

60 Address by HR/VP Mogherini to the EU–NGO Human Rights Forum, 4 December 2015. The award of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize to the National Dialogue Quartet in Tunisia offered public recognition on a global stage of the contribution that civil society can make to issues of reconciliation and security.

61 Forces from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Brunei all participated in this mission.

62 The Ems–Dollard Treaty was signed in 1960, but there was no reference in this treaty to the management of the coast between 3 and 12 nautical miles from baselines, a problem that was highlighted by the subsequent construction of an offshore wind farm in the disputed waters. After five rounds of negotiations a compromise emerged, which was converted into an international legal treaty and signed by the foreign ministers of Germany and the Netherlands in October 2014.

63 This Dialogue has already had two iterations, with further meetings scheduled with Thailand in 2016 and the Philippines in 2017.

64 As suggested in the conclusions of the 2nd ASEAN–EU High Level Dialogue, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/indonesia/press_corner/all_news/news/2015/20150506_02_en.htm.

65 Prashanth Parameswaran, 'Indonesia's Maritime Ambition: Can Jokowi Realise It?', RSIS Commentary 044, 4 March 2015.

66 For background on the projected base, see Prashanth Parameswaran, 'Islamic State Eyes Asia Base in 2016 in Philippines, Indonesia: Expert', *Diplomat*, 14 January 2016.

67 For more details on facts and figures – as well as returns – on these investments, see Scott N. Mckay and David A. Webb, 'Comparing Terrorism in Indonesia and the Philippines', *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 8, no. 2, February 2015.

68 At a conference hosted by Malaysia's Religious Affairs Department (Jakim), Shia Islam was declared a national-security threat, whilst liberalism and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activities were identified as sources of potential radicalism. While Jakim may not be the most powerful of departments, its influence should not be underestimated.

69 European Commission briefing, 'The EU–ASEAN relationship in facts and figures'.

70 The reality is that HADR also provides convenient cover, and that these acquisitions are also being driven by concern over China's military build-up.

71 Of course, there are exceptions. The UK was able to fly the flag when Typhoon Haiyan hit Tacloban in November 2013 thanks to the chance deployment of a Royal Navy Type 45 destroyer in Southeast Asian waters and HMS *Ocean* in the Indian Ocean. But force posture alone means that this is unlikely to happen again in the coming years.

72 Japan holds '2+2' meetings with the US, Australia, France, the UK and others. In December 2015 it announced its first 2+2 mechanism with a Southeast Asian country – Indonesia. Other examples could also be quoted, including Australia and the UK, and now Australia and Germany.

73 For more details on EU–ASEAN activity generally, as well as coordinating mechanisms and the particular citation for German and Swedish engagement, see http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/docs/rsp/regional-asia-mip-2014–2020_en.pdf.

74 It is recognised that the EU will naturally provide the majority of funds for many of its initiatives. Nevertheless, some modest local buy-in is often desirable as a means of ensuring the required political commitment to the proposed project.

75 European External Action Service, 'EU and Vietnam Hold Human Rights Dialogue', 16 December 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/151216_02_en.htm.

76 Having already spent over €71m on humanitarian assistance in Myanmar since 2012, the EU has set a 2014–20 Multi-Annual Indicative Programme budget of €688m, making the country the second-largest recipient of the EU's programme of bilateral development cooperation in the region.

77 See, for example, Chinese lobbying efforts prior to the US–ASEAN Sunnylands summit aimed at persuading ASEAN partners not to include any specific reference to China in the inevitable statement on the South China Sea.

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