Article

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

European View
1–12

DOI: 10.1177/17816858261434324
journals.sagepub.com/home/euv
Sage

Chips and chokepoints: Why Europe's security runs through Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Abstract
The security of Europe and the security of the Indo-Pacific are inseparable. This conviction is reinforced by the sight of North Korean soldiers fighting on European soil alongside Russia, the aggressor, in its full-scale invasion of its sovereign neighbour, Ukraine. Yet, Pyongyang's backing of Moscow pales in comparison with Beijing's. China has become economically indispensable to Russia and has helped undermine Europe's security. China and Russia are also connected ideologically and have committed to backing each other's core interests. For China, Taiwan is a core national interest. Whether Russia would also back China to annex Taiwan remains unclear. It is certain, however, that the tensions in the Taiwan Strait have security implications for Europe. Taiwan plays far too critical a role for Europe to neglect it. Europe must therefore work closely and effectively with its partners in the Indo-Pacific, a region technologically and politically crucial for its security and prosperity.

Keywords
EU, Indo-Pacific, China, Taiwan, Japan, The Philippines, Semiconductors, Security

Introduction

'We are committed to strengthening our dialogue and cooperation, based on shared strategic interests and common values, and on the recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is interconnected' (NATO 2025). In June 2025, at the

Current affiliation: Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy is now affiliated with National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan.

Corresponding author:
Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, rue du Commerce 20, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.
Email: zsuzsaaferenczy@gmail.com

NATO summit in The Hague, the NATO secretary general and NATO's four Indo-Pacific partners—Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand—agreed to step up cooperation. They committed to engaging in efforts to enhance mutual situational awareness of security developments in the two regions, namely Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine (which has also seen North Korean soldiers fighting on the side of the aggressor), the growing ability of the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) to project power and assert its sovereignty claims over Taiwan, and the deepening partnership between China and Russia.

The return of Donald Trump as an 'America First' president has shaken up the geopolitical landscape. He is reshaping the role of the US in the Indo-Pacific and rewriting transatlantic relations. From the abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January 2026 to threats to acquire Greenland because he claims it is vital to US national interests, President Trump is unpredictable. Europe is ill-equipped to manage his threats, which Trump has leveraged as a weapon, leading to a deep crisis in transatlantic trust. Beyond dealing with the US and agreeing that a militarily powerful PRC undermines regional security, Europe and its Indo-Pacific partners are engaging in close cooperation. Both regions seek to better understand the implications of the rapidly changing geopolitical and geo-economic landscape.

As the PRC's commercial interests and military capabilities have grown, its global ambitions have increased. While it has interests from the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, Beijing places greatest emphasis on its near abroad, namely the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has recalibrated China's calculations over how military conflict involving Taiwan might unfold. Many have speculated about whether Beijing might replicate Moscow's moves and try to take Taiwan by force, while others have cautioned against superficial analyses (Hass 2022). The Russian aggression has also forced the EU to reconsider its own defence capabilities in a world where international rules no longer matter and the US treats Europe as an adversary, rather than an ally. Similarly, Taiwan has drawn its own lessons. It is strengthening its deterrence, integrating hybrid warfare capabilities into its national defence strategy and reinforcing international partnerships.

China's growing strategic alignment with Russia has also shaped EU–China relations and is the key sticking point in political relations. Yet, China remains a key trade partner for the bloc. De-risking from China is official European policy on paper, but in practice, de-risking has turned out to be more easily said than done. The PRC is also a key trade partner for most of the Indo-Pacific region, forcing regional states to carefully navigate relations with both Beijing and Washington. As a result of Trump's first trade war with China in 2018 and the 'China Plus One' supply chain strategy that has gained growing relevance over the past decade, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China are each other's largest trade partners. As a result of President Trump's renewed pressure on South-East Asia since returning to power, in 2025 the bloc upgraded its free-trade agreement with China on the sidelines of the forty-seventh ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur (Hale 2025).

These are only some of the dynamics that are shaping the Indo-Pacific's response to geopolitical uncertainty that the EU must invest in better understanding. The bloc is struggling to become more independent in strategic areas, namely energy, critical raw materials and semiconductors, and remains exposed to supply chain disruptions. With a breakdown in transatlantic trust, an aggressive Russia and an assertive China, time is not on Europe's side. The EU's priority must continue to be to choose strategic partners well and avoid depending on any one in particular. In the short to medium term, the EU will not be able to keep up with fierce global competition from the US and Asia unless it secures access to critical technologies. This makes Taiwan, the self-governed island that the PRC claims as its own, a key partner. In the long term, Europeans must think about what form their future relationships with Russia, China and the US might take, and invest in Europe's resilience, security and prosperity.

Taiwan's value—and vulnerability

Through deeper trade ties, infrastructure investment and supply chain expansion, China has accelerated its regional economic integration across the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, its assertive posture has triggered counterbalancing strategies among regional states. However, countering PRC pressure collectively is more complex than it may seem. Having China as their number-one trading partner limits the options available to regional states. Beijing's power projection revolves around the pursuit of its national interests, with the annexation of Taiwan topping the rest. Although the PRC has never ruled Taiwan, Beijing claims the self-governing island as its own territory. In official PRC discourse, 'there is but one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and the government of the PRC is the sole legal government representing the whole of China'—this is the essence of the 'One China' principle (Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU 2022).

For China, Taiwan is therefore a core national interest. Its strategic location in the first island chain off the coast of East Asia means that if the PRC were to conquer Taiwan, its navy would have greater freedom of movement across the Indo-Pacific. This island chain roughly encompasses the islands of Japan and Taiwan, and portions of the Philippines and Indonesia. Chinese Leader Xi Jinping's legitimacy is closely tied to annexing Taiwan, thus completing the 'national rejuvenation' of the PRC by 2049. In his 2025 New Year address, he confidently declared: 'The reunification of our motherland, a trend of the times, is unstoppable' (quoted in Hawkins and Davidson 2025).

At the same time, Taiwan's value to the global economy cannot be overestimated; it is the eighth largest economy in Asia and the twenty-first largest in the world, producing around 60% of the world's semiconductors and over 90% of the most advanced microchips by node. Chips are ubiquitous in smartphones, and used in data centres and advanced military equipment. Disruption to their supply could wipe trillions of dollars from the global GDP. Europe is highly dependent on Taiwan-made computer chips, including the most advanced ones, which are produced by the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company. The latter is, in turn, dependent on the Netherlands-based lithography giant Advanced Semiconductor Materials Lithography.

Advanced Semiconductor Materials Lithography is Europe's largest technology firm, the sole provider of the extreme ultraviolet lithography equipment essential to chip manufacturing companies. Semiconductors and related products make up the bulk of the EU's trade with Taiwan. European machinery has contributed to the success of Taiwan's semiconductor industry. In turn, Taiwan has become an important hub for European high-tech companies. A Chinese attack or blockade could instantly destroy these vital supply chains, with dramatic consequences. Taiwan and China are also closely linked by electronics supply chains, and over the decades Beijing has sought to promote closer economic cooperation as a way of promoting unification.

Taiwan's export dependency on China has created economic vulnerability. Losing access to the Chinese market would therefore impact Taiwan's economy. For Taiwan, the deepening cross-Strait trade is both attractive and dangerous. At present, Taiwan is actively de-risking from China, looking to replace it with the US and countries in South-East Asia and Europe. In 2022 Taiwan's investments in South-East Asian and South Asian countries reached $5.2 billion, exceeding its investment in China for the first time. About 40% of new investment is directed towards the region, with Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand among the top recipients (Hoang and Pham 2024). The geography of the region links the ASEAN countries directly to the risk of a contingency in the Taiwan Strait. The region must therefore strategically balance relations with both China and the US.

China channels approximately $1.3–$1.4 trillion of its trade through the Taiwan Strait, which suggests the high importance to it of maintaining stability there. Yet Beijing has to balance this economic reality with the political reality; rather than getting closer, Taiwan is drifting further away from the PRC. China's 2019 crackdown on Hong Kong's democracy undermined Beijing's 'one country, two systems' model for Taiwan's eventual settlement, and negatively influenced perceptions in Taiwan of the PRC's intentions. In other words, the pressure applied by Beijing to Taiwan may have been counterproductive. There is a widely shared sentiment in Taiwan that China poses an existential threat. In addition, shifts in the global economy may erode Taiwan's competitive position and deepen its domestic political divides. The extent to which its leadership can build domestic support will shape the future of Taiwan and cross-Strait ties.

China on the offensive

Rising tensions across the Strait have global implications, due to the economic importance of China and Taiwan to global trade. Approximately $2.45 trillion worth of goods, or over one-fifth of global maritime trade, transited the Taiwan Strait in 2022. In the same year, Taiwan's ports, uniquely vulnerable to Chinese provocations, handled approximately $586 billion worth of trade, including trans-shipment between other economies. Should there be disruption to merchant traffic through the Strait, shipping companies might be forced to avoid the area to mitigate risks. Changing routes would require significant logistical changes in implementation, increase costs and cause delays, affecting consumers. Disruption in this vital area would carry serious consequences for Europe's trade with the region (Funaiole et al. 2024).

An increasingly assertive China has opposed all international engagement with Taiwan, claiming this constitutes interference in its domestic affairs. In response to a resolution the European Parliament adopted concerning China's pressure on Taiwan in 2024, a spokesperson of the Chinese Mission to the EU warned the bloc to 'act prudently on the Taiwan question', adding that 'Taiwan will eventually return' (quoted in Liboreiro 2024). Meanwhile, Beijing is making progress with its ambitious military objectives for 2027 and beyond, with organisational turbulence occurring alongside substantial capability gains, as the Pentagon's *China Military Power Report*, released on 23 December 2025, shows. The report concludes that China is advancing towards Xi's 2027 centennial military build-up goal and associated acquisition of warfighting capabilities against Taiwan (Erickson 2026). The year 2027 will mark the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), but will also be the occasion of the twenty-first Party Congress, at which Xi Jinping is likely to secure his unprecedented fourth term as leader of the party, military and government.

Advances in the modernisation of the PLA in recent years include the doubling of its stock of missile launchers to 1,500, enabling the PLA to strike virtually all targets in the Western Pacific, including the US military base on Guam (Culver 2025). The PLA remains firm on its path of structural reforms, technological innovation and joint operational capabilities. Nonetheless, reports indicate that Xi and the Chinese Communist Party think that an outright invasion of Taiwan would be a daunting strategic task; it could last years and China would be subject to sanctions. The basis for the Party's domestic legitimacy would have to shift from a stress on economic development to a focus on nationalism to provide the reason for ensuring Taiwan's 'reunification' with China (Culver 2022).

To keep the pressure on Taiwan, China has continued its military drills encircling the island, with the latest occurring in December 2025. In response to China's Justice Mission 2025, which took place days after the US announced an $11 billion arms package for Taiwan, the EU reaffirmed that it has a direct interest in the preservation of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait (EEAS 2025b). This is in line with European awareness that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is of strategic importance for global security. In recent years the EU, and particularly the European Parliament, has been more assertive in its support for Taiwan (Ferenczy 2025). Yet, beyond a reactive approach, the EU is yet to consolidate its position by producing a strategy that details *how* it wants to protect its interests in the region. Mindful of the importance of trade with China, Taiwan's critical role in technology and the trend of gradual escalation in cross-Strait ties, the EU must be prepared for more-uncertain future scenarios.

Towards regional responses?

Beyond investing in its military power, Beijing has kept up the pressure on Taiwan by leveraging hybrid warfare tactics. These include economic pressure, diplomatic isolation, information operations and interference in its democracy, designed to undermine people's trust in their leadership's ability to govern and to shape the broader strategic environment in the region. China has also sought to shape the global narrative on Taiwan, reinforcing its sovereignty claims over the self-governed island. It has incorporated its official narrative, framed through its One China principle, into bilateral agreements with regional states across the ASEAN nations and more broadly in the Global South, while exploiting their trade dependence on China.

For example, in the 2024 Joint Statement between the PRC and Indonesia, Jakarta reiterated its 'consistent adherence to the one-China principle' and its recognition that 'Taiwan is an inalienable part of China' (State Council of the People's Republic of China 2024, 5). Nonetheless, Jakarta maintains that Indonesia's rise as a regional power has been built on the principle of 'bebas-aktif', or a free and active foreign policy, first articulated under the country's first vice president, Mohammad Hatta. As the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy, this has ensured its engagement with diverse international actors. It also inspired Jakarta's desire to join BRICS,[1] which has nonetheless raised questions about both Jakarta's ability to pursue its national interests and how membership may potentially compromise Indonesia's non-aligned stance. As such, joining BRICS and thus aligning with specific geopolitical camps could shape perceptions of Indonesia's international standing (Haykal 2024). As China–Indonesia trade ties have grown stronger, Jakarta's ties with the US have faced challenges, including the 19% tariff imposed by the Trump administration since July 2025.

The reaffirmation of the One China principle by Indonesia, as well as Malaysia and other ASEAN states, in bilateral agreements with Beijing, has offered the PRC legitimacy on a core issue. In return, these countries have secured the promise of PRC support in their economic development, albeit their trade remains vulnerable to pressure. Taiwan is not, therefore, the only economy on the receiving end of Chinese pressure. Demanding freedom of navigation, Japan, Korea, India and the ASEAN nations have all adopted strategies of hedging, selective alignment and strategic ambiguity, which entail reliance on US defence guarantees and a strong interest in avoiding antagonising China. Research shows that 32% of Japan's imports and 25% of its exports—totalling nearly $444 billion—transited the Taiwan Strait in 2022. Korea depended on the Taiwan Strait for 30% of its imports and 23% of its exports, amounting to about $357 billion in goods. Both Japan and Korea rely on the Taiwan Strait for importing raw materials, namely oil, gas and coal to meet their immense energy needs (Funaiole et al. 2024).

Japan and the Philippines, two of Washington's closest allies, particularly stand out in pushing back against China's assertiveness. In July 2024 the two signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement, the first of its kind that Japan has signed with another Asian country, that would allow the deployment of forces on each other's soil (*Reuters* 2025a). Furthermore, in January 2026 they signed an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, designed to enable the swift provision of supplies and services between the militaries. These measures must be seen as part of Japan–Philippines–US trilateral cooperation in the face of the increasingly severe strategic environment, as noted by Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi upon signing the security pact in Manila in January (Flores 2026).

The South China Sea, home to critical trade routes, is one of the most contested maritime areas in the world, where several countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam and Brunei, have sovereignty claims that overlap with China's. China's coercive pressure has steadily reshaped the regional status quo, aiming to impose control over the contested seas. The Philippines has been more inclined than its neighbours to see its own security as connected to that of the broader region, including Taiwan. In 2023 Manila introduced 'assertive transparency', an innovative tactic which entails the systematic and purposeful use of visual evidence to expose China's state-sponsored grey-zone actions to the public. This is just one tactic in a larger strategy to deter and defeat malign grey-zone activities. In other words, assertive transparency alone will not generate sufficient deterrence value to secure control of the West Philippine Sea (Garlauskas and Yu 2025).

Nonetheless, it is the view of leading members of the Philippine coastguard that the greatest impact of the transparency effort is that Manila was 'able to convince the international community and those who support the rules-based order that [ours] is not just a fight for us for our sovereignty but it is a fight for every nation who believes in the adherence to international law' (quoted in Garlauskas and Yu 2025). China's grey-zone activities in the Philippines have implications for Taiwan. Both countries have weaknesses that China could exploit, particularly their economic dependence on the country. However, while Taiwan's diplomatic isolation constrains its ability to protest through traditional diplomatic channels in the way that Manila can against the PRC, it is able to express its concern through unofficial partnerships with the US, Japan and European countries (Chou 2025).

Europe's interests

High-level officials in Manila have embraced the 'one theatre' concept, which refers to the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Korean Peninsula being a single, integrated theatre of operations in wartime. This reflects a major step forward in thinking about defence, moving towards synergies in operations, domain awareness, intelligence exchange and mutual reinforcement. The 'one theatre' concept was originally put forward by Japanese Defence Minister General Nakatani in April 2025 (Sato 2025). And it was the Japanese prime minister who said at the 2024 NATO Summit in Washington: '"Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow," and that the security of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is inseparable' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2024). Japan's current prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, has gone one step further, stating that China's use of military force against Taiwan would represent a 'survival-threatening situation' that would require a Japanese response. These comments could be interpreted as directly linking Japan's own security with that of Taiwan, which would mean Japan is moving away from its ambiguous stance on Taiwan (Dotson 2025).

The recognition of regional interconnectedness has resonated in Europe, reinforcing the belief that whatever happens in one region will impact the other. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China enabling that aggression and North Korea supporting it, have laid this reality bare. The EU and the Indo-Pacific have a stake in each other's prosperity and security. Europe's trade with the Indo-Pacific made up 18.5% of all EU imports and 15.4% of all exports in 2024, amounting to a total value of €848 billion. Imports were valued at €450.3 billion and exports at €397.7 billion (European Commission 2025b). The boost to Russo-Chinese strategic alignment since the invasion of Ukraine has increased the sense of urgency in Europe to strengthen defence capabilities. It has also encouraged closer collaboration with Taiwan. Parliamentary diplomacy and high-level dialogues have helped strengthen exchanges focused on trade and investment; maritime security, including that of undersea cables; and information operations and elections interference.

In 2025 the EU and Taiwan held their fourth Trade and Investment Dialogue to discuss common challenges concerning economic security and semiconductor supply chains (European Commission 2025a). In the same year, the Chips Diplomacy Support Initiative and the European Commission co-hosted an EU–Taiwan semiconductor industry dialogue, bringing together over 40 senior representatives from European and Taiwanese semiconductor companies, research organisations, think tanks and diplomatic missions. The Initiative is an 18-month-long project, led by a group of European think tanks and co-established by the EU, that aims to help structure EU foreign policy in the chips industry, with a focus on risk management and expanding networks of expertise with key international partners (Institut Montaigne 2025).

The EU is also reinforcing cooperation with the Philippines and Japan in maritime security and regional stability, as well as in the digital arena. The EU is closely following what it described in a joint EU–Philippines press release in 2025 as ‘China’s illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive measures against Philippines vessels and aircraft conducting lawful maritime operations in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea’ (EEAS 2025c). The EU and the Philippines jointly called for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on international law, while reaffirming their support for Ukraine’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders (EEAS 2025c).

On her visit to Manila in June 2025, EU High Representative Kaja Kallas announced that the Philippines and the EU had agreed to start a dialogue on security and defence (*Reuters* 2025b). In the same month, the EU and Japan held their first high-level security and defence dialogue in Brussels, focused on maritime security, as part of their Security and Defence Partnership (EEAS 2025a). Aligned with its Indo-Pacific cooperation strategy, the EU has launched several digital partnerships with Asian countries, including Japan and Korea in May and November 2022 respectively, and Singapore in 2023. In September 2025 the EU finalised a free-trade agreement with South-East Asia’s largest economy, Indonesia, while progress is being made on free-trade negotiations with the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. The significance of these developments will only grow with the increase in disruptions to global security.

Conclusion

In recent years, Europe has become more aware of the implications of China’s assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, as well as of the threats posed by the growing China–Russia friendship. Faced with a deep crisis in transatlantic trust, the EU is adjusting to a world where raw power is testing the limits of international law. In this framework, Europe needs to take a strategic approach to the Indo-Pacific region so that it can project influence while protecting its interests. The building blocks of this strategy already exist, including the 2021 strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, which noted: ‘The display of force and increasing tensions in regional hotspots such as in the South and East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait may have a direct impact on European security and prosperity’ (European Parliament and Council 2021, 2). The strategy also signalled that Europe chooses partnerships over isolation.

The EU must stay grounded in this mindset, which has helped it to embrace the Indo-Pacific concept,[2] and continue to invest in understanding what the current realignment in regional geopolitics means for Europe and how it should respond. It must increase its presence on the ground with regular high-level visits and participation in regional summits, and deepen existing dialogues on security, trade and investment, and digital affairs with its regional partners, which include Taiwan, the Philippines and Japan. The parties involved must together ensure that these dialogues are effective. Given Taiwan’s and Japan’s critical roles in the digital economy, Europe must absorb the right lessons and develop its semiconductor diplomacy in line with its strengths and expertise, mindful of its weaknesses and needs.

Equally, boosting its own semiconductor industry should not only be an economic priority, but a strategic necessity for Europe’s prosperity and security. As Washington works to bring production home while struggling to strengthen its chip-making capabilities, and Beijing’s accelerates its push for technological self-reliance, the EU must focus on leveraging its tools and mobilising its assets in innovation more effectively. Its reputation for predictability, respect for international law and choice of diplomacy over a transactional approach are ingredients that are in stark contrast with Washington’s approach. This is a powerful asset that could help to ensure that the EU that is emerging is a capable and credible actor. There are lessons to be learned from how Indo-Pacific partners counter security threats, and Europe has lessons to share with its partners. Europe must, however, carve its own way forward.

Notes

1. BRICS stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, an intergovernmental grouping of countries founded in 2009. The acronym BRICS+ has been informally used to describe the bloc since 2024, when membership was opened up to other countries.
2. The ‘Indo-Pacific’ as a concept has come to replace the ‘Asia-Pacific’ paradigm. While it broadly refers to the same geographic area, the Indo-Pacific is used to imply various, often divergent, approaches. Nonetheless, the common element is the reference to the importance placed on a rules-based regional order, economic development and connectivity. The Indo-Pacific is at the same time used as a geopolitical term, primarily aimed at addressing China’s growing assertiveness in the region. Given its fear of Beijing’s retaliation, the EU was not comfortable with embracing the concept in its early days but has gradually accepted and committed to it, just as China has become increasingly assertive. At present the EU uses the term in official documents, as reflected by its 2021 Indo-Pacific strategy.

ORCID iD

Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2002-0055

References

Chou, C.-Y. (2025). *What Taiwan can learn from China's gray-zone actions against the Philippines*. Atlantic Council. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/what-taiwan-can-learn-from-chinas-gray-zone-actions-against-the-philippines.pdf. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Culver, J. (2022). How we would know when China is preparing to invade Taiwan. *Carnegie Endowment*, 3 October. https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/10/how-we-would-know-when-china-is-preparing-to-invade-taiwan?lang=en. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Culver, J. (2025). China, Taiwan, and the PLA's 2027 milestones. *The Interpreter*, 12 February. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-taiwan-pla-s-2027-milestones. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Dotson, J. (2025). The PRC's diplomatic offensive against Japan over Taiwan. *Global Taiwan Institute*, 1 December. https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/12/the-prcs-diplomatic-offensive-against-japan-over-taiwan/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

EEAS (European External Action Service). (2025a). EU–Japan: First security and defence dialogue at managing director/director general level takes place in Brussels. 12 June. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-japan-first-security-and-defence-dialogue-managing-director-director-general-level-takes-place_en. Accessed 25 February 2026.

EEAS. (2025b). Spokesperson statement on China's military exercise around Taiwan. 30 December. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/spokesperson-statement-china%E2%80%99s-military-exercise-around-taiwan_en. Accessed 25 February 2026.

EEAS. (2025c). The EU and the Philippines enhance security cooperation. 2 June. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-philippines-enhance-security-cooperation_en. Accessed 26 February 2026.

Erickson, A. (2026). Latest Pentagon report: China's military advancing amid churn. *War on the Rocks*, 9 January. https://warontherocks.com/2026/01/latest-pentagon-report-chinas-military-advancing-amid-churn/. Accessed 26 February 2026.

European Commission. (2025a). EU and Taiwan hold fourth Trade and Investment Dialogue. 12 December. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-and-taiwan-hold-fourth-trade-and-investment-dialogue-2025-12-12_en. Accessed 26 February 2026.

European Commission. (2025b). EU trade with the Indo-Pacific region: €848.0 billion. 4 November. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20251104-1. Accessed 26 February 2026.

European Parliament and Council. (2021). The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Communication, JOIN (2021) 24 final, 16 September. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf. Accessed 26 February 2026.

Ferenczy, Z. A. (2025). *Partners in peace. Why Europe and Taiwan matter to each other*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Flores, M. (2026). Japan, Philippines sign new security pacts as regional tensions rise. *Reuters*, 15 January. https://www.reuters.com/world/china/japan-philippines-sign-new-security-pacts-regional-tensions-rise-2026-01-15/. Accessed 26 February 2026.

Funaiole, M. P., Hart, B., Peng, D., Lin, B., & Verschuur, J. (2024). Crossroads of commerce: How the Taiwan Strait propels the global economy. Part 3 of a China Power series. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 10 October. https://features.csis.org/chinapower/china-taiwan-strait-trade/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Garlauskas, M., & Yu, P. W. (2025). Dispatch from Manila: A lesson in calling out Chinese maritime aggression. *Atlantic Council*, 24 July. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/dispatch-from-manila-a-lesson-in-calling-out-chinese-maritime-aggression/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Hale, E. (2025). China, ASEAN sign enhanced free trade pact amid Trump tariffs. *Al Jazeera*, 28 October. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/28/china-asean-sign-enhanced-free-trade-pact-as-trumps-tariffs-linger. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Hass, R. (2022). Learning the right lessons from Ukraine for Taiwan. *Brookings*, 22 February. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/learning-the-right-lessons-from-ukraine-for-taiwan/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Hawkins, A., & Davidson, H. (2025). Xi Jinping vows to reunify China and Taiwan in New Year's Eve speech. *The Guardian*, 31 January. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/dec/31/xi-jinping-vows-reunification-china-taiwan-new-years-eve-speech. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Haykal, M. M. (2024). Between OECD and BRICS: Indonesia's 'bebas-aktif' conundrum. *The Jakarta Post*, 3 December. https://asianews.network/between-oecd-and-brics-indonesias-bebas-aktif-conundrum/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Hoang, T. H., & Pham, T. P. T. (2024). Taiwan's economic pivot towards Southeast Asia: Bolstering regional support for status quo. *Fulcrum*, 23 March. https://fulcrum.sg/taiwans-economic-pivot-towards-southeast-asia-bolstering-regional-support-for-status-quo/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Institut Montaigne. (2025). Europe–Taiwan semiconductor industry dialogue, meeting. November. https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/meetings/europe-taiwan-semiconductor-industry-dialogue. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Liboreiro, J. (2024). 'Act prudently': China slams EU Parliament over Taiwan resolution, warns of red lines. *Euronews*, 10 October. https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/10/25/act-prudently-china-slams-eu-parliament-for-resolution-on-taiwan-warns-of-red-lines. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2024). Prime Minister Kishida attends the NATO summit. 11 July. https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/pageite_000001_00446.html. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU. (2022). Questions and answers concerning the Taiwan question (2): What is the one-China principle? What is the basis of the one-China principle? 15 August. https://eu.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/more/20220812Taiwan/202208/t20220815_10743591.htm. Accessed 25 February 2026.

NATO. (2025). Statement between NATO secretary general and the four Indo-Pacific partners in the context of the NATO summit in The Hague. 25 June. https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/2025/06/25/statement-between-nato-secretary-general-and-the-four-indo-pacific-partners. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Reuters. (2025a). Japan and the Philippines push security and economic ties on Ishiba's visit. 29 April. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-pm-push-security-economic-ties-philippines-visit-2025-04-29/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Reuters. (2025b). Philippines and EU to set up security and defence dialogue, minister says. 2 June. https://www.reuters.com/world/china/philippines-eu-set-up-security-defence-dialogue-minister-says-2025-06-02/. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Sato, M. (2025). Japan broaches 'one-theatre' concept to U.S. for Indo-Pacific. *Asahi Shimbun*, 15 April. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/15710761?msockid=2c2543d2b72b612f05b856e2b69b60ba. Accessed 25 February 2026.

State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2024). Joint statement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Indonesia on advancing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the China–Indonesia community with a shared future. 9 November. https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202411/10/content_WS67301550c6d0868f4e8ecca9.html. Accessed 25 February 2026.

Author biography

Dr Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy *is a Visiting Fellow at the Martens Centre in Brussels and Adjunct Assistant Professor at National Dong Hwa University in Hualien, Taiwan. Based in Taiwan between 2020 and 2025, she worked as a geopolitical analyst and academic in the context of the shifting geopolitical and geo-economic trends there. She served as a political advisor in the European Parliament from 2008 to 2020. She is the author of* Europe, China, and the Limits of Normative Power *(Edward Elgar, 2019) and* Partners in Peace. Why Europe and Taiwan Matter to Each Other *(Palgrave Macmillan, 2024)*.