



Book Launch & Panel Discussion

- **The EU through the Eyes of Asia**
- **Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand**

Beijing News Plaza Hotel

Wednesday, 22nd of October 2008



**Seeing the EU
through the Eyes of
Asia:**

**ESIA trans-national
comparative project**



“The EU Through the Eyes of the Asia” an overview of findings

***Prof. Martin Holland
Jean Monnet Chair ad personam***



Why this ESiA Project?

Snap-shot from 2006/7

Ongoing project through ASEM

**“Europe does not exist without non-Europe”
“Europe can only be realized in the mirror of Others”**



Locations

Mainland China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand

Data

Media: Three newspapers (**Popular, Business, English-language**) and a **prime-time TV News** broadcast examined on a daily basis (1 Jan – 31 Dec 2006)

Public Opinion: a representative sample of 400 respondents drawn from online panels surveyed (November 2006)

Elite Opinion: 154 face-to-face interviews with political, economic, media and civil society elites conducted (February-April 2007).

Table 2 Overall Distribution of EU News

*Absence of EU on
primetime TV News*

*The comparatively
high EU profile in
China/ Hong Kong*

*The comparatively low
EU coverage
in South Korea and
Thailand*

*Thai Rath least
interested in EU news*

	TV	Popular	English	Business	Total
China	148	689	595	547	1979
Hong Kong	16	746	455	953	2170
Japan*	n.a.	280	95	505	880
Singapore	16	708	1021	677	2422
S. Korea	36	359	196	372	963
Thailand	25	93	707	175	1000

*6 month sample

Table 3 Distribution of Frames across all Media

EU was typically described as an economic actor (**Korea, Hong Kong**)

Emerging EU international political role (**Thailand, China, Japan**) and in social (**China**) and environmental (**Hong Kong**) policy.

	Political	Economic	Social	Environment	Total
China	821	852	378	27	2078
Hong Kong	519	1154	333	155	2161
Japan*	387	391	72	5	855
Singapore	956	1094	349	79	2478
S. Korea	213	482	181	57	933
Thailand	431	395	151	20	997
Total	3327	4368	1464	343	9502
	35%	46%	15%	4%	100%

Chinese PUBLIC OPINION ... Dominant “EU images”

1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Euro	<u>EU enlargement/ internal</u>	European integration	trade

Chinese PUBLIC OPINION

... most Important Overseas countries for China

Currently 1st Place... USA

EU rank ...2nd

In Future 1st Place... EU

Chinese PUBLIC OPINION

... state of China’s relationship with the EU

	Improving	Steady	Worsening
%	44	46	1





Media, Public and Elite Opinion Themes

- **Limited media coverage** of the EU across all countries; especially low level of TV coverage.
- In terms recognition the **€ has become emblematic** of the EU, even though not all Member States are part of the single currency.
- Predominantly the EU is presented in the media as a **traditional economic actor**, but a trend towards appreciating the **multidimensionality of EU activities** is emerging.
- A growing recognition of the EU's international political role **“somewhere else in the world”**
- The EU as an **environmental and social regulator** is also starting to be profiled.
- The **ASEM process** was largely irrelevant to the media and in public opinion.



Raising EU Visibility in Asia

1. Utilise the “recognition” of the **€ as a public diplomacy tool**
2. Lisbon Treaty pending... Build on the “**single voice**” of the High Representative and External Action Service as representative of the EU
3. Promote studies of European integration into **Asian school curricula** as well as develop EU Studies degrees.
4. If third countries’ expectations of the EU’s global role can be increased then there must be a **corresponding EU capacity to deliver such expectations** – politically, economically, environmentally and socially – otherwise raising the profile would be counter-productive.
5. A positive external perception of the EU’s global role can have **reinforcing effects upon the internal value** placed on the integration process per se.



Why “perceptions” matter

Inaccurate images of a foreign actor make it less likely a government will adopt appropriate policy choices which may lead to **serious policy errors**.

Despite recognition that the EU is more than an economic actor, the **EU is still punching below its weight in Asia**, and the public, elite and media perceptions of this are even lower than is justified in reality.