BACKGROUND PAPER

Security Context in Asia and Implications for Europe: The Roles of Proactive and Gender-Responsive Parliaments

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Contents

1 Introduction

Occupying 30 percent of the world's land area and hosting a population of more than four billion [1], Asia is the most diverse continent in terms of politics, economy, and culture. This is due to its vast size, demographic complexity, and historical legacy, inevitably leading to a dynamic yet sometimes problematic geopolitical environment. In particular, there are the major sub-regions—East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East—where major powers coexist, collaborate, and compete economically and militarily. This has given rise to contemporary security issues, both traditional and non-traditional, that significantly threaten peace, security, and shared prosperity of not only Asia itself, but also of external partners, including Europe.

Despite being geographically distant with a large gap in time zones, Asia and Europe are highly interconnected in many areas ranging from political and economic to social and environmental domains. Inter-regional shared interests and solid ties include, inter alia, trade and investment, research and development, biodiversity protection and climate change, and security and defense cooperation. Particularly, following its Indo-Pacific Strategy adoption in September 2021, the European Union (EU) realized the need to reinforce its strategic presence and actions in Asia for mutual stability, security, prosperity, and sustainable development at a time of rapidly changing and an increasingly challenging environment. [2]

Given sharp dissimilarities in historical legacies and development gaps, the two regions are confronted with both shared interests and challenges with common but differentiated responsibilities[1]. To facilitate cooperation and foster dialogues between Asia and Europe, an intergovernmental process was established in 1996, known as the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) that adheres to key characteristics of Informality, Multi-Dimensionality, Equal Partnership, and High-Level and People-to-People engagement [3]. Attached to the ASEM is

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[1] This "Common but differentiated responsibilities" view was re-emphasized by participating Member Parliaments from Asia and Europe, as reflected in the adopted Declaration of the ASEP 11 in Cambodia on 16th November 2021.

the Asia Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP), which serves as a diplomatic forum between participating members of parliament from both regions to highlight to the leaders in ASEM common issues of priority, including inter-regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

The aim of this paper is to highlight Asia's security context—environment, architecture, and outlook— and implications for Europe as well as to underline the roles of proactive and gender-responsive parliaments for peace, stability, and shared prosperity for both regions.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How can the contemporary security of Asia be contextualized?
2. What are the implications of Asia's contemporary security context for Europe?
3. How could Asian Parliaments be proactive and gender-responsive for peace, security, and shared prosperity between both regions?

1.2 Methodology

The contextualization of Asian security will be guided first and foremost by the development of the region-wide security environment primarily shaped by security-related issues—both traditional and non-traditional—in the early twenty-first century, especially from the second decade. Against that backdrop, the Asian security context can be characterized by two additional factors: existing security architecture—consisting of a collective set of institutions and initiatives established to promote regional peace and security—and the Asian security outlook.

Given the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of the two regions, understanding the context of Asian security will highlight its implications to European interests in a number of aspects, which will be discussed in the respective section on the Asian security environment, architecture, and outlook.

This contextualization will also serve as a backdrop against which parliaments in Asia could play (more) proactive roles—including strengthening their traditional roles,

enhancing parliamentary diplomacy, and integrating a gender-mainstreaming approach—to contribute to peace, security, and shared prosperity amidst the unpredictable security environment, existing regional security forums, and parliamentary diversity—characterized by differences in budgeting capacity, composition of political parties, and constitutional framework—parliamentary or presidential system.

Data sources will include, but are not limited to, relevant academic publications—textbooks and journal articles—trusted international news outlets, Op-eds, and publications/communications from related governmental, regional, and interparliamentary institutions within the scope of Asia and Europe.

1.3 Limitations of the Paper

This paper focuses only on Asia's security context and its implications for Europe but not the other way round. Also, given the myriad of security issues with rapid and incessant development, evolving regional security forums, and differences in security outlooks of Asian countries themselves, this discussion would by no means be exhaustive and completely accurate for the long term. Finally, regarding the proactivity of parliaments in both regions, the focal points lie mainly only in three areas considered necessary and compatible for Asia, namely efficient implementation of their existing traditional roles, promotion of parliamentary diplomacy, and integration of gender-mainstreaming approach.

2 Asia's Security Context and Its Implications for Europe
2.1 Asia's Security Environment

Asia's security environment is shaped by various traditional and non-traditional security issues with domestic and international dimensions. The contemporary traditional security issues consist of those currently escalating or ongoing and those with potential of re-escalating in the immediate future. They include the South China Sea dispute between China and ASEAN claimant states, which disturbs freedom of navigation, questions international

rules and norms, and tests ASEAN solidarity. In addition, the Cross-Strait relations between China and Taiwan remains dominated by tensions and threats of military intervention, and it is only made more complicated by the strategic ambiguity of the United States (US) [4]. Meanwhile, the Korean peninsula nuclearization threatens the security of the US allies— South Korea and Japan—while the East China Sea dispute pits Japan against China. In addition, the Syrian war—which generated tensions between the US and Russia—has resulted in a massive flow of refugees into Europe, and the breakdown of the Iran Nuclear Deal brought international tensions and disruption of the global oil supply.

From a European perspective, the rise of China as a great power means higher stakes for Europe, while any challenges to Asia—including those mentioned above— would impact not only Asian regional order but also the global order, thus incentivizing Europe to pay more attention to China's moves in Asia and other regions. The South China Sea shows that security issues in Asia are no longer limited to Asia. While the management of the issues remains the primary responsibility of Asian states, it is also in Europe's best interests to closely observe, and when appropriate, to contribute to mitigation of the tension. For Europe, in this context, the US remains a critical actor for the guarantee of regional order [5].

Moreover, the region also continues to experience unsettled international border disputes involving Southeast Asian States, India and Pakistan, and Israel and Palestine, among others, as well as armed separatist movements in parts of Southeast Asia. Left unchecked and without proper and timely measures, these issues could potentially undermine regional trust among the Asian States concerned and with external partners, including Europe, as well as jeopardize regional security as a whole.

Within ASEAN in particular, the onset of 2021 saw a military coup in Myanmar, which the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) claimed in accordance with the law[2]. The coup reversed the country's democratic transition and reform since 2010 and is severely

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[2] More discussion on Myanmar's military coup in 2021 can be found at:
https://www.justsecurity.org/75904/beyond-the-coup-in-myanmar-in-accordance-with-the-law-how-the-military-perverts-rule-of-law-to-oppress-civilians/

disturbing regional relations, especially among ASEAN. The crisis has called into question the level of ASEAN willingness and capacity to honor its resolve to promote human rights, which seriously challenges its institutional relevancy. It has also pushed to the limit the flexibility of the ASEAN principle of non-interference, while also testing the resilience of ASEAN solidarity. Nevertheless, up to 2023, there remains no major outcome from ASEAN on the Myanmar crisis apart from the 5-point-consensus[3].

In response to this regional concern, the European Union (EU) has applied a range of sanctions, such as asset freezes and travel bans targeting responsible individuals, including government officials et.al allegedly accused of undermining democracy and rule of law and seriously violating human rights. Economic entities owned and controlled by the Tatmadaw in the natural resources sectors—gems and timber—have also been targeted to restrict its profit generation, while avoiding unintended and undue harm to Myanmar people. Pre-existing EU restrictive measures remain, including the embargo on arms and military equipment, the export ban on civilian-military-dual-use goods[4], prohibition on military training and military cooperation, and freezing of EU assistance to the military. [7]

In addition, other non-traditional security issues are, on the one hand, increasingly eroding Asian physical infrastructure and human security, and on the other, compelling states to pursue collective responses as they have trans-regional consequences. For example, terrorism, particularly the rise of ISIS in the Middle East and parts of Southeast Asia, has led to physical destruction and humanitarian disasters, including large-scale intra-and inter-regional migration, especially to Europe. In particular, in 2014 when ISIS declared a caliphate in Syria and parts of Iraq, around 100,000 people had migrated to Europe. In 2015, the Syrian refugee movements to Europe increased dramatically, forcing Hungary to close the border

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[3] The ASEAN Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar was reached during the ASEAN Leader's Meeting in Indonesia in 2021 and include provisions for an immediate cessation of violence, constructive dialogue among all parties, the appointment of an ASEAN special envoy to facilitate mediation, humanitarian assistance by ASEAN, and the visit by the ASEAN special envoy and delegation to Myanmar to meet with all parties.
[4] Examples of dual-use goods that can be in both civilian and military applications include global positioning satellites, chemical and biological tools, night vision technology, thermal imaging, drones, and certain kinds of ball bearings, among others.

with Serbia to prevent further refugee flows. Meanwhile, thousands of refugees arrived in Greece daily, and in total, Europe had received 1 million refugees and 1.3 million asylum requests from Syrians by 2015 [8]. The downfall of ISIS in 2019 only re-shifts the power and attention to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban and generates fear of the return of ISIS foreign fighters to their home countries, including those in Southeast Asia and Europe [9].

In addition, epidemics and pandemics—especially the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in early 2020—have resulted in extensive quarantines in numerous countries and continents, increased racial tensions, and caused significant economic disruption[5]. These have exacerbated regional threats to human security and extend the lengthy list of pressing non-traditional security issues, namely climate change, environmental degradation, drug and human trafficking, poaching of natural resources, food and energy security concerns, natural disasters, and cyber warfare, including dissemination of fake news.

The prospect of global effort to overcome the pandemic was to some extent interrupted by the new variants of Delta and Omicron. By 2023, there had been nearly 800 million cumulative cases of Covid-19, including nearly 7 million cumulative deaths as reported to the World Health Organization, while it is worth noting that around 13 billion vaccine doses had been administered globally [10]. In the framework of EU-Asia cooperation, Europe allocated 2.7 billion Euros in Asia, of which 800 million Euros had been specifically reserved for ASEAN [11]. It is also worth noting that in the 13th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in November 2021 in Cambodia under the theme "Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared growth", Heads of States/Governments from Europe and Asia and the EU and ASEAN Secretary-Generals also reaffirmed their shared partnership and engagement for the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic [2].

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[5] More discussion on socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 can be found at:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7574839/

2.2 Asia's Existing Architecture in Addressing Security Challenges

In today's context, no state can single-handedly deal with the multitude of traditional and non-traditional security issues, so collective cooperation mechanisms are indispensable. These shared challenges have, as a result, served as preconditions for the establishment of the Inclusive Asian Security Architecture[6], consisting of, for example, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-plus, the East Asian Summit (EAS), and other related initiatives mandated to address both traditional and non-traditional regional security issues. These institutions operate not only at the Track I (governmental) level, but also through Expert Working Groups (EWGs) at Track II, and they could be further promoted by Parliamentary support, which is discussed in the following sections. Notably, most of the existing architecture is associated with Asia Pacific-rim States, as the other sub-regions have yet to form any concrete regional initiatives.

For Europe, the rise of China may not substantially modify the existing regional security architecture or institutions, but it could gradually transform the context in which those institutions operate. That is mainly because China has also become more confident, which internationalizes Asian security issues. One example lies in the South China Sea issue, which, from the European perspective, poses a serious challenge to international law. For instance, China has challenged the universal interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), specifically through the militarization of the Paracel and Spratly Islands [12], which can hinder international freedom of navigation. Instead, China introduced the notion of claiming the island through historical rights. The consequence is increasing uncertainty to all states in the region, and Europe is no exception [13].

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[6] "Inclusive Regionalism" refers to regionalization project that welcomes members beyond geographical scope of a certain region based on shared interests. More discussion on "Inclusive Regionalism" is available at: Rozman, G. (2012). East Asian Regionalism. In M. Beeson & R. Stubbs, *Routledge Handbook of Asian Regionalism* (1st ed., pp. 22-32).

2.3 Asia's Security Outlook: The Asian Way of Multilateralization

While multilateralism is critical for regional security, it should not be at the expense of Asian centrality. For states in this region, the role of defining their own destiny and sovereignty remains of the utmost importance, and it has become an entrenched value in all Asian States. One prime example is ASEAN Centrality[7] [14], in which the ASEAN Way—non-interference, consultation, and consensus—is fundamental to many inclusive multilateral institutions and forums, such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus). From the European perspective, ASEAN Centrality is a key to counter any hegemonic temptations in the region [15]. Such centrality can be best realized through "informal", "unofficial" or "soft" regionalism, which embeds certain institutional features, including non-supra-nationality, mutual understanding and flexibility, and a lack of legally binding obligations as opposed to those of the "formal", "official" or "hard" regionalism[8] of the West.

In this regard, regional institutional design has revolved around the matter of "regional suitability"—what suits Asia—rather than "regional comparison"—comparing the Asian Way with the Western Way of institutionalization. Skillful utilization of this well-suited multilateralism is essential for states in the region to maneuver carefully between superpowers—especially amidst Sino-US rivalry—in order to maximize regional and national interests and to minimize risks of becoming satellite states, while ensuring that the rule of law and norms remain keys to maintaining regional order.

However, the ideal scenario remains far from concrete. From the European perspective, the Sino-US polarization and rivalry pose certain implications to Asian multilateralism. Simply, great power competition entails competing new initiatives and institutions, which

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[7] "ASEAN Centrality" is a concept that emphasizes ASEAN role as a dominant regional platform to overcome common challenges, especially when engaging with external powers.

[8] For comparative study between 'Formal' and 'Informal' Regionalism, see: Acharya, A., & Johnston, A. (2007). Crafting cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

could overshadow the existing regional mechanisms. For instance, the US would prefer bilateral asymmetrical relations with ASEAN members while China would prefer ASEAN to lose its significance and divide its members politically through massive economic investments and incentives [13].

A likely consequence would be a zero-sum game, in which Asian states are forced to choose sides, thus inevitably undermining Asian's cohesion in general, and ASEAN Centrality, in particular, and in turn increasing conflict of interests. In such a case, Asian capacity to construct a regional architecture and multilateralism for its regional interest would be extremely limited [13]. Meanwhile, Europe views the Indo-Pacific Concept as a collective test for East Asian states to maneuver between the US and China, so as to preserve strategic cooperation with the US, while avoiding offending China, which would be critical in preventing the worst scenario of the super-power rivalry in the region [16].

3 Proactive Roles of Asian Parliaments for Peace, Security, and Shared Prosperity

3.1 Diversity of Asian Parliaments: Capacity, Composition, and Constitutional Framework

Just as no two nations are alike, the same can be said of Parliaments in Asia. Diversity would best describe the contemporary status of Parliaments in this region in terms of three variables—capacity, composition, and constitutional framework. First, in terms of capacity, Asian Parliaments differ based on their resources—economic status and human capital—of their respective states, and these resource gaps may correlate with capacity gaps between these Parliaments in fulfilling their roles. Second, the composition of political parties in each Parliament is the result of the differing political systems of each state. Some nations have elections featuring a variety of competitive parties, in others one party tends to dominate, and in others there is just a single party. Last but not least, Asian Parliaments can also be divided in terms of constitutional framework—presidential and parliamentary [17]. Presidential system contains two separate elections for the Head of Government and for the

Parliament itself, thus separating clear powers between the executive and legislative branches. Meanwhile in the parliamentary system, there is only one election for the Parliament, which then elects a Head of Government, directly responsible to the Parliament[9].

3.2 Strengthening Traditional Roles and Promoting Parliamentary Diplomacy

As an independent branch responsible for legislation, policy oversight, and representation, parliament has a fundamental role in promoting peace, security, and shared prosperity. Against the backdrop of contemporary regional traditional and non-traditional security challenges, which are increasingly complex and dynamic in nature, it is timely and necessary that Asian Parliaments be proactive—guiding the situation rather than just reacting to it—by strengthening their traditional roles and embracing new ones.

First, Parliaments have been traditionally responsible for performing a variety of roles, which contribute to shaping the regional security framework. For example, they are tasked with the role of ratifying and overseeing international agreements, allowing them to facilitate the regional integration process, while reflecting their national interests. Also, they oversee foreign and security policies of the executive through their foreign affairs and defense committees, and they are empowered to approve budgets for implantation of policies or strategies, including those concerning peace and security.

Since the modern evolution of warfare and globalization mean that every citizen is more than ever affected by wars, it is important to practice a more representative decision-making process over the use of national armed forces—so that the use of force is in accordance with both national legislation and international law—and to have informed political debates over

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[9] For detailed comparison between Presidential System and Parliamentary System, please consult:
1. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/025c3909-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/025c3909-en#section-d1e3590
2. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/025c3909-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/025c3909-en#section-d1e4158

necessity of the use of armed forces and strategic options if wars are inevitable for the national interest or survival [18].

It can also be argued that certain stages of military decision making require secrecy and military expertise. However, that shall not unnecessarily be invoked at the expense of parliamentary involvement on the issue. The secrecy of military operations shall not exclusively exempt themselves from democratic oversight. Also, since the nature of wars is political—aiming to achieve certain objectives and interests for the government and people —military strategy could not be limited to only military considerations [19] , and elected civilian representatives deserve to be involved in decision making process to ensure its political justification [20].

Moreover, traditionally, parliaments are also in charge of proposing, reviewing, and passing laws (though the degree of this authority varies from state to state) and initiating public and inter-party debates and discussions on matters pertinent to domestic peace and stability with implications for regional security. In order to be proactive, Asian parliaments could strengthen these traditional roles through capacity building in key areas of traditional and human security —strategic, environmental, health, and economic issues, etc. —in order to guide and shape the regional security environment to the greatest extent possible, rather than merely responding to challenges when they arise [21].

Additionally , Asian Parliaments could also play a more sophisticated roles, including increased engagement in foreign relations through parliamentary diplomacy (e.g., soft diplomacy through parliamentary committees, commissions, friendship groups etc.) to complement executive diplomacy [21]. In this way, proactive parliaments could supplement conventional diplomatic channels in dealing with issues that are otherwise too sensitive or complicated for the executive branch, through using growing networks of inter-parliamentary forums, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), and Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP), among others. Through these parliamentary channels, Members of Parliament from within and outside the region could forge strong links

to deal with common regional security challenges and to seek inter-parliamentary negotiations when executive channels face deadlock.

To Europe, the parliamentary network in Asia has the potential to contribute to the prevention of the fragmentation of the Asian security structure [22]. Through their diverse networks, parliamentarians in Asia could influence diplomacy through direct messages and more subtle promotion of their respective national interests to other parliamentarians on security

issues. That is a key to preserve and strengthen unity, inclusivity, and multilateralism, which, from Europe's Perspective, has been eluding Asia [22]. Thus, Asian parliaments are as important to Europe as the executive channels in its multi-faceted relations with Asia. Despite the fact that their degrees of popular representation vary across different states, they remain influential and active in promoting regional centrality [22].

3.3 Gender-Responsive Parliaments and Empowering Women Parliamentarians

Besides strengthening their traditional roles and participating in parliamentary diplomacy, parliamentarians could increase their proactivity through building gender-responsive parliaments and empowering women parliamentarians.

A gender-responsive parliament is parliament that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its composition, structures, operations, methods, and work [23].

Asian Parliaments could be more gender-responsive by:

- Promoting parity and equal numbers of women and men in all of its bodies and structures;
- Having a gender equality policy framework, which integrates gender equality into all its work;
- Fostering an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality, and takes into account the needs and circumstances of both male and female

parliamentarians to enable them to balance their professional responsibilities with their family obligations;

- Recognizing and building on the contribution of male parliamentarians who advocate for gender equality;

- Encouraging political parties to be proactive in promoting and achieving gender equality;

- Empowering female parliamentary staff to promote gender equality, to actively encourage the recruitment and retention of women in senior positions, and to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration;

- Adopting Gender-Sensitive Legislation (GSL) (e.g., "the integration of a gender perspective into all components of the legislative process) design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to achieve the ultimate objective of equality between men and women".

Comprehensive gender-based impact assessment of legislation is a crucial component of GSL and could include:

- clear identification of target beneficiary groups and evidence-based analysis of how each of these groups would be affected by the law in question
- the identification of gender-related activities that could be sensibly integrated into the law
- the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework that consists of gender-sensitive indicators that can be measured throughout the implementation of the law to gauge its impact on various beneficiary groups.

Another key element of GSL is the institutional legislative framework that includes a clear outline of the institutional roles, functions, responsibilities and outputs of various entities (specialized gender equality committees, multi-portfolio committees, external stakeholders…) that are engaged in GSL implementation. [24] [25]

Because most ASEAN countries are yet to have a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and more specifically on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325—which recognizes that *"the full participation of women in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security"*—the development of a feasible Regional Plan of Action (RPA) on WPS would support all ASEAN member states in establishing national policies, with the RPA itself providing a legal basis for each member's national plan. In this area, Asian Women Parliamentarians could work towards establishing an RPA that recognizes the role of women in areas of conflict prevention in governance, relief, and recovery [26].

At the regional level, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) can play an important role in strengthening the cohesion between regional and national policies. More specifically, the Women Parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA) is in a key position to play a crucial role in harnessing the power of Women Members of Parliament (MPs) and pushing forward the WPS agenda by promoting gender-responsive laws and policies. Additionally, WAIPA can have an instrumental role in the development of the RPA which could lead to substantive participation of women in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, and socio-economic recovery [27]. WAIPA could also collaborate with the AIPA Caucus (formed in 2007 to accelerate effective legislative cooperation and harmonization in member countries) to support an RPA that could mark a new era of dedicated attention and increased resources.

At the national level, Asian Women Parliamentarians have an instrumental role in ensuring that laws concerning issues related to WPS are discussed and adopted. By regularly holding public hearings and requesting clarifications and reports directly from government , parliaments can bring the WPS agenda to the attention of the public and the media, thereby encouraging accountability at all levels. Additionally, Women Parliamentarians can play a crucial role in taking steps to transform deeply rooted and culturally accepted social norms and to challenge gender stereotypes that hinder the opportunity for women's participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping and in fulfilling their roles as negotiators, mediators, and peacekeepers [28].

4 Conclusion

The contemporary security situation of Asia could be contextualized into three aspects— environment, architecture, and outlook. Its security environment is conditioned by both traditional and non-traditional security challenges with multifaceted implications for Europe ranging from the Syrian refugee crisis to human-rights-driven sanctions by the EU in response to the Myanmar military coup to inter-regional cooperation to address the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, the rise of China and unsettled international disputes constantly question the relevance of the existing regional security forums. They also pose direct concerns for Europe—through potential changes to the rules-based order and international rules of law—and require reconsideration of Europe engagement with Asia. Moreover, while Asia's security outlook remains open to multilateralism, Asian centrality and the ASEAN Way stand prominent in any inclusive or multilateral platforms in the region. However, for Europe, there are concerns to Asian-led multilateralism and threats of regional fragmentation due to the Sino-US polarization, which requires Asian states to be highly vigilant in maneuvering between the two superpowers.

Against this backdrop, Parliaments in Asia are in a position to play an increasingly crucial role in regional peace, security, and shared prosperity. They could, first , build on their existing traditional roles of oversight of security related policies and budgeting for peace and security. Secondly, they could enhance their role through participating in Parliamentary Diplomacy via various available parliamentary networks and channels, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), and Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP). Last, proactive Asian Parliaments could be more gender-responsive with an emphasis on the empowerment of Women Parliamentarians to contribute towards efficient and sustainable regional peace processes.

To Europe, in its conduct of international relations with Asia, Parliaments are regarded as very important interlocutors. Thus, the more proactive Asian Parliaments could become, the more influence and significance they gain in the framework of EU-Asia cooperation.

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