

RSOG MYEULINK SEMINAR: PROFESSOR DR. THOMAS CHRISTIANSEN



When: 13 June 2012

Where: Razak School of Government

Who: Professor Dr. Thomas Christiansen

About the Seminar:

The seminar focused on developments in the European integration process and compared and contrasted these with efforts towards greater regional cooperation in Asia, with particular emphasis on ASEAN. It also zoomed into a number of important dimensions of regional cooperation that are not usually highlighted in political or media discussions: policy-implementation and enforcement, delegation of powers to common institutions, domestic changes resulting from regional cooperation, supranational regulatory agencies and horizontal policy-learning.

It is hoped that the discussions and exchanges of ideas on comparison between regional cooperation efforts in Europe and Asia could help the policy makers and senior public officials understand past accomplishments, lessons learnt if any, on-going development and future challenges.

Summary:

Unlike in Asia, integration in Europe is far more inter-connected with the presence of common institutions. Whilst the supranational model has been fairly successful, on certain issues such as the current debt crisis, limited power granted to certain common institutions and the lack of solidarity has contributed to a deadlock.

It is folly to think that the recession in Europe is beneficial to competing continents such as Asia, as the European Union is a major export market for many trading nations. Asia, on the other hand, must re-examine at their growth model; whether it is sustainable in the long run.

Asia, in particularly ASEAN, are proud of their 'consensus' model. Apparently, Europe shifted to 'majority-voting' model to expedite growth in the region. Nonetheless, the hesitancy in Europe to relinquish sovereignty, especially on strategic issues, to some extent complicates the regulation of a single market.

It is crucial for policy makers and strategists to understand the inherent characteristics of the playing field they are in, the reasons behind the existence of the regional bloc i.e. idea and spirit and the journey it had so far in formulating policy responses as well as strategies.

Questions and Issues Raised:

1. The role of founding member countries in a regional bloc; on whether that role is indeed a self-limitation?
2. How is the success of talks or negotiation in Europe measured?
3. Asia is less likely to move into the supranational model like the one witnessed in Europe.
4. Concerns on on-going development in the Europe in particularly the Eurozone.
5. The original intention of the European Union is to prevent another war in Europe. As such, the on-going development is not entirely surprising. It is less likely for member states to quarrel with each other as they are more inter-dependent than before.
6. Apparently, the 'cooperation' approach is more effective in Asia in sectors such as the energy sector than the so-called 'integration' model in Europe.
7. Countries in Asia have very different levels of development. Having said so, the focus of cooperation has always been on leveraging on the strength of some to assist others that are lagging.

About the Speaker:

Prof. Dr. Thomas Christiansen is Jean Monnet Professor of European Institutional Politics at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University and teaches predominantly on the Research Masters in European Studies and the European Public Affairs Masters. He joined the Department of Political Science in 2010, after several years at the European institute of Public Administration. He is Executive Editor of the Journal of European Integration, academic coordinator of the Observatory of Parliaments after Lisbon (OPAL) and member of the steering committee of the Standing Group of the European Union of the European Consortium of Political Research. He has published widely on different aspects of the institutional politics of the EU. The European Union after the Lisbon Treaty, co-authored with E.Best and W.Wessels, is forthcoming with Oxford University Press.

Contact:

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Attachment:

Powerpoint presentation of the session can be downloaded [HERE](#)

Photo Gallery:

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