

**CEIAS**

**Annual**

**Report**

**2024**



**CEIAS**

Central European Institute  
of Asian Studies

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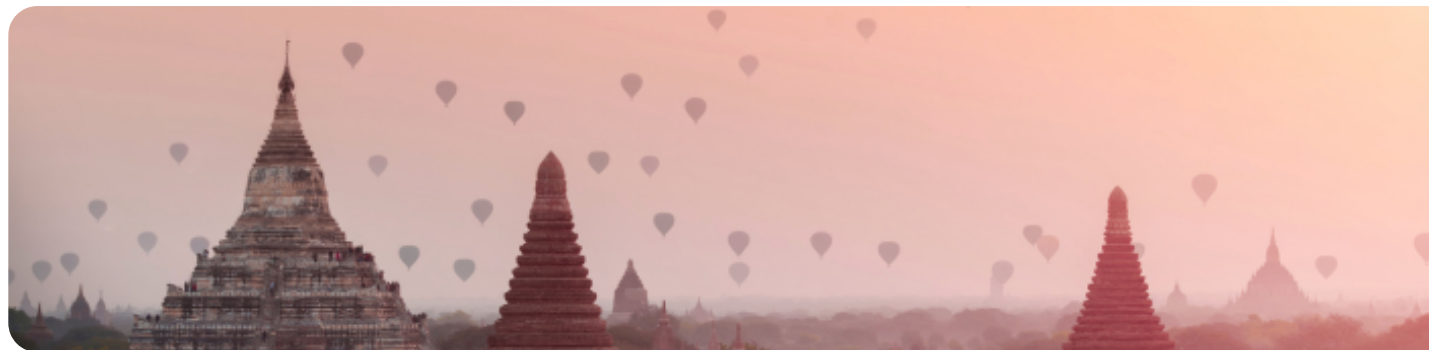




# Letter from CEIAS President



**Alfred Gerstl**  
CEIAS President



CEIAS has steadily evolved since its launch in 2007, with a significant increase in research, communication, and dissemination activities over the past five years. The year 2024 marked a period of both ambitious expansion—exemplified by the launch of new projects—and strategic consolidation. While CEIAS achieved numerous milestones during this time, several key highlights must be mentioned here.

First and foremost, CEIAS established a new branch in Prague. The Prague team, led by Filip Šebok, plays a pivotal role in advancing our mission. This expansion not only strengthens our presence in Czechia but the team also contributes strongly to all CEIAS's activities.

Secondly, CEIAS began implementing several new research projects funded by the European Union, as well as by other international and national funding agencies, embassies, and foundations. These projects examine critical

issues in the Indo-Pacific region, like human rights in Asia, China's soft power and FIMI operations in Europe, Central Europe's relations with Southeast Asia, or South Korea's position in European electromobility and military supply chains after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Thirdly, we organized, together with the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA), the CEEasia Forum 2024 in Bratislava, bringing together academics, diplomats, media and civil society representatives from across the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions.

The projects and the frequent appearances of our staff in international media underscore CEIAS's expertise and competence in analyzing strategic, political, security, economic, technological, and civil society issues across the Indo-Pacific region. This comprehensive regional expertise distinguishes CEIAS from many other research institutions, which often concentrate

on just one or two Asian countries within a generalist foreign policy portfolio.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our donors and the members of our International Advisory Board, whose support ensures the high quality of our work. I also want to extend my sincere thanks to the entire CEIAS team for their dedication and commitment to the organization's mission and values.

Looking ahead to 2025, the CEIAS team remains steadfast in its commitment to spreading knowledge about Asia in Europe, deepening relations between Europe and Asia, and promoting Central European expertise on the Indo-Pacific.

# 2024 in numbers

188

new entries  
published by the  
EU-Taiwan Tracker

140

participants  
at the 2024  
CEEasia Forum

129



original articles  
and policy papers  
published on the  
CEIAS website

1

very  
successful  
year

6

new  
projects

150+

media  
mentions

4

specialized  
trackers

137k



website  
visits

3000+

LinkedIn  
followers

4000+

newsletter  
subscribers



# About CEIAS

The **Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS)** is an independent think tank focusing on Europe-Asia relations and developments in the Indo-Pacific region. Originally founded in 2007 in Slovakia, CEIAS is today a **transnational think tank with main branches in Bratislava (Slovakia), Prague (Czech Republic), and Vienna (Austria).**

We strive to combine **academic and policy advisory roles**, producing **data-driven, methodologically rigorous, reliable, and practically relevant research** that is highly valued by experts and policymakers.



Our activities are focused into **several research programs and centers:**

Geopolitics • Security

Geo-economics • Energy • Technology

Human Rights • Law

Perceptions • Propaganda • Media

EU-China Relations

Taiwan • Cross-Strait Affairs

Southeast Asia • ASEAN

Domestic Politics • Elections • Political Parties

# Our team in 2024

## Board of Directors

**Alfred Gerstl** • President  
**Matej Šimalčík** • Executive Director  
**Richard Turcsányi** • Program Director  
**Kristína Kíronská** • Advocacy Director  
**Filip Šebok** • Head of CEIAS Prague

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**Matt Ferchen** • Yale University  
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**Atsuko Higashino** • University of Tsukuba  
**Björn Jerdén** • Swedish National China Centre  
**Bonny Ling** • Work Better Innovations  
**Grigorij Mesežnikov** • Institute for Public Affairs  
**Jagannath Panda** • Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs  
**Shannon Tiezzi** • The Diplomat

## Research Fellows

**Martin Šebeňa** • Chief Economist  
**Veronika Blablová** • Research Fellow  
**Lucia Husenicová** • Research Fellow  
**David Hutt** • Research Fellow & Editor  
**Omar Rasya Joenoes** • Research Fellow  
**Adam Kalivoda** • Research Fellow  
**Vladimíra Ličková** • Research Fellow  
**Kara Němečková** • Research Fellow  
**Benjamin Toettoe** • Research Fellow  
**Róbert Vancel** • Research Fellow

## Coordinators & Research Assistants

**Nikola Majsniarová** • Social Media Manager  
**Nela Valchářová** • Project Coordinator  
**Valentin Hoffmann** • Research Assistant  
**Barbara Halač Pavlovičová** • Research Assistant  
**Kuan Chen** • Research Assistant  
**Wei-Chung Chen** • Research Assistant

**Thomas Chan** • Research Fellow  
**Seong Hyeon Choi** • Research Fellow  
**Federica Cidale** • Research Fellow  
**Tinkara Godec** • Research Fellow  
**Sebestyén Hompot** • Research Fellow  
**James Iocovozzi** • Research Fellow  
**Diya Jiang** • Research Fellow  
**Barbara Kelemen** • Research Fellow  
**Lukáš Laš** • Research Fellow  
**Michał Lubina** • Research Fellow  
**Antonina Łuszczkiewicz** • Research Fellow  
**Julia Marinaccio** • Research Fellow  
**Bradley Murg** • Research Fellow  
**Gary Ng** • Research Fellow  
**Nick Nieschalke** • Research Assistant  
**Eunika Rejtová** • Research Fellow  
**Zdeněk Rod** • Research Fellow  
**Aneta Roth** • Research Fellow  
**Czesław Tubilewicz** • Research Fellow

# Introducing CEIAS Prague

In 2024, we opened our new branch in Prague. This expansion marked another significant step in continuing our mission to spread knowledge about contemporary Asia among experts and the public in Central Europe and beyond, while also informing international audiences about Central Europe and EU's relations with Asia. The establishment of CEIAS Prague reflects our commitment to fostering a greater understanding of Asia

in Central Europe and facilitating exchange of ideas on pressing issues surrounding the rise of China, security tensions in the Indo-Pacific, India and ASEAN's growing global importance, the EU's deepening ties with Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, the EU's economic security on the background of the green transition as well as challenges related to AI and other emerging technologies.



**Filip Šebok**  
Head of CEIAS Prague

**Kara Němečková**  
Research Fellow

**Veronika Blablová**  
Research Fellow



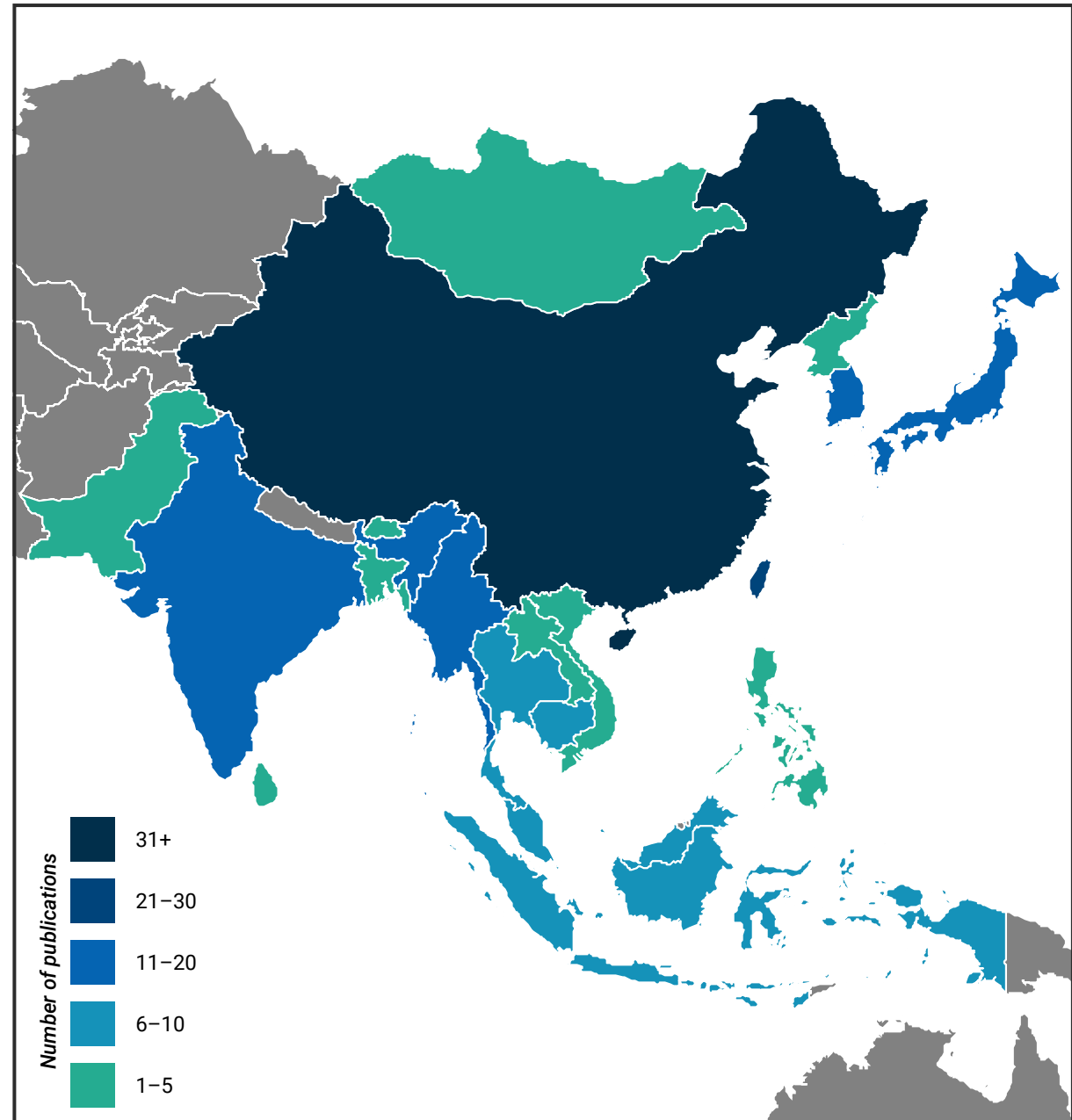
# Our publications

CEIAS is one of the few think tanks in Central Europe that focuses on analyzing Europe's relations with the broader Indo-Pacific region.

Our research and dissemination activities strive to cover the regions of Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia, while recognizing the complexity of individual countries.

A bulk of our publication activity in 2024 was dedicated to covering China's foreign policy and Sino-European relations. However, we believe that the Indo-Pacific region cannot be analyzed through a China-centric analytical lens. Due to this, we have published a variety of outputs through the year focused on consequential actors like Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, India, or the ASEAN states.

[Explore our publications](#)



# CEIAS Papers

CEIAS Papers continue to be a cornerstone of our activity. We strive to engage in methodologically rigorous research, while presenting the findings in accessible and easy-to-consume way. In 2024, our researchers published 16 new policy reports and research papers. Among these, seven were original CEIAS publications, with remainder being external publications (including contributions to the annual ETNC report, and SFPA's Yearbook of Slovakia's Foreign Policy) or academic journal articles.

CEIAS's original production focused on a variety of topics. Our reports covered issues like research security, economic dependencies, automotive industry and defense industry, relations with South Korea, Taiwan, as well as global perceptions of China and PRC soft power projections. We have also continued monitoring China's FIMI operations in Central Europe and analyzed how China-centric narratives spread via social media in the region.

Towards the end of the year, we also monitored the state visit by Slovakia's PM Robert Fico to China. Our work on this topic was both investigative and analytical. We have not only contextualized Fico's trip to China, but also brought to light new information on the visit's participants and nature of the signed MoUs.



## Slovakia's China pivot: Economic pragmatism or political subservience?

A briefing on Robert Fico's visit to China in November 2024

Matej Šimálík • Filip Šebek

### Key takeaways:

- 1 By elevating ties with China to a "strategic partnership," Beijing and Bratislava were brought politically closer, as evidenced by shared views on Ukraine or human rights relativism.
- 2 Even though the visit was framed as an exercise in economic diplomacy, its economic outcomes remain underwhelming, as no new major projects were announced.
- 3 The statements by Prime Minister Fico as well as the content of signed memoranda of understanding indicate a clear dismissal of economic security considerations in Slovakia's approach to China.

Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico, led a government and business delegation in an official visit to China between October 31 and November 5. The visit, originally scheduled for June, was postponed due to the attempt to assassinate PM Fico. The delegation included 8 eight cabinet ministers, 2 deputy ministers, and 77 representatives of 56 companies and business associations.<sup>1</sup> Government officials claimed it was the largest business delegation in the history of Slovak diplomacy.

This was the first visit by a Slovak Prime Minister to China since 2007 and the most important bilateral engagement since the visit of Chinese President, Hu Jintao, to Slovakia in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The visit came after several minister-level visits to China over the past year, including by Ministers of Economy, Finance, and Transport, underscoring frequent political contacts under the new Fico government that came to power in October 2023.

<sup>1</sup> For a full list of participating companies, see Annex 1.

<sup>2</sup> During the previous parliamentary term, in 2023, Speaker of Parliament Boris Kollár visited China. While this is protocolary a higher level of engagement, its practical importance is significantly lower compared to a visit by the Prime Minister.

Spreading knowledge about Asia

1



## China's challenge to the Western-led international order

Insights from public opinion surveys in 56 countries worldwide

Richard Turcsányi | Benjamin Toetoe | James Iocovozzi | Kristína Kíronska



## Improving research security capacity of higher education institutions in Central Europe

### Expert workshop summary

The imperative to strengthen research security within higher education institutions in Central Europe is underscored by the evolving landscape of international collaborations, particularly with entities from authoritarian countries (e.g., China and Russia).

On March 12, 2024, CEIAS organized a workshop titled Improving research security capacity of higher education institutions in Central Europe on the sidelines of the 2024 CEAsia Forum conference.

The workshop gathered several international research and economic security experts, academic administrators, and policymakers in higher education to discuss the urgent need for research security in Central European higher education institutions.

This document presents the key takeaways from the discussion and recommendations for future action as understood by CEIAS.



## Value-driven economic and military decision-making:

South Korea's arms exports to the EU and NATO

Seong Hyeon Choi • Gary Ng • Martin Šebeňa • Thomas Chan



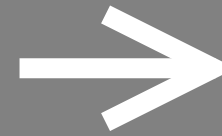
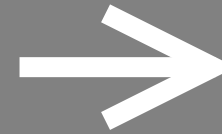
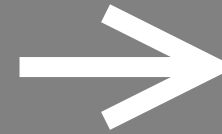
# CEIAS Trackers

We strive to provide rigorous, data driven analysis of current Indo-Pacific affairs and Europe-Asia relations. To this end, we have launched several CEIAS Trackers, online portals that present finding based on original robust datasets developed by our research team.

Our trackers help illuminate important topics, inform journalistic work, engage policymakers in data-driven decision-making, and facilitate further research by CEIAS and external researchers.

- **China-Europe Academic Engagement Tracker** collects data on the scope of research cooperation between China and Europe.
- **EU-Taiwan Tracker** provides weekly updates on dynamic developments of relations between EU and Taiwan.
- **Myanmar Coup Tracker** is dedicated to mapping key events following the military's attempt to seize power from the civilian government.
- **Who | Where | When** records almost 600 official international trips of Chinese presidents and premiers.

During 2024, we also commenced work on updating & upgrading the China-Europe Academic Engagement Tracker, and the Who | Where | When portal. We also started preparatory works on four brand new tracker projects (to be published in 2025).



Click on tile to open.



# CEEasia Forum 2024

The CEEasia Forum is CEIAS's flagship event, organized in co-operation with the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA). The conference focuses on the role of CEE in Europe-Asia relations.

The initial idea for the event was born in 2021, when, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we held the pilot CEEasia Forum as an online conference. After a short break, we decided to revive the format and bring it to the offline world.

The 2nd CEEasia Forum took place in Bratislava on 11–12 March 2024 and focused on the theme *Unity amid disruption: Charting a shared path for Europe and Asia*.

[2024 CEEasia Forum Report](#)



**2**  
days



**2**  
workshops



**8**  
panels



**20**  
countries



**40**  
panelists



**140**  
participants



The graphic features a large, stylized red torii gate in the foreground, set against a background of blue and white wavy lines representing water and a large white circle representing a sun or moon. The title 'CEEAsia Briefing' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font in the upper left quadrant.

# CEEAsia Briefing

**CEEAsia Briefing is a monthly newsletter by CEIAS that aims to spread knowledge about Asia-related developments in Europe, especially in the CEE region.**

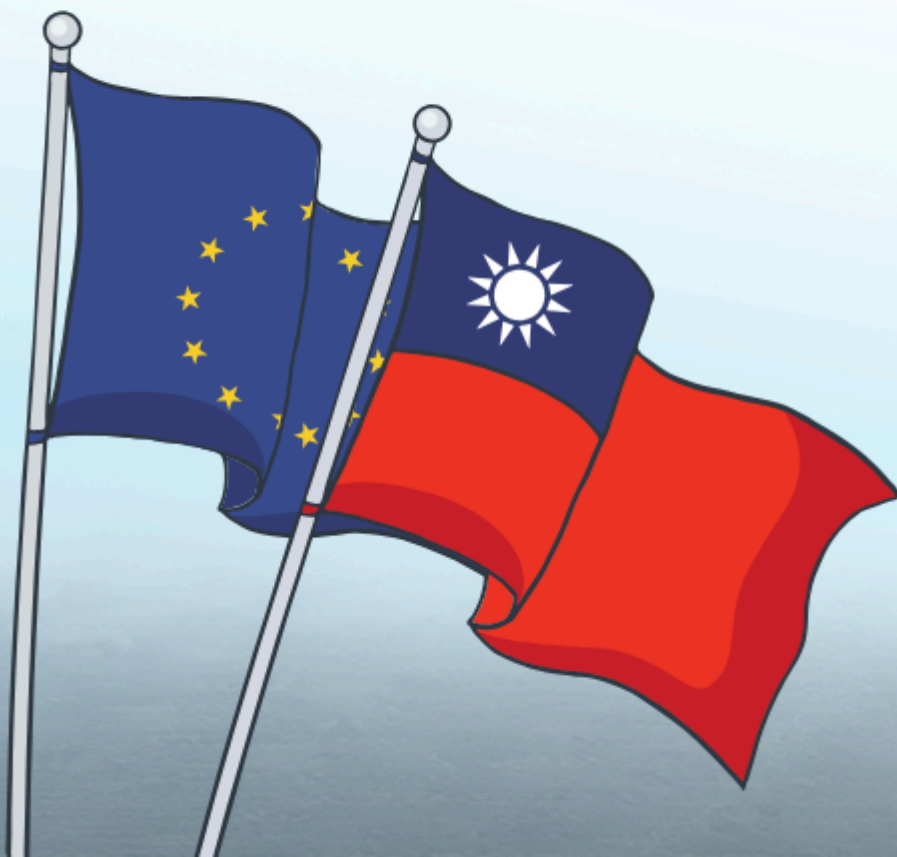
The CEEAsia Briefing is a regular gateway to news about current developments in Asia-Europe relations, including in political and security affairs, as well as trade, investment, and other aspects of economic cooperation. The bulk of our attention is dedicated to news that concerns or otherwise impacts the CEE countries and their relations with Asian partners.

In 2024, we published 12 monthly issues of the CEEAsia Briefing, which were directly delivered to consumers via email or LinkedIn subscriptions.

Currently, each issue of the CEEAsia Briefing is delivered to over 1300 email and over 1700 LinkedIn subscribers.

[Explore & subscribe here](#)

# EU-Taiwan Briefing



**EU-Taiwan Briefing is our newest newsletter. As a spin-off from the EU-Taiwan Tracker, the publication brings monthly updates about the most important developments in Taiwan-Europe relations.**

The EU-Taiwan Briefing is a monthly publication that aims to highlight the most important developments in relations between Taiwan and the EU and its member states. This helps to underscore the dynamic nature of the relationship and showcase its importance for European security and prosperity.

Started in October 2024, we published the first three issues by the year's end.

Currently, each issue of the CEEasia Briefing is delivered to over 1300 email and over 1000 LinkedIn subscribers.

[Explore & subscribe here](#)



# European Think-Tank Network on China

The European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC) is a gathering of China experts from a selection of European research institutes. Established in 2014, ETNC is devoted to the policy-oriented study of Chinese foreign policy and relations between China and European countries as well as China and the EU.

At CEIAS, we are proud to be a member of ETNC, representing Slovakia since 2019.

In 2024, our experts Martin Šebeňa, Matej Šimalčík, and Richard Turcsányi contributed to the yearly research report, *National Perspectives on Europe's De-risking from China*. In their chapter, CEIAS authors analyzed Slovakia's dependencies on China in the automotive industry and other sectors. Furthermore they also outlined the evolution of thinking on EU's de-risking policy as well as Slovak foreign policy towards China.

We also participated in the two meetings of the platform: in Vilnius hosted by Vilnius University's Institute of International Relations and Political Science (April 2024), and in Sofia at the Economic Policy Institute (October 2024).



## National Perspectives on Europe's De-risking from China

Lead editors: Patrik Andersson, Frida Lindberg

Editorial working group: Bernhard Bartsch, Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, Andreea Brinza, Lucas Erlbacher, Miguel Otero-Iglesias, John Seaman, Plamen Tonchev, Mariana Trifonova



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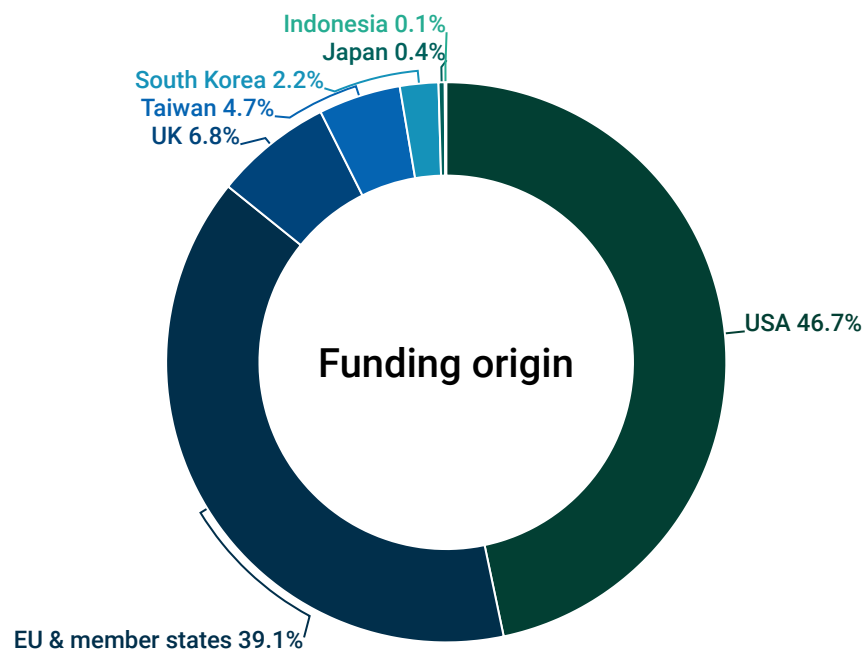
MERICIS  
Mercator Institute for China Studies

A Report by the European  
Think-tank Network on China (ETNC)  
June 2024

[Read the ETNC report](#)

# Funding & donors

Our work and impact was made possible thanks to the support of our institutional partners. Their belief in our work, and support for it via provision of grants and donations, has allowed us to focus on delivering high quality research, inform public debates about Asia-Europe relations, and spread knowledge about the importance of the Indo-Pacific region.



Donor	Contribution (€)
US State Department	267 419.76
Slovakia's Reconstruction and Resilience Plan	138 310.81
European Media and Information Fund	53 934.00
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	41 050.00
International Visegrad Fund	22 648.00
Wilfred Martens Center *	20 713.44
Taipei Representative Office, Bratislava	18 000.00
Korea Foundation	13 396.81
Center for International Private Enterprise	8 641.44
Doublethink Lab	6 703.45
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung **	6 000.00
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy	3 925.43
Slovak-Japanese Friendship Society	2 159.00
Embassy of Indonesia, Bratislava	500.00
Hadart Publishing (book publisher)	242.08
Epocha (book publisher)	217.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>603 862.01</b>

\* In-kind contribution

\*\* Partially in-kind contribution

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