

BMBF Academic and Policy Roundtable:

Democratizing ASEAN and the Role of the European Union

Organized by the Southeast Asian Studies Program at Freiburg University

Sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

In 2008 the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted the quasi-constitutional ASEAN Charter which many observers regarded as a landmark document in the grouping's institutional evolution. With the Charter Southeast Asian governments seek to transform ASEAN from a regional organization based on "soft law" (that is, informal and non-binding processes of decision-making) with a poor implementation record into a rule-based, more legalized and, hence, more effective regional grouping. No less ambitious was the objective to convert ASEAN from an elitist, state-centric organization to a people-oriented association.

This workshop targets the latter of these objectives. While research has so far primarily concentrated on the question as to what extent regional organizations facilitate the democratization of member countries, much less attention has been devoted to the democratization of regional governance itself. This is surprising as complaints about the democratic deficit of regional organizations abound and pressures to democratize arcane international decision-making bodies markedly increased. Especially ASEAN, Asia's leading and most established regional organization has often been taken to task as an overly elitist and state-centric organization. The question is thus as to what extent the Charter has facilitated a more participatory and people-centered process of regional decision-making.

After a general overview of post-Asian crisis reforms of Southeast Asian regionalism, the workshop first seeks to assess whether there are specific ideational roots that have entrenched executive dominance and the often deplored secretive decision-making processes in ASEAN. If a strong "cognitive prior" (Acharya) providing legitimacy to ASEAN's executive dominance can be identified, internal as well as external drivers for participatory reforms will face serious obstacles. A second step thus must concentrate on potential drivers of change, their societal backing, their regional policy agendas and their strategies to effect change. Such drivers could be regional civil society networks, academic think tanks and legislators. However, in an increasingly dense web of interregional relations such drivers could also be external norm entrepreneurs. Pivotal in this respect is the European Union which cultivates such a role and which therefore has been labeled a "normative power" or even a "transformative power." Therefore, the third part of the roundtable studies the role of the European Union as an external democratizer of regional governance. It explores as to what extent EU human rights and democracy promotion policies have influenced ASEAN reform dialogues and led to tangible change in the regional grouping's decision-making patterns.

The Policy Retreat is organized under the auspices of the University of Freiburg's Southeast Asia Program. It is a one-day event of intense exchange between ASEAN experts from the academe, representatives of the German government, the European Union and the embassies of ASEAN member countries. The program is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Tentative Program

SPONSORED BY THE



	8.45-9.00	Registration
Welcome/ Introduction	9.00-9.15	Introduction into the Roundtable Theme <i>Prof. Dr. Jürgen Rüländ, University of Freiburg</i>
Panel 1	9.15-10.15	ASEAN, the ASEAN Charter and Post-Asian Crisis Reforms of Regional Governance in Southeast Asia <i>Dr. Tan See Seng, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore</i>
	10.15-10.4 5	Coffee and Tea Break
Panel 2	10.45-11.3 0	Towards a People-Oriented ASEAN? Ideational Roots of State-Centered Notions of Participation in Southeast Asian Regionalism <i>Prof. Dr. Jürgen Rüländ, University of Freiburg</i>
Panel 3	11.30-12.3 0	“Participatory Regionalism?” The Rise of Transnational Civil Society Networks in Southeast Asia and their Impact on Regional Cooperation <i>Prof. Dr. Alan Collins, Swansea University</i> The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Association (AIPA) - Towards the Parliamentarization of Regional Governance? <i>Dr. Tobias Lenz, Free University of Amsterdam</i>
	12.30-13.3 0	Lunch Break
Panel 4	13.30-14.1 5	Frontrunners of Change? Track Two, Think Tanks and the Democratization of Regional Governance <i>Prof. Dr. Jörn Dosch, University of Rostock</i>
Panel 5	14.15-15.1 5	The EU as a “Transformative Power:” Promoting Participatory Regionalism through Support Programs? <i>Dr. Michael Reiterer, Senior Advisor, Asia & Pacific Department, European External Action Service</i> Transformative Power Europe? Europe and Southeast Asian Human Rights Discourses <i>Prof. Dr. Anja Jetschke, University of Göttingen / GIGA Hamburg</i>
	15.15-15.4 5	Coffee and Tea Break
Roundtable Discussion	15.45-16.3 0	Roundtable Discussion Panelists: <i>ASEAN Ambassador (t.b.c.), Dr. Thomas Gambke (MP, DIE GRÜNEN)</i>
Summary/ Conclusion	16.30-16.4 5	Summary and Concluding Remarks <i>Prof. Dr. Jürgen Rüländ, University of Freiburg</i>
	16.45	End of Roundtable and Departure of Participants