

**CSCAP EU**  
**INAUGURAL MEETING**  
**Brussels, 19 March 2014**



The inaugural meeting of the CSCAP EU full committee was held on Wednesday 19 March in Brussels and was attended by 36 committee members, from both various European think tanks, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) all in a private capacity.

After welcoming remarks by the members of the Steering Committee, the introduction by Viorel Isticioaia-Budura, the Managing Director of the Asia and the Pacific Department of the EEAS, focused on the increased interest of the EU in reengaging with East Asia and the concrete efforts deployed by the EEAS in that direction over the past years. In this context, Isticioaia-Budura notably highlighted the importance of upgrading the relationship and strengthening cooperation with the EU's long-standing and most "natural" partner in the region, ASEAN, as well as its related multilateral security mechanisms, including at the track-two level. The new membership of the EU of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and the creation of CSCAP EU are therefore of utmost interest to the EEAS and deserve its full official support.

An invaluable contribution to the meeting has been the participation of Tang Siew Mun, the Head of the CSCAP Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, who traveled to Brussels for the occasion. Prior to taking part at the CSCAP EU inaugural meeting, Tang met with various EEAS officials working on Asia and addressed the COASI group, together with Antonio Missiroli, to introduce the CSCAP initiative.

At the meeting, Tang expressed his support to the EU's interest in stepping up its involvement in the region, and wished it a warm welcome in CSCAP, which has become yet another venue for institutionalising such involvement. He familiarised the committee with the CSCAP structure, working mechanisms, past achievements, and contributions to the regional security environment. Besides providing policy recommendations (in the form of Memoranda) to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), CSCAP aims to provide input also to the ADMM+, the EAS, or other regional security mechanisms, as stated at the CSCAP Bali meeting in July 2012. Finally, Tang shared some practical insights on the working methods of CSCAP, as well as information on practices of other member committees, notably regarding the frequency of meetings, selection of topics for future Study Groups, deadlines or association agreements, which are described in the "proposed working methods" below.

Finally, Francois Godement, the member of the CSCAP EU steering committee who has been most familiar with and actively involved in CSCAP under the past European membership (until 2008), took the floor to share his experience, recall some of the past misadventures and draw lessons for the new committee. The greatest drawback of the former European membership was the lack of coordination within the group, merely represented by a handful of experts from different EU countries, as well as a lack of understanding and financial support by the previous EU institutional structures. The establishment of the EEAS, allowing better articulation of common EU foreign and security policies, as well as the role of the EU Institute of Security Studies as the leading body of the new EU member committee, constitute a major step forward in this respect and a promising start for the initiative. Among the main challenges, according to Godement, will be not only to "rebuild" the good name of EU participation in CSCAP, but also the internal coordination among the group and communication with the individual EU member states.

The afternoon interactive working session addressed the group's objectives, the concrete working methods and the next steps.

#### **Proposed working methods:**

##### **Full committee meetings:**

- CSCAP EU full committee should aim **to meet at least once and preferably two times a year**, on dates that would precede and/ or follow the CSCAP Steering Committee Meetings (SCM) (held usually at the end of May/ beginning of June, and at the end of November/ beginning December each year).
- These meetings should serve to provide inputs from the full committee to the steering committee and coordinate positions in preparation of the SCM, as well as to inform the committee about its outcomes.
- A central **theme** should be introduced for each meeting, setting the direction of the discussions.
- The unique composition of the group, bringing together experts and policy practitioners, should be used also with a **networking function** – allowing better circulation of information on the EEAS activities in Asia and exchange of views with the experts of the group.

The next meeting of the CSCAP EU full committee should be held after summer 2014.