



Interview with Martin Cauchi-Inglott

Team leader, [CRIMARIO](#)

Why do EU-Asia relations matter to you?

Europe and Asia share a long history of multilateral and bilateral relations based on political, economic and cultural ties. Such relations matter to me because I believe they are key to ensuring a stable and secure global environment upon which a healthy trade-balance between the two regions can prevail, providing impetus to a global economy. Yet, such relations should not be taken for granted as it is only through the concerted and coordinated actions of Asian and European partners alike that stability can be assured, and here the EU can play a critical role given its neutral and unbiased stance.



What are EU-Asia greatest common challenges today?

In my view, the largest challenges facing the EU and Asia are the over-lapping maritime claims, which could endanger sea lines of communication across the Indo-Pacific. Our common future, however, is also being threatened by climate change, which is leading to forest fires, droughts, bleached coral reefs, and rising sea-water levels with some of the islands already in danger of disappearing. Another serious threat to biodiversity is illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing as we see vast tracks of ocean being depleted of fish stocks in days, bringing into question the sustainability of many marine species.

EU-ASIA PORTRAITS



The Proust Questionnaire

Freely inspired by a parlour game popularised by the French novelist Marcel Proust

Your chief characteristic?

Though this is not up to me to define, my colleagues inform me that I am a perfectionist and rather persistent.

What do you appreciate most in people?

The fact that people will always deliver above the expected standard.

Your idea of happiness?

Trekking and overnighing in pure wilderness.

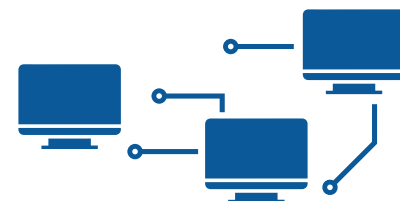
Your favourite European or Asian author or artist?

The colourful Austrian artist Clemens Hasenschwandtner, who sadly passed away early September.

Advancing the European Union's role in multilateral fora in Asia

What is your idea of EU-Asia dialogue?

The EU-Asia dialogue offers a platform for the exchange and enhancement of understanding of current as well as future challenges amongst EU and Asian policymakers, non-governmental organizations and researchers, which are frequently tasked to recommend policy frameworks. The dialogues, consequently, enrich and fertilize Asian by cross-pollinating ideas, promoting conceptual thinking and expediting the transmission of lessons learnt. These exchanges are relevant because both continents have the critical mass when weighing-in on the most burning issues affecting the global community.



Which European/Asian achievement do you admire most?

In my view, the key to global success is the ability of regional partners to conclude free trade agreements as these remove barriers to trade. But the EU's founding principles preclude the Union from entering into any form of agreements with government's, which abuse human rights, so whenever I witness the EU concluding trade agreements with partners, I view this not only as a trade win but also a triumph for humanity. On a more political level, the recent [EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership](#) is an important achievement as it allows for enhanced security and defence cooperation across Southeast Asia.



How can Europe Asia relations make a difference in our daily lives?

I find it hard to quantify how Europe-Asia relations make a difference in our daily lives as everything is momentarily functioning well, but what would happen if diplomacy failed? Rising tensions could not only lead to trade wars, but conflict too, which could strangle global commerce. Indeed, if connectivity were to be affected, as happened last March when the Suez Canal was blocked, or if pirates controlled trade routes, the intricate synchronization of shipping goods, services, and energy supplies would be affected. Fortunately, the EU-Asia dialogue addresses these what ifs, and so we are better prepared to deal with the unexpected.



Martin Cauchi Inglott is a retired naval officer who occupied several senior positions in Brussels, including Maltese Military Representative and Head of External Relations in the EU Military Staff. He is the Team Leader of the EU Critical Maritimes Routes Indo-Pacific project (CRIMARIO)

EU-Asia Fora is about promoting the EU's role in international fora like the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#), the major political platform linking Asia and Europe since 1996, and [ASEAN \(Association of Southeast Asian Nations\)](#) with its [ASEAN Regional Forum \(ARF\)](#). Maritime security is one of the main themes.

#MaritimeSecurity

#EUForeignPolicy

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