



TAIWAN FOUNDATION
for DEMOCRACY

財團法人臺灣民主基金會

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Taiwan's Soft Power and its Relations with the EU

Mr. Jakub Piasecki, International Visiting Fellow of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Date: May 8, 2013

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

Venue: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (No 4, Alley 17, Lane 147, Xinyi Rd Sec 3, Taipei 106 Taiwan)

Moderator: Dr. CHENG Chin-Mo 鄭欽模, Associate Professor at the Department of Global Political Economy, Tamkang University

Discussant: Dr. CHEN Yu-Jane 陳玉珍, Associate Professor at the Department of International Affairs, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages

Itinerary:

10:00 – 10:10 Opening remarks by Dr. CHENG Chin-Mo

10:10 – 10:50 Presentation by Mr. Jakub Piasecki

10:50 – 11:10 Comments by Dr. CHEN Yu-Jane

11:10 – 11:30 Open discussion with the audience

Please note that this event will be conducted entirely in English.

Soft power is a concept coined by Joseph Nye in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, which was further developed in his subsequent works. Nye defined soft power as:

“The ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion and payments. It arises from the attractiveness of one country’s culture, political ideals and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, (...) soft power is enhanced. (...) When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend so much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more



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effective than coercion and many values like democracy, human rights and individual opportunities are deeply seductive.”

According to Nye, “A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values (...) want to follow it. (...) Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others.”

For obvious reasons, Taiwan relies solely on its soft power when dealing with the European Union. “Sticks and carrots” are a measure that no rational policy-maker would even consider to explore, as is done by the North Korean leaders, threatening the United States with all out war.

Taiwan, being the only truly democratic example of the Chinese Civilization, as Samuel Huntington argued in his groundbreaking work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, makes its “culture and political ideals attractive in the eyes of European policymakers.” Taiwan’s recent closer engagement with China is widely seen as a “legitimate policy,” boosting Taiwan’s international image as a responsible stakeholder, whose goals are defined by pragmatism, rather than ideology. Taiwan’s like-mindedness with the European Union, the two partners’ “shared values such as democracy and human rights” have proven to be “seductive” to Members of the European Parliament. Their support for Taiwan exceeds what might be expected, if only Taiwan’s importance from the economic point of view was considered.

However, Taiwan’s soft power’s “ability to obtain the outcomes it wants” in its relations with the European Union, i.e. to negotiate and sign a Free Trade Agreement, is still limited by the European Commission’s “one China policy.” Even though the mainland’s values are a far cry from being compatible with those of the EU’s, the position it has established on the international arena, its size and economic significance are still too frightening, to be outweighed by Taiwan’s attractiveness.

Members of the European Parliament have urged the Commission to change its conservative position and champion closer relations with Taipei, with some success, as discussed in this paper. Taiwan’s soft power has played a pivotal role in this context.

Nevertheless, the positive international image of a given country cannot be taken for granted, including Taiwan. The death penalty has long been the traditional thorny issue. This paper intends to answer the question: What is the extent of capital punishment’s negative impact on the way Taiwan is perceived in the EU.

Taiwan’s image may also be potentially impaired by the case of former president Chen Shui-bian, which is attracting increasingly more international attention. The



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situation of the imprisoned former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko will be briefly discussed to shed some light on how “poster figures of political imprisonment” affect international relations.

Bio

Mr. Jakub Piasecki received his M.A. degree at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, specializing in European Studies. He is fluent in English.

RSVP

Please RSVP by Tuesday, May 7, 2013

Date: Wednesday, May 8, 2013
Time: 10:00 – 11:30
Location: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (No 4, Alley 17, Lane 147, Xinyi Rd Sec 3, Taipei 106 Taiwan)

Mr./Ms./Dr. _____ Tel _____

Organization _____ Title _____

- Will attend
- Unable to attend
- Vegetarian
- Non-Vegetarian

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