

After the Year of the Dragon: How Is Taiwan Affected by Europe's Strategic Decisions Related to China's Geopolitical Endeavors?

By Bernadett Szél

This summary offers a brief overview of the broader research project and its analytical framework. A detailed and theoretically developed version is currently under academic review for publication.

The research examines how Taiwan's strategic room for manoeuvre in Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), is shaped by Europe's evolving approach to China amid geopolitical and technological uncertainty. Rather than treating the CEE as a coherent strategic actor or assuming linear trajectories, the study applies a scenario-based foresight perspective to explore how different global configurations may affect Taiwan's diplomatic, economic, technological, and security environment.

Empirically, the project situates Taiwan–Europe relations within the broader transformation of EU external policy since 2019, with particular attention to the growing role of economic security, de-risking strategies, and critical technologies. Within this context, Central and Eastern Europe is approached not as a unified region but as a differentiated political space marked by diverging national trajectories. These trajectories reflect varying combinations of normative alignment, economic pragmatism, and geopolitical positioning, all of which shape the scope and limits of Taiwan-related engagement.

Methodologically, the study combines empirical inquiry with a foresight framework based on an adapted version of Dator's Four Futures. The resulting "Multivariable Four Futures" approach provides a structured way to assess how geopolitical, technological, economic, and societal dynamics may interact across alternative global contexts. From this perspective, Taiwan's position in Europe appears contingent and relational, varying according to the coherence of EU policy, the structure of transatlantic relations, and the evolution of technological competition.

Overall, the project underlines the value of foresight approaches for analysing national agency in a contested global environment. It suggests that Taiwan–Europe relations are best understood not as a linear trajectory, but as a field of evolving possibilities shaped by structural conditions, institutional dynamics, and strategic choices. In this sense, the study is intended less as a set of definitive predictions than as a framework for interpreting uncertainty, adaptation, and strategic change.