

Abstract

EU-Taiwan relations have seen a leap forward in recent years, yet there are some “vanguards” among the EU member states taking more assertive stances on Taiwan than others. China's economic leverage is believed to be a key factor driving this variation. To test this assumption, this paper examines whether the EU member states' relations with Taiwan are influenced by their economic dependencies on China. It employs a quantitative research design, conducting a statistical analysis with the event data derived from the EU-Taiwan Tracker, an online tool comprehensively recording each EU member state's Taiwan-related activity. The results suggest that economic interdependence affects engagement with Taiwan differently for post-communist and non-post-communist EU member states. While non-post-communist countries with higher economic dependency levels on China tend to have less frequent and diverse engagements with Taiwan, post-communist states' rapprochement with the island is driven by more intricate factors. Thus, the paper partly supports the hypothesis that economic dependencies play a crucial role in shaping EU-Taiwan relations and concludes with policy implications for the complex dynamics among the EU, Taiwan, and China.

Keywords: Taiwan-EU relations, China, foreign policy, interdependence theory