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“The idea of East Asian Community: what can we learn from Europe?”

There have been numerous attempts among some politicians and academics in Asia in exploring ways of achieving regional cooperation in the region. They enormously admire the process of European integration. As a consequence Asian elites and scholars always ask what we could learn from the European experiences. However, the liberalist ideas of these Asians tend to become wishful thinking, as the realist worldview still prevails among Asian leaders, who have to take into consideration the geo-strategic imperatives that every nation-state has to face. After the former Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama re-initiated the concept of East Asian Community (EAS) one month after his advent to power in 2009, hope for a more fruitful regionalization process has been rekindled as his proposal implied first of all the amelioration of Sino-Japanese relations, the primary condition for the establishment of the EAS. While skepticism regarding the Chinese ambition during the rise of China lingers on, to what extent could regionalization serve as a lubricant-catalyst in the process of improving bilateral or multilateral relationships in Asia? This paper aims to examine how far we could learn from the European experiences, and how the liberalist idea of regionalization could enhance regional security and stability in the Asia-Pacific.