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**Idea, Concept and Agenda of the
European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan
(ERCCT)**

at Tübingen University, Germany

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I Taiwan Studies in Europe

There are only a few universities in Europe where teaching and research on contemporary Taiwan play a visible role. In the U.K., with the support of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, a Taiwan Studies programme was introduced at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, in 1999, and this has been an established Centre of Taiwan Studies since 2005. The European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS), which convenes annually in a selected European city¹, was also launched at the SOAS. In addition there is a Taiwan Culture Research Programme at the London School of Economics (LSE) and a Taiwan Studies Programme at Nottingham University.

In Germany, also with support of the CCK Foundation, a Taiwan Research Unit, which specialises in language and culture, was founded at Bochum University in 2002. The chair Greater China Studies, with a special focus on teaching and research on contemporary Taiwan, was established at Tübingen University in 2003. The Chair of Greater China Studies was the recipient of one of the last institutional enhancement grants to be awarded by the CCK Foundation to a university for the promotion of Taiwan studies in Europe. A Center on Taiwan Studies has also been launched in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In France, Taiwan studies figure prominently at the Institute of East Asian Studies in Lyon.

Taiwan studies in Europe have clearly gained momentum in recent years, but these efforts are limited in scale and scattered all over the continent.

II The idea

Taiwan studies in Europe must be promoted vigorously in order to become more visible and institutionalised. Setting up specific Master's programmes, organising workshops, conferences and public lectures, and publishing academic papers on Taiwan-related issues are important activities in this direction, but they are not enough. Equal attention has to be paid to the systematic promotion of empirical research on Taiwan, especially at Ph.D. and postdoc levels. Only if young researchers earn the necessary academic credentials can Taiwan studies be firmly rooted and expanded at European Universities. For this purpose, postgraduate Taiwan studies should become more focused organizationally in order to enable students to get as much research-related

¹ During its meeting in April 2010 in Tübingen, EATS was registered as a legal entity according to German law and is now officially seated in Tübingen.

feedback as possible. Students should work together on a permanent basis and interact with experienced Taiwan scholars in order to

- identify interesting research fields
- develop feasible research strategies
- apply suitable theories
- clarify and fine-tune methodology
- carry out critical assessments of research results and
- prepare for publications in internationally renowned publishing houses.

Against this background the European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan Research (ERCCT) was established in Tübingen in 2008. The ERCCT is jointly sponsored by the CCK Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange and the University of Tübingen to

- **serve as a platform for highly qualified European and Taiwanese postgraduate students** who conduct empirical research on contemporary Taiwan, especially in the realm of politics and law, economics, society and cross-strait relations;
- **support empirical research in Taiwan** by closely working together with first-class academic institutions in Taiwan and organizing a **tutorial system** set up to help ERCCT fellows conduct fieldwork and get into contact with Taiwanese researchers;
- **invite visiting scholars from Taiwan and Europe** to give talks or lecture courses at the ERCCT and, most importantly, invite them to take part in the centre's regularly held **Taiwan Colloquium**, where they share their expertise with ERCCT research fellows;
- **identify highly qualified young scholars in the field of Taiwan studies** for special ERCCT fellowships granted by the ROC's Ministry of Education;
- act as **host for short-term visiting fellows from Taiwan who wish** to join the centre's academic activities
- **help emerging scholars in the Taiwan studies field to publish their work** with renowned international publishing houses

The ERCCT also hosts the annual **Taiwan Documentary Film Festival** at Tübingen University and organises workshops and conferences related to the study of contemporary Taiwan.

III Concept and agenda

- The main objective of the ERCCT is to promote postgraduate research on contemporary Taiwan at Ph.D. and Postdoc level.
- Research fellows are provided with office space and computer hardware. As a general principle, appointed **ERCCT Research Fellows** must take care of their own funding.
- **ERCCT Short-Term Resident Fellows** from Europe and Taiwan are invited to stay for shorter periods, for instance, one term or one academic year, depending on regulations at their own institutions and the availability of office space at ERCCT headquarters. They are granted a monthly allowance of 400 EUR and a one-time travel support grant of up to 600 EUR.
- **ERCCT Visiting Fellows** from the Center's Taiwanese partner institutions are invited to stay for four weeks, being offered accommodation, a living stipend, travel cost reimbursement and office space at the ERCCT.
- **ERCCT Associate Research Fellows** reside and work at universities or academic institutions outside Tübingen, participating occasionally in the centre's activities.
- **Taiwanese or European Visiting Scholars** are invited to Tübingen during each academic term (summer term: April 15th – July 15th; winter term: October 15th – February 15th). They are provided with accommodation, a round air ticket (Economy Class), office space and computer hardware.
- The visiting scholars give lectures or courses of lectures. Most importantly, they participate in the **Taiwan Colloquium** where they are expected to play an active role by presenting their research and commenting on ERCCT Research Fellows' respective projects.

- The **Taiwan Colloquium** is held at regular intervals during the academic term and is the key academic event at the ERCCT. It takes place as either a closed-door meeting for ERCCT Research Fellows or as a meeting that is open to interested postgraduate students from other departments. The research fellows report on the progress of their research. Their theory-based approaches and methodology are examined, and their data analysis is subjected to critical assessment.
- All ERCCT Fellows are entitled to take part in the **Tutorial System** organised by the center's partner institutions during their periods of fieldwork in Taiwan. The tutorial system is not a fixed programme or structure offered by the partner institution, but a flexible arrangement under which office space is provided and the facilities of the host institution are made available to the visiting fellows. It is the responsibility of the host institution or one specific tutor (a scholar affiliated to the partner institution) to help the fellow conduct fieldwork and obtain scholarly feedback. The aim is to integrate ERCCT Research Fellows, as far as possible, in the academic activities of the partner institution.
- The ERCCT offers assistance to all fellows in applying for stipends and grants to finance their research stays in Taiwan.

Between 2008 and 2012, and again between 2014 and 2016, a special **ERCCT Fellowship Programme** was offered by Taiwan's Ministry of Education, which also covered fieldwork in Taiwan. Within the framework of this programme, the MOE awarded six fellowships to talented and highly qualified European postgraduate students doing doctoral or postdoctoral research on a topic related to Taiwanese politics and law, economics, society and cross-strait relations. The recipients of the grants became ERCCT Research Fellows and were required to stay and work at the centre for at least one year before returning to their home institutions. They were also asked to conduct a longer period of fieldwork in Taiwan (usually 1 year). The fellowships were initially offered for two years and doctoral students could apply for a one-year extension if their research reports were given a positive evaluation. Postdoctoral students were only eligible for a two-year fellowship.

Since 2011, the Center has been running a **Short-term Visiting Fellows Programme**, within the framework of which Ph.D. and postdoctoral students from ERCCT partners and other research institutions are invited to Tübingen. This programme is jointly sponsored by the ERCCT and the **Taiwan Foundation for Democracy** (see below).

- The ERCCT organizes **workshops and conferences** on Taiwan-related topics in cooperation with one or more of its partner institutions. It also organizes the annual **Taiwan Documentary Film Festival** which is held annually at Tübingen University.
- Information on all ERCCT-related matters, including detailed ERCCT work reports, is systematically updated and accessible through the centre's website: www.ercct.uni-tuebingen.de

The ERCCT is co-run by a Director (Prof. Gunter Schubert), a Co-Director (Ass.-Prof. Yu-chin Tseng), and a Managing Director (Mr. Stefan Braig). The Managing Director is responsible for the daily operations of the centre and all necessary coordination related to the agenda outlined above. There is also a small support team which helps with the administrative work of the Center. Working languages at the ERCCT are Mandarin Chinese and English.

IV Advisory Board

The ERCCT is assisted by an Advisory Board. Board members, who are renowned scholars from Europe and Taiwan, consult the centre on the recruitment of fellows, review applications to the ERCCT Fellowship Programme, cooperate in the organisation of conferences and workshops hosted by the ERCCT, and help in international networking. A complete list of all board members can be found on the ERCCT website.

V Partners

The ERCCT has a number of partners all over Taiwan which belong to the island republic's most renowned research entities. As the scope of the centre's activities widens, their number shall increase in the future. Currently, the ERCCT has cooperation agreements with the following institutions:

Academia Sinica

Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica

Contact: Dr. Wu Yu-Shan 吳玉山 (Director)

Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica

Contact: Dr. Hsiao Hsin-Huang 蕭新煌 (Director); Dr. Chang Mao-Kuei 張茂桂

Institutum Iurisprudentiae, Academia Sinica

Contact: Dr. Lin Tzu-Yi 林子儀 (Director); Dr. Lee Chien-Liang 李建良

Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica

Contact: Dr. Norman Y. Teng (Director)

National Taiwan University

College of Social Sciences, NTU

Contact: Prof. Lin Hui-Lin 林惠玲 (Dean)

Department of Political Science, NTU

Contact: Prof. Wang Yeh-Li 王業立 (Department Head); Prof. Chang Ya-Chung 張亞中; Prof. Shih Chih-Yu 石之瑜; Prof. Su Tsai-Tsu 蘇彩足

Department of Sociology, NTU

Contact: Prof. Ko Jyh-Jer 柯志哲 (Department Head); Prof. Tseng Yen-Fen 曾熾芬; Prof. Fan Yun 范雲

Global Asia Research Center, NTU

Contact: Prof. Lan Pei-chia 蘭佩嘉 (Director), Wei-Chung Chen 陳薇仲 (Executive Secretary)

College of Law, NTU

Contact: Shieh Ming-Yan 謝銘洋 (Dean)

National Cheng-Chi University

College of Social Sciences, NCCU

Contact: Prof. Chuang Yih-Chyi 莊奕琦 (Dean)

Department of Political Science, NCCU

Contact: Prof. Tang Ching-Ping 湯京平 (Department Head); Prof. Kuo Cheng-Tian 郭承天

Taiwan Study Center, NCCU

Contact: Prof. Yen Liang-Kung 顏良恭 (Director)

Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies, NCCU

Contact: Prof. Kou Chien-Wen 寇健文 (Director)

Graduate Institute of Development Studies, NCCU

Contact: Prof. Wu Te-Mei 吳德美 (Director)

National Chung-Hsing University

Graduate Institute of International Politics, NCHU

Contact: Prof. Tsai Tung-Chieh 蔡東杰 (Director); Prof. Tsai Ming-Yen 蔡明彥

National Cheng-Kung University

College of Social Sciences, NCKU

Contact: Prof. Ho Chih-Chin 何志欽 (Dean)

Department of Law, NCKU

Contact: Prof. Hsu Yue-Dian 許育典 (Department Head); Prof. Chen Yi-Kai 陳怡凱

Department of Political Science, NCKU

Contact: Prof. Yang Yung-Nane 楊永年 (Department Head)

National Sun Yat-Sen University

College of Social Sciences, NSYSU

Contact: Prof. Lin Wen-Cheng 林文程 (Dean)

Institute of Political Sciences, NSYSU

Contact: Prof. Liao Da-Chi 廖達琪 (Director)

Institute of Sociology, NSYSU

Contact: Prof. Wang Hung-Zen 王宏仁 (Director)

VI Why Tübingen?

Tübingen University, centrally located in continental Western Europe, is considered to be one of the best research universities in Germany, and has a high percentage of foreign students from all over the world. It is also one of the leading academic institutions in Europe in comprehensive teaching and research on the Middle East, East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. Since the establishment of the Chair of Greater China Studies was established in 2003 and the ERCCT was founded in 2008, Tübingen has become a major destination for domestic and international students interested in contemporary Taiwan. Tübingen has also been the seat of the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS) since 2010. The Chair of Greater China Studies at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies is strongly committed to teaching and research on Taiwan and maintains a wide network of relations to Taiwan scholars and academic institutions all over the world. The Taiwan studies field enjoys the strong support of Tübingen University.

VII Looking ahead

The ERCCT has the announced goal of becoming the major access point and network platform for Taiwan-related research in Europe and for academic cooperation between Europe and Taiwan. The intention is not to compete with other institutions dedicated to the promotion of Taiwan Studies but to complement their efforts. The ERCCT wishes

to serve as a springboard for young scholars who are working towards developing their expertise in the Taiwan studies field, to assist them in their research, and help them make contact with other scholars and research institutions dedicated to Taiwan studies. Through its work, the ERCCT aims to strengthen the visibility of Taiwan studies in Europe. One major indicator of success in this regard is and should be the publication of cutting-edge research conducted by the Center's fellows. The ERCCT is working towards the gradual expansion of its programmes and activities, and aims at recruiting and increasing number of research fellows. This, however, will incur the need to obtain more financial resources, which represents a major challenge for the Center. The strong support offered by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation and by Tübingen University has helped the ERCCT so far to focus on the raise of funds from other donors, and it is committed to working hard towards securing a solid and sustainable funding structure to make the ERCCT a lasting project.

Tübingen, in August 2018

Gunter Schubert (ERCCT Director)

Tseng Yu-chin (ERCCT Co-Director)

Stefan Braig (ERCCT Managing Director)