



## International Press Service

Ressort: Politik

### EU and ASEAN cooperation

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations comprising ten Southeast Asian states created on 8 August 1967 has emerged as one of the world's most dynamic and fastest-growing, particularly in terms of the economy, technology and research. ASEAN has a geopolitically and geo-economically strategic position, has rich resources, is following a goal of increased economic integration

and an ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda, especially on education, and it is a strong advocate of multilateralism.

Closing the development gap within ASEAN will be vital in pursuing further integration and guaranteeing security, stability and the protection of social, economic and political rights. EU is very interested in high frequency of political contacts, notably at ministerial level taking full benefit of the ASEAN member state responsible for coordinating ASEAN's Dialogue Relations with the EU. The main legal framework for EU-ASEAN relations, namely the ASEAN-EEC Cooperation Agreement, was signed in March 1980.

The EU has a specific experience in institution-building, the single market, regulatory convergence, conflict and crisis management, maritime security, mediation, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Furthermore, its recent progress on defence integration and its successful experience with regional norm-setting and strong regional architecture for human rights and democracy are an important example. EU is willing to share such experience where useful.

Today, tensions in the South China Sea represent a threat and a risk to security and stability in the region. The most perturbing trend is the militarization of the South China Sea. Today the ASEAN-China Dialogue on a Code of Conduct remains ASEAN's most important mechanism for exchanges with China on the South China Sea. On the other side, Chinese activities, from military patrols and drills to construction activities, ignoring the principles outlined in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea of 2002, remain an issue of concern.

It is important to emphasize the political value of strong trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the EU. Both partners intend to further strengthen their economic and political relations and there is significant potential for EU-ASEAN trade relations to develop.

The EU is the top foreign investor in ASEAN. The European Union is wishing to intensify cooperation to close the development gap that exists within ASEAN. It has have confidence that cooperation could be

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strengthened and good practices shared in various areas, such as addressing global challenges, including climate change, transnational organized crime and terrorism, border management, maritime security, financial sector development and so on.

The pursuit of a high level of EU-ASEAN cooperation in multilateral institutions such as the UN, but also the WTO, with reference to preserving, strengthening and further developing the multilateral international trade architecture and fair trading relationships is crucial.

ASEAN centrality and its important role in promoting dialogue and cooperation for peace, security, stability and prosperity, in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond is within the range of interest of the EU in promoting commitment with the region through all ASEAN-led processes.

European Union gives particular attention to the creation of active and well-organized dispute settlement mechanisms as provided for in Chapter 8 of the ASEAN Charter and in a 2010 Protocol to the Charter, together with legally binding measures and regulations. On the other hand, the EU experience has been achieved in over 40 years on the continent of Europe with an approach to security which, in addition to a political and military dimension, also includes the economic, environmental and human dimensions. This experience can be exploited in ASEAN's efforts for the peaceful development of its region.

The negotiations for an EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA) and the broader connectivity are on the agenda. For the period 2014-2020 half of the EU's financial assistance to ASEAN is devoted to supporting ASEAN's connectivity. The European Union wants to engage at the multilateral level with other jurisdictions in the region, such as ASEAN observers Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste, as well as China, Japan and Taiwan.

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