

VIETNAM IN THE EU-ASEAN RELATIONS

Since the start of its Doi Moi Process, Vietnam has substantially reshaped and strengthened its foreign relations. Its accession to ASEAN in July 1995 marked the start of its integration in the region, Vietnam increasingly plays an active role promoting stronger ASEAN solidarity and cooperation. The EU as a long-standing partner of ASEAN established its relationship with the bloc in 1980 under the EC-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement to which all ASEAN members, with the exception of Burma/Myanmar, are parties. It was not until 1999 when Vietnam formally acceded to this agreement.

On June 2015, the EU confirmed the adoption of a new strategy “The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with a strategic purpose”. In August 2017 during the EUASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, the second EU-ASEAN Plan of Action (2018-2022) was agreed.

The European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN, consisting of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Myanmar) are upgrading their relationship to a Strategic Partnership. This decision was taken by EU and ASEAN countries’ Foreign Ministers at the EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 21 January 2019. EU-ASEAN, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) relations date back to 1977 when official “Dialogue Relations” began.

As an active partner in ASEAN, Vietnam holds an important role in deepening the relationship between the two regions. The key components of these relations are the Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI) and the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI). Furthermore, Vietnam is a founding member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) launched in 1996; an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together the 28 EU Member States along with the European Commission, all ASEAN members, as well as in particular China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and India. The ASEM dialogue aims to strengthen the relationship between the two regions in the spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership, by means of enhanced political dialogue, economic cooperation and cooperation in social, cultural areas.

The 13th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Summit will take place in Phnom Penh on 16-17 November 2020, gathering 51 countries under the theme “*Strengthening Multilateralism for shared Growth*”. The preparatory process for the Summit will start with the ASEM Senior Officials’ Meeting Retreat on 5-6 March, in Siem Reap, where officials will gather preliminary inputs for the ASEM Summit agenda. Alongside the ASEAM13, seven side-events will take place (13th Asia-Europe People's Forum, 11th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting, 4th ASEF Young Leaders Summit, ASEM Cultural Festival 2020, 10th Asia-Europe Editors’ Roundtable, 17th Asia Europe Economic Forum, and 17th Asia-Europe Business Forum).