



Brussels, 7 April 2016

## FACT SHEET

### EU-ASEAN relations

The European Union's relations with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) date back to 1972, recognising a **shared commitment to regional integration** as a means of **fostering regional stability, building prosperity and addressing global issues**. Since then, both sides have increased their dialogue and cooperation, and have pursued closer coordination on regional and international issues. ASEAN comprises ten South East Asian countries: [Brunei Darussalam](#), [Cambodia](#), [Indonesia](#), [Lao PDR](#), [Malaysia](#), [Myanmar \(Burma\)](#), [Philippines](#), [Singapore](#), [Thailand](#), and [Vietnam](#).

On 19 May 2015, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission adopted the Joint Communication: "[The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with a strategic purpose](#)". The Joint Communication puts forward concrete ideas for taking EU-ASEAN relations to the next level by providing a more coherent framework for sectoral cooperation and by ensuring a sharper political focus. This strategy was confirmed in the [Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council](#) of June 2015.

#### Trade and Investment

The EU is ASEAN's **second largest trading partner**. Based on EU statistics, in 2015 ASEAN-EU two-way trade in goods stood at €201 billion, an 11% increase on 2014. In 2015, ASEAN exported almost €118 billion to the EU and the EU €83 billion to ASEAN.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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The EU is the **biggest provider of Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN** and has built a solid investment stock of over €194 billion in the region, accounting for almost a quarter of total Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN. The EU has concluded negotiations for **Free Trade Agreements** (FTA) with [Singapore](#) and with [Vietnam](#) and is negotiating FTAs with several other ASEAN countries ([Thailand](#), [Malaysia](#) and the [Philippines](#)). The EU is also making progress with Indonesia on ongoing discussions on pre-negotiations of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Additionally, the EU is negotiating an [investment protection agreement](#) with Myanmar (Burma). These agreements are stepping stones towards a fully-fledged EU-ASEAN region-to-region FTA. In this respect, the EU is engaged with ASEAN on assessing jointly the prospects towards the possible resumption of these region-to-region FTA negotiations.

### **Mobility, education and culture**

10 million people travel between our two regions each year. Seven million are EU citizens who travel to ASEAN for tourism, business, study, family visits and otherwise, more than from any other partner of ASEAN. There is also a **growing exchange of students and scholars**. Each year over 1,300 students and staff from ASEAN universities receive scholarships and almost 600 European students and staff will travel to ASEAN countries under the [Erasmus+](#) programme. Over 25 ASEAN scholars a year benefit from **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships**. In addition, many scholarships are provided directly by EU Member States.

The [EU Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region](#) project (SHARE) is supporting the creation of an **ASEAN Inter-University Network** through **€10 million** in funding over the period 2015-2019. This programme, which began in January 2015, is improving the comparability of university qualifications and makes it easier to transfer credits obtained at one ASEAN university to another, promoting people to people connectivity. SHARE is a joint initiative aimed at sharing Europe's experience from the "Bologna Process" with ASEAN.

More than 212 ASEAN research organisations link up with EU organisations under the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (2007-2013). Benefitting from nearly €20 million of EU

funding, 103 projects have been devised with the aim of **knowledge exchange**. Cooperation will continue under the EU's new [Horizon 2020](#) programme.

### **Political cooperation**

In recent years there has been an unprecedented number of **top-level visits** from EU officials to South East Asia. This includes visits by former Presidents Herman Van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso, High Representative Federica Mogherini, as well as several other European Commissioners. There has also been a marked rise in the visits by EU Member States. In October 2014, the EU and ASEAN met for an informal Leaders' Meeting for the first time since 2007. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, has also been active in South East Asia in order to intensify our dialogue on human rights, [meeting with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights \(AICHR\)](#) in May 2013 and travelling to Jakarta twice in 2014. In October 2015 the AICHR visited the EU institutions for the second time on a full-week visit during which the [first EU-ASEAN Policy Dialogue on Human Rights](#) took place.

In July 2012, the EU [acceded to](#) ASEAN's **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation**. Two months earlier, EU and ASEAN Foreign Ministers adopted a [Plan of Action](#) for the period 2013 to 2017 in Brunei. The EU and ASEAN are also stepping up their engagement on **non-traditional security** aspects. The EU and ASEAN work together to enhance crisis response and disaster management, including through EU support to the [ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance](#).

### **Security and defence-related cooperation**

Besides the non-traditional security aspects, the European Union also has a clear interest and plays a relevant role in **maintaining stability in Asia**. The EU thus promotes a security architecture that is better able to manage the region's political tensions. In recent years, the EU has stepped up its involvement in security and defence related matters commensurate with its global role and responsibilities. Cooperation on broad security issues is growing element in the EU's relationship with ASEAN. This is illustrated by the attendance of the High Representative/Vice-President at every **ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial** since 2012, as well as the Shangri La Dialogue in [2014](#) and [2015](#). The Chairman of the EU Military

Committee has paid several visits to the respective chairs of ASEAN and has also attended the Shangri La Dialogue and the Asia Pacific Roundtable.

The EU has so far organised two **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** orientation courses for ASEAN countries, informing ASEAN representatives on the EU's civilian and military missions and operations. Furthermore, in [2013](#) and [2015](#) the EU, together with Indonesia and Malaysia, organised High Level Dialogues on **Maritime Security**. Further editions are being planned for 2016 and 2017 with Thailand and the Philippines respectively. The High Level Dialogue brings together senior officials and experts to discuss how to forge effective answers to maritime security related challenges. The EU has also co-chaired a number of initiatives in the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** framework, for instance two [training courses on Preventive Diplomacy](#) as well as a [workshop on CBRN Risk Mitigation](#) and another one on [Confidence Building Measures during Cyber-incidents](#). Other security-related initiatives between the EU and the ARF include Inter-Sessional **Meetings on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime**, the **Defence** Officials Dialogue, and **Disaster Relief Exercises**. The EU and the Philippines will co-chair an ARF workshop on the **prevention of violent extremism** in 2016/17.

### **Integration and connectivity**

As two leading **regional integration** initiatives, the EU and ASEAN are natural partners, and regularly share their experiences - both successes and challenges – of how to make integration work. Exchanges have been taken to a higher level since the first session of the [dialogue on connectivity](#) in Myanmar in September 2014.

In the last 15 years, **air traffic** between the EU and ASEAN has almost doubled. More than **10 million passengers** now travel between the two regions every year: a figure that is expected to grow by 65% over the next 20 years. The EU supports ASEAN's endeavour to establish a single aviation market; ASEAN was identified in the recent [EU Aviation Strategy](#) as one of the priorities for negotiating a region-to-region Air Transport Agreement.

### **Significant sectoral cooperation**

The EU is a **major development partner** of ASEAN and the **biggest donor** to the ASEAN Secretariat. In the current budget cycle (2014-2020), the EU is supporting the ASEAN

integration and the Secretariat with €170 million of **regional funding**, more than double the amount under the previous cycle. This comes in addition to €26 million **thematic programmes** intended for ASEAN, as well as our bilateral cooperation with individual countries of ASEAN, which will amount to over €2 billion in the period 2014-2020.

The EU will support the **ASEAN Economic Community [Blueprint 2025](#)** with a new EU-ASEAN flagship programme ARISE+ amounting to €85 million expected to start in 2017. The programme will build on the successful work of the ongoing programmes in the areas of **trade facilitation, standards conformance** notably in **food safety** and **pharmaceuticals, customs and transport, civil aviation, intellectual property rights, statistics and integration monitoring**. The new programme will, alongside regional support, also include tailor-made country-level support. Building on the successful [EU-ASEAN Dialogue Initiative facility](#), the new and substantially increased (€20 million in total) [Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument](#) programme, expected to start during 2016, will be able to support policy dialogues and experience sharing between the EU and ASEAN and among ASEAN Member Countries across all areas of ASEAN Community pillars.

Building on past EU support in **border management**, the second phase of the **EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme [started in 2015](#)**, in cooperation with INTERPOL. Aligned with the [Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity](#), in particular **people to people connectivity**, the border management programme (€3.4 million) supports the **exchange of information** between immigration officials in ASEAN capitals and the **easing of visa requirements** for ASEAN and non-ASEAN nationals within the region.

€60 million of EU funds over the period 2014-2020 will support initiatives and projects **tackling climate change and environmental issues**, as well as **preventing, managing and responding to disasters**. In 2015, two new programmes were adopted – Sustainable Peat Land Management and Combating Trans-boundary Haze Pollution (€20 million). Furthermore both the ASEAN Biodiversity Agenda and ASEAN Heritage Parks projects (€10 million) are expected to start in 2016. The **ASEAN Farmers' Organisations Support Programme** (€15 million), which started in 2015, aims to implement a common approach in strengthening producers' organisations in ASEAN Member Countries.