ASEAN, EU launch flagship programmes on policy dialogue and economic integration

The EU and ASEAN held a launch event today (17/4) to celebrate the recent start of EU-ASEAN initiatives on policy dialogue and regional economic integration. The Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) and the Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus) are two flagship programmes of EU development cooperation in ASEAN with an overall budget of EUR 61 million.

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Jakarta, 17 April 2018 - Today, the EU and ASEAN held a launch event to celebrate the recent start of EU-ASEAN initiatives on policy dialogue and regional economic integration. The Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) and the Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus) are two flagship programmes of EU development cooperation in ASEAN with an overall budget of EUR 61 million.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi and the EU Ambassador to ASEAN Francisco Fontan Pardo welcomed the launch at the ASEAN Secretariat. “The two programmes on enhanced dialogue and regional economic integration highlight the long-standing and active engagement between ASEAN and the EU,” said Secretary-General Dato Lim.

Both sides acknowledged that these two initiatives will benefit ASEAN and its people through the consolidation of ASEAN Community. Important areas of the ASEAN economic integration process will be supported by ARISE Plus such as the single market, trade facilitation, reducing non-tariff barriers to trade, along with Intellectual Property Rights, civil aviation and ASEAN statistics. Via E-READI, ASEAN’s integration process would be supported through sharing of the EU integration experience.

“In 2018 the EU and ASEAN are deepening relations, with development cooperation at the core of our successful partnership. The start of our two biggest flagship programmes – ARISE Plus and E-READI
reflects the commitment of the EU in supporting ASEAN’s regional economic integration in a holistic manner, as well as the interest in strengthening EU-ASEAN dialogue in areas of strategic importance,” highlighted EU Ambassador Francisco Fontan Pardo.

E-READI is a cooperation programme that facilitates dialogue forums between the EU and ASEAN on policy areas across all three ASEAN Community pillars (Political and Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural). With a budget of EUR 20 million and an implementation period of six years, E-READI builds on the achievements of its predecessor READI and further assists ASEAN in the development and implementation of regional integration strategies and community building, drawing on relevant EU experience.

The ARISE Plus-Regional programme consolidates and enhances the results achieved with past EU-ASEAN technical assistance programmes to meaningfully support the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025, thus supporting greater economic integration in ASEAN. The programme reflects the growing strategic relations and cooperation of the EU and ASEAN as a regional block. With a budget of EUR 41 million, the six-year initiative is the largest ever EU-funded ASEAN action.

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**Backgrounder**

**EU-ASEAN Development Cooperation**

The EU has earmarked more than EUR 170 million for development cooperation with ASEAN for 2014-2020.

**E-READI** is a demand-driven dialogue instrument that supports ASEAN regional integration by drawing on European experience and facilitates ongoing or new dialogues between the EU and ASEAN in policy areas of joint interest across all three ASEAN Community pillars (Political and Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural). Activities can include:

1. ASEAN policy dialogues and exchanges; support to draft policies and plans of action
2. Capacity and institutional strengthening initiatives, including activities promoting ASEAN-helps-ASEAN and triangular cooperation
3. Providing analyses and studies in support of policy dialogue and formulation
4. Activities aimed at strengthening consultations with CSOs and the private sector

The ARISE Plus-Regional programme takes advantage of the EU's unique knowledge and experience in meeting the challenges and reaping the benefits of regional economic integration. It has a special focus on CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam) and works closely with relevant actors in the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, ministries in ASEAN Member States, as well as the private sector.

The ARISE Plus-Regional programme consists of the following components:

1. ASEAN Single Market: Standards, Trade and Customs facilitation
2. ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights
3. ASEAN Secretariat Capacity Development
4. ASEAN Integration Monitoring and Statistics
5. ASEAN Air Transport