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P R E S S R E L E A S E

European Union – Thailand Partnership and Cooperation Agreement initialled today in Brussels

The European Union and Thailand have finalized today the text of the EU-Thailand Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Chief negotiators David O'Sullivan (EU) and Sihasak Phuangketkeow (Thailand) initialled the text at a ceremony held at the European External Action Service in Brussels. The EU and Thailand have been closely working together both bilaterally and in regional and international fora. Thailand is a very committed and important member of ASEAN, which the EU sees as a natural partner. The PCA is a reaffirmation of these growing links and marks a big step forward in EU - Thailand relations.

The Agreement will give more scope for sectoral cooperation in a broad number of areas of mutual interest, such as tourism, labour and employment, education, migration, transport, environment. It will enhance the political dialogue and will intensify our work together on global issues such as non-proliferation, counter-terrorism and small arms and light weapons.

The initialling follows the conclusion of negotiations, which was welcomed by President Barroso and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra at their meeting in Brussels on 6 March 2013. The PCA is complemented by the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), for which negotiations were launched in March 2013.

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Background

Thailand is the fifth ASEAN partner to finalize negotiations and present text for a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU. Similar agreements have been signed or are currently under negotiation with Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia.

At present, EU - Thailand bilateral relations are founded on the 1980 EC – ASEAN Cooperation Agreement. The new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will replace the 1980 Agreement and will put EU - Thailand relations on an up-to-date and more comprehensive foundation, which will facilitate and enhance:

- political dialogue, including on peace and security, human rights, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons;
- regional and international cooperation;
- cooperation on trade and investments issues, including barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, intellectual property rights, customs;
- cooperation in the area of justice, freedom and security, including rule of law and legal cooperation, data protection, migration, combating organised crime, money laundering, terrorist financing and illicit drugs;
- sectoral cooperation in areas such as: financial services, tax area, education, information society, audio-visual and media, energy, education and culture, environment, employment and social affairs, health, transport, scientific and technological cooperation.

The signature of the PCA will take place at a date jointly agreed, after the completion of internal procedures necessary on both sides. It will enter into force once it has been ratified by the parties.

More information on EU-Thailand relations:

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/thailand/index_en.htm