



## THE NINETEENTH AEM-EU TRADE COMMISSIONER CONSULTATION 20 August 2023, Semarang, Indonesia

### JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Nineteenth ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) – EU Trade Commissioner Consultation was held on 20 August 2023. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. Zulkifli Hasan, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and Mr. Christophe Kiener, Head of Unit for South and Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, representing H.E. Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President for an Economy that Works for People and EU Trade Commissioner. The Meeting welcomed H.E. Filipus Nino Pereira, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste who joined the Meeting as an observer.
2. The Meeting noted that both ASEAN and the EU are on their way to fully recovering from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to ASEAN's statistics, the total value of two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and the EU in 2022 amounted to USD 295.2 billion, representing a 9.6% increase from 2021. The Meeting also noted that in 2022, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow from the EU to ASEAN was USD 24 billion, which made the EU ASEAN's 3rd largest source of FDI amongst ASEAN's Dialogue Partners that year.
3. The Meeting affirmed its commitment to make use of the positive momentum to further intensify trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the EU. The Meeting, however, highlighted that economic recovery remains vulnerable to regional and global challenges, including the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, heightened volatility in the global financial market, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical tensions. With regard to geopolitical tensions, the Meeting recalled paragraph OP 46 of the Joint Leaders' Statement of the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit of 14 December 2022. The Meeting underscored the importance of multilateralism, adherence to international law, and respect for sovereignty in contributing to global and regional peace, stability and prosperity and stressed the importance of deeper cooperation to navigate the challenging global environment]. The Meeting therefore tasked officials to explore ways to embed practical activities of mutual interest that will mitigate the effects of these global challenges and support post-pandemic economic development in the ASEAN and the EU, especially in the areas of sustainability, digital transformation, and supply chain resilience.
4. The Meeting highlighted that the ASEAN-EU partnership goes beyond trade and investment. In this regard, the Meeting recalled the invaluable contribution made by the EU to ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) in the areas of food safety, circular economy, biodiversity conservation, disaster-responsive social protection, green cities, and gender equality which helped ASEAN swiftly respond to

the pandemic and quickly bounce back from it. The Meeting acknowledged that the ASEAN-EU partnership in mitigating the pandemic was a testament to the importance of collaboration and cooperation in addressing global issues and challenges.

5. The Meeting welcomed the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit held on 14 December 2022 in Brussels, Belgium to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations. The Meeting reaffirmed their commitment to forge closer economic cooperation on shared priority areas as outlined in the Joint Leaders' Statement of the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit, particularly in promoting sustainable and inclusive trade and investment through robust economic cooperation in the areas of, among others, climate change, green and circular economy, renewable energy and digital transformation.

6. The Meeting welcomed the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN-EU Trade and Investment Work Programme (TIWP) 2022-2023. The Meeting encouraged officials to continue their collaboration under the TIWP which serves as a framework to guide economic cooperation between ASEAN and the EU. Noting the importance of early, effective, and full implementation of the TIWP, the Meeting endorsed the ASEAN-EU TIWP 2024-2025 and looked forward to its implementation starting early next year.

7. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the EU-funded ARISE+ (trade facilitation) and E-READI (EU-ASEAN policy dialogue) programmes. The Meeting welcomed the extension of the E-READI programme and expressed its appreciation for the recently completed ARISE+ regional programme. The Meeting acknowledged the invaluable contributions made by the two programmes to advancing ASEAN economic integration efforts and strengthening the economic partnership between ASEAN and the EU.

8. The Meeting looked forward to forging an even closer partnership through the EU's recently launched € 30 million EU-ASEAN Green Initiative as part of the Green Team Europe Initiative for ASEAN and € 60 million EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package as part of the Sustainable Connectivity Team Europe Initiative for ASEAN. Both programmes will contribute to the strengthening of the EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership and the implementation of the Global Gateway in Southeast Asia. The Meeting underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of these programmes and, to this end, encouraged officials from both sides to work closely together throughout the programme management process.

9. The Meeting welcomed the report of the ASEAN-EU Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment (JWG) Meeting and the recommendations contained therein on advancing ASEAN-EU cooperation on digital economy, green technologies & green services, and supply chains resilience. The Meeting encouraged officials to continue their engagement under the JWG mechanism.

10. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, free, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. The Meeting highlighted its support to reform the WTO to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose and forward looking. The Meeting expressed determination to cooperate and coordinate on mutually beneficial

areas to contribute to the success of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13), to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in 2024.

11. The Meeting noted the relevant shared fundamental principles between the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific of promoting an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based regional architecture in which ASEAN is central. The Meeting agreed to explore potential collaboration in the priority areas of the AOIP and the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

12. The Meeting noted the recommendations by the EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) and expressed appreciation for their continuous contribution to strengthening trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the EU. The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the EU-ASEAN Business Sentiment Survey and committed to work with EU-ABC to address the issues raised by the respondents in the survey.

13. The Meeting affirmed its commitment to support Timor-Leste to be an ASEAN Member State by providing technical assistance, capacity building and other support to facilitate Timor-Leste's integration into the mainstream of ASEAN-EU economic relations. The Meeting also encouraged the Timor-Leste government to intensify efforts towards the preparations for ASEAN membership.

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