



EUROPEAN UNION
Mission of the European Union to ASEAN

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Press Release

**EU and ASEAN highlight
cooperation and scholarship opportunities
on ASEAN Day**

Today (8/8), the Deputy Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, H.E. Kung Phoak, together with the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Mission of the European Union (EU) to ASEAN, Lucas Cibor, launched the EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2019, the EU's annual publication on cooperation with ASEAN.

The launch of the EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2019 was held in conjunction with the **52nd ASEAN Day Celebration and the 2nd ASEAN-EU Cooperation and Scholarships Day**, an annual event at the ASEAN Secretariat dedicated to communicating the impact of EU-ASEAN development cooperation, and the benefits of intra-ASEAN and EU-ASEAN student mobility.

"In January 2019, the 22nd EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting agreed in principle to upgrade EU-ASEAN relations to a Strategic Partnership, subject to details and timing to be worked out. This reflects the depth and breadth of EU-ASEAN relations, which span more than four decades. The hallmark of this partnership is ever-closer cooperation on joint interests and common challenges such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, tackling climate change or advancing our trade and connectivity. I am confident that our relations will continue to go from strength to strength in the years to come", said **Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Mission of the European Union (EU) to ASEAN, Lucas Cibor.**

"Today, we reaffirm that strong partnership by convening the second ASEAN-EU Cooperation and Scholarships Day, and by launching the EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2019 here at the ASEAN Secretariat. Both of these encapsulate the strength of our partnership as well as the breadth and depth of our shared successes. Undoubtedly, this success is a strong manifestation of what can be accomplished when the two most advanced examples of regional integration in the world work together on development and in particular, higher education", said **Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community H.E. Kung Phoak.**

The EU has dedicated over EUR 200 million to support ASEAN regional integration for the period 2014-2020. Bilateral development cooperation with individual ASEAN Member States includes more than EUR 2 billion altogether, more than half of which is used to support Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam, in addition to assistance provided by EU Member States to ASEAN and its Member States.



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Recent highlights of EU-ASEAN cooperation include, among others:

- The completion of the **EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme II (EA-MBMP II)**, which extended Interpol's I-24/7 global police communications system to 50 transit hubs, and facilitated 89.25 million searches, 302 141 new records, 1012 new cases and 25 arrests during 40 months of operation;
- The launch of new flagship programmes supporting economic integration (**Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus)**) and EU-ASEAN dialogue in areas of shared policy priorities (**Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI)**), including road safety, IUU fishing and the circular economy.
- The soft launch of the **ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST)** for Trade in Services, a free online tool, which allows ASEAN businesses to lodge complaints on cross-border trade issues with governments in the region;
- The implementation of sustainable and climate-resilient farming and fisheries projects in the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Lao PDR under the **ASEAN Farmers' Organisations Support Programme (AFOSP)**;
- The launch of the **Safe and Fair** programme, which aims to improve labour conditions for migrant women in Southeast Asia, and is the first initiative in Asia under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;

The Cooperation and Scholarships Day highlighted higher education as one key thematic area of EU-ASEAN cooperation. Since 2014, more than 5500 students and staff from ASEAN have travelled to Europe on scholarships funded by the EU and its Member States, including the EU's ERASMUS+ programme, and nearly 3000 students and staff have studied or worked in ASEAN.

A total of 591 scholarships have been awarded by the **European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (EU SHARE)** programme for short-term study at 32 universities in ASEAN and 10 in Europe. Since 2017, two ASEAN Student Mobility Forums have been convened, which gathered 330 students from all 10 ASEAN Member States, allowing them to discuss important issues regarding student mobility.

ASEAN Member States also offer a range of scholarship opportunities, both publicly- and privately-funded, including those implemented through the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Higher Education Development, the ASEAN University Network, and Passage to ASEAN, among others.

EU-ASEAN projects focusing on a wide array of social and environmental issues, from sustainable agriculture to inclusive education, and higher education providers from across the two regions showcased their programmes at the ASEAN-EU Cooperation and Scholarship Day. The exhibition fair and scholarship presentations drew a record 2000 visitors, up from 1500 participants during the inaugural event in 2018.

The EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2019 is available online at: <http://bit.ly/euasean2019bluebook>