

VIETNAM IN THE EU-ASEAN RELATIONS

Since the start of its Doi Moi Process, Vietnam has substantially reshaped its foreign relations. Its accession to ASEAN in July 1995 marked the start of its integration in the region, Vietnam increasingly plays an active role, inter alia promoting stronger ASEAN solidarity and cooperation. The EU as a long-standing partner of ASEAN establishes its relationship with the bloc since 1980 under the EC-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement to which all ASEAN members, with the exception of Burma/Myanmar, are parties. It was not until 1999 when Vietnam formally acceded to this agreement.

The European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are upgrading their relationship to a Strategic Partnership. This decision was taken by EU and ASEAN countries' Foreign Ministers at the EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 21 January 2019. EU-ASEAN (consisting of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) relations date back to 1977 when official "Dialogue Relations" began. On June 2015, the EU confirmed the adoption of a new strategy "The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with a strategic purpose". In August 2017 during the EU-ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, the second EU-ASEAN Plan of Action (2018-2022) was agreed.

As an active partner in ASEAN, Vietnam holds an important role in furthering the relationship between the two regions and its key components; the Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI) and the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI). Furthermore, Vietnam is a founding member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) launched in 1996; an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together the 28 EU Member States along with the European Commission, all ASEAN members, as well as in particular China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and India. The ASEM dialogue aims to strengthen the relationship between the two regions in the spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership, by means of enhanced political dialogue, economic cooperation and cooperation in social, cultural areas.

The 12th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Summit took place on 18-19 October in Brussels, bringing together 51 countries, as well as EU and Asian institutions. Under the title "Global Partners for Global Challenges", leaders addressed some of the world's most pressing issues.