

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **France Names its Ambassador to ASEAN ASEAN Secretariat, 2 February 2009**

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France has named Mr Philippe Zeller, Minister plenipotentiary HC, its Ambassador to ASEAN.

Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN welcomed the appointment and said that this appointment reflected France's keen interest to deepen its relation with ASEAN. "We look forward to working with Ambassador Zeller to strengthen ASEAN-France and ASEAN-EU relations," he added.

France acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia during the 12th ASEAN Summit in 2007 in Cebu, Philippines.

Mr Zeller is currently serving as the Ambassador of France to the Republic of Indonesia as well as to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

With Mr Zeller's appointment, France became the second European Union member state to appoint its Ambassador to ASEAN, following the United Kingdom. Under the ASEAN Charter, non-ASEAN Member States may appoint Ambassadors to ASEAN.

As a result of the ASEAN Charter which entered into force recently, ASEAN is receiving an increasing number of Ambassadors accredited to work directly with its Secretariat in Jakarta. For ASEAN Member States, they are appointing their own Permanent Representatives to ASEAN to coordinate the community building efforts. The Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN will be in place in Jakarta soon.