

Joint Press Statement

28th ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting Convenes Virtually

1. The 28th Meeting of the ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was held via video conference on Friday, 26 March 2021.
2. The meeting welcomed the successful convening of the 23rd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) on 1 December 2020 via video conference. During the 23rd AEMM, Ministers reaffirmed the shared values and common interests that underpin the comprehensive, dynamic and multifaceted nature of ASEAN-EU relations and the significant role played by ASEAN and the European Union (EU) in regional and global affairs. Both sides recalled the decision taken during the 23rd AEMM to elevate their relations to a Strategic Partnership and looked forward to further discussions on an inaugural ASEAN-EU Summit.
3. ASEAN and EU officials recognised the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and reaffirmed their commitment to continue efforts to strengthen both regions' preparedness for, and capacity to respond to, current and future public health emergencies. Both sides recalled the successful convening of the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Video Conference on COVID-19 in March 2020. ASEAN expressed appreciation for "Team Europe"'s – including the EU's - assistance of over EUR 800 million to combat the spread of the disease and mitigate its impact on the region including the additional support programme "South East Asia Health Pandemic Response and Preparedness" of EUR 20 million, implemented by the World Health Organization. ASEAN took note of EU's announcement from 23 March 2021 to allocate EUR 11 million for disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid in the South East Asian region, to support those affected by natural disasters, the coronavirus pandemic, and conflicts.
4. ASEAN and EU appreciated the inaugural EU-ASEAN Experts' Dialogue on COVID-19 Vaccines that was held on 8 December 2020 and looked forward to the Dialogue's continuation in May 2021. Both sides expressed their continued support to vaccine multilateralism, the World Health Organization and fair, equitable and affordable access to safe and effective vaccines under the multilateral COVAX Facility. In this context, ASEAN recognised the EU's contribution of over EUR 850 million in grants and guaranteed loans to the COVAX Facility to purchase, secure and deliver vaccines to low and middle-income countries and accelerate manufacturing capacity for their global supply.
5. Both sides emphasised the need for a robust socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that would enable ASEAN and the EU to "build back better", greener and in a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient manner, including through support to the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and with the assistance of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility in the EU.
6. The Meeting also exchanged views on recent developments in both regions, including regional issues of mutual concern. Brunei Darussalam presented its priorities and key deliverables under the theme of "*We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper*" for ASEAN's Chairmanship in 2021, which reflects ASEAN's commitment to care for its people, to prepare and adapt for future opportunities and challenges by ensuring that ASEAN remains relevant and its Community could continue to prosper, especially given the impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU provided updates on the

implementation of its priorities for 2019-2024, notably the Next Generation EU and European Green Deal.

7. Both sides underlined the strategic importance of their economic partnership and recognised efforts to further increase and strengthen two-way trade and investment flows between ASEAN and the EU that can support the regions' comprehensive recovery process, particularly for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. ASEAN and EU officials will continue to implement the EU-ASEAN Trade and Investment Work Programme for 2020-2021 and look forward to its formal adoption, and noted the progress made by the Joint Working Group for the development of a Framework setting out the parameters of a future EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement.
8. Officials reviewed the third year of implementation of the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022 and welcomed the significant achievements to date, with over 88 percent of action lines either achieved or currently being addressed.
9. ASEAN and EU officials reaffirmed the importance of and their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, with a view to promote sustainable development and address the global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental protection, including through the relevant ASEAN-EU dialogue mechanisms.
10. ASEAN and EU looked forward to the 3rd ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development hosted by Thailand in 2021 and confirmed their interest in exploring further cooperation on issues such as sustainable finance, green development, human development and gender equality, digitalisation and innovation, and sustainable connectivity. Both sides also noted the various efforts to advance sustainable development through plans which included amongst others the EU's Green Deal, Thailand's Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economic Model, and Singapore's Green Plan 2030. They welcomed the EU's partnership with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) on sustainable consumption and production in the area of circular economy.
11. Both sides welcomed the ASEAN-EU partnership on sustainable development, including the EU's commitment of over EUR 280 million over the period 2014-2020 to support ASEAN-EU programmes. The EU and ASEAN welcomed the recent success achieved by the "Ship to Shore Rights" programme, and the launch of the regional programme on labour migration in the fishing sector. They also welcomed the research on women migrant workers' use of information and communication technologies in ASEAN by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. EU and ASEAN officials confirmed their readiness to explore further development cooperation actions.
12. ASEAN and the EU welcomed the outcomes of the 2nd ASEAN-EU High Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, which took place on 27 November 2020, and the progress on related work streams on inter alia circular economy, sustainable finance, climate action and natural capital. ASEAN welcomed the launch of the EUR 5 million programme "Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in ASEAN" and both sides looked forward to the launch of the EUR 5 million programme on "Smart Green ASEAN Cities". They also welcomed the dialogue on Green Technology and Innovation Mapping for plastic waste and sustainable manufacturing through a series of webinars, which started on 18 February 2021.

13. Both sides welcomed the establishment of the Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between relevant ASEAN Member States and the European Union and the holding of its inaugural meeting via video conference on 27 January 2021, which addressed several issues as mentioned in the meeting's press release. The 2nd Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between relevant ASEAN Member States and the European Union is scheduled to be held in April 2021.
14. On trade and economic connectivity, both sides welcomed the official launch of the 'ASEAN Customs Transit System' (ACTS) on 2 November 2020, with the official launch event held on 30 November 2020 under the flagship programme "ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU" (ARISE Plus). They highlighted the role of ACTS in facilitating cross-border land transport and in bringing tangible benefits to their respective businesses and citizens.
15. Both sides reiterated their support for enhanced and sustainable connectivity between ASEAN and the EU, and called for the effective implementation of the Joint Ministerial Statement on Connectivity adopted during the 23rd AEMM on 1 December 2020. Both sides welcomed the ASEAN-EU Virtual Connectivity Seminar held on 1 July 2020. They urged the expeditious conclusion of the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement to strengthen cooperation on civil aviation and enhance air connectivity between and beyond ASEAN and the EU. They welcomed the success of projects enhancing people-to-people connectivity between and within the regions. The two sides welcomed the flagship SHARE (EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN region) programme and joint research notably on High Performance Computing and green technology mapping and transfer, supported by the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI). They welcomed the 1st ASEAN Digital Senior Officials' Meeting Plus EU Dialogue (ADGSOM + EU) hosted virtually by Malaysia on 20 January 2021. In light of its outcomes, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen cooperation on digital issues and encouraged both parties to strengthen the implementation of cooperative programs and projects in line with the stated vision of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025.
16. Officials on both sides welcomed the continued wide-ranging, substantive policy dialogues between EU experts and ASEAN counterparts supported by E-READI, which promotes dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of policy areas of shared interest. In this respect, both sides welcomed E-READI supported dialogues such as the 3rd ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Combatting IUU Fishing, which was held on 23 and 24 February 2021 and looked forward to holding of the 5th EU-ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Dialogue as well as the start of new E-READI supported dialogues, including on clean energy, in 2021, and to reschedule the 4th ASEAN-EU Human Rights Policy Dialogue as soon as possible.
17. Both sides recognised that peace, security and stability in ASEAN and the EU are vulnerable to a range of common, transboundary threats – including terrorism, violent extremism, cyber security attacks, infringements on maritime security and freedom of navigation, illicit trade in and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, and the spread of online disinformation.
18. Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation in cybersecurity as previously affirmed in the ASEAN-EU Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, which was adopted in 2019.
19. They welcomed the growing engagement between the ASEAN and the EU on a broad range of security and defence-related issues, including the EU's active engagement

as co-chair of two thematic work streams, on maritime security as well as on counter-terrorism and transnational crime (CTTC), within the ASEAN Regional Forum. They welcomed the participation of the EU in the virtual “Guests of the Chair” commemorative event, held on the sidelines of the 7th ADMM-Plus in December 2020. They underlined the importance of further developing the ASEAN-EU dialogue on security and defence issues and crisis management, and noted the EU’s ambition to adhere to all relevant ASEAN-led security mechanisms including the ADMM-Plus. Both sides looked forward to the ASEAN-EU 5th High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation. The EU encouraged ASEAN Member States to consider enhanced involvement in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy activities.

20. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to regionalism and rules-based multilateralism as well as to respecting and promoting international law and internationally agreed norms and standards, in line with the UN Charter. They also reaffirmed their support for preserving and strengthening an open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, and the need to address barriers to international trade.

21. The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Kok Li Peng, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to ASEAN, and by Mr. David Daly, Head of the South-East Asia Division of the European External Action Service, together with Mr. Mario Ronconi, Head of Unit for South and South-East Asia, European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships. It was attended by members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and the EU. EU Member States attended as observers.

Jakarta

26 March 2021