

Co-Chairs' Press Statement
EU-ASEAN: Senior Officials' Meeting

10-11 February 2020, Brussels

The European Union (EU) – Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Senior Officials' Meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium from 10 to 11 February 2020. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Gunnar Wiegand, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific, European External Action Service and H.E. Stanley Loh, Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore. The Meeting was attended by officials from all 27 EU and 10 ASEAN Member States, as well as by representatives from the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

We exchanged views on recent developments in the EU and ASEAN, which are two of the world's leading regional organisations. ASEAN and the EU both believe in the importance of strengthening the rules-based multilateral system, including through the promotion of effective multilateralism. ASEAN and the EU have a shared interest in promoting international law and internationally agreed norms and standards, thereby contributing to a peaceful, fair and prosperous world.

We received updates on the EU's New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 and the priorities of the new European Commission, notably the European Green Deal, ensuring an economy at the service of citizens and adapting to the digital age. We also received updates on Vietnam's 2020 ASEAN Chairmanship theme of "Cohesive and Responsive", its five key thematic priorities, its plans and proposals to strengthen ASEAN's relations with its dialogue partners and external parties, and to reinforce the ASEAN-centred regional architecture.

We recalled that the 22nd EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Brussels in 2019 had agreed in principle to upgrade EU-ASEAN relations to a Strategic Partnership, and looked forward to the timely conclusion of the upgrade.

We reaffirmed the EU's and ASEAN's commitment to strengthen relations and cooperation across all areas of mutual interest, as outlined in the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018-2022). We exchanged views on recent EU-ASEAN policy dialogues, notably those on climate change, human rights and sustainable development. We welcomed the EU's initiatives to contribute to the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility and partner with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue on sustainable consumption and production, as announced at the 2nd ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development on 10 February 2020 in Brussels. We also had wide-ranging discussions on how to further strengthen EU-ASEAN cooperation, especially in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, the circular economy, fair and open trade, maritime security and cybersecurity. We welcomed the EU's invitation to ASEAN Member States to the 2nd EU Cyber Forum in June 2020 in Brussels and will explore opportunities to enhance formal exchanges on this increasingly important issue.

Recognising that EU-ASEAN cooperation should yield tangible and concrete benefits to the people of the two regions, we discussed the importance of enhancing trade, investment and connectivity, including through the expeditious conclusion of the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, development of smart cities, enhancing dialogue on political and security issues of common concern, and promoting closer people-to-people ties. We were also informed about the

convening of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific 2020, which will be held in Jakarta from 7 to 9 July 2020. Without prejudice to ongoing WTO proceedings, we also highlighted the importance of dialogue between relevant ASEAN Member States and the EU on issues of common interest. We noted the EU's intention to inform relevant parties on the design of certification rules in connection to the European Union's Renewable Energy Directive (RED II).

We also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern, including recent developments in the South China Sea, the situation in the Korean Peninsula, and transboundary challenges such as terrorism and cyber threats. There was also a comprehensive exchange of views from the Member States which are current members of the United Nations Security Council on their priorities for their respective terms. We discussed the importance of promoting the rules-based international order, including through upholding international law such as the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We discussed the recent 2019-Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) outbreak, and emphasised the importance of international cooperation and information sharing to tackle the threats presented by the nCoV. We welcomed ASEAN's briefing on its efforts to share information, best practices and enhance cooperation, as well as measures undertaken by individual ASEAN Member States to control the spread of the outbreak, which would strengthen public confidence. We agreed to convene a video conference meeting between ASEAN and EU public health and other relevant officials to further exchange information on the 2019-nCoV.