OVERVIEW

ASEAN-FRANCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

1. France was conferred the status of Development Partner of ASEAN at the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (AMM) on 9 September 2020 via videoconference.

2. The ASEAN-France Development Partnership was institutionalised through the convening of the First ASEAN-France Development Partnership Committee (AF-DPC) Meeting on 4 March 2021 via videoconference. The Meeting exchanged views on the potential areas of ASEAN-France cooperation, including projects/activities to support ASEAN’s priorities across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community and the implementation of ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.

A. Political-Security Cooperation


B. Economic Cooperation

4. ASEAN and France have enjoyed considerable trade and investment relations despite recent fluctuation. The total two-way trade experienced a slight decrease from USD 37.81 billion in 2018 to USD 36.31 billion in 2019, with the trade balance in favour of France. With a share of 1.3% of ASEAN’s total trade, in 2019 France was the 19th largest trading partner of ASEAN.¹

5. In 2019, with a total value of USD 4.5 billion, ASEAN’s leading export products to France was electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof, sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, parts and accessories of such articles. France top export products to ASEAN of the same year was aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof, of which the total value amounted to USD 6.1 billion.²

6. Meanwhile, Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from France to ASEAN also experienced lower growth from USD 1.88 billion in 2018 to USD 1.41 billion in 2019. In tourism, the number of tourist arrivals from France to ASEAN has

¹ ASEAN Statistics Database as of May 2021
² Ibid.
increased every year since 2010. In 2019, the number of tourist arrival increased slightly by 1.1% from to 2,012,301 from 1,990,393 in 2018.\(^3\)

C. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

7. France has bilateral socio-cultural cooperation with ASEAN Member States. France’s cooperation in this field with ASEAN Member States (AMS) includes, among other, contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; institutional cooperation projects between environment ministries; humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters; students training; research cooperation; and archaeological cooperation. In the area of public health, France supported projects with the Research Institute for Development (IRD), through its joint international laboratory DRISA: Drug Resistance in Southeast Asia (2016-2020) on antibiotic resistance, and the French Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis (ANRS), through almost 100 research projects. In response to address COVID-19 and its impact in the ASEAN region, France, through the French Development Agency (AFD), provided additional financing of EUR 2 million to the project ECOMORE II (Economic Development, Ecosystem Modifications, and Emerging Infectious Diseases Risk Evaluation), and EUR 650 million to support strengthening financial systems and to mitigate impacts on SMEs in several AMS.

8. At regional level, France had cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) following the earthquake and tsunami, which hit Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, in September 2018.

D. Development Cooperation

9. Thus far there has been minimal development cooperation between ASEAN and France at the regional level. However, the French Development Agency (AFD) has been operating in the ASEAN region since 1993, which now has been extended to cover seven ASEAN Member States, namely Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Since 2010, the AFD has supported more than 170 projects representing more than EUR 4 billion of commitments (mostly in the form of loans), and managed EUR 116 million of grants on behalf of the European Union over the period 2015-2018. It finances regional projects, including in the area biodiversity, health, environment, energy, cultural heritage, and economy.

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\(^3\) Ibid.