

## **OVERVIEW**

### **ASEAN-RUSSIA DIALOGUE RELATIONS**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership could be traced back to July 1991 when the then Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation attended the Opening Session of the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Kuala Lumpur as a guest of the Malaysian Government. Russia was subsequently elevated to a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN at the 29<sup>th</sup> AMM in July 1996 in Jakarta.

#### **B. Political and Security Cooperation**

2. ASEAN and Russia maintain good political and security cooperation relations. A milestone in ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations was when Russia acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 29 November 2004. Russia's accession to the TAC reflects her strong commitment to regional peace, stability and a significant contribution to the TAC as an important code of conduct governing inter-states relations.

3. Russia participates in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN under the ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations to discuss and exchange views on political and security issues of mutual interest and concern. These include ministerial meetings, senior officials' meetings and meetings at expert level, as well as dialogue and cooperation frameworks initiated by ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs) Plus One, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and the East Asia Summit.

4. At the first ASEAN-Russia Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN and Russia signed the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government of the Member Countries of ASEAN and the Russian Federation on Progressive and Comprehensive Partnership. The Joint Declaration promotes and strengthens ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership in a wide range of areas including political and security, economic and development cooperation. ASEAN and Russia also adopted the Comprehensive Programme of Action 2005-2015 to realise the goals and objectives set out in the Joint Declaration.

5. In keeping up with the momentum in ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations, the Leaders of ASEAN and Russian Federation convened the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Russia Summit in October 2010 in Ha Noi which, among others, reaffirmed their commitment to consolidate and further promote ASEAN-Russia progressive and comprehensive partnership towards enhancement of the relations to a higher plane, and to work closely together in the evolving regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific.

6. ASEAN and Russia have been working to implement the ASEAN-Russian Federation Joint Declaration on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism signed at the PMC Plus One Session with Russia in 2004. ASEAN and Russia adopted the ASEAN-Russia Work Plan on Countering Terrorism and Transnational Crime and have held regular dialogues at senior official and expert levels.

7. ASEAN and Russia marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their dialogue relations in 2016 with a Commemorative Summit held in Sochi, Russia on 19-20 May 2016, with the theme “Moving Towards a Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit”. During the Summit, the Leaders adopted the Sochi Declaration, which charts out the future direction of the ASEAN-Russia relationship and cooperation. A number of commemorative activities were also carried out to signify the expanding and deepening of the dialogue partnership.

8. As part of commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations, an ASEAN-Russia Eminent Persons Group (AREPG) was established to review ASEAN-Russia relations over the past years, explore ways to widen and deepen the existing cooperation between ASEAN and Russia, and make recommendations on the future direction of the ASEAN-Russia cooperation. The AREPG submitted its recommendations in the form of a report to the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit in May 2016.

9. ASEAN-Russia cooperation is now being undertaken under the framework of the Comprehensive Programme of Actions (CPA) to Promote Cooperation between ASEAN and the Russian Federation 2016-2020, which was adopted by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and Russia on the occasion of the Commemorative Summit in May 2016 to succeed the CPA 2005-2015. The CPA (2016-2020) is aimed at promoting and enhancing ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations through assisting ASEAN in its efforts in regional economic integration and Community building.

10. The PMC Plus One Session with Russia on 6 August 2017 in Manila adopted three documents, aimed to further substantiate the ASEAN-Russia partnership. These documents are the Statement of ASEAN and Russia Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Joint Efforts to Counter International Terrorism, the Implementation Roadmap of the ASEAN-Russia Eminent Persons Group (AREPG) Report, and the Concept Note on the Network of ASEAN-Russia Think Tanks (NARTT). The NARTT was launched with the convening of its inaugural meeting in April 2018 in Moscow, Russia.

11. Following the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter and based on the long-standing ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations, Russia has accredited its Ambassador to ASEAN. Russia also established its diplomatic Mission to ASEAN based in Jakarta, which was officially inaugurated in August 2017 by Russian Foreign Minister, H.E. Sergey Lavrov.

### **C. Economic Cooperation**

12. ASEAN-Russia economic cooperation has been tightened through regular dialogue and engagement such as the Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM)-Russia Consultations and the ASEAN Economic Ministers-Russia Consultations. At the 6<sup>th</sup> AEM-Russia Consultations held on 11 September 2017, the Ministers endorsed the revised ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Roadmap, along with its Post-2017 ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Work Programme, which was built upon positive developments made under the Post-2015 Work Programme. The Post-2017 Work Programme covers, among others, regular dialogues as well as various projects in the spheres of technology, food and agriculture, transport, energy, tourism,

and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and promoting business-to-business contacts.

13. The total trade between ASEAN and Russia increased by 40%, from US\$11.96 billion in 2016 to US\$ 16.74 billion in 2017. With a share of 0.66% of ASEAN's total trade, among the ASEAN Dialogue Partners Russia is the eighth largest trading partner of ASEAN. The foreign direct investment inflow from Russia in 2017 was US\$ 0.04 billion. With a share of 0.03% of total inward investment to ASEAN in 2017, Russia became the tenth largest source of FDI for ASEAN, among the ASEAN Dialogue Partners.

14. Energy is viewed as a promising area for cooperation between ASEAN and Russia. Activities to establish international collaboration between scientists/experts from Russia and ASEAN Member States for joint initiatives in the field of renewable energy were successfully implemented in 2015/2016. Meanwhile, a new ASEAN-Russia Energy Cooperation Work Plan 2016-2020 was endorsed at the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Energy (SOME)-Russia Consultation held in July 2016 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Work Plan is the successor of the first work plan adopted in 2010, and marks the willingness and readiness of ASEAN and Russia to deepen cooperation on energy, with a focus on oil and gas, the electric power sector, civilian nuclear energy, and promotion of renewable energy.

15. In tourism, the number of visitor arrivals from Russia to ASEAN in 2016 was 1.8 million, a significant increase by 20% compared to the 2015 figures at 1.5 million<sup>1</sup>. ASEAN and Russia have held regular dialogue to promote tourism. A number of projects on tourism promotion were also developed and successfully implemented and planned, namely ASEAN-Russia Joint Projects "Russian Language Course for ASEAN Tour Operators", Advanced Russian Language Training for ASEAN Tour Operators, and a project to develop an ICT platform to provide travelers safety, among others.

16. Following the approval of the ASEAN-Russia Agriculture & Food Security Cooperation Work Programme (2013-2015), the ASEAN-Russian Federation Senior Officials' Meetings on Agriculture (ARSOMA) was established as a body to promote and intensify cooperation in the agriculture and food security sector between ASEAN and Russia. The First ARSOMA held in April 2016 endorsed the new ASEAN-Russia Agriculture and Food Security Cooperation Work Programme 2016-2020 and agreed on two priorities to be carried out in 2016-2017, namely: "Formulation of various programmes on capacity building in the areas of mutual interest" and "SPS Cooperation to enhance trade in agricultural products and food".

17. ASEAN and Russia renewed and enhanced their cooperation in science and technology with the adoption of the ASEAN-Russia Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (ARPASTI) 2016-2025, which is aimed to enhance mobility of scientists and researchers, strengthen and develop joint R&D activities, increase translation of R&D to practice, and strengthen regional science, technology and innovation linkages.

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN Tourism Statistics Database as of July 2017.

#### **D. Socio-Cultural Cooperation**

18. A number of joint activities have been undertaken in and the sphere of socio-cultural cooperation, including education, human resource development, cultural exchange and people-to-people connectivity. ASEAN-Russia joint cooperation projects are funded by the ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (ARDPFF) established in June 2007 with initial contribution of US\$ 500,000. In keeping up with the growing ASEAN-Russia cooperation, Russia has increased an annual contribution of USD 1.5 million to the ARDPFF for cooperation projects.

19. To further promote people-to-people contact, facilitate studies and provide information on ASEAN and Russia, as well as promoting trade, tourism, and awareness, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the ASEAN Centre in Moscow was signed in July 2009. The Centre, located at the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO), was officially launched in June 2010.

20. ASEAN and Russia have seen significant progress in socio-cultural cooperation following the designation of 2016 as the ASEAN-Russia Year of Culture, resulted in the implementation of series of activities, including the ASEAN-Russia Culture Ministers' Meeting convened on 19 May 2016 in Sochi, Russia, the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Russia Culture Festival on 19-20 May 2016 in Sochi, and the annual ASEAN-Russia Youth Symphony Orchestra held in Vientiane in April 2017. At the 2016 ASEAN-Russia Culture Ministers Meeting, the Ministers agreed to further promote cultural exchanges in music, theatre, archives, libraries, museums, cultural heritage, dance, visual arts, film, copyright, folk-crafts, decorative and applied arts, circus and other artistic forms. In conjunction with the Meeting, Sergey Kovalchuk's Photo Exhibition on ASEAN and the ASEAN-Russia Culture Festival was also organised.

21. Efforts have also been made to promote cooperation in education. The 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Russia University Forum held in September 2016 in Vladivostok, Russia, was aimed at strengthening and diversifying ASEAN-Russia cooperation in the field of science and education as well as creating preconditions for strengthening productive relations between the universities and university-based research institutions of ASEAN and Russia. Following its precedent, the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Russia University Forum was also organised September 2017 in Vladivostok. The Forum centered on the theme "Russia-ASEAN 2017: New Horizons for Mutual Cooperation" was attended by education practitioners, policy-makers, academicians and students. The Speakers included education ministers and presidents of major universities in ASEAN and Russia. Furthermore, the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) held in December 2017 endorsed the establishment of the ASEAN-Russia Working Group on Education and the development of the ASEAN-Russia Plan of Action on Education.

22. In the cooperation on disaster management, Russia has expressed keen interest in pursuing deeper collaboration. ASEAN and Russia have implemented two relevant workshops, namely "Workshop on Financial Policies for Disaster Response" held in August 2012 in Moscow and a workshop on disaster management, entitled "Methodological Support for the Development of ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) Based on Experience of the National Crises Management Centre in Russia" in March 2013 in Moscow. These workshops kicked start Russia's engagement in the field as well as with the AHA Centre.

23. An important initiative to forge people-to-people contact between ASEAN and Russia was the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Russia Youth Summit held in May 2013 in Moscow, Russia. The Youth Summit was organised by the ASEAN Centre in Moscow in partnership with RIA Novosti Media Holding, and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, the ASEAN Moscow Committee, the ASEAN Secretariat and the Russia-ASEAN Business Council. Continuing the initiative, the Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) and the ASEAN Centre co-organised the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Russia Youth Summit, themed “Young ASEAN – Young Russia: Contributors to Greater Connectivity” in October 2014 in Kuala Lumpur. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Russia Youth Summit was held in Vladivostok, Russia in October 2015 in cooperation with the Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok and non-profit youth organisation--the UN Model in the Russian Far East. The 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Russia Youth Summit was held on 24-27 October 2016 in Siem Reap.

24. ASEAN and Russia are also exploring cooperation in other areas, including food security, climate change, connectivity, infrastructure development, transport, ICT, industry and minerals, SMEs development, narrowing development gap, research and development, and health.

