

OVERVIEW

ASEAN-EUROPEAN UNION DIALOGUE RELATIONS

1. The European Union (EU) became ASEAN's Dialogue Partner in 1977 and was formally institutionalised following the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between Member Countries of ASEAN and the European Community in Kuala Lumpur on 7 March 1980. The adoption of the Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership in 2007 was another milestone in the dialogue relations. The Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership (2013-2017) was adopted in 2012 to provide strategic focus to the partnership through regional cooperation in a wide range of areas under the three ASEAN Community pillars.

2. The ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018-2022) was adopted at the Post Ministerial Conferences Plus One (PMC+1) Session with the EU on 6 August 2017 in Manila, and its successor, the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027), was adopted at the PMC+1 Session with the EU on 4 August 2022 in Phnom Penh.

3. The 23rd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM), held on 1 December 2020, agreed to establish the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership. This was followed by the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit held on 14 December 2022 in Brussels to commemorate the 45th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations, during which the Joint Leaders' Statement on the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit was adopted.

4. On 26 October 2025, H.E. António Costa, President of the EU Council, attended the Opening Session of the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur at the invitation of the ASEAN Chair.

A. Political-Security Cooperation

5. The EU appointed its first Ambassador to ASEAN and established the Mission of the EU to ASEAN in 2016. The current Ambassador of the EU to ASEAN, H.E. Sujiro Seam, assumed his role in September 2023.

6. The EU continues to engage with ASEAN in the political-security pillar through its participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the PMC+1 Session with the EU, and through the ASEAN-EU mechanisms such as the AEMM, the ASEAN-EU Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and the ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting. The 25th AEMM was held on 28 April 2026 in Bandar Seri Begawan.

7. The EU also participates in the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Plus EU Consultation, with the 13th Consultation held in June 2025 in

Putrajaya. ASEAN and the EU also regularly exchange best practices as part of the ASEAN-EU High-Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation (HLD-MS).

8. ASEAN-EU collaboration in human rights continues to be strengthened through: (i) six iterations of the biennial ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, with the last being held in Kuala Lumpur on 14-17 October 2025; and (ii) support for the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on initiatives to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

B. Economic Cooperation

9. The total two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and the EU reached USD 318.79 billion in 2025,¹ while the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow from the EU to ASEAN, amounted to USD 31.32 billion in 2025, placing the EU as ASEAN's third largest trading partner and largest external source of FDI.²

10. ASEAN and the EU convene regular consultations between ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the EU Trade Commissioner, as well as regular meetings of the ASEAN-EU Senior Economic Officials (SEOM-EU), with the 33rd SEOM-EU Consultation held in April 2025 in Penang. The 19th AEM-EU Trade Commissioner Consultations, held on 20 August 2023 in Semarang, adopted the ASEAN-EU Trade and Investment Work Programme (TIWP) (2024-2025), which serves as a framework to guide the ASEAN-EU economic cooperation. Additionally, the ASEAN-EU Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment was held to intensify engagement on supply chain resilience, digital trade, and green technologies and green services, as tasked by the 18th AEM-EU Trade Commissioner Consultations. The 21st AEM-EU Trade Commissioner Consultation, held in September 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, welcomed the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN-EU TIWP (2024-2025).

11. On digitalisation, following the endorsement of the ASEAN-EU 2024 Digital Workplan in January 2024, ASEAN is now working with the EU to incorporate the further development of the ASEAN Digital Index (ADIX) initiative.

12. Recognising the potential for comprehensive aviation cooperation on a region-to-region basis, the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA) was signed at the 28th ASEAN Transport Ministers' Meeting on 17 October 2022, in Bali. The ASEAN-EU CATA is the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement and reflects the latest policy thinking in air transport regulation. Cooperation under CATA is also supported through the ongoing EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package (SCOPE) – Aviation Partnership Project (SCOPE APP). Additionally, at the 23rd AEMM, ASEAN and the EU adopted the ASEAN-EU Joint Ministerial Statement on Connectivity.

¹ ASEAN Statistics, IMTS preliminary data as of 1 July 2026.

² ASEAN Statistics, FDI data, preliminary as of 1 July 2026.

C. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

13. The EU supports ASEAN's efforts to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and the protection of migrant workers, as well as to enhance the quality of education through scholarships, and support for higher education under the completed EU Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme and the ongoing EU-ASEAN SCOPE: People-to-People Connectivity (SCOPE Higher Education). Furthermore, through the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI) facility, which was operationalised from September 2011 to September 2017, the EU has provided support in various sectors, including education, science and technology, and environment.

14. On disaster management, the EU supports the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) through capacity-building activities organised under the Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of the AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanism (EU SAHA project) since 2020, and through the signing of the Administrative Arrangement between the AHA Centre and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) on 17 October 2024.

15. On sustainable development, the High-Level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development serves as a platform for promoting cooperation in implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Since its launch in 2017 in Bangkok, three Dialogues have been convened, the most recent of which was held virtually on 8 November 2021. The EU has also partnered with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDDSD) on sustainable consumption and production, including by supporting the establishment of the ASEAN Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Secretariat in Bangkok and its Knowledge and Information Portal.

16. Under the ambit of climate change, ASEAN-EU collaboration has been deepened through seven iterations of the ASEAN-EU High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change following its launch in 2019. The Dialogue remains an avenue to keep track of progress towards the attainment of sustainable development and climate action. The 1st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, held on 4 September 2025 in Langkawi, provided an impetus for furthering collaboration in this sphere.

D. ASEAN-EU Development Cooperation Programmes

17. The EU has supported ASEAN in its regional integration process, enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and strengthening the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat through its funded cooperation programmes across the three pillars of ASEAN such as the

Forest Governance Support Programme (FLEGT), the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF), the Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation (SUPA), the EU-SHARE, the ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE Plus) and the E-READI.

18. The EU reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the ASEAN Community-building and regional integration beyond 2025, through the various development cooperation programmes, covering the areas of trade, intellectual property rights, investment facility, circular economy, aviation, energy, and higher education, under the EU-ASEAN SCOPE and the EU-ASEAN Green Initiative.

