



# EU-ASEAN YOUNG LEADERS FORUM

## 26 February 2018, Brussels

EU-ASEAN: Old friends, new challenges  
Building a reinvigorated partnership

**8.30-9.00 Registration**

**9.00-9.30 Opening Plenary session**

Representative from EU: **Mr. David Daly**, Head of the South East Asia Division, European External Action Service

Representative from ASEAN: **Mr. Chittipat Tongprasroeth**, Deputy Director-General of Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

**9.30-10.45 Debate 1: Political and Security Issues**

*Moderated by: **Dr. Frederick Kliem**, Senior Programme Manager Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, Singapore*

*Introductory statements:*

*Representative from EU: **Dr. Steven Everts**, Senior Advisor at the European External Action Service (EEAS)*

*Representative from ASEAN: **Dr. Natthanan Kunnamas**, Director, Centre for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand*

For the past decades, Europe and Southeast Asia have been among the most stable and peaceful regions in the world. In 2012, the EU was awarded the Peace Nobel Prize in recognition of its significant contribution to the transformation of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace. In a similar vein ASEAN is often described



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as a catalyst for peace and a security community in which war has been absent for a long period of time. Yet, both the EU and ASEAN face the challenge of effectively responding to old and emerging security threats within the region, in their respective neighbourhoods and globally. Some of these threats are of a military nature and concern conflict and tension in the South China Sea, on the Korean Peninsula, in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq to name but a few. At the same time, new transnational problems have emerged and rapidly expanded across borders. This non-traditional security dimension encompasses an ever-growing array of phenomena, including but not limited to terrorism, drug trafficking, pandemics, people smuggling and natural disasters, all of which pose a direct threat to the welfare of state and people. Consequently, there is increased pressure on national governments as well as regional and global organisations to intensify international cooperation with the objective of managing and fighting many of these new security threats.

As collective regional actors the EU and ASEAN appear to be a natural partners allowing an open inter-regional exchange of ideas and practices on a broad range of political and security issues, such as regional stability, good governance and human rights. Indeed, political and security cooperation between ASEAN and the EU has been progressing through existing dialogue mechanisms such as ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-EU Senior Officials' Meeting as well as within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs) 10+1. However, close cooperation of government officials is only one dimension of addressing political and security agendas of mutual concern. Civil society in general and the youth in particular play an important role as well. As the UN Development Programme (UNDP) acknowledges, "The way we engage young people today will determine the prospects for sustainable development and peace". Many studies have shown that young people are vital stakeholders in peace-building and contribute to a more just and peaceful society. They also play a crucial part in using new technologies to mobilize societies to bring about positive change.

- What are the security interests in both regions from a young perspective?
- What is the importance of non-traditional security challenges such as irregular migration and climate change?
- How do the effects of geopolitical shifts and particularly the roles of China, the US and Russia affect international security?
- How can new technologies and means of communication (including social media) be used as a contribution to building peaceful societies?
- How can EU-ASEAN dialogues be further developed to respond to new and emerging threats to peace and stability?

#### **10.45-11.00 Coffee Break**

#### **11.00-12.15 Debate 2: Economy, trade and business exchanges**



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*Moderated by: Prof. **Dr. Jörn Dosch**, Professor of International Politics and Development Cooperation, University of Rostock, Germany*

*Introductory Statements:*

*Representative from EU: **Mr. Peter Berz**, Head of the unit for Trade relations with South and South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, European Commission – Directorate General for Trade*

*Representative from ASEAN: **Mr. Arief Rizky Bakhtiar**, Technical Officer of Monitoring, Surveillance and Coordination Division, AEC Department (ASEC)*

ASEAN as a whole represents the EU's third largest trading partner outside Europe (after the US and China). The EU is ASEAN's second largest trading partner after China, accounting for around 13% of ASEAN trade. Furthermore, the EU is the largest investor in ASEAN countries, accounting for more than 20% of total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in the region. The EU and ASEAN also among the largest regional markets in the world. Economic integration in Europe and Southeast Asia has steadily and rapidly deepened in the past decades and strongly contributed not just to economic growth but also human development. Negotiations for a EU-ASEAN Free Trade Area (FTA) were launched in 2007 but paused in 2009 to give way to bilateral FTA talks, conceived as building blocks towards a future region-to-region agreement. The European Commission finalised negotiations of a bilateral FTA with Singapore in 2014 and with Vietnam in 2015. At the regional level, the European Commission and the ASEAN Member States are exploring the prospects towards the resumption of region-to-region negotiations. A 2017 survey conducted by the Washington-based Pew Research Centre shows that young people are more likely than older adults to say free trade benefits them.

However, economic growth and free trade are not automatic solutions to everything. Widening income gaps, social inequality and youth unemployment are only some of the most pressing challenges faced by both the EU and ASEAN. From a business perspective, the knowledge in the EU of ASEAN as a market and investment destination has grown as has Southeast Asia's awareness of Europe. Yet, information gaps remain and, according to the most recent EU-ASEAN Business Sentiment Survey, existing hurdles, such as non-tariff barriers, stand in the way of even closer business-to-business relations.

- What are economic issues that interest young people?
- How can civil society leaders communicate the benefits of FTAs in both region against a backdrop of a critical public?



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- What can the EU and ASEAN do to address pressing challenges such as youth unemployment and social inequality?
- How can young entrepreneurs be encouraged and supported to actively contribute to business-to-business relations between the EU and ASEAN?

## 12.15-13.30 Lunch

### 13.30-14.45 Debate 3: Enhanced people-to-people contacts

*Moderated by: Prof. Dr. Jörn Dosch, Professor of International Politics and Development Cooperation, University of Rostock, Germany*

*Introductory Statements:*

*Representative from EU: Ms. Clair Morel, Head of the International Cooperation Unit, European Commission – Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture*

*Representative from ASEAN: Mr. Ekkaphab Phanthavong, Deputy Director-General of ASEAN Department, Laos MFA*

Young people have demonstrated the potential to build bridges across communities, working together, helping to manage conflict and promote peace. Perhaps no-where in the world is this more visible than in Europe, where programmes such as the Erasmus student exchange scheme, have made a significant contribution to regional integration. The EU also has a long history of supporting student mobilities and collaboration between universities in the EU's relations with other regions, including prominently Southeast Asia. A recent independent evaluation concluded that the EU's support to higher education in the world has markedly strengthened intercultural understanding between Europe and Asia. However, there can be no denying of the fact that the mutual knowledge of each other's regions remains low among young European and Southeast Asian citizens.

Closer people-to-people contacts also require the EU and ASEAN to become more people-centred. Strong efforts to move away from an image that both organisations involved predominantly political elites began many years ago. In ASEAN these initiatives are prominently associated with its former secretary general, the late Surin Pitsuwan. Today there is plenty of opportunity for civil society and also young people to participate in the shaping of regional governance but it all remains work in progress. There are already many areas in which civil society exchanges between the EU and ASEAN play an increasingly important role, for example with regards to human rights and environmental sustainability.

- How can regions be made more “people centred”?



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- How can the interaction between governments and civil society in EU-ASEAN relations be strengthened?
- What are the crucial issues that would require closer exchanges and cooperation between the peoples of Europe and Southeast Asia and how can young people get involved?
- How can youth participation in regional forums and institutions be increased?
- How can opportunities for exchanges between the regions' young people be improved (examples could include mobility programmes, internships and work visa)

**14.45-15.45 Debate/discussion/working in three groups to prepare a set of recommendations to be presented to STF**

**15.45-16.00 Coffee break**

**16.00-17.00 Conclusion on a set of recommendations to be presented to STF**

**Moderated by:**

Prof. Jörn Dosch and Dr. Frederick Kliem

**19.00 Dinner hosted by the EU for YLF participants, speakers, and moderators at the Hotel Brussels (26<sup>th</sup> Floor)**



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# EU-ASEAN YOUNG LEADERS FORUM

## PROGRAMME DAY2

### 27 February 2018 (09.00-17.00)

**09.30-14.00** – All participants and speakers from the EU-ASEAN Young Leaders Forum are invited to participate at the Public Event “EU-ASEAN Relations: the next forty years” organised by EU, ASEAN and Friends of Europe (see separated programme).

**14.00-17.00** – Afternoon programme (tbc)

**19.00** – Free time (not dinner arranged by the organisers)



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