

ASEAN, ASEM, ARF, SAARC, PIF...

EU-ASIA

Factsheet



The EU's comprehensive engagement with the Asia Pacific

Mindful of its substantial interests, the EU has in recent years stepped up its constructive engagement in and with the Asia Pacific : More visits, more mediation efforts, increased financial assistance, more statements are all proof of greater EU activism and commitment. Drawing on its economic strength as the largest economy and the largest donor of development aid world-wide, the EU is developing also the other strands of foreign policy following its comprehensive approach: Security policy, including non-traditional security issues, is getting more and more attention, not least because the political and security situation in Asia remains volatile with tensions among regional and other powers. The South China or East China Sea are regular news features in Europe and of course of direct relevance for European security. The EU-anti- piracy operation ATALANTA off the coast of Somalia has a strong 'Asian' element.

Building on decades of experience in integration and multilateralism, the EU is supporting ASEAN and ASEAN-led for a with the aim of helping to build a security architecture in Asia which is able to address the many challenges the region is facing. In this, the EU is guided by the comprehensive approach in its external relations in general and security policy in particular. Its toolbox contains diplomatic, political, economic, humanitarian instruments of both the EU and its Member States. This allows addressing challenges at their root causes in a long-term and strategic manner.

The EU strives to realise the following main goals:

- Supporting ASEAN integration and strengthening EU-ASEAN security cooperation: Under the Brunei Plan of Action, the EU and ASEAN are cooperating on a wide range of (non-traditional) security issues including maritime security, border management, mediation and crisis response.
- Participating actively in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to share know-how and engage in a political and security dialogue supplementing bilateral activities. The ARF aims to foster conflict prevention and peace building, address security threats like nuclear proliferation, terrorism, radicalisation, transnational crime and trafficking in human beings.
- Render the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) which fosters dialogue in politics, economics and between the peoples more efficient, more visible and develop its potential fully
- Establishing the EU as a credible political and security player in the region in bringing its experience and expertise in institution building and integration, conflict prevention, crisis solution and mediation, delivering human security to the table.
- Supporting the development of a more robust regional architecture in close cooperation with ASEAN including by contributing to evolving structures like the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus Meeting.
- Promoting the rule of law, good governance, democracy and respect for universal human rights to strengthen stability and to support transition processes (Burma/Myanmar, Post 2014 Afghanistan).

Sources of information:

EEAS:

http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/index_en.htm

ASEM InfoBoard:

<http://www.aseminfoboard.org/>

ASEAN:

<http://www.asean.org/>

Pacific Island Forum:

<http://www.forumsec.org/>

SAARC:

<http://www.saarc-sec.org/>

- Leveraging the four strategic partnerships (with China, Japan, India and the Republic of Korea) to assist in stabilising the changing regional order.
- Promoting sustainable policies to meet global challenges related to security such as climate change, energy security, cyber and space security, environmental protection, eradication of poverty, addressing economic imbalances, disaster and pandemic prevention as well as gender issues.
- Protecting the economic and trade interests of the EU and its Member States . Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and Partnership Agreements serve this purpose not least in view of competing regional processes e.g. the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) reflecting competition between the US and China.

Milestones in the EU-Asia relations

- **1996:** founding of ASEM together with Asian partners thereby providing a platform for dialogue among leaders, ministers, officials and civil societies. The 2014 biannual summit will be held in Milan.
- **2001:** " Europe and Asia Strategy for Enhanced Cooperation", identifies six major objectives for inter-regional cooperation such as strengthening peace and security, increasing mutual trade and investment-flows, enhancing development cooperation, protecting human rights, spreading of democracy and good governance and mutual awareness raising
- **2003:** the European Security Strategy (ESS) specifies the EU's interest in the Asia-Pacific region, focussing on the challenges posed

by nuclear proliferation and terrorism. It suggests the conclusion of strategic partnerships – four out of ten are presently with Asian countries.

- **2006:** EU observer in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- **2011:** President Barroso attends the Pacific Island Forum (PIF)
- **2012:** 'East Asia Policy Guidelines' providing a broad orientation for the EU and its Member States on maritime and territorial disputes: While not taking sides on the sovereignty issues, the EU strongly advocates diplomatic and peaceful conflict resolution according to international law, without any threat or use of force.
- **2012:** the EU accedes to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia and expressed interest in participating in the EAS. The 2012 EU-ASEAN Banda Seri Begawan Plan of Action agreed. High turnout of leaders for ASEM Summit in Laos followed by bilateral visits.
- **2013:** HRVP Ashton attends ARF, Shangri-La Dialogue and makes numerous bilateral visits to the region.
- **2014:** 20th EU-ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting taking place in Brussels, ASEM Summit in Milan; HRVP attends ARF and PIF.

The largest economy of the world, its relevance for Asian partners

- The EU is one of the leading trading partners of every Asian country with an annual average growth rate of trade of 5,8% (2008-2012). In 2013 Asian partners accounted for 15.3% of EU imports (€678bn) and 12.5% of exports (€573bn).
- China, Japan and South Korea are among the top ten trading partners of the EU (2013) counting for 17,9% of the EU's total trade: China 12,5%, Japan 3,2%, South Korea 2,2%.
- For ASEAN the EU counted in 2012 for 13,1% of total trade. This

puts the EU on rank three after China and Japan but outperforming the fourth placed US.

- The EU is also a major investor in Asia. In 2012 21.4% of EU outward investment was destined to Asia (€57bn), while 13,0 % originated in the region (€38bn).
- The EU is the largest trader in services, on top of the US, China, Japan, India and South Korea

State of Play of bilateral agreements

Against the background of ongoing negotiations of TPP and RCEP securing market access and a comprehensive cooperation with partners is of particular importance. This is assured through a web of FTAs and Partnership Agreements, whenever possible negotiated in parallel. A region-to-region FTA with ASEAN is envisaged.

Partnership and Cooperation or Framework Agreements:

Ongoing negotiations: Afghanistan, Australia, Brunei, China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand
Initialled: Singapore, Thailand
Signed: Mongolia, Philippines, Vietnam
In force: Indonesia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea

Interim Economic Partnership Agreement

In force: Papua New Guinea

Framework Participation Agreement on Crisis Management:

In force: Republic of Korea, New Zealand

Free Trade or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

Ongoing negotiations: India, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam
Initialled: Singapore
In force: Republic of Korea

Investment Agreement:

Ongoing negotiations: China

EU assistance to the region

The EU has confirmed its commitment to the region for the 2014-2020 period,

which will see a continuation of the EU's engagement with a particular focus on poverty eradication. Disaster prevention and response as well as humanitarian assistance will continue. Global challenges such as energy security, climate change and support to the external dimension of EU policies will be financed through the Partnership Instrument. The Instrument for Stability and other thematic instruments (e.g. the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) will also benefit the Asian region.

For the 2014-20 period the indicative geographical amount under the Development Cooperation Instrument will be EUR 6429 million for the region. This amounts to a significant increase of support by more than 20% compared to the preceding financial period.

The EU is also engaged in the whole region in disaster prevention and response, cooperating with individual countries and with ASEAN as a group. In 2013 the humanitarian assistance (from the EU and its Member States) amounted to EUR 186 mio.

Horizon 2020

'Horizon 2020' is the EU flagship programme for Research and Technological Development. With an overall budget of EUR 80 billion (2014-2020) the programme aims at boosting knowledge-driven economies through research and innovation and promises new breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas 'from the lab to the market'. Priorities for funding include sciences, industrial leadership and global challenges. Like in the 7th Framework Programme strong participation of Asian partners is expected. Scholarship schemes and exchanges between universities will continue. New initiatives like Gateway to South East Asia and the Executive Training Programme will facilitate exchanges and knowledge transfer.

