



27/79

## A S E A N AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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December 1979

On December 18, the Community Council approved the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the five States of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), the first such agreement to be concluded in the name of ASEAN by its five members. This agreement, which is evolutionary and flexible in character, is intended to consolidate, deepen and diversify economic relations.

While individual countries of the European Community have had close historic links with member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (notably the Netherlands with Indonesia and the U.K. with Malaysia and Singapore), the tendency has over the last five to six years been towards a relationship between the two regional groupings.

The Community welcomed the formation of ASEAN and was the first to recognise the viability of the organization and its potential in regard both to the economic development of the region and to political stability and peace in the whole of South-East Asia.

The conclusion of the Economic Cooperation Agreement between ASEAN and the Community marks a temporary peak in the collaboration between the two groupings and offers very good prospects for an even further, future growth in the relationship.

## A S E A N

### The political background

ASEAN was established at Bangkok on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. As expressed in the ASEAN declaration, the aims of the Association are essentially to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development of the region, to promote regional peace and stability on the basis of respect for justice and the rule of law and to promote active cooperation and mutual assistance on matters of common interest. The idea of regional solidarity and cooperation and of self-reliance in order to ensure not only the economic and social progress and stability of the ASEAN countries but also their security from outside interference emerges clearly from the preamble to the declaration. The formation of ASEAN has already made an impact on the region and the Association has proved its durability, in spite of the different historic, religious and cultural traditions of the five member countries, and despite the physical difficulties of practical cooperation in a region of peninsulas and archipelagoes.

During its first decade of existence ASEAN initiated regional cooperation in a number of fields. However, the Bali summit of February 1976 - the first summit meeting of heads of government in the history of ASEAN - really marked a breakthrough in the development of the Association with the signature of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Politically, the Association is committed to preserving the stability of each Member State and of the region, particularly against the threat of subversion, to the peaceful settlement of intra-regional disputes and to the creation of a Zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. ASEAN does not constitute a military bloc and its stated aim, to create a zone of peace and neutrality, is a concept strongly supported by the European Community. There is no doubt that the cohesion of ASEAN has been strengthened by a growing sense of common destiny, both politically and economically. This was clearly demonstrated in Geneva in July 1979 at the U.N. Conference on refugees who had in horrifying numbers left Vietnam by sea to seek asylum in the ASEAN countries. ASEAN has also collectively been active since the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in late 1978 both at the U.N. General Assembly and elsewhere. The Association has demanded respect for the territorial integrity and called for the withdrawal of foreign military forces in South-East Asia simultaneously bringing to the

World's attention the extremely grave problems posed by the mass exodus of refugees from Kampuchea into Thailand.

### The economic background

ASEAN is making steady progress towards regional economic cooperation. It is not yet a free-trade area, much less a customs union, it has so far established preferential trading arrangements for 2400 products, and it has agreed on a number of regional industrial projects and on schemes for internal preferential supply of rice and crude oil in cases of shortage.

Regular regional meetings are held at Heads-of-Government, ministerial and senior official levels, and a permanent ASEAN secretariat has been set up in Jakarta. Since the second Heads-of-Government Summit (Kuala Lumpur, 1977), ASEAN has intensified its contacts with its international partners, including the European Community, the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, all of which acknowledge the growing importance of ASEAN. Indeed the Japanese Prime Minister declared, on 29 November 1979, that Japan would henceforth treat ASEAN as "a priority region".

The five ASEAN countries have a total population of 250 million, slightly less than the 260 million inhabitants of the Community. This compares with just over 300 million for the 59 developing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific associated with the Community through the Lomé Convention and, again, the 300 million in the 20 countries of Latin America.

The economies of the ASEAN countries are among the fastest growing in the world. Between 1973 and 1978 the annual growth rate of the ASEAN countries' Gross Domestic Product average between 6.8 % and 7.9 %, in real terms compared to the Community's growth rate of less than 3 %. In 1977 the Gross National Product per capita of the five countries ranged from \$ 304 in Indonesia, \$ 414 in Thailand, \$ 453 in the Philippines to \$ 929 in Malaysia and \$ 2.887 in Singapore.

The ASEAN region is exceptionally rich in natural resources. It is the principal world supplier of natural rubber (80 %), abaca fibres (80 %), tropical hardwoods (75 %), palm oil (60 %) and coconut (50 %) as well as being a major producer of oil, tin, copper, sugar, coffee, rice and tobacco.

### ASEAN, the European Community and the world

In spite of ASEAN's rapid economic development and its growing political cohesion and despite the region's historic trading and investment links with Europe, the Community has been slow to appreciate the opportunities for more intense economic exchanges with the area.

Where trade is concerned, there has been an absolute growth between the two regions:

	(in million European Units of Accounts)	
	<u>1973</u>	<u>1978</u>
EC imports from ASEAN	1.777	4.234
EC exports to ASEAN	1.656	3.8

However in relative terms the picture is less favourable: the Community's share of ASEAN's exports in the period 1973-78 fell from 15.7 % to 14.2 % while its share of ASEAN imports dropped from 16.5 % to 14.4 %. In 1978 trade with ASEAN represented only 2.3 % of the Community's external trade. ASEAN is thus a much less important trading partner for the Community than Latin America (5.3 %) or the ACP countries (6.9 %) than might be expected from a comparison of its relative size as a market, its rich natural resources and the rapidity of its economic growth.

It is Japan which is now ASEAN's principal trading partner with over 25 % of the latter's external trade, followed by the United States with about over 20 %.

Much the same trend can be distinguished in the investment field. Japanese investments in ASEAN have grown rapidly and at the end of 1977 were estimated to represent just over 32 % of total foreign investment in the region as against about 16 % for the US and about 14 % for the Community. In 1977 the Community accounted for approximately 9 % of new foreign investment in Indonesia, 18 % in Malaysia, 11 % in the Philippines, 32 % in Singapore and 13 % in Thailand. Japanese investment was particularly important in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMMUNITY'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

The first move to bring about closer relations between the two organizations came from the ASEAN side and was the result of fears about the effect on some of their countries' export trade of the loss of Commonwealth preference on the United Kingdom market following British accession to the Community. In June 1972 the ASEAN countries set up a Special Coordinating Committee of ASEAN Nations (SCCAN) consisting of the Ministers of Trade, and the ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) composed of the ASEAN ambassadors to the Community. An ASEAN delegation under the Indonesian Trade Minister visited Brussels to establish a dialogue with the Commission which welcomed this approach. It was agreed to maintain regular contact through the ABC for the purpose of discussing trade problems and the implementation of the Community's Generalized Scheme of Preferences which allows duty free or preferential access to the Community market for products originating in the developing countries.

Since 1972 a regular dialogue has been maintained between the Commission and the ASEAN countries. Sir Christopher Soames, then Commission Vice-President for external relations, twice visited the ASEAN region and took part in SCCAN meetings at Bangkok in 1973 and Jakarta in 1974. Following the conclusion of the Community's Commercial Cooperation Agreement with India in 1973, and the decision to offer similar agreements to the other countries of the Indian sub-continent, the Commission sounded out the ASEAN countries as to whether they were interested in concluding similar agreements with the Community. They all replied that they preferred to develop their relations with the Community on a regional basis, which meant waiting till ASEAN's institutional development made it possible to envisage negotiating the present Cooperation Agreement. In the meantime a Joint Study Group, comprising representatives of the Commission and the five ASEAN Governments, was set up with a view to exploring all possible areas of future cooperation. The Joint Study Group thus met at Brussels in 1975,

Manila in 1976, Brussels again in 1977 and Bangkok in 1978. At the same time, following the ASEAN Summit at Bali in 1976, the ASEAN countries sought to broaden their contacts with the Community institutions and with representatives of the nine Member States in particular. In November 1977, a dialogue was initiated in Brussels with the ASEAN ambassadors on one hand and the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Community's Council of Ministers, together with senior officials of the Commission on the other hand. The ASEAN side on this occasion pressed for a meeting at ministerial level to complement the talks which had taken place during 1977 with the Prime Ministers of Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and with the U.S. Administration in 1978. There was a favourable response from the Community side. The notion of a joint ministerial meeting had already been put forward by the Federal German Foreign Minister, Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher on his visit to the ASEAN region in early 1977 and taken up again by Mr. Wilhelm Haferkamp, Commission Vice-President responsible for external relations on his first official visit to the five ASEAN countries later in the same year. At the second meeting of ASEAN ambassadors with the Community (July 1978), a ministerial meeting was scheduled for November 1978.

#### The first ministerial meeting of the European Community and ASEAN

A ministerial meeting between the European Community and ASEAN was held at Brussels on 20-21 November 1978 and was attended by the Foreign Ministers of the two sides together with President Roy Jenkins and Vice-President Wilhelm Haferkamp of the Commission. Ministers reaffirmed in their final Declaration (1) their support for a new international economic order and agreed to cooperate constructively in future meetings within the North-South Dialogue, including UNCTAD V at Manila to take place in May 1979. The Ministers also emphasised the need for commodity agreements and for the establishment of a Common Fund. They stressed their mutual interest in stimulating economic, commercial, technological development and cultural cooperation between their two regions and expressed joint concern at the continuing problem of the Indochinese refugees which called for resettlement efforts by the international community.

Above all the Ministers agreed that, in order to place their inter-regional relations on a more formal footing, exploratory discussions on the content of a possible Cooperation Agreement should be started. The first of such talks were held at Brussels (14-15 December 1978) and the second at Jakarta (1-2 March 1979). Their success led to the formal negotiations which concluded with the initialling of the Cooperation Agreement on 30 November 1979.

#### THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT: COLLABORATION IN THE TRADE, ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT FIELDS

The Agreement provides inter alia for:

- commercial cooperation (the parties undertake for example to study how to remove trade barriers, to take into account their respective needs for improved access, create new trade patterns by bringing together economic operators, recommend trade promotion measures and consult on measures likely to affect trade);

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(1) The text of the Final Declaration is reproduced in full in Information Note n° 16/79 "The European Community and ASEAN" published in the same series as the present document

- economic cooperation (e.g. encouraging closer contacts and industrial and technological cooperation between firms in the two regions);
- development cooperation (support for ASEAN development and regional cooperation through the Community's programmes for non-associated developing countries in coordination with member states, promotion of cooperation between sources of finance in the two regions);
- a Joint Cooperation Committee to promote and review at least once a year the various cooperation activities and to provide a forum for consultations between the parties.

The basis for the kind of cooperation foreseen in the new agreement has already been laid through the activities of the Joint Study Group and other EEC/ASEAN contacts over the years. Some detail of achievements and future prospects are given in the following pages.

### Trade Cooperation

Under the Joint Declaration of Intent attached to the Treaty of Accession, the enlarged Community undertook to seek appropriate solutions, essentially through its generalized system of preferences (GSP), to the trade problems which enlargement would cause the Commonwealth countries of Asia and other developing countries in the region. The primary goal of the Community's GSP is to aid the economic diversification, and notably the industrialization of the economies of developing countries such as ASEAN, through improving the access to Community markets or manufactured and semi-manufactured goods. Ongoing discussions between ASEAN and Commission representatives have accordingly centred on improvements to the scheme. Although the GSP is applied autonomously and hence not subject to negotiation, the Community has gone a long way to meet ASEAN preoccupations since the scheme was extended to the new Member States in 1974, particularly through additions to the list of processed agricultural produce (e.g. various crustacea, coconut oil, preserved pineapples, palm oil, pepper and spices) as well as tobacco. Further improvements benefiting ASEAN were incorporated in the Community's tropical products offer under the Tokyo Round multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) which were implemented in 1977. In order to encourage intra-regional trade within ASEAN, the Community introduced in 1974 a special regime allowing certain products to be imported under the GSP from Singapore, which has an important entrepôt trade accompanied by origin certificates from other ASEAN countries. As from 1975, the Community has applied the principle of cumulative origin of imports from regional groupings such as ASEAN. In order to improve knowledge of the scheme among exporters and government officials in ASEAN, the Commission regularly organizes regional seminars on the operation of the GSP. The last of these was held at Manila (11-12 January 1979). There has indeed been a substantial improvement in the ASEAN export performance under the scheme, particularly since 1977 when Community imports from ASEAN under the GSP rose by 88 %.

The five ASEAN countries are now, if taken together, by far the largest beneficiary of the system, accounting for over 20 % of total Community imports under the GSP.

### Trade promotion

In the last three years, the Community has substantially improved and extended its schemes to promote exports from the ASEAN region to the Nine. These schemes include the organization of exporters' trade missions and European buyers' missions to ASEAN, participation in European fairs, some two workshops every year, the provision of experts in various fields, the offer of trade centres and aid for publicity programmes.

Important increases in spending were registered in 1979:

(in EUAs)

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>
Indonesia	281.000	196.000	346.000
Malaysia	215.000	196.000	346.000
Philippines	204.000	196.000	346.000
Singapore	150.000	136.000	193.000
Thailand	169.000	196.000	346.000

### Commodities

As a major commodity producer, ASEAN is naturally concerned about the progress of negotiations in UNCTAD on the Common Fund and the Integrated Programme, and the subject was raised at the first ministerial meeting. The ASEAN countries have also shown considerable interest in the stabilization of export earnings scheme (STABEX) developed by the Community in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) under the Lomé Convention, and which they would like for their own commodity exports. At the first ministerial meeting, the Community recognized the importance of ASEAN as a major supplier of many key commodities and expressed its willingness to examine, within a global scheme involving all the industrialized countries, what possibilities there were for guaranteeing the stabilization of export earnings of developing countries, including ASEAN, as a complement to other measures. It should be borne in mind that the ASEAN countries have a more diversified economic structure than the ACP countries and that unlike the ACP countries they do not rely almost entirely on the Community market as an outlet for their exports.

### Textiles

Bilateral agreements on trade in textiles were negotiated by the Community with the five ASEAN countries at the end of 1977 in the framework of the Multifibres Arrangement (MFA). Under these agreements which cover the period 1978-1982, the ASEAN countries agree to limit their exports of the more sensitive categories of textiles to the levels specified in the agreements, and to introduce export restraint for other categories at the request of the Community in the event of their sales reaching a certain percentage of total Community imports. In return, the Community agrees to suspend existing restrictions and not to introduce safeguard measures.

### Economic Cooperation

It is in the area of investment and industrial cooperation where the most significant cooperation has thus far taken place, reflecting the ASEAN preoccupation with the under-representation of European industry in the region in comparison to Japan and the United States, and the European Commission's concern at the relative lack of European investment in the raw materials sector so vital to the Community economy.



Industrial cooperation has been stimulated above all by two ASEAN-EEC Conferences on Industrial Cooperation held at Brussels in 1976 and Jakarta in 1979. The first conference allowed ASEAN for the first time to present the investment potential of the ASEAN region as a whole to a high-level audience of European industrialists and bankers. The second conference, co-sponsored by ASEAN, the European Commission and four European banking consortia (ABECOR, EBIC, Europartners and Inter-Alpha), and which was opened by Indonesia's President Suharto and attended by Commission Vice-President Wilhelm Haferkamp, brought together some 800 leading businessmen, bankers and officials from the two regions, including senior officials from the European Commission, the nine Community Member States and European public development finance institutions. About one-third of the industrial companies and more than half of the banks were represented by their chief executives.

Taken together, the European presence comprised probably the strongest business delegation yet to travel from Europe anywhere in the world. This second conference, which led directly to numerous business transactions, dealt with eight principal sectors:

- chemical industries;
- electric industries;
- machinery/metal engineering industries;
- industrial processing of agricultural products;
- timber and timber-based industries;
- precision engineering;
- transport and communications equipment manufacturing, and
- plantation of export crops.

It pointed the way to further European investment in the ASEAN countries, particularly in those industries which are labour-intensive, which rely on ASEAN raw materials and which will raise the technological capabilities of the ASEAN region.

In addition to the Industrial Conferences it should be mentioned that links have been established between the Commission's Business Cooperation Centre and the ASEAN Investment Boards and that preparations are at present in progress to create a permanent ASEAN/EC Trade and Investment Council. Both of these arrangements have the purpose of establishing a mechanism which on a continuous basis can bring together the potential partners from the two areas in industrial cooperation. To assist the ASEAN side in their future negotiations on this kind of cooperation the Commission has in 1977, 1978 and 1979, organised three seminars for ASEAN businessmen and officials on the management of the transfer of technology, in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Pattaya respectively.

#### Development cooperation

In the framework of its programmes in favour of non-associated developing countries, the Community is already committed to ASEAN development. The new Agreement however includes - for the first time in any Agreement concluded by the Community and non-associated developing countries - a development article, in which the Community pledges itself to cooperate with ASEAN in order to contribute to the region's self-reliance, economic resilience and social wellbeing. It will work with ASEAN to realise concrete projects and programmes including food production and supplies, rural development, education and training facilities.

Also in the development area, and under the aegis of the Joint Study Group, the Community has initiated a wide range of cooperation activities. Funds for technical assistance to regional integration between developing countries have been used to study the harmonization of ASEAN trade statistics and to finance visits by senior ASEAN officials to study the functioning of the Community.

In the context of the Community's development cooperation with non-associated developing countries, a number of specific projects have been adopted in three ASEAN countries since 1976 (see Appendix: Table V).

Moreover the fund for export promotion has been used by the Commission to finance participation by ASEAN countries in numerous trade missions, fairs and exhibitions in Europe as well as European buying missions to ASEAN (see also sub-section "Trade promotion" above).

Also, since the ministerial meeting in 1978, the Community has taken measures to facilitate the transfer of technology to ASEAN, through seminar programmes and training assistance for technicians and industrial workers. At the same time, some of the Community's Member States, together with the Commission, have promised more scholarships for ASEAN students.

Finally the Community has provided for the third time food aid for Indonesia (1.500 t. skimmed milk powder in 1979) and for the Philippines (2.000 t. cereals and 500 t. skimmed milk powder in 1979).

#### PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

Parliamentary links between the two sides have developed in parallel with the overall evolution of relations. ASEAN parliamentarians were able to meet members of the new, directly elected European Parliament at Strasbourg. For its part (2), the European Parliament has reaffirmed the need for the strengthening of the Community's ties with ASEAN.

#### COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

To serve the relationship between the Community and Asia and in this connection especially with a view to the links with ASEAN, the European Commission has since September 1979 maintained, at Bangkok, a Delegation (3) which includes a press and information office.

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(2) See Report on trade and economic relations between the EEC and ASEAN (rapporteur: Mr. J. Baas), European Parliament document 77/79, 23 April 1979

(3) The Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities for South and South-East Asia  
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APPENDIX

Table I  
ASEAN's trading patterns 1978

(USD Mio.)

		Exports	%	Imports	%
World		35,744	100	36,513	100
of which	USA	7,619	21,3	5,170	14,2
	Japan	8,940	25,0	9,085	24,9
	EEC	5,094	14,2	5,259	14,4
	USSR	329	1,0	64	0,2
	China	293	0,8	870	2,4
	Australia	734,4	2,0	1,119	3,0
	ASEAN	5,000	14,0	4,150	11,3

Table II  
Evolution of Community trade with ASEAN - 1973-78

(1) (Mio ECU)

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
EC imports	1 777	2 319	2 200	3 355	4 130	4,234
EC exports	1 656	2 727	2 634	3 282	3 845	3,858
Trade balance	- 121	+ 408	+ 434	73	285	- 376

Table III  
Main Community imports from ASEAN 1978

('000 ECU)

	Value	% of total imports
Natural rubber	459,686	10,8
Manioc and other roots	474,410	11,2
Machinery and transport equipment	381,469	9,0
Sawn timber	408,624	9,7
Textiles and clothing	328,354	7,8
Tin	291,278	6,9
Palm oil	248,429	5,9
Coffee	179,873	4,3
Animal feedingstuffs	152,864	3,6
Copra	111,352	2,6
Oil and petroleum products	115,544	2,7
Plywood	128,470	3,0
Tobacco	94,472	2,2
	3.374,825	79,7

(1) 1 ECU (European Unit of Account) = US \$ 1,274

Table IV

Pattern of foreign investment in ASEAN

(%)

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand
EEC	9.0	18.0	11.0	32.0	13.0
USA	11.0	15.0	33.0	33.0	16.0
Japan	37.0	27.0	25.0	15.0	35.0
Australia	3.0	2.0	5.0	n.a	1.0
Hong Kong	11.0	10.0	1.0	n.a	10.0
Others	29.0	28.0	25.0	20.0	25.0

Table V

EEC projects in ASEAN member countries, 1976-79 under the  
Community's programme of development cooperation with non-  
associated developing countries

Year	Country	Title of project	EEC Contribution M UA or EUA
1976	Indonesia	Soy-bean pilot project	1.00
	Indonesia	Bali irrigation (study) <sup>c</sup>	0.08
	Thailand	Inland fisheries (study) <sup>c</sup>	0.12
	Philippines	Mindanao irrigation (study) <sup>c</sup>	0.16
1977	Indonesia	S.E. Sulawesi transmigrati <sup>o</sup> n project <sup>a</sup>	2.00
	Thailand	Pig-breeding centre project	0.11
	Thailand	Inland fisheries project <sup>b</sup>	0.90
1978	Indonesia	S.E. Sulawesi transmigrati <sup>o</sup> n project <sup>a</sup>	3.00
	Indonesia	Bank Indonesia small business credit programme (technical assistance)	2.35
	Indonesia	Baturaden Dairy-cattle breeding centre (study)	0.15
	Indonesia	Draft cattle breeding centre (study) <sup>c</sup>	0.18
	Thailand	Integrated rural development project <sup>a</sup>	2.40
	Thailand	Seed production centre (study)	0.10
	Thailand	Crop diversification (study)	0.20
1979	Indonesia	Talungagung Flood Control and Drainage Project (Java)	6.10
	Indonesia	Crop development study	3.00
	Thailand	Winged beans crop development	0.60
	Thailand	Rubber small holdings development	1.80
	Thailand	Pa Mong and Lam Chiang SA <sup>d</sup> irrigation	0.70
	Thailand	Crop development for the N.E. region	2.60
	Philippines	Bicol River irrigation development <sup>a</sup>	4.50
	ASEAN	Aquaculture development (regional project)	0.30

a) Co-financed with ADB (Asia Development Bank)

b) Channel-financed through ADB

c) Studies financed through ADB

d) in cooperation with Mekong Committee

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