



A S E A N AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

66/83

ASEAN

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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, was signed at Kuala Lumpur on 7 March 1980. This was 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 between the two groups.

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 decade been towards a relationship between the two regional groupings, the Community and ASEAN.

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 marked a peak in the collaboration between the two groupings of countries.

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 independence 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.

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 left Vietnam en masse by sea to seek asylum in the ASEAN countries. Since the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea at the end of 1978, ASEAN has also collectively made numerous approaches to the U.N. General Assembly and other international organizations to demand respect for territorial integrity and to call 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. In 1981/82 ASEAN scored an important diplomatic success by establishing the nationalist coalition in Kampuchea.

The economic background

The five ASEAN countries have a total population of 266 million, slightly less than the 272 million inhabitants of the Community. This compares with just over 350 million for the 62 developing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific associated with the Community through the Lomé Convention and, again, the 320 million in the 20 countries of Latin America.

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.

The economies of the ASEAN countries are among the fastest growing in the world. Between 1975 and 1981 the annual growth rate of the ASEAN countries Gross Domestic Product averaged between 7 % and 10,8 % compared to the Community's growth rate of less than 3 %. Although ASEAN rates of growth slowed to an average 5 % in 1982, this still represents a considerable achievement in the context of a worldwide recession which has seen average EEC growth rates drop to 1 %. In 1981 the Gross National Product per capita of the five countries ranged from \$ 505 in Indonesia, \$ 748 in Thailand, \$ 781 in the Philippines to \$ 1763 in Malaysia and \$ 5119 in Singapore.

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 more than 6500 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.

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 ECU)			
	<u>1973</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u> (8 months)
EC imports from ASEAN	1.777	6.896	6.642	5.424
EC exports to ASEAN	<u>1.656</u>	<u>5.317</u>	<u>7.081</u>	<u>4.771</u>
Balance	- 121	- 1.579	+ 439	

In relative terms, the Community's share of ASEAN exports and of ASEAN imports have been stabilized around 14 %.

In 1980, trade with ASEAN represented 2.4 % of the Community's external trade and in 1981, 2.7 %, a continuous upward trend since 1973.

ASEAN is thus a much less important trading partner for the Community than Latin America (5.7 %) or the ACP countries (6.2 %) 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 26 % of the latter's external trade, followed by the United States with about 18 % and EEC with 12 %.

Much the same trend can be distinguished in the investment field. Japanese investments in ASEAN have grown rapidly and at the end of 1980 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.

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 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.

During this first Ministerial Conference, the Ministers decided among other things to launch exploratory talks with a view to the conclusion of a cooperation agreement. These negotiations opened in November 1979 and rapidly led to the conclusion of an agreement which was formally signed at Kuala Lumpur on 7 March 1980.

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);
- 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 consultation between the parties.

Trade Cooperation

Under the Joint Declaration of Intent attached to the Treaty of Accession (UK), 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 of 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 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. There has indeed been a substantial improvement on 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 18 % 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. These schemes include the organization of exporters' trade missions and European buyers' missions to ASEAN, participation in fairs, organization of workshops, the provision of experts in various fields, the offer of trade centres and aid for publicity programmes.

Commodities

As a major commodity producer, ASEAN is naturally concerned about the conclusion of commodity agreements and the progress on the Common Fund and the Integrated Programme.

The Community is in favour of continuing international cooperation in the framework of existing commodity agreements and has supported the ASEAN position during the negotiation of two agreements on products of vital interest for these countries, tin and rubber.

Furthermore, the Community is in the process of concluding the convention establishing the Common Fund.

Textiles

Bilateral textile agreements with all five ASEAN countries were concluded in December 1982 for the period 1983-86. These provide for export limitations on the ASEAN countries, but allow for a regular growth of exports to the EEC, a significant concession in view of the static nature of demand in Europe.

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 was co-sponsored by ASEAN, the European Commission and four European banking consortia (ABECOR, EBIC, Europartners and Inter-Alpha).

A third sectorial industrial conference has been organized and is scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 1983. The conference will concentrate on three major sectors : agricultural machinery, processing machinery and machine tools. There are expected to be 300 participants, of whom 100 European businessmen.

The third meeting of the ASEAN-EEC Joint Council (Pattaya, Thailand in November 1982), decided to follow-up the conference with a programme of investment seminars focusing on medium and small-scale industries.

Meanwhile, there have been contacts between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Community and the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce with a view to creating an ASEAN-EEC Business Council. This Business Council, modelled on those already existing between ASEAN and the United States, Japan and Australia respectively, will periodically bring together industrialists from the two regions in order to encourage the development of trade and investment in the two groups of countries.

It will be a forum for raising problems encountered by industrialists seeking to invest in one or the other region. This Business Council will also organize the various sectorial industrial conferences which will go more fully into the contacts already established during the three preceding general industrial conferences.

Much progress has been achieved in setting-up the Business-Council. Two meetings of EABC's executive Council were held in 1982. It is hoped that the first full session of the Council will be held by the end of 1983.

Development Cooperation

The Cooperation Agreement 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 developments, education and training facilities.

On this basis, the Community has continued its actions of development cooperation with the ASEAN countries, granting either bilateral aid or aid at regional level. Since 1980, the stress has been on developing aid at regional level.

There are various aspects to the help given by the Community: financial and technical assistance, training, food aid.

Financial and technical assistance

In the context of its budget in favour of non-associated countries, the Community has financed development projects in the three ASEAN countries which are eligible for such aid (Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand). This aid has increased constantly since 1976 and was initially granted bilaterally. Since 1979 it has also been granted for regional projects benefitting the ASEAN countries as a whole. ASEAN countries benefit from about 20 % of the global aid granted to all non-associated countries (see Annex IV).

Training

Training programmes tend to become one of the most important elements of EEC assistance to ASEAN. Because of their level of development, ASEAN countries can take full advantage of this assistance in the fields they have selected conjointly with the Commission.

In the industrial sector, the Community has financed each year since 1977, technology transfer seminars aiming at upgrading skills of businessmen and officials in that region. Furthermore, two seminars on access to European capital markets have also been financed.

A programme of cooperation in science and technology has been set up and from September 1981 to September 1983 will allow scholarships to be granted and seminars organized for the benefit of ASEAN countries. It is planned to continue this programme after 1983.

Finally, in the rural development sector, several actions have been sponsored in particular on mechanisation and on water resources.

Food aid

ASEAN countries are not among the main beneficiaries of Community food aid, which is aimed at the poorest countries. Nevertheless, when the situation requires this type of assistance, the Community provides food aid for Indonesia and the Philippines.

Other fields of cooperation

In 1982, the scope of cooperation has been widening through actions of cooperation in the field of insurance and culture, in particular with the visit in the Community of ASEAN lawyers and the organizing of a seminar on regional integration in Manila.

POLITICAL RELATIONS

Political relations between the Community and ASEAN have been considerably strengthened since 1978. Between November 1978 and October 1981, three Conferences were held between the Foreign Ministers of the Community and those of ASEAN. While the first of these, at Brussels in November 1978, gave only a limited place to political problems, the second ministerial meeting at Kuala Lumpur in March 1980 devoted a large part of the discussions to these problems and revealed a total identity of views among these two groups of countries on the two major crises of that time: Kampuchea and Afghanistan.

The third Conference of this type, essentially political in character, was held at London on 13 and 14 October 1981, and thus confirmed the principle now established of regular consultations at the highest level between the two groups of countries.

A fourth ASEAN-CEE ministerial meeting is to be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 24 and 25 March 1983.

In addition, the Community regularly attends the dialogue-meeting organized each year by ASEAN with its principal partners (United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

Furthermore, the Community and its Member States have supported the ASEAN countries in the Kampuchea crisis, not only by backing their approaches for a final solution of this crisis, but also by supplying 40 % of the total of international aid for the refugees.

PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

Parliamentary links between the two parties have been developed in parallel with the general evolution of their relations. Three meetings have already been held between the elected European Parliament and the Interparliamentary Association of the ASEAN countries, two at Strasbourg in 1979 and 1982 and the other at Jakarta in April 1981.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

To promote relations between the Community and Asia and, in particular, the links between the EEC and ASEAN, the European Commission, since September 1979, has installed a Delegation (1) at Bangkok, comprising also a Press and Information Office.

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- (1) Delegation for South and South-East Asia
Press and Information Office
Commission of the European Communities
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34 Phya Thai Road,
Bangkok
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ANNEX

TABLE I

ASEAN'S trading patterns 1981

(million US \$)

	Export	%	Import	%
World	66 810	100	71 866	100
of which USA	12 902	18.6	9 747	13.6
Japan	18 902	28.3	16 703	23.2
EEC	7 522	11.3	8 845	12.3
USSR	964	1.4	115	0.2
China	481	0.7	1 874	2.6
Australia	1 712	2.6	2 156	3.0
ASEAN	11 715	17.5	9 241	13.0

Source : I.M.F. - D.O.T.

TABLE II

Evolution of Community trade with ASEAN 1973 - 1981 / 1982 8 months

(million ECU) (1)

	1973	1975	1977	1979	1980	1981	1982 8 months
EC imports	1777	2200	4130	5424	6896	6642	5424
EC exports	1656	2634	3845	4344	5317	7081	4771
Trade balance	-121	+434	-285	-1080	-1579	+439	-653

TABLE III

Main Community imports from ASEAN 1980 - 1981

(million ECU) (1)

	Value		% of total imports	
	1980	1981	1980	1981
Sawn timber	600	525	8.7	7.9
Natural rubber	653	620	9.5	9.3
Manioc	545	794	7.9	12.0
Machinery & electrical eqpt.	643	800	9.3	12.0
Tin	426	392	6.2	5.9
Clothing	388	500	5.6	7.5
Palm oil	228	237	3.3	3.6
Coffee	165	132	2.4	2.0
Animal feedingstuff	206	262	3.0	3.9
Copra	134	211	2.0	3.2
Plywood	149	186	2.2	2.8
Textiles (fibres and fabrics)	148	146	2.2	2.2
Oil and oilproducts	219	231	3.2	3.5
			65.5	75.8

(1) ECU = European Unit of Account

TABLE IV

EEC projects in ASEAN member countries under the Community's
programme of development cooperation with non-associated
developing countries 1976 - 1981

Year	Country	Title of project	EC Contribution m. ECU
1976	Indonesia	Soy-bean pilot project	1.00
	Indonesia	Bali irrigation (study) ^c	0.08
	Philippines	Mindanao irrigation (study) ^c	0.16
1977	Indonesia	S.E.Sulawesi transmigrati ^o n project ^a	2.00
	Thailand	Pig-breeding centre project	0.11
	Thailand	Inland fisheries project ^b	0.90
1978	Indonesia	S.E.Sulawesi transmigrati ^o n project ^a	3.00
	Indonesia	Bank Indonesia small business credit programme (technical assistance)	2.35
	Indonesia	Baturaden Dairy-cattle breeding centre (study)	0.15
	ASEAN	Regional study on timber marketing in ASEAN countries	0.30
	ASEAN	Research and training centre for grain harvests	0.30
	Thailand	Seed production centre (study)	0.10
	Thailand	Crop diversification (study)	0.20
1979	Indonesia	Talungagund 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 ^d irrigation	0.70
	Thailand	Crop development in the N.E. region	2.60
	Philippines	Bicol River irrigation development ^a	4.50
	ASEAN	Aquaculture development (regional project)	0.30
1980	Indonesia	Husbandry development (cross-breeding) Italy ^e	4.4
		Irrigation project ^b	3.8
	Philippines	Crop protection programme (GFR) ^e	3.5
	Thailand	Huai Mong irrigation and drainage	11.0
		Rubber small holdings development	1.8
		Cooperatives programme	2.5
		Project for diverting waters of ING-YOM-NAM (study)	0.3

a) Co-financed with ADB (Asian Development Bank); b) project financed through ADB. d) Studies financed through ADB; d) In cooperation with the Mekong Committee. e) Co-financed with Member States.

TABLE IV (continued)

EEC projects in ASEAN member countries under the Community's programme of development cooperation with non-associated developing countries 1976 - 1981

Year	Country	Title of project	EEC Contribution m. ECU
1981	Indonesia	Bali irrigation ^a	12.00
	Philippines	Palawan integrated area development ^a	7.10
	Thailand	Seed Centre, Southern region	2.20
	ASEAN	Scientific and technological cooperation programme	2.80
	ASEAN	Post-harvest technology programme	4.30
	ADB [*]	Technical assistance programme	1.00
	IRRI ^{**}	Research support ^f	1.50
ICRISAT ^{***}	Research support ^f	1.20	

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

f) Co-financed with CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Reserves)

* ADB = ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

** IRRI = INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

*** ICRISAT = INSTITUTE OF CROPS RESEARCH FOR THE SEMI-ARID TROPICS

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