



EU Statement

On the occasion of the visit of the ASEAN Secretary-General

Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 25 June 2019

Mr. President,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by congratulating you on the assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. You can count on our support and cooperation.

The EU very much welcomes Vietnam's initiative to invite the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, to today's plenary meeting. We thank him for his important address and congratulate him and Thailand on the successful ASEAN Summit in Bangkok last week.

Earlier this year, in January, the EU and ASEAN Foreign Ministers decided, in principle, to upgrade our long-standing relationship to a Strategic Partnership. As a steadfast supporter of ASEAN integration, the EU is committed to strengthening its relations with ASEAN. Our cooperation has continued to grow and expand, as outlined in the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action for 2018-2022, and this includes also security related issues such as crisis response and disaster management, maritime security, cyber security, transnational crime and counter-terrorism. The EU has expressed its interest in participating as an observer in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group activities and we look forward to enhanced involvement by ASEAN Member States in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy activities, beginning with Vietnam.

The EU and ASEAN both believe in the importance of strengthening the rules-based international system, including through the promotion of effective multilateralism. We have a shared interest in promoting respect for international law and internationally agreed norms and standards, thereby contributing to a more peaceful, fair and prosperous world. We

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

reiterate our support for ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture, and for ASEAN's role as a driving force in promoting dialogue, security, and the rule of law in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

In particular, we express our hope for continued dialogue and practical cooperation to strengthen discussion on non-proliferation and disarmament in the region under the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) framework and look forward to increased EU engagement with all ASEAN-led mechanisms. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) represents a key platform to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest as well as a venue to advance efforts towards confidence building and preventive diplomacy in the region. Against the backdrop of the evolving regional security landscape, it will be important to make the Forum even more effective to address increasingly complex challenges.

We welcome the current co-chairmanship of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament by Indonesia, Japan and the Republic of Korea. It provides a valuable forum to address ongoing non-proliferation challenges in the region, including with regard to the Korean Peninsula. We recall the continued support expressed by the ARF Participants for the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, as well as for the abandonment of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We believe that ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms could play a greater role in the Korean Peninsula, taking into consideration the ARF's being the only such multilateral forum with the DPRK as an active participant.

With regard to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), the EU acknowledges the importance of nuclear weapon free zones for regional and international peace and security, in accordance with Article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The EU recognises that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear weapon free zones which already comprise more than 100 States. We encourage all nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations. We also call on those States in existing nuclear weapon free zones that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant nuclear weapon free zone treaties. The EU welcomes the readiness of P5 countries and ASEAN to renew engagement and encourages concrete progress on the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty.

Negative security assurances can be an important confidence building measure which strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contribute to nuclear disarmament and enhance regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the NPT. The EU recognises the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear weapon States as part of binding and agreed security arrangements.

The EU will continue its efforts to promote universal adherence to, implementation and strengthening of the key multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. We welcome that all ASEAN Member States have now ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is a top priority for the EU. We encourage accession to the relevant nuclear security conventions and underline the continued importance of full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 2325 to prevent non-State actors from acquiring nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, related materials, and their means of delivery.

We share the grave concern over the re-emergence of chemical weapons, including at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in 2017, and strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. The EU welcomes the positions taken by ARF Participants calling for compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We look forward to working together to secure positive outcomes at the CWC Conference of States Parties and the BTWC Meeting of States Parties later this year.

In this context, we would like to highlight the EU's support for establishing in Manila the South-East Asia Regional Secretariat of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative. Within the framework of this Initiative, the EU has now fully funded 25 CBRN projects in the region, with the provision of over 26 million Euros since 2010. We are particularly pleased that a number of ASEAN Member States, including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam, have developed and adopted CBRN national action plans with EU support.

We welcome the significant progress made under Singapore's 2018 chairmanship of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), in particular in improving the region's capability to respond to chemical, biological and radiological threats, and the adoption by the 12th ADMM of the Concept Paper on Establishment of the Virtual ASEAN Network of Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defence Experts. We look forward to further progress in this and related domains under the chairmanships of Thailand and Vietnam in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Our engagement with ASEAN, both diplomatic and practical, will continue, and I would like to thank the Secretary-General of ASEAN and all ASEAN Member States for their commitment and cooperation in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to express the EU's gratitude to the outgoing Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Michael Møller, for his excellent service over the past five years. His legacy such as the setting up of the Civil Society Forum and his support for the CD's work will be remembered.

Thank you, Mr. President