



23rd EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting

Singapore, 1st December 2020 (VTC)

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Jean Asselborn

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg

Dear colleagues,

The physical distance between Southeast Asia and Europe has not prevented us from building ever-stronger links over the last four decades. I welcome that today we will adopt a joint statement on connectivity. Let us work together to implement it fully.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the transition to a digital economy. Large archipelagos like Indonesia and the Philippines have recognized the urgency to transform their digital landscapes with the help of satellites, to allow their citizens to be connected and to improve resilience to disasters.

However, the lack of broadband infrastructure in some countries poses a challenge in dealing with the pandemic, especially for education and work.

If we want to increase connectivity, we need fair competition on a level playing field for services offered by global satellite operators to the ASEAN market.

Therefore, we need to promote licensing and regulatory frameworks based on transparent open skies policies, opening up access for all operators, without discrimination.

With its international financial center, Luxembourg is not only a facilitator for investments between Europe and ASEAN, but also an important bridge-builder and a gateway between our two regions.

This applies also to green and sustainable finance, where Luxembourg has developed extensive expertise, which can help our ASEAN partners tackle climate change. This week, Thailand is choosing the Luxembourg Green Exchange to list its first sovereign sustainability bond.

We hope we will soon be able to conclude the negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement. This would boost trade and increase safety and sustainability in delivering medical equipment and vaccines, wherever needed.

Europe's largest all-cargo airline, Cargolux, has recently entered into a global alliance for securing vaccine deliveries. Today, Cargolux is moving goods between Europe and Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Cargolux is a true enabler of connectivity between Europe and Asia, and within ASEAN itself.

We welcome the ambitious free trade agreements concluded with Singapore and Vietnam. We are committed to a swift conclusion of the negotiations, which are ongoing with Indonesia. These agreements will be the cornerstone of a future comprehensive region-to-region FTA.

Dear friends,

Strengthening connectivity between ASEAN and the EU is vital. You can count on Luxembourg to help deepen our strategic partnership and our contribution to effective multilateralism.

I thank you.