
DOCUMENTATION

Abstracts from the EC-Joint Declaration 7th EC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Düsseldorf, 2–3 May 1988

1 The Seventh Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the European Community and of the Association of South-East Asian Nations was held in Dusseldorf on 2 and 3 May 1988. The Ministers had a comprehensive exchange of views on political and economic subjects, revealing a high level of agreement. The meeting confirmed that EC and ASEAN developed a working relationship which matured into an enhanced and broad mutual understanding in all fields. The Ministers felt that it was in the best interest of the EC and ASEAN to further strengthen the elements of their political and economic solidarity. The excellent record of relations among the Ministers gave confidence for the future cooperation between the two groups of states.

2 The Ministers welcomed important developments since their last meeting in Jakarta in October 1986, in particular progress in integrating the European Community manifest in the single European Act, the impressive confirmation of ASEAN solidarity at the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government in Manila in December 1987 and encouraging developments in world politics are reflected by the conclusion of the INF Treaty. At the same time, the Ministers expressed their concern that regional conflicts had not yet been resolved. They reaffirmed their determination jointly to work for the restoration of peace in the regions of tension to the best of their ability.

The Ministers were satisfied to note that the economies of the EC and ASEAN have again shown upward trends despite difficult global economic conditions. The Ministers expressed their great interest in even stronger economic cooperation between the two regional groupings and welcomed in this connection the fact that joint EC-ASEAN investment committees have been founded in all ASEAN capitals since their last meeting.

3 *REGIONAL COOPERATION*

The EC Ministers informed the ASEAN Ministers about the Single European Act, which entered into force on 1 July 1987, and which is an expression of the will of the EC member states to continue the work to transform relations as a whole among themselves into a European Union.

The ASEAN Ministers informed their European counterparts about the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government which took place in Manila on 14–15 December 1987. The EC Ministers congratulated ASEAN on the twentieth anniversary of its founding and on the progress it had made through close cooperation. The Ministers noted that ASEAN had evolved into an area of peace among its members and of growing stability and economic progress.

Now that the EC is well on its way towards the completion of an internal market of 320 million

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of standstill and rollback and expressed their concern that in spite of the ongoing negotiations, barriers continued to be introduced by certain countries. In this context the Ministers welcomed the Community's initiative in presenting an autonomous rollback offer in Geneva. They noted that special and differential treatment for developing countries applies to these negotiations in accordance with the Punta del Este declarations. They also noted that as the economic and trade situation of developing countries improves, the countries concerned accordingly expect to participate more fully in the framework of rights and obligations under the GATT. On the new subjects, notably services and intellectual property and trade related investment measures, they took note of the preparatory work carried out so far and expressed their hope that further work in these increasingly important areas could lead to successful results.

The Ministers welcomed the decision to hold a Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) Ministerial Meeting in Montreal in December 1988 and agreed that the meeting should be seen as an opportunity to give political impetus to the negotiations which shall be treated as a single undertaking without prejudice to the implementation of Agreements reached at an early stage; in that connection, the ASEAN Ministers expressed the hope that an early result on tropical products could be achieved by the time of the mid-term review.

16 *COMMODITIES*

Ministers expressed concern over the instability in commodity prices and export earnings of the developing countries. They stressed the need for international cooperation to deal effectively with commodity problems.

To strengthen mutual cooperation, the Ministers agreed to exert concerted efforts in bilateral as well as multilateral fora, towards finding ways and means in which those ASEAN countries heavily dependent on the commodity sector could bring about growth, diversification and expansion of commodity trade. The Ministers welcomed the successful outcome of the negotiation for the renewal of the International Natural Rubber Agreement. ASEAN Ministers expressed the necessity of ratifying the Agreement so that it could enter into force by January 1989 as scheduled.

The Ministers noted the increased prospects of the Common Fund entering into force and expressed their hope that it would make a useful contribution in the commodity field. In this connection, Ministers noted that there are a number of matters pertaining to the implementation of the Fund which need examination.

The ASEAN Ministers reemphasized the importance of vegetable oils and fats products for the development of their economies and stressed the need for further expansion of their exports to the world market including the EEC.

17 *EC-ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION*

The Ministers noted with satisfaction the increasing scope of activities being carried out in the framework of their bilateral relations resulting from the new priorities and directions agreed at the Bangkok Ministerial Meeting on Economic Matters in October, 1985 and the 6th EC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in October, 1986.

While recognizing that the cooperation between ASEAN and the EC has made progress, the Ministers believed that the present activities can be further enhanced in the years ahead particularly with regard to the cooperation in commercial and economic fields. In improving ASEAN-EC economic and trade relations, the Ministers recognized the important role played by the private sector and agreed to encourage private sector participation in ASEAN-EC economic cooperation.

and in the process of establishing an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe and that the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government in Manila has adopted an important Programme of Action, it has become particularly evident that the establishment of EC-ASEAN relations are both foresighted and advantageous for all partners.

The Ministers were encouraged by the positive results of consultations between the EC and ASEAN since the beginning of the ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting in 1978. The Ministers reaffirmed the desirability in the future of having periodic consultations on issues of mutual interest, which would contribute further to strengthening of the existing cooperative relations between the two regional groupings.

14 *INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION*

The Ministers had an exchange of views on the recent evolution and prospects of the international economic situation. The need for developing and applying policies geared towards the intensification of growth was recognized. The correction of existing disequilibria, particularly in trade and current account imbalances, and the reduction of monetary instability were considered to be a major task in restoring a sound international economy. The necessity was also stressed on countering growing protectionist measures, increasing financial flows to developing countries, alleviating their debt burden and thus allowing them resources for growth.

The Ministers recognized the important role the developing countries could play in fostering world economic growth. In this context, the Ministers also recognized that the close relations developed between ASEAN and EC would benefit the world economy. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction that their cooperation both in international fora and on a bilateral basis contributed to the encouraging improvements in the efforts towards restoring a sound international economy. The ASEAN Ministers expressed the hope that the Toronto Summit of the industrialized countries will be fruitful. ASEAN Ministers urged that the interests of the developing countries including ASEAN be fully taken into account.

15 *URUGUAY ROUND*

The Ministers welcomed the progress that had been made in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations and reaffirmed their commitment to work towards the achievement of the objectives laid down at Punta del Este. The Community and ASEAN noted with satisfaction that close contacts were established on these important negotiations and agreed that every effort should be made to maintain them in the continuing negotiations.

The Ministers noted that the Community had been the first participant in the MTN which had tabled a significant offer on tropical products, a sector of particular interest in ASEAN. They reaffirmed that the negotiations shall aim at the fullest liberalisation of trade in this sector.

The Ministers also noted the importance of natural resource-based products as well as textiles and clothing for ASEAN and expressed their determination to work towards the achievement of the objectives stated in the Punta del Este Declaration.

Ministers expressed satisfaction that a large number of proposals had been tabled in Geneva on agriculture, which could serve as a basis for meaningful negotiations. In order to fulfill the commitments set out in Punta del Este, the Ministers agreed that these negotiations should focus on securing a comprehensive long-term framework for agricultural reform as well as consistent short-term measures. Both sides considered that progress in this key sector is an important element to the overall success of the Uruguay Round as well as the promotion of liberalised world agricultural trade in general.

Trade

The Ministers recognized that there was still a need for more intensified efforts to improve market access and eliminate trade barriers.

The ASEAN Ministers acknowledged the role of the Community's GSP in contributing to the expansion of their exports, in particular in manufactured goods which constitute 50% of ASEAN total exports to the EC. The EC Ministers agreed to examine the possibility of improving the EC's GSP scheme further.

ASEAN Ministers reiterated that ASEAN attaches great importance to the maintenance and expansion of market opportunities in the EEC for tropical timber.

Investment and Industrial Cooperation

The Ministers noted that ASEAN represents an important, rapidly expanding region of special interest to the European investors. The Ministers noted that financial organizations in some Member States of the Community participate in the financing of investment projects in the region. They expressed the hope that this cooperation can be pursued in the future and will contribute to increased European investments in the ASEAN countries.

The Ministers noted the constructive work being undertaken to further improve the investment climate and welcomed the valuable work being carried out in the Joint Investment Committees set up in each of the ASEAN capitals and the appointment of a "European Investment Consultant".

In this connection, as problems still existed including those concerning the protection of intellectual property rights, the Ministers expressed their wish to continue efforts to find the most appropriate ways to overcome those problems.

They also noted the steps taken to establish a "Partner Research Network" to facilitate business cooperation and joint-ventures, the improvement of information on investment opportunities in the ASEAN region and initiatives aimed at promoting increased European investment. On the occasion of the successful 3rd Meeting of the EC-ASEAN Business Council in Brussels, in October 1987, representatives of the private sector in the two regions welcomed the positive contribution of these activities.

The Ministers stressed the importance they attach to the promotion of EC-ASEAN industrial cooperation and agreed that it should continue to be accorded high priority in EC-ASEAN cooperation. They welcomed the recently initiated survey to identify industrial sectors, product groups and potential partner companies suitable for establishing ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures.

They expressed the hope that the cooperation in this field would be further intensified and will contribute to increased European investment in the ASEAN region.

18 *DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION*

The ASEAN Ministers expressed their continuing appreciation for the important contributions, both bilaterally and regionally, of the Community and its Member States in the field of development cooperation. It was noted that the European Community and its Member States are the second most important source of bilateral development assistance to ASEAN countries.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the wide range of activities carried out in the field of Human Resources Development, particularly those which brought about exchanges and contacts between ASEAN and EC officials and businessmen. They underlined the particular importance of training for future cooperation. In this context they welcomed the creation of a data bank on training opportunities in the Community. They highlighted the value of sharing knowledge and experiences between the two regional groupings in the course of implementation of HRD, Science

and Technology as well as Energy Cooperation projects. In this connection, the ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation for the Community's assistance towards the establishment of the ASEAN-EC Energy Management Training and Research Centre.

The Ministers agreed in principle that an ASEAN-EC Management Centre be established in ASEAN. They were of the view that the Centre would effectively enhance the Community's long-term presence in the region. The Ministers requested the ASEAN-EC JCC to consider the operational details on the establishment of such a Centre and took note of ASEAN's intention to locate it in Brunei Darussalam.

The ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation for the contribution provided by the Community towards the ASEAN Tourism Development Programme.

SOURCE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore.