

Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the EU-ASEAN leaders' meeting

Press contacts

Preben Aamann

European Council President Spokesperson

+32 2 281 51 50

+32 476 85 05 43

Prime Minister Lee, Prime Minister Prayut, Secretary-General, I am delighted that despite a very busy week here in Brussels, we have found a moment to talk. As a long-standing supporter of ASEAN integration, the European Union is committed to strong relations with ASEAN.

Almost one year ago we met at the EU-ASEAN commemorative Summit and East Asia Summit in Manila to celebrate 40 years of bilateral relations. The overall geopolitical context has changed substantially since then – both in Europe and in Southeast Asia.

Today, ASEAN and the European Union have a responsibility to put all our energy, influence and power to support the rules-based international order and the multilateral trading system. We are committed to working together to counter protectionism and modernise the World Trade Organisation.

In Manila, we agreed to accelerate efforts towards a Strategic Partnership between the EU and ASEAN by strengthening all areas of dialogue and cooperation. We will use the meeting today to seek greater engagement on trade and investment, rules-based and sustainable connectivity, climate change, and more security cooperation. It is also a priority for the EU to enhance our relations further, on the basis of common interests and shared values of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

[Visit the meeting page](#) [Download as pdf](#)

[Foreign affairs & international relations](#) [Trade](#)

EU and Singapore forge closer economic

and political ties

The agreements signed today are the EU-Singapore Trade Agreement, the EU-Singapore Investment Protection Agreement and the Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation.

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *“The signature of the EU-Singapore agreements is another strong message by like-minded partners to defend and promote an international system that is based on rules, on cooperation, and on multilateralism. The trade agreement will open up new opportunities for European producers, workers, farmers and consumers, mirroring what this Commission has delivered with other like-minded partners across the world, whilst our collective resolve to tackling global challenges will be strengthened through political dialogue.”*

Federica **Mogherini**, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, said: *“The European Union partners with Singapore not only for our growing economic links, but as a key player in the region and beyond. This Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will enable us to strengthen the joint work we are already doing, from countering climate change to tackling organised crime. Today’s significant step forward in our bilateral relations will have a positive impact on our citizens and on the regions beyond our borders.”*

Cecilia **Malmström**, Commissioner for Trade, said: *“These agreements with Singapore – our biggest trading partner in the region – are another landmark for the EU. As the first of such agreements between the EU and a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, they will open up vast new opportunities for our exporters. These deals, as all our recent ones, go beyond economic considerations and demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting human and labour rights and to protecting the environment. In this difficult period on the world stage, we need strong allies such as Singapore in order to uphold the rules-based global trade system.”*

Within the ASEAN bloc of nations, Singapore is by far the EU’s largest partner with a total bilateral trade in goods of €53.3 billion (2017) and in services of €44.4 billion (2016). Over 10,000 EU companies are established in Singapore and use it as a hub to serve the whole Pacific region. Singapore is also the number one location for European investment in Asia, with investment between the two growing rapidly in recent years: bilateral investment stocks reached €256 billion in 2016.

The trade agreement with Singapore will remove nearly all remaining tariffs on certain EU products, simplify customs procedures and set high standards and rules. It simplifies trade in goods like electronics, food products and pharmaceuticals, while stimulating green growth. It opens up the market for services like telecommunications, environmental services and engineering. It also includes a comprehensive chapter on trade and sustainable development, setting the highest standards of labour, safety, environmental and consumer protection, as well as strengthening joint actions on sustainable development

and climate change.

The Investment Protection Agreement contains all aspects of the EU's new approach to investment protection and its enforcement mechanisms. It will ensure a high level of investment protection, while safeguarding the EU's and Singapore's rights to regulate and pursue public policy objectives such as the protection of public health, safety and the environment.

The trade and investment agreements represent the first building block towards a future region-to-region agreement between the EU and ASEAN.

The Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation, signed by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and her counterpart, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Vivian Balakrishnan, will allow the EU and Singapore to strengthen political, economic and sectoral cooperation across a wide range of fields, including environment, climate change, energy, education and culture, employment and social affairs, science and technology, transport, counter terrorism and the fight against organised crime. It will enhance cooperation on global challenges, where both Singapore and the EU play an increasingly important role, and will help address them in a more coherent way. The Agreement establishes a Joint Committee, which will ensure the proper functioning and implementation of the Agreement.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Singapore is the fourth such agreement signed with an ASEAN country, following the agreements with Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. It will supersede the current legal framework of the 1980 Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and member countries of ASEAN.

Next steps

The trade and investment agreements will be sent to the European Parliament for consent. The trade agreement could then enter into force before the end of the current mandate of the European Commission in 2019, while the investment protection agreement will also follow ratification procedures at Member States level. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will need to be ratified by EU Member States and submitted to the European Parliament before it enters formally into force.

For More Information

[Delegation of the European Union to Singapore](#)

[The trade and investment agreements between the EU and Singapore](#)

[Mission of the European Union to ASEAN](#)

[Factsheet on EU-ASEAN relations](#)

EU-Republic of Korea Summit: building on a well-established partnership

Jean-Claude **Juncker**, President of the European Commission and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, represented the European Union at the Summit. The Republic of Korea was represented by its President, Moon Jae-in. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini** and EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström also participated, alongside several Ministers from the Republic of Korea.

*“In 2011, the EU agreed its first Free Trade Agreement with an Asian country. That country was the Republic of Korea”, said President Jean-Claude **Juncker**. “The beneficiaries of this agreement have been our citizens and our businesses, but if our trade relationship is to reach its full potential, we need to ensure that it is being implemented properly. At the same time, we must continue to dispel the notion that protectionism protects, continue to invest in multilateralism, and continue to increase our cooperation in sustainable development and the implementation of the Paris climate agreement. I am confident that in the years to come, our relations will be even more dynamic and our ties even stronger than now.”*

Presidents **Juncker**, Tusk and Moon committed to further develop the EU-Republic of Korea Strategic Partnership, which is underpinned by three concrete pillars: an enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; an ambitious Free Trade Agreement; and a Framework Participation Agreement for EU crisis management operations. The Summit provided an opportunity to explore further areas for cooperation within the Strategic Partnership.

Discussions focused on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, the broader situation in the world, and trade relations. The Summit also provided an opportunity for the initialling, by the European Commission and the Republic of Korea, of a Horizontal Aviation agreement and the signing of a Joint Statement committing to work closely together to fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.

Jointly addressing global challenges

The EU and Korea are united by common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Leaders reaffirmed their strong commitment to multilateralism and the international rules-based order, politically and economically, while also supporting global action on climate change and the environment. The EU and Korea will continue promoting free, fair and rules-based trade, modernising the WTO-based multilateral trading system, and maintaining international cooperation against protectionism.

The Leaders discussed a number of pressing issues on the global agenda, chief

among them prospects for achieving lasting peace and security on a **Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons** and finding a comprehensive solution through diplomacy, while fully implementing the relevant UNSC Resolutions. The EU supports the Republic of Korea's efforts and diplomatic initiatives, in particular the three inter-Korean Summits and the US-DPRK Summit, and the implementation of their outcomes. The EU sees the development of inter-Korean relations, the denuclearisation of, and the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula as vital for peace and security not only in East Asia, but for the entire world. In this context, the EU stressed the requirement for the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** (DPRK) to completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle all its nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and related programmes and facilities.

The EU and the Republic of Korea reiterated their commitment to maintaining close coordination on foreign and security issues. In the field of **crisis management**, the EU and the Republic of Korea will continue the good cooperation under the EU-Republic of Korea Framework Participation Agreement, through which the Republic of Korea has regularly contributed to the EU's naval counter-piracy operation off the coast of the Horn of Africa, EU NAVFOR Atalanta. Similarly, they discussed and agreed to cooperate more closely on implementing the 2030 Agenda for **Sustainable Development** and achieving its Sustainable Development Goals, and will bolster their bilateral policy dialogue on international development issues and promote joint cooperation in areas and third countries of mutual interest, notably in Asia and Africa.

Expanding the bilateral agenda to bring further benefits to citizens

The leaders recalled that the EU-Republic of Korea **Free Trade Agreement** has been an economic success that has increased wealth on both sides. The EU is Korea's 3rd largest trading partner and Korea the EU's 8th largest; annual trade in goods between the EU and Korea is now worth about €100 billion. With that in mind, the leaders exchanged views on how to ensure that our citizens and businesses can reap the full benefits of the agreement. The EU highlighted several important issues: for example, ensuring the full implementation of the long-standing, binding labour commitments under the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter; opening the Korean market to EU beef from all EU Member States; and fully implementing commitments in the area of intellectual property rights, including protecting new Geographical Indications.

The Summit also provided an opportunity for the European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella**, and Kim Young-Choon, Minister for Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea [to sign a joint statement](#) committing to work closely together to fight against **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing**. The Republic of Korea is the fourth country with whom the EU signs such a joint statement as part of its efforts to tackle the most serious threats to sustainable fishing and to marine biodiversity in the world's oceans, with devastating environmental and socio-economic consequences. The new partnership, in line with the objectives of the [EU's Ocean Governance strategy](#), will help exchange information about suspected Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated activities, enhance

traceability of fishery products and promote sustainable fishing through education and training.

Excellent progress has been made in the area of transport, where this week the European Commission and the Republic of Korea initialled a **Horizontal Aviation Agreement** on certain aspects of air services. The agreement will restore legal certainty to all 22 bilateral air services agreements that the Republic of Korea has with EU Member States by bringing these into conformity with EU law. The number of passengers travelling directly between the Republic of Korea and the EU has grown on average 10.1% over the past five years, totalling 3.4 million passengers in 2017. Currently, direct passenger flights are operated between 10 EU Member States and the Republic of Korea. The Horizontal Aviation Agreement reflects this growth in the EU-Republic of Korea aviation market and should serve as a catalyst for increased flows. More information is available [online](#).

Leaders also stressed their commitment to implementing the **Paris climate agreement**. To [translate this political commitment into concrete projects](#), the EU has set up a platform to exchange best practice on climate action and support the implementation of the Korean Government's Emissions Trading System (ETS) to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. The EU's Partnership Instrument also financially supports exchanges of cultural practitioners and artists from both the EU and Korea, economic cooperation between companies, as well as the promotion of research and teaching on EU-related issues in Korea, adding to the overall breadth of the relationship.

Further Information

[EU-Republic of Korea Summit website](#)

[EU-Republic of Korea relations factsheet](#)

[Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea website](#)

[Support to the EU-Republic of Korea Strategic Partnership under the Partnership Instrument](#)

**[Joint Press Statement from
Commissioner Věra Jourová and
Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on
the Second Annual EU-U.S. Privacy](#)**

Shield Review

Senior officials from the United States Government, the European Commission, and European Data Protection Authorities are meeting in Brussels this week to conduct the second annual review of the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield framework. The two days of detailed discussions are addressing all aspects of the functioning of the Privacy Shield. The review benefited greatly from industry and civil society input.

Since the inception of the Privacy Shield program in 2016, nearly 4,000 companies have made legally enforceable commitments to comply with the Privacy Shield framework. The significant growth of the program last year highlights Privacy Shield's vital importance to transatlantic data protection and commerce.

The U.S. and EU took note that since the last annual review, the President nominated, and the Senate confirmed, three new members to the independent Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) to restore a chair and a quorum. The PCLOB also declassified its report on a presidential directive that extended certain signals intelligence privacy protections to foreign citizens.

Review participants are discussing the functioning of the Privacy Shield Ombudsperson Mechanism, including President Trump's recent decision to name a senior, politically appointed State Department official as Ombudsperson. Nonetheless, both sides recognize the need for prompt progress on nominating a permanent Under Secretary. This process is well underway and the U.S. will be in close contact with the EU on this important matter.

In addition, in the wake of recent privacy incidents involving the personal data of Europeans and Americans, the U.S. and EU reaffirm the need for strong privacy enforcement to protect our citizens and ensure trust in the digital economy. Among other things, the Commerce Department will revoke the certification of companies that do not comply with Privacy Shield's vigorous data protection requirements.

U.S. and EU officials will continue to work closely together to ensure the framework functions as intended, including on commercial and national-security related matters. Before the end of the year, the Commission will publish a report containing its findings on the functioning of the Privacy Shield.

Background

The Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová, launched with the US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and launch the discussions to review the [EU-U.S. Privacy Shield](#) on 18 October. Operational since 1 August 2016, this framework protects personal data transferred from

the EU to the U.S. for commercial purposes. It brings also legal clarity for businesses relying on the transmission of personal data across the Atlantic.

[EU and Vietnam sign an agreement for better enforcement of forest law, governance and trade](#)

Press contacts

[Maria Daniela Lenzu](#)

Press officer

+32 2 281 21 46

+32 470 88 04 02

On 19 October 2018, a **voluntary partnership agreement** (VPA) between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on **forest law enforcement, governance and trade** (FLEGT) was signed in Brussels in the margins of the EU-ASEM summit.

The aim of the agreement is to stop illegal logging and, through the FLEGT licensing scheme, to guarantee that timber imported into the EU from Vietnam is legally harvested. This is the second VPA that the EU has concluded with an Asian country after Indonesia and is particularly significant given the importance of Vietnam in the global timber market, being one of the main hubs for processing and re-export of timber.

This agreement is an important milestone in our relations with Vietnam and in our fight against illegal logging and deforestation. Our commitment to the environment is not only a slogan, but a reality.

Sebastian Kurz, federal chancellor of the Republic of Austria and president of the Council

The agreement establishes a **Timber Legality Assurance system** to monitor the timber supply chain and a **FLEGT licensing scheme** to ensure that only timber coming from legal logging can be exported to the EU market. The agreement also establishes a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Vietnam on the FLEGT licensing scheme, via a **Joint Implementation Committee**. Finally it establishes principles of stakeholder participation, social safeguards, accountability and transparency.

The VPA was signed by Sebastian **Kurz**, federal chancellor of the Republic of Austria, and Federica **Mogherini**, EU high representative for foreign affairs and security, on behalf of the **EU** and Nguyen Xuan **Cuong**, Minister for Agricultural and Rural Development of **Vietnam**.

Background and next steps

The **Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)** endorsed by the Council in 2003 proposes a set of measures, including support for timber-producing countries, multilateral collaboration to tackle trade in illegal timber, support for private-sector initiatives, and measures to discourage investment in activities that encourage illegal logging. The cornerstone of the Action Plan is the establishment of **FLEGT partnerships** between the EU and timber-producing countries, aimed at stopping illegal logging.

In 2005 the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community, a mechanism that enables verification of the legality of timber imported into the EU under the FLEGT partnerships.

Negotiations for this agreement started in 2010.

The VPA will enter into force after being ratified by both the EU and Vietnam and will be binding upon the parties.

[Download as pdf](#)

[Agriculture Environment](#)