

UK seeks to boost ties with Southeast Asia through ASEAN

The bid is the latest step by the Foreign Office to forge deeper relations with regional blocs beyond the UK's doorstep, and boost ties with international forums that will lead to new opportunities across trade, education, science and security.

The application, which would give the UK high-level access to ASEAN reinforced by deeper practical cooperation, alongside countries including the United States, China and India, was signed by Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

As Asia grows in importance, Global Britain will cooperate even more closely with our friends in the region. We aim to boost trade by joining the Trans-Pacific trade agreement. And by becoming one of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, we can strengthen our ability to cooperate across the Indo-Pacific region, as a force for good, on everything from climate change to regional stability.

The UK is already one of the few countries with a dedicated Ambassador to ASEAN, an embassy or High Commission in all ten Member States and an extensive cooperation programme on topics spanning terrorism, climate change and COVID-19.

UK Ambassador to ASEAN, Jon Lambe, said:

We have been a close partner of ASEAN for over 40 years, over which time we have worked side-by-side across political, security, economic and social and cultural issues.

In my role as Ambassador to the organisation, every day I see how the UK is being a force for good in the region.

Our bid to become a Dialogue Partner is part of our long-standing and continued commitment to ASEAN.

Dialogue Partner status would further build the UK's strong relationships across the ASEAN region and reflects the strength and breadth of the UK offer to the organisation.

The status would facilitate further practical cooperation across key sectors

as well as allow the UK to attend annual ASEAN Summits and ministerial meetings.

Founded in 1967, ASEAN is a regional community that has brought together the ten Southeast Asian countries around a set of common values and principles, as well as seeking to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development through joint endeavours.

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