

PRESS RELEASE

853/22

17/10/2022

ASEAN and the EU sign the world's first bloc-to-bloc Air Transport Agreement - joint press release

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) and its member states have signed the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the European Union and its member states ("ASEAN-EU CATA") at the 28th ASEAN Transport Ministers' Meeting on 17 October 2022, in Bali, Indonesia.

The ASEAN-EU CATA is the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement and reflects the latest policy thinking in air transport regulation. Negotiations on the agreement commenced in 2016 and concluded on 2 June 2021 at the Extraordinary ASEAN-EU Senior Transport Officials Meeting. This was followed by legal scrubbing and translation of the text in preparation for signature.

The agreement will provide greater opportunities for airlines of ASEAN and the EU to operate passenger and cargo services between and beyond both regions, which will help bolster the recovery of air connectivity between the two regions following the COVID-19 pandemic. Passengers can look forward to a greater variety of destinations, more flight frequencies, and more travel options between South-East Asia and Europe.

Under the ASEAN-EU CATA, airlines of ASEAN and the EU will be able to fly any number of services between both regions. In addition, airlines of each country of one bloc will be able to fly up to 14 weekly passenger services and any number of cargo services to each country of the other bloc with 5th freedom traffic rights, via any third country or beyond to any third country.

The ASEAN-EU CATA provides a foundation for closer cooperation between ASEAN and the EU in areas such as aviation safety, air traffic management, consumer protection, and environmental and social matters. This deeper cooperation builds upon existing initiatives such as the Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus) programme on technical assistance and capacity building, the EU-South East Asia Cooperation on Mitigating Climate Change impact from Civil Aviation: Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (EU-SEA CCCA CORSIA), which supports CORSIA implementation, and the EU-South East Asia Aviation Partnership Project (EU- SEA APP).

Alongside the ASEAN-EU CATA, ASEAN and the EU have signed the Record of Statements Made on the Occasion of the Signature of the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement.

Dato Lim Jock Hoi, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, said: "This year marks the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-European Union Dialogue Relations, and to commemorate this historic occasion, it is heartening that ASEAN and EU signed the world's first region-to-region air transport agreement in Bali on 17 October 2022, and set a significant milestone in world aviation history. I believe that the ASEAN-EU CATA will strengthen air transport services, connecting people, cultures, and businesses across continents, as well as supporting the sustainable growth of aviation. The ASEAN-EU CATA emerges at an opportune time as ASEAN and the EU celebrate our 45 years of partnership."

Ms Adina Vălean, the European Commissioner for Transport, said: "The signature of this first-ever region-to-region air transport agreement between the EU and ASEAN brings our aviation partnership to a new level. The agreement will help to support the aviation sector's recovery post-COVID 19, and restore much-needed connectivity between our two regions, to the benefit of some 1.1 billion people, by enabling greater business, trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. It replaces more than 140 bilateral air services agreements, thereby providing a single set of rules and reducing red tape. The agreement also provides us with a new platform to work jointly towards our shared commitment to economically, socially and environmentally sustainable aviation."

Mr Budi Karya Sumadi, Chair of the 28th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting and the Minister of Transportation of Indonesia, said: "The signing of this agreement will create more harmonious synergies to accelerate economic recovery, especially air connectivity between ASEAN and Europe, and will re-invigorate the global economy, in particular in the ASEAN and EU regions."

Mr Martin Kupka, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, which holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU, said: "By

signing off the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement, we took an important step in bolstering connectivity between Europe and the ASEAN. This will provide greater opportunities to EU and ASEAN airlines to operate passenger and cargo services between and beyond both regions. This will not only boost aviation industry both in Europe and Asia, but also our economies during the economic recovery."

Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Transport and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations of Singapore, said: "The ASEAN-EU CATA is a landmark agreement that will enhance air connectivity between ASEAN and Europe and facilitate people-to-people and business exchanges. It comes at an opportune time, opening up new growth opportunities for the aviation industry in both regions, as we work towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Singapore is honoured to have been ASEAN's lead coordinator from the inception to the conclusion of the agreement, and would like to thank our fellow ASEAN member states and the EU for their strong cooperation and support."

The ASEAN-EU CATA will now undergo ratification in accordance with the respective procedures of the ASEAN member states and the EU and its member states.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press