

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand to promote political and economic cooperation and regional stability. Brunei joined in 1984, shortly after its independence from the United Kingdom, and Vietnam joined ASEAN as its seventh member in 1995. Laos and Burma were admitted into full membership in July 1997 as ASEAN celebrated its 30th anniversary. Cambodia became ASEAN's tenth member in 1999.

The ASEAN Declaration in 1967, considered ASEAN's founding document, formalized the principles of peace and cooperation to which ASEAN is dedicated. The ASEAN Charter entered into force on 15 December 2008. With the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN established its legal identity as an international organization and took a major step in its community-building process.

The ASEAN Community is comprised of three pillars, the Political-Security Community, Economic Community, and Socio-Cultural Community. Each pillar has its own Blueprint approved at the summit level, and, together with the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Strategic Framework and IAI Work Plan Phase II (2009-2015), they form the Roadmap for and ASEAN Community 2009-2015.

ASEAN commands far greater influence on Asia-Pacific trade, political, and security issues than its members could achieve individually. This has driven ASEAN's community building efforts. This work is based largely on consultation, consensus, and cooperation.

Number of member countries: 10

Region(s): Asia

Headquarters: Jakarta, Indonesia

Composition: Plurilateral

Coverage: Goods & Services

Signed: August 8, 1967

Entry into force: January 28, 1992

Web Site: <http://www.asean.org/>

Member Countries

Brunei	Malaysia
Burma	Philippines
Cambodia	Singapore
Indonesia	Thailand
Laos	Vietnam

History

1967 - ASEAN was established in Bangkok at the height of the Vietnam War by the five original member countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

1976 - First ASEAN Summit convenes in Bali, Indonesia.

1978 - First ASEAN-European Economic Community ministerial meeting held in Brussels.

1984 - Brunei joins ASEAN.

1994 - ASEAN establishes the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is focused on security interdependence in the Asia-Pacific region. Besides ASEAN member states, the present participants include Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation and the United States.

1995 - Vietnam joins ASEAN.

1997 - First meeting of ASEAN Plus Three, comprising leaders of the 10 ASEAN members and their counterparts from East Asia – China, Japan and South Korea. Laos and Myanmar join ASEAN.

1998 - The two day ASEAN summit opened in Hanoi, Vietnam. Cambodia was admitted formally. The ASEAN nations approved the "Hanoi Action Plan," a 34-point declaration that emphasized economic recovery based on free market policies.

1999 - Cambodia joins ASEAN.

2000 - The Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) was set up to help East Asian cash strapped countries defend their currencies in times of trouble. The initiative came in response to the 1997 East Asian financial crises. ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea launched the multilateral arrangement of currency swaps (CMI).

2002 - China and ASEAN agreed to a China-ASEAN free-trade area to be implemented in stages up to 2015.

2005 - First meeting of ASEAN Plus Six, also called the East Asia Summit, comprising the ASEAN countries plus China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

2007 - ASEAN signs charter giving its 10 member states a legal identity, a first step towards its aim of a free trade area by 2015.

2008 - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations moved to forge an EU-style community, signing a charter that makes the bloc a legal entity. This could pave the way for creating a single market within seven years.

2010 - A free-trade agreement between China and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) came into effect. The six richest members scrapped tariffs on 90% of goods. The four poorest (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar) will not need to cut tariffs to the same level until 2015.

