

**THINK NEXT, ACT NEXT – THE NEXT GEN EU-ASEAN THINK TANK  
DIALOGUE (EANGAGE 2021-2022)**

**EANGAGE CONFERENCE  
“ADVANCING TOGETHER FOR ASEAN-EU  
SECURITY AND CONNECTIVITY”  
3 – 5 NOVEMBER 2022 | HANOI, VIETNAM**



**FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT**

## Background

The two-year project “Think Next, Act Next – The Next Gen EU-ASEAN Think Tank Dialogue” funded by the European Union (EU) was launched in 2021. The aims of the project were to encourage greater collaborative research between the EU and ASEAN, inspire joint research and foster greater awareness of the EU’s engagement in the ASEAN region.

Since 2021, the Political Dialogue Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung in partnership with the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), Cambodia and the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) have promoted the exchange of knowledge between think tanks and researchers in the two regions. 3 research clusters on security, sustainable development and connectivity were established. Over 70 young researchers from think tanks and academic institutions in the EU and ASEAN worked together on policy papers and academic research. These EANGAGE fellows received regular inputs through lectures, background discussions, cluster meetings and training workshops.

A key activity of the project was to organise two think tank conferences bringing together think tank representatives from both the EU and ASEAN regions. The first conference was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in April 2022 and focused on the theme of sustainable development.

The EANGAGE conference on “Advancing Together for ASEAN-EU Security and Connectivity” held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 3 – 5 November 2022 was the second and final conference of the EANGAGE project. The conference featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, skills development speeches and simulation exercises focused on the theme of ASEAN-EU cooperation on security and connectivity.

More than 50 participants from across Europe and the ASEAN region attended the conference, including senior policymakers, diplomats and think tank representatives. The keynote addresses were delivered by H.E. Giorgio Aliberti, Ambassador of the European Union to Vietnam and H.E. Ambassador Pham Quang Vinh, Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam and Former Vietnam ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Leader.

## Summary of Proceedings

### WELCOME ADDRESS 1

**Delivered by:**

**Dr. Pham Lan Dung**, Acting President, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

Dr. Pham Lan Dung welcomed the participants to the conference on behalf of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV). She thanked the EANGAGE partners for their support for the project and the organisation of the conference. With 2022 marking 45 years of ASEAN-EU partnership, Dr Pham Lan Dung emphasised the importance and timeliness of this conference. Setting the conference within the context of wider EU-ASEAN relations, Dr. Pham Lan Dung underlined that the themes of the conference – security and connectivity – reflect the broader priorities of the ASEAN-EU partnership. In these times of unpredictability, conflicts and challenges ranging from health security to climate change, she noted that it is critical for the EU and ASEAN to exchange ideas and foster dialogue to strengthen their mutual trust and cooperation.

### WELCOME ADDRESS 2

**Delivered by:**

**Mr. Florian Feyerabend**, Resident Representative, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Vietnam

Mr. Florian Feyerabend welcomed the participants on behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. In his welcome address, Mr. Feyerabend provided some background to Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and also to the partnership between the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Vietnam and the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV).

Mr. Feyerabend highlighted ‘togetherness’ as the keyword for the conference. Mr. Feyerabend stated that the challenges of security and connectivity have increased significantly since the EANGAGE project was launched, making togetherness even more important. The war in Ukraine, the geopolitical competition between the US and China, climate change, and COVID-19 are just some of the challenges the world is facing today. Working together in partnership is needed to address these challenges. Mr. Feyerabend also touched upon 45 years of EU-ASEAN partnership and the shared values and principles of the two regions. The EANGAGE project is an example of successful research collaboration between the two regions, which contributes to the spirit of togetherness and cooperation. Mr. Feyerabend thanked the European Union for funding the EANGAGE project and then outlined some of the highlights of the two-day conference. He ended his address with wishes for insightful and thought-provoking discussions during the conference.

## KEYNOTE SPEECH 1<sup>1</sup>

### 45 YEARS OF EU-ASEAN COOPERATION – ADVANCING TOGETHER FOR SECURITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Delivered by:

**H. E. Giorgio Aliberti**

**Ambassador of the European Union to Vietnam**

Ladies and Gentlemen, good to be here with you today! Let me start by thanking our hosts “Think Next, Act Next – The Next Gen EU-ASEAN Think Tank Dialogue – EANGAGE 21-22” for organising today’s event. It is a great initiative to reflect on EU-ASEAN Security and Connectivity cooperation a couple of weeks ahead of the upcoming EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit to be held in Brussels on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

This year we celebrate 45 years of EU-ASEAN relations. Almost half a century of profitable and beneficial relations. It was 2020 when the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations opened a new chapter in their longstanding relationship by becoming Strategic Partners.

It took us some time before elevating our relations to a Strategic Partnership but progress can take time. Progress can take time, particularly in building a relationship with another regional body with its own strategic outlook and different interests among its own member states. We in the EU certainly know how complicated that can be!

But as two regional organisations we share the same DNA.

However, even if we are different, we have common values, interests and visions. Let me mention, for example, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific which has ASEAN Centrality as the underlying principle for promoting cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

The EU, at the same time, has a vital geopolitical and economic interest in the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. Through our Global Gateway and Indo-Pacific Strategy, the EU aims to contribute to:

- Sustainable and inclusive prosperity;
- Green transition;
- Ocean governance;
- Digital governance and partnerships;
- Connectivity;
- Security and defence;
- Human security.

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the keynote speech is included here, but has been slightly modified from the original version.

These are the 7 priorities of the EU Strategy on the Indo-Pacific. But it must not be seen as an EU-only agenda. On the contrary, it is an invitation to our partners in the region to address together common challenges. To achieve these objectives, the EU and ASEAN need to work together, not as technical partners, but as allies.

As we are celebrating 45 years of EU-ASEAN relations this year, it is a good moment to explore:

- the connectivity, or should I say the links, that bring us, the EU and ASEAN, together on the one hand,
- and, on the other hand (because we need to be realistic): the way to protect these connections.

## I. Connectivity

Connectivity between Asia and Europe is not the result of 45 years of EU-ASEAN relations. Connectivity between Europe and Asia can be traced back more than 2,000 years with trade routes between India and the Roman Empire. As far as we can trace back the existence of ancient societies, human beings have been constantly exchanging – not only goods, but also knowledge, art, and culture. Innovation and progress is the fruit of these longstanding exchanges.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a watershed moment for these connections. In a world of interdependence, where supply chains are showing their fragility, we have seen how the links that bind us can also be weaponised. Data flows, energy supplies, rare earths, vaccines and semi-conductors are all instruments of power in today's world. Which is why we need to ensure that global connectivity and access to these flows is based on rules and international standards.

While flows in goods are ideologically neutral, the rules which govern them are intertwined with political values. Particularly in the digital domain, Europe and other democracies must ensure that the standards of the future reflect our core values.

Europe wants to reduce excessive dependencies. Our autonomy is reinforced only if all our partners have alternatives when making their investment decisions. Europe's calling card and offer to our partner countries to address infrastructure investment needs is financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable connectivity. No 'white elephants' and no 'debt traps', but projects that are sustainable and serve the needs of local populations.

This is what we aim to do with Global Gateway, the new EU connectivity strategy, adopted in December 2021. We aim to promote a connectivity that is:

- Sustainable: financially and environmentally
- comprehensive: covering infrastructure but also digital and energy
- and rules-based.

This strategy will boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and strengthen health, education and research systems across the world.

With our Team Europe partners, (EU and Member States), we aim to mobilise up to EUR 300 billion of investments in: digital, climate and energy, transport, health, as well as education and research until 2027.

How are we concretely planning to implement the Global Gateway with ASEAN?

Let me give you one recent fact that highlights better than any speech our cooperation on connectivity: It is the EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA). This is the first ever region-to-region agreement of its kind and it has just been signed two weeks ago on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

In ASEAN, this strategy is also being realised through many projects focusing on the areas of:

- road infrastructure,
- clean energy generation and transmission,
- as well as water/irrigation.

To give you a few examples, these projects include hydropower plants in the Philippines and Vietnam; work on irrigation systems in Laos; as well as rural infrastructure and water treatment plants in Cambodia. These are only a few examples, and we are looking to increase such support through not only grants but also guarantees.

## II. Security

I would like now to touch upon the second focus of this conference, a central topic for the EU and ASEAN, and this is security cooperation.

First a few words about the South China Sea: we are committed to maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS. We encourage all actors to avoid any unilateral actions that endanger peace, security and stability in the region.

This is our vision. But vision without concrete actions is just words. Therefore, let me tell you about the concrete implementation and the tools designed for the region:

- The EU will promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture and enhanced naval presence by EU Member States in the Indo-Pacific.
- The EU will seek to conduct more joint exercises and port calls with Indo-Pacific partners, to fight piracy and protect freedom of navigation in the region.
- And to implement our vision for security in the Indo-Pacific, the EU will employ two specific programmes: ESIWA and CRIMARIO.
- ESIWA (Enhancing Security cooperation In and With Asia) focuses on Counter-Terrorism/Prevention of Violent Extremism, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Crisis Management and proposes tailor-made cooperation with a budget of EUR 15 million.

CRIMARIO (Critical Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean) promotes maritime domain awareness through capacity-building for maritime operation coordination including real-time management of incidents at sea.

Let me now speak about the way forward for EU and ASEAN. Security cooperation's main objective is about preventing conflicts. Therefore, we welcome the growing engagement between ASEAN and the EU on a broad range of security and defence-related issues, including the EU's active engagement in the ASEAN Regional Forum, including as co-chair of the thematic work stream on counterterrorism and transnational crime.

We underline the importance of further strengthening the EU-ASEAN dialogue on security and defence issues and crisis management. We look forward to the EU being invited as an observer to the activities of the ADMM+ Expert Working Groups on peacekeeping operations and disaster relief as soon as the ADMM+ observership arrangements are operational.

We are committed to further developing cooperation on cyber security, in line with the EU-ASEAN Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation adopted in 2019. We also commit to enhance dialogue and promote cooperation on defence and security matters, such as in the areas of maritime security, women, peace and security (WPS), youth, peace and security (YPS), peacekeeping operations, military medicine, cybersecurity, and counter-terrorism, as well as on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

But before finishing, I would like to mention one additional topic. This is actually the core reason why we, the EU and ASEAN, cooperate on security: as we realize in particular in the current context, peace is often fragile and we should protect whatever it takes.

Therefore, I would like to reaffirm our strong shared respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We strongly condemn Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine, which violates international law. Russia must immediately and unconditionally cease its military invasion and withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia must respect international law, notably the UN Charter.

In addition, I think we cannot speak about security and peace, especially in the EU-ASEAN context without mentioning Myanmar, which is also a great concern for our two regional organisations. We remain deeply worried over the crisis in Myanmar. We call for the immediate cessation of violence, start of dialogue and the full implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. On these very two issues, (Ukraine and Myanmar), our unity within the EU and ASEAN is being tested. Building the EU is a daily work of discussions and compromise. On Myanmar, the approach you (ASEAN) will choose, will be a test, a challenge for the unity of your organisation. Crisis is always an opportunity for change and common innovation.

Let the crisis in Myanmar be an opportunity to show to the world that you can unify and work together, beyond your differences, for humanitarian relief and peace.

We live in a world where the rules-based order, multilateralism and cooperation are increasingly in danger. It is the duty of regional organisations like the EU and ASEAN to promote, more than ever, the shared values of

- rules-based multilateralism,
- the common attachment to open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based regional architecture,
- and the commitment to maintain peace, security and stability through the promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and fundamental freedoms.

I look forward to the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in December and more fruitful discussions on the future of the EU-ASEAN partnership! Thank you for your attention!

## **KEYNOTE SPEECH 2<sup>2</sup>**

### **PRIORITIES FOR ASEAN-EU COOPERATION IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT**

**Delivered by:**

**Ambassador Pham Quang Vinh**

**Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Viet Nam, Former Vietnam ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Leader**

Thank you very much for the introduction. Ambassador Giorgio Aliberti, the European Union Ambassador, Representatives from Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Madam Pham Lan Dung, President of DAV, colleagues and friends. It is a great pleasure for me to be invited to this event and to give the keynote speech. But I would like to share with you my ideas rather than giving a speech. The theme that has been assigned to me is “Priorities for ASEAN-EU cooperation in the current context.” My understanding is that under this theme we have to look both back and forward and we will look into our priorities in the new world context which has changed a lot and also into the shaping of new strategies and priorities.

So, my first observation is that ASEAN and EU over the past 45 years have built a strong foundation for partnership and cooperation. Actually the EU has been the first partner of ASEAN, and over the past 45 years has been one of the most important partners of ASEAN. The EU has aligned itself with the priorities of ASEAN and has been helping us a lot. And for ASEAN, we consider that cooperation between ASEAN and EU, between this region of Asia and the European continent as very much important. Over the past few years, a lot of activities have taken place between our two groupings. At the same time, the EU has been extending its assistance to ASEAN in all areas

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<sup>2</sup> The full text of the keynote speech is included here, but has been slightly modified from the original version.



including the three pillars, political security, economic trade and investment, social and cultural activities. Ambassador Aliberti has mentioned it all already. But this is very important as it cements the foundations of cooperation for our two groupings.

Now, for 45 years, we have been discussing on how to further improve our relationship. That's always the question. We have different groupings but we also have differences in our beliefs and values and standards. So how can these two groupings further deepen our ties and partnerships? Later on I will touch upon these issues further but I must first make a note that I see more commonalities. And in the words of our colleague from KAS, the sense of togetherness has been strengthened over the years.

The second point I would like to observe in sharing is about the changing global and regional landscape. Certainly, we have been facing fundamental changes these days never before observed in our world in Europe and also in Asia as well. We also see a lot of differences in geopolitics and in the strategic environments of both blocs and in the world.

In economic terms, we also see a lot of changes. Not only because of the rivalry among the major powers but also because of the different contexts for economic development. One of the points that we can see is about inflation and decoupling. Before, we used we think that interdependence can be a good thing for peace and security and brings economic benefits for both sides. Nowadays, when crisis comes, we can see that interdependence can be over dependence on something and that is the critical point for security and economic development. In Europe and Asia as well, it is a lesson.

Technological advancement also helps us to move further forward but at the same time, there are challenges. Suddenly, non-traditional security is also important, for instance issues like pandemics and climate change. In that context, I see that the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a most dynamic region but at the same time, the shifting of geopolitics in this region can also create major rivalry among the region's major powers. So in that context, while we see the opportunities of engagement of the major powers here, at the same time, we have the challenges of competition and other challenges like non-traditional security issues, for example, the pandemic or climate change or the economic impact from the Ukraine crisis or other pressures like the Mekong sub region or the South China Seas.

But one point, one point I recognise which is very much important – the EU has been adopting new strategies to push further forward its engagement in the Indo Pacific. While I will not be in a good position to talk about how the new strategy of the EU for Indo-Pacific cooperation like Ambassador Aliberti, I certainly believe this is very important. The EU has seven priority areas covering issues such as climate change, sustainable development, green transition, digital transformation, connectivity (including human connectivity), peace and security, defence and capacity building.

All these areas I think are in line with the objectives and priorities of ASEAN and the ASEAN Vision for 2025 and beyond. And I think is a very good foundation for us, not only to build up on the achievements over the past 45 years, but also the basis for us to move further forward.

So I now recommend to you to read carefully the new strategies that have been adopted by the EU with regard to this region, the Indo Pacific. The approach of the EU is very much in line with ASEAN, and includes recognition of the importance of ASEAN in this region.

I have several points to note. Point number one, the EU will pursue its strategies, but the main emphasis is about cooperation. Number two is about rule based order. Number three is about the original architecture of economic cooperation and security in this region, with the recognition of ASEAN playing a central role. This is very important. I think that ASEAN and its priorities can also go together with the EU. And you know that ASEAN is now trying to push further forward to achieve its objectives and priorities for 2025. But, at the same time, since 2020, when Vietnam was chairman of ASEAN, we have conducted discussions and developed our vision beyond 2025. So we have to look into the achievements that we have been getting over the past years, the regional and global context and the priorities that we must build together. And I think that the priorities of ASEAN are also closely aligned with the EU's priorities.

My recommendation for the approach of both current and future ASEAN-EU cooperation is the establishment of priorities. We have a lot of priorities that we share together but the approach should be to work on those priorities within the new global and regional context, particularly the ASEAN Vision for 2025 and beyond, and the new context of the EU engagement with the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN.

So number one, we must deepen the ongoing cooperation between ASEAN and the EU, including on the number of important initiatives. Number two, refocus on the region. That means on the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asia. Certainly ASEAN cannot go beyond this region, ASEAN wants to engage its dialogue partners, especially the EU. And this region is very important to the world and to Europe as well. Number three, align new strategies and priorities within the two blocs. And I think as I analysed a little bit earlier, the priorities of the two blocs seems to be very much in line, so commonalities and togetherness will be very important. Our new strategies and new priorities have much in common. And number four, support ASEAN regions in meeting the ASEAN Vision 2025 and beyond. Certainly supporting ASEAN will include, as we often say, the key pillars of the ASEAN community, the role of ASEAN as central to the regional architecture. And also capacity building. That is also very important. We have been doing this over the past years, but we need to do more. Finally, number five. Coordinate with other partners. I think this is very important as ASEAN and EU are important partners of each other. But we have many other players that can contribute constructively to the priorities of this region that are in line with ours, including the US, including even China, including Japan, India, Australia and others. It will be very important that we can make use of the mechanisms created by ASEAN and the mechanisms that ASEAN engages with its dialogue partners. It is our wish that this region will be peaceful and prosper.

That's the list of suggestions for cooperation. Economic recovery will be important, supply chain resilience or economic trade and investment with the EU will be very important. Other issues include digital transformation or climate change or human security or capacity building. Ambassador Aliberti mentioned connectivity and also security issues as we continue to strengthen

the rule-based order. And it is also important to tackle a number of issues that are facing this region such as the South China Seas, the Mekong or the other non-traditional security issues in this region.

Finally, I think the role of Vietnam will be very important in this exercise. Vietnam has a consistent policy of placing priority on ASEAN and on the ASEAN-EU relationship and we continue to do so. Vietnam collectively has good relations with both EU and ASEAN. Vietnam bilaterally has good relations with the EU including what we have the EVFTA (Europe Vietnam Free Trade Agreement) and the EVIPA (EU-Vietnam Investment Protection Agreement). That is very important, that can be a bridge of our efforts to work together for ASEAN-EU relationships. In conclusion, I think the achievements over the past 45 years have laid the grounds for us to move further forward. But more important than that, the new priorities and strategies that the two blocs have developed are in line with each other and we can work along these lines on how to continue, how to align and how to coordinate, that will be critical. I thank you very much and I wish this conference success.

## PANEL DISCUSSION 1

### The Role of ASEAN-EU Cooperation in the New World Order

#### Panellists:

**Ambassador Dr. Luan Thuy Duong**, Former Ambassador of Vietnam to Myanmar

**Ms. Izzah Ibrahim**, Analyst, Foreign Policy and Security Studies (FPSS) Programme, Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia

#### EANGAGE Fellows:

**Dr. Pascal Abb**, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)

**Ms. Dana Lee**, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU)

#### Moderator:

**Dr. Vu Le Thai Hoang**

Acting Director General, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (IFPSS), Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

The theme of this panel was the role of ASEAN-EU cooperation in the new world order. The panel started with a brief review of what constitutes the new world order, as this in itself can be an issue of debate. While the current world order is often described as a post- cold war era, and more recently as a post-covid era, it could also be argued that this is a completely new era that we are living in. The moderator, Dr. Vu Le Thai Hoang listed a triad of challenges that the new era currently faces. First, the Sino-US strategic competition. Second, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Third, cross-border or non-traditional security challenges, in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

In this environment, there is an important nexus between security and economic development. In the context of this new world order, the panel discussed the role of the EU and ASEAN, their shared values and challenges and outlined potential priorities for cooperation.

The two EANGAGE fellows presented the findings of their research papers written as part of the activities of the EANGAGE project. Dr. Pascal Abb discussed the Belt and Road Initiative and the impact of the BRI on member states' domestic and external security. He outlined both the advantages and disadvantages of the BRI. He discussed how some of the disadvantages of the BRI (such as on issues of sustainability) could provide openings for exploring alternatives to the BRI.

Ms. Dana Lee presented the findings of the research on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) under authoritarian regimes. She noted that there is a gap between the WPS agenda and implementation at the national level in ASEAN member states; and recommended that there should be greater policy dialogue between the EU and ASEAN on these issues.

The research presentations were followed by insights on ASEAN-EU cooperation by the two other panellists. The panellists noted that the EU and ASEAN have strong foundations of cooperation, and share both common goals on peace, security and development and also face common challenges. However, the EU and ASEAN have different views and approaches on some of these issues. Therefore, there is a need to bridge this gap in perceptions. Before talking of specific cooperation projects, there is a need to have dialogue to narrow down the gap in perceptions between the two regions. For instance, there should be further discussion of how to apply EU practices and morals in the ASEAN context, as well as how to adapt the ASEAN principles to the new global circumstances.

The panel also discussed how diversifying away from a Chinese-centric or American-centric views could present an opportunity for the EU to explore alternative avenues of partnership. At the same time, it is critical that both regions focus on the new challenges being faced today, on issues such as human security, energy security, health security, water security, food security and cyber security to name a few.

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO DAY 2

**Dr. Chheang Vannarith**, President, Asian Vision Institute (AVI)

Dr. Chheang Vannarith welcomed all the conference participants to the second day of the conference. He thanked the EANGAGE partners, in particular the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) for the organisation of the conference. He briefly reflected on the events of the conference on the first day, including the keynote speeches on ASEAN-EU cooperation. and provided an overview of the schedule for the second day of the conference.

## **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: TRACK I AND TRACK II DIPLOMACY**

### **Delivered by:**

#### **Ambassador Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dang Dinh Quy**

Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Viet Nam, Former Ambassador of Viet Nam to the United Nations in New York

Ambassador Assoc. Prof. Dr Dang Dinh Quy provided an overview of Track I and Track II Diplomacy, explaining the difference between Track I (or more formal diplomacy) and Track II diplomacy. He highlighted the differences between the two in terms of level of formality, the actors involved and the main focus of each type of diplomacy. For instance, while Track I diplomacy is more formal, Track II diplomacy tends to be associated with conflict resolution and conflict prevention.

Ambassador Assoc. Prof. Dr Dang Dinh Quy discussed these different tracks using examples from Vietnam and from his experience in the ASEAN region, but also referred to the EU. He compared Track I and Track II diplomacy on the basis of the level of flexibility involved, and also in the limitations of each type of diplomacy. For example, the two types of diplomacy vary in relation to the interactions with the media. Both types of diplomacy have their advantages and disadvantages on different factors, including limits on the type of discussions they can undertake, the time taken for negotiations, their impact and the level of implementation, as well in the degree of influence on policymaking.

Despite the differences between the two tracks of diplomacy, Ambassador Assoc. Prof. Dr Dang Dinh Quy underlined that the two tracks can also complement each other.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION 2**

### **Digital Connectivity: Lessons from the EU and ASEAN**

#### **Panellists:**

**Mr. Chanty Pisal**, Director of Digital and Innovation Policy Research, Institute of Digital Research and Innovation, Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology (CADT)

**Mr. Jason Chumtong**, Policy Advisor, Artificial Intelligence, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Germany

#### **EANGAGE Fellows:**

**Dr. Riccardo Corrado**, Assistant Professor and ICT Programme Chair, American University of Phnom Penh and Advisor, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Cambodia

**Ms. Catherine Setiawan**, Project Coordinator, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

#### **Moderator:**

**Ms. Alina Reiss**, Deputy Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Singapore

The second panel discussed the challenges of digital connectivity and drew lessons learned from the EU and ASEAN on how to utilise artificial intelligence and other digital tools for the benefit of the people. Different perspectives on the topic were shared by two external experts: Mr. Chanty Pisal, Director of the Digital and Innovation Policy Research Centre of the Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology and Deputy Director of the ASEAN ICT Centre and Mr. Jason Chumtong, Policy Advisor on AI, block chain and quantum computing at the Analysis and Consulting Division of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung- and two EANGAGE Research Fellows: Ms. Catherine Setiawan, Project Coordinator at the International Telecommunication Union and Dr. Riccardo Corrado, Assistant Professor and the Chair of the ICT Programme at the American University of Phnom Penh. The panel was moderated by Ms. Alina Reiss, Deputy Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Singapore.

The panel agreed that digital connectivity is a topic with vast potential for greater EU-ASEAN connectivity and cooperation. However, the two regions themselves are still struggling with digital connectivity amongst each other and within individual member countries.

The EU and ASEAN should collaborate in order to find answers to the many open questions regarding digital connectivity: How can the digital divide of ICT infrastructure be bridged - both between rich and poor countries but also between urban and rural areas? Why does AI need to be regulated and how should ethical guidelines look like? How much government regulation is needed and what role do companies and start-ups play? Are the current regulative frameworks supportive of advanced digital connectivity?

Furthermore, the nexus of digital connectivity and security risks were discussed as well as the opportunity for using digital tools for sustainable resource management as explored in the research on the Mekong river region by Dr. Riccardo Corrado and Ms. Audrey Liwan. The main challenge to intensified digital connectivity between both regions however, is the different data cultures of the EU and ASEAN, which at the same time provides several opportunities to learn from each other and share best practices.

## SCENARIO-BASED EXERCISE

### Facilitator:

**Ms. Vu Phuong Anh**, Research Fellow, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (IFPSS), Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

The scenario-based exercise aimed to engage fellows on the topics of security and connectivity through using case studies and simulating a policy dialogue process. The fellows were provided with a case study of a real-world policy issue and then divided into different groups to come up with a solution to this policy problem. Each group represented one stakeholder, from ASEAN, EU, civil society and the private sector. The fellows were given time to work together as a group to conduct research gather information on the case study. The exercise was then divided into the following parts:

- Presentation of issues
- Discussion & negotiation between parties
- Presentation of responses
- Presentation of solutions

The exercise facilitated inter-cluster networking and bonding among the research fellows from both the EU and ASEAN. It also provided fellows insights into the policymaking process.

## CLOSING REMARKS & NEXT STEPS

### Delivered by:

**Mr. Andreas Klein**, Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Singapore

In closing the conference, Mr. Klein gave a brief background to the project, and how it was started in 2021 at the beginning of the pandemic. He spoke of the early days of the project, when the fellows met virtually, to the present when the fellows could meet together for the final conference of the project, having already met before in Cambodia and Berlin. Looking back, he said it felt like a miracle to be at the conference after everything the project, the fellows and everyone had gone through with the pandemic and other crises, such as the war in Ukraine.

He thanked the hosts, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) for hosting the meeting and putting the conference together. He also thanked the EANGAGE partners, the Asian Vision Institute for their support over the last few years.

Reflecting back on the conference, he reiterated the theme of ‘togetherness,’ pointing out that the idea of the project from the very beginning embodied this idea, to bring together the next generation of think tankers from the EU and ASEAN. Based on the meetings he had attended, he remarked upon how he has been amazed by the ideas, vision and creativity of the fellows (including in the simulation exercise during the afternoon). Seeing how the young fellows viewed the present challenges and how they created solutions for the future gives hope that in a world of uncertainty, the brilliant minds of the next generation can take up these challenges of today and tomorrow.

He also thanked the fellows for their support, enthusiasm, energy and patience for sticking together through the pandemic and driving the project forward.

Looking forward, he reminded the fellows that the project does not end with this conference, but at the end of the year. Fellows still needed to submit their final contributions for the publication of the research papers.

Although the project would end, Mr. Klein informed the fellows that the project team are developing new ideas on how to keep this network of think tankers together so that the network would not end with this project, but the fellows could continue to work together in the future. Mr. Klein then closed the conference by requesting fellows to stay in touch and support each to create new ideas to work towards a brighter future.