

# REGIONALISM AND COVID-19: HOW EU-ASEAN INTER- REGIONALISM CAN STRENGTHEN PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT

Policy Report  
August 2020

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**NANYANG  
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# Executive Summary

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The COVID-19 pandemic is testing international cooperation and presents a particularly daunting challenge to regionalism. The transboundary nature of pandemics requires regional cooperation for successful pandemic management. However, even the two most successful regional organisations, the European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), seemed unable to muster a sufficient regional response. This was in stark contrast to timely securitisation and robust responses at the national level.

Several months into the pandemic, both the EU and ASEAN are somewhat recovering from their initial COVID-19 paralysis. In particular, the EU has responded belated but comprehensively to the pandemic. This report investigates how both organisations responded in the months following the global COVID-19 outbreak, how ASEAN can look towards the EU for regional pandemic management best-practices, and how both organisations can explore greater EU-ASEAN cooperation by building on existing strong inter-regional ties.

# Introduction

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The COVID-19 pandemic is one the greatest challenges of our time. Beyond the immediate health threats, the crisis is testing international cooperation and presents a daunting challenge to regionalism. The transboundary nature of pandemics requires regional cooperation for successful pandemic management, but even the European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — both widely recognised as the most successful regional organisations — are struggling with nationalism and unilateral knee-jerk reactions among their members.

As Europe and Southeast Asia have been hit hard by COVID-19, the EU and ASEAN have been chastised for being sluggish, with insufficient early crisis response. Indeed, several months into the global outbreak, it appeared COVID-19 might be the greatest challenge the EU had ever faced. Likewise, despite plenty of goodwill, ASEAN has been unable to muster a coordinated regional response. This stands in stark contrast to timely securitisation at the national level, which allowed for robust national response.

Several months into the pandemic, both the EU and ASEAN are somewhat recovering from their initial COVID-19 paralysis. In particular, the EU has responded belatedly but comprehensively to the pandemic. This report investigates how both organisations responded in the months following the global COVID-19 outbreak, how ASEAN can look towards the EU for regional pandemic management best-practices, and how both organisations can explore greater EU-ASEAN cooperation by building on existing strong inter-regional ties.<sup>1</sup>

## The National Securitisation of COVID-19

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COVID-19 is a non-traditional security (NTS) crisis<sup>2</sup> that threatens human security — a concept that recognises several dimensions of security beyond direct physical violence — on numerous levels. Pandemics are multi-dimensional threats, cutting across numerous NTS challenges. Without exhausting the full depth of its negative spill-over effects, COVID-19 has

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<sup>1</sup> J. Dosch, “The EU and the Asia-Pacific,” in *The New Global Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, 3rd ed., M. Connors, R. Davison, and J. Dosch (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> M. Caballero-Anthony, *Negotiating Governance on Non-Traditional Security in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

already proven to be a challenge to public health at large by overwhelming national healthcare systems in countries like Italy.<sup>3</sup> It affects the social and mental well-being of citizens as a result of draconian public policy responses, such as lockdowns, as well as imperils the economic well-being of businesses, citizens, and ultimately governments. The pandemic has caused the largest economic recession in decades, which could put the integrity and legitimacy of the state at risk.

This leads to two preliminary conclusions: NTS threats are incredibly complex, and they are inevitably transnational. This presents a dilemma for NTS management. Due to the immense complexity and serious spill-over effects across several domains of state and human security, national governments must react decisively to protect their citizens' well-being. Such robust national actions, however, could harm international cooperation, which is equally imperative due to the transboundary nature of NTS emergencies. As a result, COVID-19 represents a substantial challenge to regionalism.

Health governance is high on national security agendas, and substantial national securitisation<sup>4</sup> of COVID-19 occurred almost immediately across Europe and Southeast Asia. Securitisation intends to heighten threat perceptions pertaining to a particular issue, thereby enabling governments to gain better executive control and muster more resources. ASEAN leaders roped in the defence establishments,<sup>5</sup> French President Macron declared war on COVID-19,<sup>6</sup> and the British government mobilised its armed forces.<sup>7</sup> Singapore made pandemic management a matter of national pride,<sup>8</sup> and while one may debate the appropriateness of Vietnam's campaign,<sup>9</sup> it was largely successful, invoking militaristic rhetoric from previous wars,

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<sup>3</sup> J. Horowitz, "Italy's Health Care System Groans Under Coronavirus — a Warning to the World," *New York Times*, 12 March 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/world/europe/12italy-coronavirus-health-care.html>.

<sup>4</sup> O. Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in *On Security*, ed. R. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> "Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019," ASEAN, 14 April 2020, <https://asean.org/storage/2020/04/FINAL-Declaration-of-the-Special-ASEAN-Summit-on-COVID-19.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> R. Momtaz, "Inside Macron's Coronavirus War," *Politico*, 12 April 2020, <https://www.politico.eu/interactive/inside-emmanuel-macron-coronavirus-war/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Military stands up COVID Support Force," UK Government, 19 March 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/military-stands-up-covid-support-force>.

<sup>8</sup> Website for "SG United", 2020, <https://www.sgunitied.gov.sg>.

<sup>9</sup> B. Hayton and T.L Ngheo, "Vietnam's Coronavirus Success Is Built on Repression," *Foreign Policy*, 12 May 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/12/vietnam-coronavirus-pandemic-success-repression/>.

mobilising the strong sense of national solidarity among the Vietnamese who take pride in their ability to unite in crisis and endure hardship.<sup>10</sup>

## Regional Contagion from COVID-19 Globalisation

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Europe and Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to pandemics, owing to their deep interconnectedness in terms of integrated supply chains, trade and investment, tourism and people-to-people connectivity intra-regionally as well as inter-regionally. Such admirable linkages have advanced regional integration, but are now, ironically, dangerously exposing both regions to COVID-19. Pandemics inevitably transcend the nation state and, thus, connect domestic public policy domains and make national public health a matter of regional concern. Health governance efficacy, or the lack of it, in one state may prevent or cause an acute regional crisis. Consequentially, effective pandemic management must be included in regional security agendas as regional cooperation becomes the *sine qua non* for everyone's security and prosperity. Alas, timely national responses were initially not matched regionally, and both ASEAN and the EU have invited strong criticisms.

Due to largely uncoordinated and patchy travel restrictions within ASEAN, travellers and returning citizens had predictably caused a second wave of imported cases, while infections spread within local communities. As late as March 2020, intra-ASEAN travel was still possible, and large cultural gatherings were still taking place. There was also a certain degree of complacency in some countries. As the pandemic spread, individual ASEAN members took unilateral and uncoordinated actions to stem further spread. For example, without consultation and with almost immediate effect, Malaysia announced a border closure, including the causeway with Singapore which is a critical supply route for goods and labour between the two countries. Vietnam unilaterally shut its borders with Cambodia and Laos, which in turn prompted Cambodia to shut its borders in retaliation. Several ASEAN countries delayed border closures in deference to China.

Likewise, the EU Commission President called the COVID-19 response by EU member states a "painful story" of "only for me" responses.<sup>11</sup> As

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<sup>10</sup> H.K. Nguyen & T.M. Ho, "Vietnam's COVID-19 Strategy: Mobilizing Public Compliance Via Accurate and Credible Communications," *ISEAS Perspectives*, 25 June 2020, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_69.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_69.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> U. Leyen, Speech on the European coordinated response to the COVID-19 outbreak at the European Parliament, 26 March 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_20\\_532](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_532).

soon as the extent of the crisis became obvious, EU members immediately abandoned the most sacrosanct EU principles, such the four freedoms of movement (of people, goods, services and capital). They unilaterally shut their borders and effectively abandoned the borderless Schengen area — a key pillar of European integration, highly contentious even during the refugee crisis in 2015.

Italian citizens were shocked by the lack of European solidarity. The badly affected Italy activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism whereby EU members in need can appeal to other member states for crisis assistance. However, Rome's plea for medical support and equipment was not answered for weeks. Even worse, several countries decreed export bans on relevant medical goods, thus forsaking both European solidarity and the EU single-market.

After France became the first EU country to confirm a case of COVID-19 on 24 January 2020, it took EU health ministers almost three weeks to convene the first emergency meeting. And although COVID-19 had already been spreading in Asia, the initial outbreak in Italy did not raise much concern in Europe. The EU agency European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) expressed confidence that the situation in Italy was under control — a complacency which allowed several the emergence of clusters in popular holiday destinations for example.

Thailand became the first country outside China to confirm a case. By late March, all ASEAN countries had confirmed cases, most of which were imported from East Asia. Nevertheless, the first ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 only took place as late as 6 April 2020, and the first ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on COVID-19 a week later. Despite plenty of statements on ASEAN solidarity, there was little to no coordination on the ground.

Realist International Relations theory<sup>12</sup> would predict precisely that. Due to the risks inherent in the anarchic international system, in times of crisis, states will resort to national and unilateral self-help with only their narrow national interest in mind. In this perspective, international cooperation is politically palatable only in times of harmony, but COVID-19 demonstrated that the impact of institutions and organisations on state behaviour is limited.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995): 5–49.



What such notions overlook, though, is the causal relationship between national self-help and regional inadequacy. The inefficacy of regional organisations is both the cause and the consequence of robust national responses as a result of early national securitisation. As realists would predict, initial national reactions to COVID-19 showed that governments tend to follow their basic self-help instinct as soon as a crisis materialises, and multilateral cooperation came to a standstill in the EU and ASEAN. The more the EU and ASEAN member states chose to act unilaterally or stay complacent, the less likely was a concerted regional response. Governments would thereby act unilaterally in the absence or delay of a concerted regional response, not only affirming the realists' prediction on COVID-19<sup>13</sup>, but making it a self-fulfilling prophecy.

## **Regionalism's Comeback**

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This criticism is not to deny the legitimacy or urgency of national responses. However, as pandemics are by definition a case for international cooperation, failing to meaningfully coordinate regional pandemic management raises doubts regarding the value of the EU and ASEAN for its members.

Fortunately, regionalism offers a way out of this crisis in a two-dimensional EU-ASEAN inter-regionalist approach. Firstly, ASEAN should be willing to look at how the EU recovered from its initial paralysis to meaningfully support regional COVID-19 management post-haste; and secondly, the EU and ASEAN should cooperate closely on pandemic management. With their long inter-regional history, there should be sufficient inter-regional trust and mechanisms to meet both dimensions.

### ***Restoring trust***

While it is impossible to foresee the long-term damage of Brussels' initial institutional failure, it is encouraging to witness the EU's awakening. Its lobbying efforts managed to break the negative self-help spiral across its membership, as individual EU members stepped up their solidarity efforts, fearing reputational loss and irreparable damage to the EU.

Following the woeful silence on Italy's requests, EU members later commenced mutual support among each other, providing consular support

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<sup>13</sup> S. Walt, "The Realist's Guide to the Coronavirus Outbreak," *Foreign Policy*, 9 March 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-economy-globalization-virus-icu-realism/>.

and repatriation of one another's citizens, sending medical teams and equipment, and treating one another's patients.

The action the EU and its member states are taking to minimise the economic fallout is impressive. Bridging disagreement among members, the EU Commission initiated a €540 billion package to support businesses and workers, and the European Central Bank provided a total of €870 billion to local banks. Adding to this is the biggest financial EU instrument yet. The Next Generation EU will raise €750 billion as common EU debt, to be channelled to member states as loans and grants for their pandemic recovery efforts. This represents a revolutionary development in Eurozone policy in itself — that negotiations could be concluded within five days, along with the new multi-annual EU budget of over €1 trillion, demonstrated the determination of the EU and its leaders in tackling COVID-19.

More importantly for regionalism, perhaps, is the EU's Joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures, such as border closures and export bans, which were hastily implemented with little coordination, to restore members' trust in EU regionalism and arrest the vicious cycle of self-help dynamics. The roadmap is a detailed plan to regionally coordinate the gradual rollback of confinement measures and the resumption of proper regional procedures. It is a multi-sectoral ministerial-level coordination for member states to jointly and coherently emerge from COVID-19 as *One EU*. It includes the coordination to restore free movement, mutual healthcare support, resumption and maintenance of supply routes and transport infrastructure, and even the restart of sports events. Importantly, for practical reasons as well as a gesture to support regionalism, national ministers agreed to let the Commission lead on this restoration process.

The roadmap is the EU's best answer to critics who had too prematurely predicted its downfall.<sup>14</sup> In both ASEAN and the EU, decades of regional integration and historical reconciliation processes have created a certain degree of trust, a necessary condition and a driver of regional integration.<sup>15</sup> Trust and cooperation are mutually dependent constituents of regionalism, as trust facilitates cooperation and cooperation promotes trust.<sup>16</sup> But initial

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<sup>14</sup> N. Chrysoloras, "Debt Crisis, Brexit, Now Virus. Can the EU Survive?" *Bloomberg*, 13 May 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-13/how-the-virus-poses-an-existential-threat-to-the-eu-quicktake>.

<sup>15</sup> H. Mayer, "Historical Narratives as Normative Drivers of Integration and Disintegration in Europe and Asia," in *Drivers of Integration and Regionalism in Europe and Asia: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. L. Brennan and P. Murray (London: Routledge, 2015), 54.

<sup>16</sup> R. Putnam, R. Leonardi, and Y.N. Raffaella, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 171.

self-help reactions in both regions demonstrated how easily trust could give way to the self-fulfilling prophecy of realism. Member states must regain trust in one another and in regionalism itself. It is imperative to not only invest financially in post-COVID-19 recovery, but jointly discuss and coordinate an exit strategy from unilaterally imposed restrictive measures that have hurt regional trust, for which, the EU has produced an exemplary blueprint.

Although Vietnam, the current ASEAN Chair, is trying to facilitate regional coordination, ASEAN has yet to respond forcefully as one region. A special video conference, the 36th ASEAN Summit, and numerous video conferences on all levels of governance, allowed officials to exchange lessons and reach an agreement on a “whole-of-ASEAN community approach” in combatting COVID-19. This included establishing a common Response Fund, an in-principle consensus on the need for joint procurement and stockpiling, and the sharing of information and best practices. However, there has been little concrete actions by ASEAN members. With Brussels’ coherent and tangible approach, there should be ample opportunities for emulation.

## Inter-regional Learning

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Much of the academic literature on inter-regionalism and norm diffusion agrees that crises are often drivers of policy adaptation through the drawing of pertinent lessons.<sup>17</sup> Far from suggesting that ASEAN should simply imitate the EU’s deep institutionalisation and its logic of regionalism, the particular case of COVID-19 management by the EU should be viewed as an approach worth studying.

Indeed, the EU’s joint COVID-19 management strategy is precisely what ASEAN leaders have themselves envisioned: a caring, multi-stakeholder, whole-of-community approach.

A collaborative pandemic management strategy in ASEAN does not necessarily require substantial institutional change and may be achieved by expanding and exhausting existing mechanisms and partnerships. The ability to leverage existing mechanisms calls for sound regional cooperation, and this could engender trust, and even result in stronger regional institutions and mechanisms.

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<sup>17</sup> A. Jetschke and P. Murray, “Diffusing Regional Integration: The EU and Southeast Asia,” *West European Politics* 35, no. 1 (2012): 174–191.

Besides regionalism, COVID-19 also provides a unique opportunity for inter-regionalism. In supporting and collaborating with ASEAN on COVID-19, the EU can live up to its normative objectives and ambitions to achieve security relevance in Asia. For ASEAN, leveraging the strong EU relationship will support its pandemic management and directly demonstrate its relevance as well as the support of the ASEAN Community vision.

### ***Institutional spill-over***

Despite the habitual refusal to treat the EU as a model for regional integration — a direction ASEAN *should not venture into*<sup>18</sup> — two pre-conditions for successful inter-regional exchange are already in place, namely communication mechanisms and precedents of institutional learning.

Since the EU (then EEC) became ASEAN's first dialogue partner in 1977, inter-regionalism has gradually deepened, beginning with a formal Cooperation Agreement that underscored the equality of the EU-ASEAN partnership. Yet, the EU sees itself essentially as a normative power<sup>19</sup> and ASEAN has always been a target, a "natural partner" for its normative approach by influencing ASEAN.<sup>20</sup>

Over time, the inter-regional agenda broadened substantially accompanied by ever-increasing diplomatic engagement with a designated EU Ambassador to ASEAN, alongside the current 25 Ambassadors from respective EU countries and EU Missions to ASEAN countries. The relationship now spans from economics and trade to social-cultural and development cooperation, and more recently, political and security issues and challenges as well.

Adding to the diplomatic engagement is the substantial EU funding to ASEAN that exceeded €200 million between 2014 and 2020, making the EU the single largest donor to ASEAN integration, contributing more than ASEAN members themselves. One of the inter-regional flagship programmes is the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI). E-READI supports EU-ASEAN network building and knowledge exchange, where ASEAN is encouraged to learn from the European experiences in integration.

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<sup>18</sup> M. Natalegawa, *Does ASEAN Matter? A View From Within* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015), 58f.

<sup>19</sup> I. Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 20, no. 2 (2002): 235–58.

<sup>20</sup> Jetschke and Murray *op. cit.*; T.A Börzel and T. Risse, "Diffusing (Inter-)Regionalism: The EU as a Model of Regional Integration," *KFG Working Paper 7*, and "The Transformative Power of Europe," *KFG Working Paper 1* (Freie Universität Berlin, 2009).

Yeo<sup>21</sup> points out that frequent interactions with, and the assistance provided by the EU, have tangibly influenced ASEAN's internal discourse. However, evidence suggests that this influence goes even beyond discourse. For example, EU-funded projects have synchronised ASEAN standards and practices with EU norms.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the ASEAN Charter draws on EU concepts and terminology<sup>23</sup> as a result of experience and knowledge transfer from the EU.<sup>24</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

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What measures should ASEAN look for in drawing lessons from the EU? And what can the EU and ASEAN do together?

ASEAN should leverage its plethora of existing mechanisms and frameworks by increasing the capacity of existing instruments, such as ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) instruments, to better account for the threats of pandemics. However, previous NTS challenges, such as disasters, have shown that although ASEAN mechanisms could be effective, significant challenges remain, particularly in the areas of coordination and clarity of mandates.<sup>25</sup>

A critical role should be given to the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) to become ASEAN's first responder to health crisis, such as pandemics, in order to effectively coordinate and facilitate genuinely domestic responses. This would restore trust in regionalism and reduce over-reliance on external parties, such as China. However, there is a need to endow these ASEAN mechanisms with greater resources as well as empower them with unambiguous legal mandates. Some measures are suggested below. All of them can tap into existing ASEAN mechanisms and do not require the EU's integrational depth.

First, while ASEAN cannot produce a bailout package of the magnitude proposed by the EU, its Rescue Fund is a step in the right direction. More importantly, ASEAN has secured buy-in from its ASEAN Plus-Three (APT)

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<sup>21</sup> L.H. Yeo, "EU-ASEAN Relations and Policy-Learning," in *Europe-ASEAN Relations*, ed. R. Balme and B. Bridges (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Dosch *op. cit.*, 185.

<sup>23</sup> Börzel and Risse *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> T. Koh, R. G. Manalo, and W. Woon, *The Making of the ASEAN Charter* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2009), 14, 41, 76f.

<sup>25</sup> Caballero-Anthony *op. cit.*, Chapter 6.

partners to contribute to the fund. It should extend this into the ASEAN-EU agenda, where ASEAN might find a generous benefactor. Indeed, the first EU-ASEAN Meeting on COVID-19 had led to the EU's commitment of more than €350 million in support of the pandemic management efforts by ASEAN members. This was later upgraded to a package of over €800 million for the ASEAN region by the EU's "Team Europe" instrument.

Second, ASEAN should study how the ECDC collaborates closely with member states to pool European health information and strengthen EU-wide early warning. ECDC also facilitates European public health networking and activities to exchange information and best practices. Existing ASEAN mechanisms have been comparatively mute due to sovereign-conscious ASEAN members. However, with the 2005 ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), there is a precedent for a legally binding ASEAN agreement that includes the obligation for information sharing to reduce calamities. With the devastating experience of COVID-19 fresh in mind, this interpretation should be expanded to include pandemics and placed under the ambit of the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADInet).

Third, the pandemic demonstrated that in interconnected regions, pandemic resilience is only as strong as its weakest link. Comparable to EU practices, ASEAN should assume a role in immediate pressure relief for lesser-developed healthcare systems by facilitating temporary secondment of doctors and health experts across ASEAN as well as regional ICU-sharing where possible.

Fourth, ASEAN should jointly manage a common stockpile of essential medical supplies and equipment. This can come under the AHA Centre where the existing emergency logistics instrument, Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), could be leveraged for rapid distribution across the region. This would fulfil a function similar to "rescEU reserve", a European equipment reserve where deliveries are coordinated by the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

Equally important is the studying of the EU's roadmap. As trust is a necessary constituent of successful regionalism, it is imperative for ASEAN to look towards the EU processes to ease restrictive measures across all sectors, facilitated by a coordinating authority. Despite differing national conditions, action must be coordinated among member states to avoid political friction while instilling trust. There have been commendable bilateral intra-ASEAN precedents that should be gradually extended to include all ASEAN members. Such dialogues should result in common guidelines for the implementation of pandemic responses in the future, such as minimising

the detrimental impacts on supply chains, trade and free movement. Doing so can help to restore trust in regionalism's value-added. The upcoming EU-ASEAN webinars on COVID-19 facilitated by the EU Mission can support such learning trajectories.

It will take significant efforts and political will for ASEAN and the EU to emerge from the pandemic unscathed. However, if both organisations manage to successfully capitalise on inter-regional mechanisms and the current positive momentum of COVID-19 management, COVID-19 may become a driver and reinforcer of regional cooperation and both organisations will emerge stronger from the pandemic.

## About the Author

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**Frederick Kliem** is a Visiting Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. Frederick's research interests include regional integration and multilateralism in Asia and Europe. At the Centre for Multilateralism Studies, he studies ASEAN, Southeast Asia and geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific, as well as the European Union and comparative regionalism. In addition, Frederick is a Freelance Consultant and Key

Expert on ASEAN-EU matters to the EU consortia in Brussels. Before joining RSIS, Frederick was Senior Programme Manager at the political foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, in Singapore.



## About the Centre for Multilateralism Studies

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The **Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS)** is a research entity within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The CMS team conducts cutting-edge research, teaching/training, and networking on cooperative multilateralism in the Asia Pacific region. The Centre aims to contribute to international academic and public discourses on regional architecture and order in Asia Pacific. It aspires to be an international knowledge hub for multilateral and regional cooperation.

The Centre's research agenda includes international and global forms, as well as expressions of cooperative multilateralism:

- **Economic Multilateralism**

Research areas include trade, monetary, and financial integration in ASEAN, ASEAN+3, South Asia, and Central Asia; evolving linkages between various Asian sub-regions and with countries/sub-regions outside the region; and developments in the global economic architecture to ensure complementarity between global and regional initiatives.

- **Diplomatic and Security Multilateralism**

Research areas include inter-governmental and non-official arrangements such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Six-Party Talks, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, and the like. Initiatives in defence diplomacy include the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM Plus, the Shangri-La Dialogue, and alliances.

- **International Political Economy**

The programme examines the interactions between politics and economics of particular countries, regions and the world. Drawn from both the fields of economics and politics, an international political economy perspective enhances our understanding of issues in the regional and global economy.

- **Temasek Foundation Series on Trade & Negotiations**

With a generous donation from Temasek Foundation, CMS organises two capacity-building programmes a year; an annual three-day training course for regional members of parliament and In-Country training courses for government officials. These workshops are carefully designed to help develop the human capital necessary to take full advantage of the opportunities unleashed by globalisation and international trade.

For more information about CMS, please visit [www.rsis.edu.sg/research/cms](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/cms).

## About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

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The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education and networking, it produces research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.



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