



**42<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
Brunei Darussalam, 23-25 August 2021**

*Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion  
Towards ASEAN Community 2025*

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANNUAL AIPA-EP INTER-  
REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE**

EU-ASEAN relations are particularly perceived through the lens of trade and economic relations. The EU is ASEAN's second largest trading partner as well as the biggest provider of Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN. ASEAN as a whole represents the EU's third largest trading partner. From the trade standpoint, this obviously shows that the EU is a strategic partner of ASEAN. Beyond trade and economic relations, the European Union aims at upgrading the EU-ASEAN relations to a Strategic Partnership with a view to promoting the common interests based on shared values.

The European Parliament (EP) holds observer status to AIPA since 1980. The EP Delegation for Relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and ASEAN (DASE) has been regularly attending the AIPA annual General Assembly (GA). On these occasions, they have participated in an AIPA-EP "Dialogue with Observer Delegations", held by AIPA with each individual observer.

AIPA and EP are natural partners, with a significant potential to contribute towards strengthening EU-ASEAN relations. While both are already engaged through the annual Dialogue with Observer Delegations, this event takes place at the margins of the AIPA GA and only allows for up to 2 hours for discussions. Deepening the relationship between the EP and AIPA is a prospect that the EP/DASE is exploring in the efforts to strengthen the parliamentary extension of EU-ASEAN relations. In this regard, the European Parliament Delegation represented by the Chair of DASE, has been consistent in making the proposal at the 39<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> AIPA General Assembly, to hold one additional annual inter-regional meeting, which would allow for a more structured dialogue between the European Parliament and AIPA.

Upon correspondence with the AIPA President, the AIPA Secretary General developed close contact with the European Parliament to follow up the proposal. The output of the intensive communication between the AIPA Secretary General and the Chair of DASE was the implementation of the Inaugural EP-AIPA Inter-Regional Parliamentary Dialogue that was

successfully held through video conference on 22 June 2021. From this perspective, taking into account the success of the first dialogue as well as the wish to strengthen and continue the practice of such a dialogue expressed at the meeting by the Delegates from the two groupings, the AIPA Secretariat takes the initiative to establish the AIPA-EP Annual Inter-Regional Parliamentary Dialogue, aside from the “Dialogue with Observer Delegations” that has been regularly convened during the AIPA General Assembly.