

UDC 330.3

Jel Classification: F50

DOI: 10.15587/2312-8372.2019.162592

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ANALYSIS OF THE FEATURES OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH THE ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS) COUNTRIES

Об'єктом дослідження є особливості економічних відносин Європейського Союзу та країн-членів союзу АСЕАН (Асоціація держав Південно-Східної Азії). Одним з найбільш проблемних місць є те, що Європейський Союз як наднаціональний інститут в даний час переживає кризу на різних рівнях. Починаючи з економічних проблем, особливо з так званими країнами PIGS (Португалія, Італія, Греція та Іспанія), через труднощі при досягненні внутрішньополітичного консенсусу і єдиногосного «виступу» на міжнародному форумі, а також забезпечення безпеки Європи на східному кордоні.

У процесі дослідження використовувалися загальнонаукові та спеціальні методи дослідження: аналіз економічних процесів, узагальнення аналізованих особливостей економічного співробітництва Європейського Союзу (ЄС) та країн-членів АСЕАН. Структурно-функціональний метод дозволив виділити основні ризики та напрямки стратегії реалізації програми співпраці з членами АСЕАН. Статистичний метод використовувався при оцінці і аналізі стану торгового балансу між членами ЄС та АСЕАН.

В ході дослідження було показано, що вирішення політичних проблем або проблем безпеки Європейського Союзу в основному залежать виключно від своїх власних сил. З точки зору економічних питань, існує ряд регіонів, з якими така тісна співпраця представляється логічним рішенням, яке може принести користь в найближчому майбутньому. Одним з таких регіонів є Південно-Східна Азія. В результаті дослідження показано, що АСЕАН є швидко зростаючою організацією в регіоні протягом багатьох років, і її торговий потенціал для ЄС швидко збільшується. Зміцнення міжнародного співробітництва на лінії Європейський Союз – АСЕАН може виявитися дуже важливою альтернативою для європейських економік. Крім того, такий альянс може стати основою для широкого обміну технологічним і освітнім досвідом, створюючи ядро майбутніх стратегічних відносин.

Результати дослідження показують не повністю використаний потенціал співробітництва з членами АСЕАН. Можливості та області майбутньої співпраці компаній ЄС зокрема і країн ЄС в цілому з членами АСЕАН можуть стати основою для майбутніх досліджень.

Ключові слова: Європейський Союз, Асоціація держав Південно-Східної Азії (АСЕАН), зона вільної торгівлі, міжнародне співробітництво, азіатські країни.

1. Introduction

ASEAN – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is one of the most dynamically developing integration groups in the world. ASEAN countries are noticing dynamic economic growth. Gaining better access to their markets is one of the most important priorities of the European Union (EU). For years, the process includes a very wide range of topics contained in three pillars: political and security, economic and socio-cultural.

This approach is an expression of striving for a comprehensive integrated region and readiness to face the differences between its countries. This approach does it with ASEAN an unprecedented case in Asia, where cooperation between particular regions usually focuses on narrow topics or covers a wide geographical scope.

The great importance attached to joint initiatives in the field of security as well as social and cultural issues distinguishes ASEAN from the EU, where these threads are still basically left to intergovernmental activities. In

turn, the intention to build an ASEAN free trade zone on the Asian continent, proposed at the beginning of the nineties by Thailand, is similar to the concept of the European Single Market.

Europe's strong capital for ASEAN countries is high trade and a positive image (soft power). Although it is difficult to say that the European Union serves ASEAN countries as a model of integration, its experience undoubtedly remains a valuable inspiration and point of reference. The financial support of the European Union for the functioning of ASEAN is also significant. In 2006, the European Commission identified ASEAN as a priority market and one of the most important economic partners for the Union. The most important countries of the European Union have already appreciated the enormous potential of the countries that make up ASEAN.

Strengthening relations with the ASEAN, which is the basic element of stability in the Asia and Pacific region, is the real strategic interest of the European Union. Cohesive and strong ASEAN, continuing processes of internal

integration, favors regional prosperity, security and stability. It creates new opportunities for cooperation on regional or global issues.

Therefore relevant is the study of peculiarities of the economic cooperation of the European Union and countries-members of the ASEAN union.

2. The object of research and its technological audit

The object of research is the features of economic relations of the European Union and countries-members of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) union.

The peculiarities of cooperation of EU and ASEAN shows big potential, development of which gives for both parties abilities to grow-up and increase synergy effect of such cooperation, especially in political & security area, economical area and sociocultural area.

The most problematic issues which need to be improved first of all are [1]:

- integration abilities of members of ASEAN association (economic, transportation, information flows, customs etc.);
- sustainability level of ASEAN members, and its readiness for reforms;
- the usage of lean management technics while operating within environment and disaster management;
- adoption and renovation of higher education and students mobility especially between ASEAN countries.

3. The aim and objectives of research

The aim of research is identification of peculiarities of economic relations of the European Union and countries-members of the ASEAN association.

To achieve this aim, it is necessary to solve the following objectives:

1. To outline main risks and areas with which program of cooperation development will continue working in the upcoming years.
2. To identify main keywords, with which members of ASEAN trying to promote their steps under reformation of economic environment.

4. Research of existing solutions of the problem

It is possible only talk about ASEAN from August 8, 1967, when the ministers of five countries of South and East Asia signed the Declaration in Bangkok. These countries are:

- Philippines;
- Malaysia;
- Indonesia;
- Singapore;
- Thailand [1].

All countries of South-East Asia were relatively quickly invited to cooperate within ASEAN. However, they believed that definitely greater benefits would bring them functioning outside the structures of the Association. In 1984, Brunei joined ASEAN, followed by Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar and Cambodia [2]. The accession of Vietnam – a communist country and a regulation by the Burma junta – was very important. Even before the official adoption of

the Declaration, three informal conversations took place. According to the Declaration, the main goals of ASEAN are to accelerate economic growth, cultural and social development and preservation of peace and stability in the region. At the same time, the declaration does not contain information about political cooperation, and from the area of interest, military issues were deliberately excluded [3].

Mutual relations between the European Union and ASEAN have been in existence for over 40 years, developing at the same time both economically and in the political sphere. Informal relations between the Community and ASEAN were initiated in 1972 as part of the special ASEAN coordination committee, in 1975 a joint study group was established. More formal contacts were initiated in 1977 [4]. The cooperation was established as part of the political dialogue conducted during ministerial meetings, and the first ministerial meeting with ASEAN took place a year later in Brussels. Such meetings take place every two years and constitute an important form of cooperation between the two regional groups. From this moment, actions are taken to strengthen contacts or deepen integration, which results in ensuring stability in this area of the world. During the second ministerial meeting, which took place on 7 March 1980 in Kuala Lumpur, the EC-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement was signed [5]. At the beginning, this arrangement was concluded between the Community and the following countries of the ASEAN group: Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore, becoming an extremely important element in shaping mutual relations, especially in the economic sphere [6].

ASEAN countries are dynamically growing. Thus, gaining access to their markets is one of the priorities of the European Union. Due to the suspension in 2009 of negotiations regarding the creation of the EU-ASEAN interregional free trade area, European Union member states have obliged the European Commission to negotiate bilateral agreements with individual countries of this grouping [7].

ASEAN aimed to develop cooperation, peace, equality and prosperity in the region. ASEAN creates a market for around 500 million people with a cumulative GDP of over 600 billion USD. At present, ASEAN strives to create a zone of peace, neutrality and freedom, as the declaration from Kuala Lumpur from 1971 says about it. This includes both actions focusing on internal reforms and tightening mutual relations, political measures or solutions in the sphere of security (including a zone free of nuclear weapons), as well as external actions that mean closer cooperation with third countries [8].

Cooperation not only in the regional structure, but also with other centers of strength in the world, it is characterized by a stage that continues to this day in the short history of the grouping [9]. ASEAN maintains relations with such superpowers as China, India, Japan, USA Russia, as well as with the European Union [10].

5. Methods of research

To perform above mentioned objectives in the study the general scientific and special methods of cognition were used. Analysis of cooperation ASEAN with the European Union, its economic trade, trade balance, elements of programs signed, steps which were made by members of association was conducted. The structurally-functional method has allowed to highlight the main risks and areas

of the program implementation strategy for cooperation with ASEAN members. The statistical method was used in assessing and analyzing the state of trade balance between the EU and ASEAN members.

6. Research results

6.1. Analysis of cooperation with the European Union.

Treating cooperation between the two regional groups, they should come from the relations of individual EU countries with the countries of Southeast Asia, which are associated with the colonization of this area. The United Kingdom still has quite strong relations with Malaysia, Brunei or even Singapore, and the relations between Holandia-Indonesia and France-Indochina have deteriorated. Despite some reluctance to some member countries, the European Union is a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN and a member of ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum). Permanent meetings of the EEC and ASEAN representatives have already taken place since 1972, and their institutionalization took place only in 1980, after the official signing of the cooperation agreement. They were referred to as Ministerial Meetings and they play a very important role to this day [6].

The specifics and difference in basic principles of cooperation between European Union and ASEAN association based in their Motto's [11]:

- EU was united in diversity of language, culture, history, traditions, way of doing business;
- in case of ASEAN countries – it is steps to create something common, trying to find some unites ground, based on usage of one language, in the scope of mostly the same as in Europe land area.

Such differences in Unions create different strategies to succeed its goals, and different levers in communication for business roads. Nevertheless, a cooperation strategy which was updated recently in a «Plan of Action for 2018–2022» [12] focuses on three areas of cooperation:

- political & security;
- economic;
- sociocultural.

Meantime within such three mentioned cooperation areas within next few years EU is planning to invest into decreasing of big economic, political and social gaps which currently could be observed in ASEAN countries. One of the main areas of cooperation was outline as follows:

- sustainable and inclusive economic integration and trade;
- climate change reduction for industries;
- environment and disaster management;
- higher education and students mobility.

It also covers two cross-cutting topics: connectivity, and narrowing the development gap in ASEAN. As it is possible to assume the main problems of ASEAN countries is big difference in development of particular branches comparing to the status of development of similar areas in EU countries. Such competence provided by EU is implementing by different programs which strengthen ASEAN economics and increases trade potential between EU and ASEAN association. Anyway the implementation of mentioned programs is different by different countries in ASEAN. The readiness and willingness of such changes even taking as example its moto: «One vision, one identity, one community» is not so equal. For example, Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which create main rules on the markets

and simplify process of establishing partnerships between different, even private business «players» was concluded by members of ASEAN in a different years, which also decrease level of implementation of cooperation programs:

- Singapore concluded FTA in 2013;
- Vietnam concluded FTA in 2015;
- Philippines only launched negotiations regarding FTA in 2016;
- Malaysia launched negotiations regarding FTA in 2010 and currently they are on hold;
- Thailand launched negotiations regarding FTA in 2013 and currently they are on hold.

And according to EU business – FTA launch between EU and ASEAN is preferable than just between some countries inside of unions. Fig. 1 shows a list of Free Trade Agreement preference for EU business based on performed reforms and level of development of local economics.



Fig. 1. Free Trade Agreement preference for EU business [13]

Mentioned list shows main risks in implementation of new strategy for 2018–2022 years. To avoid such unequal steps in development was established main risks and areas with which this program will continue working. They are:

- implementation standards in main areas of economic – gives ability to speed up and decrease errors in trade agreements and product's flows;
- improvements in securing intellectual property rights – such problem was blocking investments into the ASEAN markets; many companies was faced with technologies and end products clone process;
- creation of conditions for trade facilitation – open many new possibilities for simplifying EU-ASEAN trade cooperation;
- improvements of transport and infrastructure (mainly critical) – in any economics – infrastructure in general, logistics costs are usually big bottlenecks and creates huge costs of operational activity. In conditions of ASEAN association – mostly all countries located on islands, with a higher than in EU risk of natural disasters. Such restrictions create special strategy for building and improvement of transport and infrastructure possibilities;
- insurance development – as already mentioned, natural disasters in that region accounted more than 50 % of all worldwide losses from natural disasters. But the reason of development innovative insurance programs is based on serious gaps between growth and insured assets.

Unification of customs procedures, with exchange of countries databases for more secure and quick products turnover.

Such vectors of action plan shows well designed strengthening process for increasing of ASEAN countries GDP and EU abilities for trade.

In its activities, ASEAN increasingly uses the European Community's experience and practices in the field of regional integration, although it emphasizes that in pursuing similar goals, it tries to develop its own solutions, slightly different from those used in the framework of European integration.

Despite the somewhat limited role that Europe has in the South East Asia region in the political and military area, economic ties connecting the European Union and ASEAN are very strong. ASEAN belongs to the first three non-European trading partners of the EU, which in turn remains the most important foreign investor in ASEAN and its third largest trading partner. In 2017 trade between the European Union and ASEAN increased and export stand for 11 % of all partners. Import with EU products in 2017 had 9 % share in total amount of products import. Fig. 2 shows trade share of ASEAN countries with main partners.

Trade negotiations with the Association were initiated in 2007, and already two years later – were blocked with the consent of both parties. Large economic diversification (disproportion of absolute GDP in the European Union between the poorest and richest country is 58-fold, in ASEAN 96-fold), political differences, including trade policy, proved to be unstoppable obstacles.

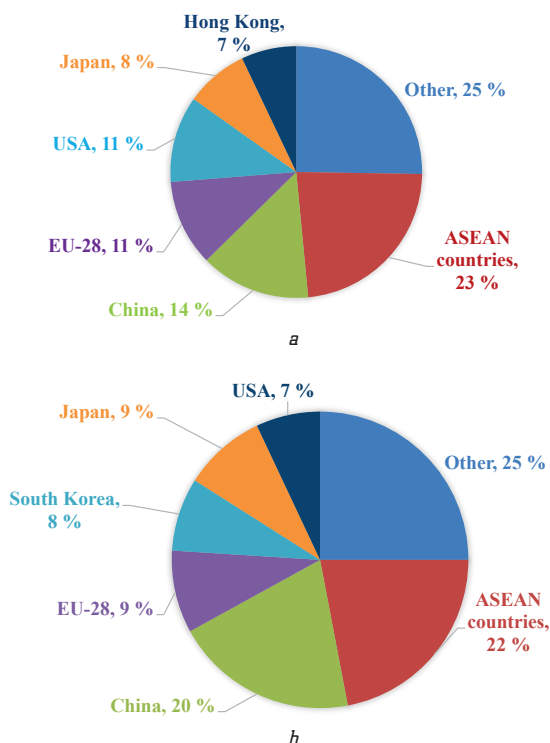


Fig. 2. Trade picture for ASEAN countries with main partners [14]:
a – export; b – import

The ASEM forum discusses the issues of integration and cooperation between European and Asian countries. There is a strong need for more effective global financial and economic management. Economic themes are also the theme

of the Asian-European Foundation (Asia-Europe Foundation – ASEF) and the European Policy Center (EPC). The most important, however, is the increase in trade turnover. The EU aims to reduce and abolish trade barriers, especially customs barriers. It undertakes numerous conversations and consultations for the purpose of trade liberalization, investment growth and financial reforms. In order to achieve this, the Action Plan on Facilitating Trade and the Action Plan for Investment Promotion are defined [15].

6.2. Trade turnover between the EU and ASEAN. The most important and measurable effect of bilateral dialogue and agreements ASEM is developing investment and trade cooperation. As a result of cooperation or agreements, Asian countries are becoming more and more important economic partners of the European Union. This factor also has a positive impact on the growth of links that are evidence of increased activity on the part of Asian countries. However, not all countries belonging to the integrated ASEM area are active equally. Among the EU countries, the largest trade in goods with Asian ASEM countries is held by France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands [8].

In general, according to the survey of business environment [13] countries of ASEAN area are the most interesting for business opportunities in the next 5 years. Big amount of global companies try to establish there its offices; main number of EU based companies willing to expand cooperation in that region. Reasons of such intensive interest to this location despite strategic vector of EU for economic sector improvement in ASEAN countries is that mostly all members of ASEAN started with aggressive marketing campaigns, main keywords of which are:

- positive market environment;
- huge steps in law and regulations encouraging foreign investments;
- increasing of customer purchasing power;
- low salaries level;
- stable political environment.

As analysis shows – such arguments has created a good economic picture for investments and further EU-ASEAN cooperation development from one hand. From other hand the prediction of 5.2 % GDP growth rate in ASEAN during 2016–2020 years, rapid urbanization – 90 millions of people until 2030 will move to the cities, 163 million of consuming households (doubled according to 2013) – show a positive steps for stable growth [13]. As we can see from Fig. 3, EU-ASEAN trade changes were influenced by world economic crisis in 2008 and big increase in 2010. Linear line shows 5 % increase for 10 years scope in trade perspective. Such trend gives positive prediction for future trade trends between EU and ASEAN association.

Table 1 gives a short overview of main ASEAN members and total trade picture. Singapore, as a leader of opened economy, standards, logistics, staff expertise and GDP take a strong lead among other local countries. And only this country shows positive trade balance. Such picture gives ability to prove mentioned data that ASEAN countries despite one strategy has a different starting positions and common problems. EU strategy for increasing all ASEAN members competitiveness need to be analyzed and adopted according to the Singapore economic miracle example as a strategy which works in that region.

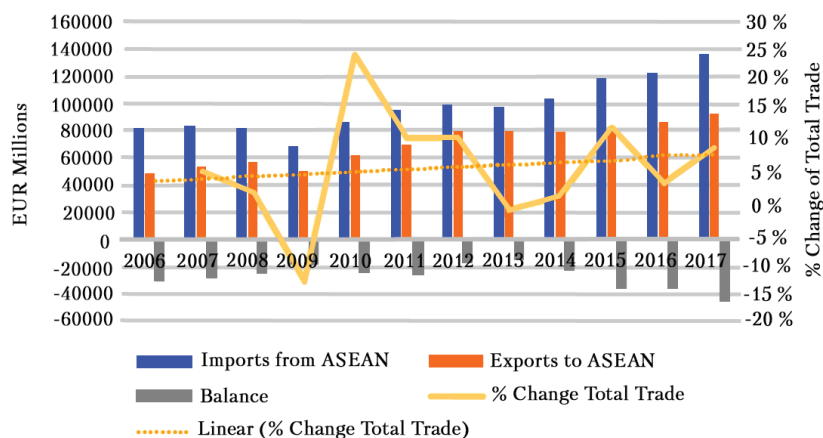


Fig. 3. EU-ASEAN trade in goods in 2007–2017 years [13]

Table 1

EU trade balance with ASEAN countries comparing 2007–2017 years, billion EUR

Country	Exports			Imports			Total trade (export+import)			Trade balance	
	2007	2017	Average annual growth rate (%)	2007	2017	Average annual growth rate (%)	2007	2017	Average annual growth rate (%)	2007	2017
Singapore	20.6	33.2	4.9	18.5	20.1	0.8	39.0	53.2	3.2	2.1	13.1
Vietnam	3.6	10.6	11.4	7.9	37.0	16.7	11.5	47.6	15.3	-4.3	-26.4
Malaysia	11.3	14.4	2.5	18.1	25.0	3.3	29.4	39.4	3.0	-6.8	-10.6
Thailand	7.9	15.0	6.7	16.7	22.3	3.0	24.6	37.4	4.3	-8.8	-7.3
Indonesia	5.4	10.1	6.5	12.8	16.7	2.7	18.3	26.8	3.9	-7.4	-6.6
Philippines	4.0	6.6	5.2	6.0	7.6	2.3	10.0	14.2	3.5	-2.1	-1.0
Cambodia	0.2	0.9	18.7	0.7	5.0	22.0	0.8	5.9	21.5	-0.5	-4.2
Myanmar	0.2	0.5	12.7	0.3	1.6	19.4	0.4	2.1	17.2	-0.1	-1.0
Brunei	0.2	0.2	2.7	0.1	0.3	7.7	0.3	0.5	5.2	0.0	-0.1
Laos	0.1	0.2	14.3	0.1	0.0	-12.7	0.1	0.2	6.3	0.0	0.2

Note: on the basis of data [14, online data code: Comext data code: DS-018995]

The countries that make up ASEAN are constantly developing their trade with the European Union. Goods from the Asian countries of their recipients are found in the European Union. However, the growing deficit is worrying for the Union in trade turnover. It should also be noted that the larger and more economically strong ASEAN countries have more trade with the European Union.

Analyzing the development of relations between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations over the years, there is no doubt that this cooperation was sinusoidal. The future will probably be shaped in the same way. The ongoing globalization processes are forcing international organizations and individual countries to enter into ever-lasting dependencies. Most probably, the track adopted by the European Union of a non-community but bilateral cooperation tightening with the ASEAN area, will bring greater and faster mutual benefits. A conservative European policy combined with a somewhat lofty attitude towards an Asian partner may hinder future cooperation. The end of negotiations with the ASEAN countries, and the start of talks with individual states divided the group into entities closer to Europe and the proverbial «poor relatives» with whom the European Commission conducts only courteous talks.

It should be remembered that the position of the European Union has weakened slightly after the crisis in 2008.

International partners saw that on some issues the European Union is clearly divided, it cares about individual interests more than the common good [16].

For some time, the «Turkish syndrome» can be seen more clearly in Southeast Asia. ASEAN, being an association of constantly developing countries, much poorer than the European Union member states, constantly strives for economic cooperation, striving for its own development. However, at the same time, ASEAN countries are not adapting to European values, norms and policies. Along with increasing the standard of living of the region's population, economic growth and improvement of the overall condition of the countries, their aspirations to play a much more important role (despite functioning in the shadow of the Chinese state) on the international arena are growing. Undoubtedly, such countries as Thailand, Singapore or Malaysia will long appeal for the attention of the European Union, also for prestigious reasons. Conclusion of cooperation agreements and establishment of free trade areas, apart from economic benefits, also brings an increase in credibility in relations with financial institutions [10].

While the Euro-Asian relations on tightening the economic dialogue will become more and more effective, the reestablishment of ethnic animosities in Asia may destroy not only the acquired achievements of the grouping, but may also contribute to a dangerous international conflict. «The Asian economic miracle was built on the foundation

of regional security and the pursuit of general development. Asian leaders today must choose between pragmatism and emotions» [17].

7. SWOT analysis of research results

Strengths. The positive aspect of the research is that it depicts main areas of future cooperation under the prism of economic risks, with which could be faced every part of the cooperation (EU or/and ASEAN members).

Weaknesses. This is critical to use for exact prediction the most updated numbers and results of reforms in the countries of ASEAN association. But the data from the part of those countries is restricted, and not opened for external research. In that case, we tried to propose future steps of increasing level of cooperation between EU and ASEAN based on the available data.

Opportunities. It is important to provide future research in the area of risks and possibilities of future cooperation of EU companies particularly and EU countries in general with ASEAN members.

Threats. Understanding that not all countries are going to provide reforms in the equal amount, and in the same speed it is difficult to create clear structure of future economic relations of EU and ASEAN.

8. Conclusions

1. The main risks and areas with which program of cooperation development will continue working in the upcoming years are outlined. Effectiveness of this program implementation will depend under readiness to changes in a countries management and business environment.

The world should appreciate the progressive integration of the countries of South and East Asia, as well as develop cooperation with such regional organizations. However, the association has already survived a kind of test of time. The Member States, while remaining in friendly relations, do not try to cooperate too closely, which undoubtedly prevents the emergence of conflicts, and cooperation takes place in these regions, where it is possible to reach agreement. Perhaps the activities carried out by ASEAN in the future will lead to the creation of a new power pole in this region of Asia. No state can afford to remain in isolation from the rest of the world, above all from neighboring countries or from regional cooperation.

2. The main keywords, with which members of ASEAN trying to promote their steps under reformation of economic environment are identified. It gives a clear overview where stands ASEAN economy and how will be possible negotiated for EU companies in future.

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