

ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) concludes successful visit to the EU

on Friday, 22 February 2013. Posted in [2013](#), [ASEAN Secretariat News](#)

Upon the invitation of the European Union (EU), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) visited the headquarters of the European Union in Brussels on 18-22 February 2013 to exchange experience in promoting and protecting women's and children's rights in Europe and Southeast Asia and to explore cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The visit also allowed ACWC Representatives to better understand EU institutions, mechanisms, instruments and policy priorities on a broad spectrum of issues relating to women's and children's rights.

The ACWC Representatives, led by their Chair Mrs. Kanda Vajrabhaya and Vicechair Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik, and with the participation of Deputy Secretary General for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Mrs. Alicia dela Rosa-Bala and staff, met with senior officials of the European External Action Service (EEAS), including Chief Operating Officer David O'Sullivan, EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambridinis, Managing Director for Global and Multilateral Issues Mara Marinaki, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific Viorel Isticioaia-Budura, Director for Human Rights and Democracy Veronique Arnault and Director for Asia Ugo Astuto, who shared information on EU policy aimed at promoting human rights, in particular the rights of women and children, outside Europe.

The delegation also had fruitful discussions with European Commission senior officials, including Director for Human and Social Development of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation Kristian Schmidt, Director for Equality of the Directorate General for Justice and Liberties Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, as well as, officials handling EU policy against trafficking in human beings and EU policy on the promotion of children's rights. Potential areas for future cooperation between the EU and ACWC concerning the rights of women and children were explored. The Ambassador of the Council of Europe to the EU, H.E. Mr. Thorbjorn Froyshnes and the Council of Europe's Head of the Gender Equality and Human Dignity Department Mrs. Elda Moreno shared information and experiences on the work of the Council in promoting and ensuring respect for women's and children's rights among the 47 members of the organisation.

The ACWC Representatives attended a meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and exchanged views with the Committee's chairman Mr. Mikael Gustafsson. The delegation also met with Mrs. Madi Sharma, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee. "It is very interesting to see how initiatives and projects related to women's and children's rights are being implemented in the EU. I am confident that our visit will only be the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership between ASEAN and the EU to protect the rights and raise the status of women and children in our two regions" said Mrs. Kanda Vajrabhaya, the ACWC Chair.

Deputy Secretary-General for ASCC Mrs. Alicia dela Rosa-Bala shared her perspective, "While ASEAN and the EU are geographically far apart and in different stages of development as regional organisations, both share the commitment to promote and protect human rights. Thus, the study visit has provided the opportunity for sharing experiences and good practices and paved the way for the strengthening of partnership and identifying possible areas of cooperation and collaboration in the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children".

The ACWC Representatives were also received by senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium led by Director for External Action of the EU Filip David. They exchanged views and experiences with representatives of the National Commission for the Rights of the Child, Institute for Equality between Women and Men, and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Fight against Racism, as well as numerous European civil society organisations on various issues concerning women and children, including gender-based violence, women's economic and political participation, human trafficking, child protection, child participation and education.

During the visit, the ACWC Representatives also had an engaging dialogue with the ASEAN Committee of Ambassadors in Brussels (ABC) that was chaired by H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia.

The visit was organised by the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI), an EU-funded programme aimed at supporting ASEAN regional integration.

The ACWC is a consultative, intergovernmental body of ASEAN that was inaugurated on 7 April 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 16th ASEAN Summit. The ACWC comprises twenty Representatives of ASEAN Member States for women's rights and children's rights. The ACWC's mandates and functions include the development of policies, programmes and innovative strategies to promote and protect the rights of women and children to complement the building of the ASEAN Community. More information is available at the ACWC's webpage: www.asean.org/ACWC.php.

Source <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-commission-on-the-promotion-and-protection-of-the-rights-of-women-and-children-acwc-concludes-successful-visit-to-the-eu>

Accessed 22 May 2013