

Visit of Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Manlio Di Stefano to Jakarta

The visit of the Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Manlio Di Stefano to Jakarta and his attendance at the second ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership Committee Meeting represents a progress toward the consolidation of the relationship between Italy and ASEAN.

ASEAN is one of the most successful examples of regional integration, as well as a trusted provider of stability and economic growth. Its contribution to upholding freedom of navigation, preventing conflicts and promoting pluralism and tolerance has been unprecedented.

At the same time, worrying developments are emerging in the Indo-Pacific: increased tensions over trade and supply chains, as well as intense competition on the political and security fronts. Consequently, regional and global powers, including the European Union and its member states, look at the Indo-Pacific with increasing attention, trying to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN, which represents an excellent framework to diminish geopolitical tensions.

Since the first Italy-ASEAN Joint Committee, we have been intensely negotiating the areas of joint cooperation. It's been a long and challenging process that culminated yesterday with the adoption of a 62-paragraph document, the Practical Cooperation Areas (PCAs). The PCAs reaffirm our commitment to work together in a wide range of fields.

The fields of cooperation include peace and security, maritime cooperation, good governance and human rights, trade, investment and private sector development, energy, food, agriculture and forestry, tourism, science, technology and innovation, information communications technology, digital integration and e-commerce, people-to-people exchanges, disaster management and humanitarian assistance, health, environment and climate change, culture, connectivity and sustainable development.

The presence of the Italian vice minister of foreign affairs in Jakarta, especially in a moment of extreme crisis in Europe, sends a very clear message: Italy is fully committed to the region and counts on her ASEAN friends for the success of our cooperation in the years to come.