

EU-ASEAN Cooperation In Facing Global Issues: Development and Pandemic

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Abstract

International cooperation between European Union (EU) and ASEAN is needed to deal with global issues related to Development and COVID-19 Pandemic. This study aims to see the implementation of liberalism and regionalism's theoretical approach within the EU-ASEAN Cooperation's framework. The qualitative method is used to answer the research objectives. The research data are obtained from the European Commission, ASEAN Secretary, Worldbank, WIPS, WHO, and UNCTAD to describe the EU-ASEAN cooperation. To deepen the desk study related to the themes, the author also conducted an analysis and construction of reports and news in print and online mass media related to the ASEAN European Union Cooperation in the development of the COVID-19 Pandemic during the 2016-2021 period. For development issues, the data used are from 2016 to 2021, meanwhile, for COVID-19 Pandemic issues, the data used are from 2020 to 2021. The results show that EU-ASEAN cooperation is more integrated regarding global issues. It is proven by the existence of many collaborations within the framework of Development Cooperation and Cooperation in overcoming the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, the flow of globalization also facilitates cooperation between the EU and ASEAN. This proves that the existence of the European Union and ASEAN, as well as their relationship based on Liberalism Theory in international relations, shows that there are no boundaries between countries in conducting international cooperation. The goal that wants to be achieved is to fight for common or global interests.

Keywords

cooperation; EU-ASEAN; liberalism; regionalism



I. Introduction

Starting from 2020, almost all countries were affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic in several aspects of life. Moreover, it has damaged the economic ecosystem and global order. A report released by the World Bank in 2020 showed that there was minus of 5.2% in global economic growth (Worldbank, 2020). That makes some countries in the world work together to overcome various global problems caused by the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In international relations, there are several types of patterns of relations between countries. The relationship pattern includes conflict, cooperation, war, and diplomacy (Baylis et al., 2014). Collaboration between countries has an aim to achieve the interests of each country. Cooperation carries out in solving problems that cannot be solved by the country itself. In addition, cooperation is limited to relation between state actors, yet it can also involve non-state actors.

This phenomenon can show the cooperation between countries and international organizations that will be analyzed by the author. The actors who cooperate are ASEAN and the European Union. In its development, the partnership that occurs shows an

enhancement. One of them is providing financial assistance of 4.4 trillion rupiahs from the European Union for the national integration program. The grant offers development cooperation between the EU and ASEAN in various sectors and the assistance of two billion Euros (Rp 35.04 trillion) to support bilateral cooperation within ASEAN member countries. The priority and essential areas of collaboration are green growth, climate change, and the environment.

The outbreak of this virus has an impact of a nation and Globally (Ningrum *et al*, 2020). The presence of Covid-19 as a pandemic certainly has an economic, social and psychological impact on society (Saleh and Mujahiddin, 2020). Covid 19 pandemic caused all efforts not to be as maximal as expected (Sihombing and Nasib, 2020).

This phenomenon becomes interesting to be analyzed in international relations because, according to the author, it is related to developing country development and the global Pandemic. It also shows the relationship between developed and developing countries. International development carried out through development cooperation is sought to improve the quality of growth in developing countries. The European Union carries out the alliance as an international organization representing developed countries and ASEAN as developing countries. This paper will examine the cooperation between the EU and ASEAN in the development aspect and overcome COVID-19 Pandemic through the theoretical approach of liberalism and regionalism in international relations.

Based on the background, the author would like to draw a problem formulation: How is the cooperation carried out by ASEAN and the European Union in dealing with Global issues (development and COVID-19 Pandemic) from the perspective of Liberalism and Regionalism in International Relations.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Liberalism Perspective in International Relations

International relation is a study that studies how interactions occur between countries in the global sphere. In International Relations, various perspectives influence the development of International Relations itself, namely Realism, Liberalism, and so on. The existing perspectives emerged against various global problems, which eventually gave birth to a perspective. One perspective that has a significant influence on International Relations is Liberalism. Liberalism is a philosophy regarding the fundamental values of individual freedom, rationality, morals, human rights, opportunity, and equal rights for humans (Steans, J., Pettiford, L., Diez, T., El-Anis, 2001).

Another opinion regarding liberalism expressed by Jackson and Sorensen (2009) is three basic assumptions. First, liberalism views positively on human nature. Second, liberalism believes that international relations can be a theoretical framework/research method systematically to arrange science. Science has some parts; theory, fact, phenomena, and concept. The research method used in problem-solving is categorized as method analysis. The caption is part of the figure caption, which is not a part of the picture. The method used in research completion written in this part is more into cooperative rather than conflict. Third, liberalism believes in progress. On the third assumption, liberalism believes that progress is progress in many areas of life. One way to achieve such progress is on the second assumption, namely cooperation. These three assumptions provide support for the explanation of the theory of liberalism presented by Mansbach and Rafferty.

2.3 Regionalism in International Relations

Regionalism in International Relations has various definitions. Regionalism is divided into two types (Mansfield & Milner, 1999). First, regionalism is based on geographical proximity, which can be interpreted as coordination or cooperation in the economic and political fields by geographically close countries (Fawcett & Hurrell, 1995). Second, regionalism is based on non-geographical factors, which can be interpreted as government and non-government activities. Thus, its activities can increase economic and political activity between countries that are not geographically close.

Meanwhile, the region is a territorial encounter distinguished from the premise of geological proximity, culture, exchange, helpful interdependence financial, communication, and useful support within organizations worldwide (Richard, 1973). According to Coulombis and Wolfe, there are four strategies or criteria that can be used to characterize and define a region with the reason of inspection which are geological criteria, criteria for legislative or military matters, financial criteria, and value-based standards criteria (Wolfe, 2000). Consideration of the unique characteristics of a region can be in the form of a topographical, sociological, ethnolinguistic, socio-political, and financial framework from a particular area to recognize the parts of a regional unit.

There are five ongoing processes of regionalism, namely regionalization, regional awareness and identity, regional cooperation between countries, state-supported regional integration, and regional cohesion (Allison-Reumann, 2014). In addition, there are three domestic factors concerning contemporary regionalism:

- a. Regionalism and coherence state where regionalism link beyond the state, which means that the sovereignty of a country has reduced and the boundary of a country will no longer be essential so that regionalism erodes the role of a nation. Coherence and viability are also closely related to the internal legitimacy of a country. If the government does not have a strong desire and they are not being able to maintain regional integration, it will not be easy to form a region.
- b. Regime and Democratization theory focuses on a country's domestic policy which adapts its internal system to its region through democratization.
- c. Convergence theory understands regional cooperation and economic integration dynamics in unifying various domestic policy choices from countries.

In the various forms of regional cooperation, there is no need for relations between these areas of cooperation. However, each cooperation has its international status consequences. Regional organizations are part of the same world bound by common goals based on geographical, social, political, economic, cultural, and formal structures that provide direction for various intergovernmental legal agreements. The forms of regional cooperation can be in terms of 1) Functional cooperation which refers to a limited issue area agreed by countries to work together on specific issues; 2) Economic cooperation refers to an order that expects to create a degree of commercial privilege, but without any harmonization in domestic rules and obligations for joint action in international affairs; 3) Political cooperation, including mutual support and commitment that respects each other in applying specific values and practices within a country; and 4) Cooperation on foreign affairs and security policy means governments systematically inform and consult with each other.

III. Research Method

To dissect the cooperation between the EU and ASEAN in dealing with development and global pandemic issues, the author extensively used qualitative research with a desk

study method to discuss the EU and ASEAN Cooperation phenomenon. A desk study conducted on literature and previous research related to liberalism and regionalism discourse in international relations and link to the European Union and ASEAN Cooperation. To deepen the desk study related to the themes, the author also conducted analysis and construction of reports and news in print or online mass media related to the European Union and ASEAN Cooperation in development aspect from 2016 to 2021. In addition, the data were obtained from European Commission (EUROSTAT), ASEAN Secretary (ASEANSTAT), Worldbank, WIPS, WHO, and WIPS.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 EU-ASEAN Cooperation

ASEAN and the European Union in the context of regionalism have been discussed in various literature. Moreover, ASEAN's plan to immediately realize a Southeast Asian community in 2015 has received many opinions, whether a positive, constructive response or even a pessimistic satire (HS, 2010). Many things arise related to ASEAN institutions and their idealistic goals in 2015, especially when it is compared to what has been achieved by the European Union as a comparison institution. One of the things that emerged was an institutional duplication effort, which meant that ASEAN should imitate what has been done by the European Union to become a solid institution like today. However, the problem of duplication is not as easy as one would like it to be. History and ideological aspects are two of the many things that distinguish the EU and ASEAN.

The political geography and cultural diversity are very much different. The EU is homogeneous in culture, while ASEAN consists of multi-racial and ethnic groups, although the ancestors of Southeast Asian nations came from the same place. In the terminology perspective, regionalism refers to the definition that is always associated with the notion of regionalism. Meanwhile, the fundamental character of regionalism that emerged at that time, among others, was the existence of various forms of simple international organizational structures. In this case, some countries that have joined the organization on a regional basis have more complex mechanisms and systems. The existence of commissions and parliaments shows that the organization that emerged was no longer straightforward. The second character is the emergence of dominance among these countries, which influenced every decision-making.

Referring to the theory of regionalism, the relationship between the EU and ASEAN is not because of geographical proximity but rather based on non-geographical factors, which can be interpreted as government and non-government activities. These activities increase the level of economic and political activity between countries that are not geographically close. It can show the ASEAN relationship with the EU in respective relations between two local associations, specifically the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The cooperation between the two regional organizations covers politics, economy, defense, and culture. ASEAN collaboration with the European Union officially began in 1977. Dialog between the two organizations was legal through the signing of the ASEAN-EEC Cooperation Agreement on March 7, 1980, which took place in Manila, Philippines.

The relationship between the two organizations continued through the Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership in Nurnberg, Germany, in 2007. The meeting in Germany became a milestone for the cooperation between the EU and ASEAN. Their meeting continued until there was a cooperation agreement called the Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership held in

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam (2012). During the meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, the EU and ASEAN agreed to strengthen cooperation. The two organizations agreed to improve relations in three main areas, namely, security politics, economy-trade, and socio-culture.

4.2 EU-ASEAN in Dealing Global Development Issues

Liberalism explains the key concept, namely the existence of regional or multilateral cooperation. There are at least three definitions of the concept of cooperation in International Relations presented. The first opinion was expressed by Keohane (2009), who defines cooperation as a condition when actors change their conduct to the actual or anticipated preferences through policy coordination. The second opinion comes from Clackson, who explained that cooperation basically should lead to rewards for all states, not necessarily equal rewards, but everyone should get the benefit (Clackson, 2011). In contrast, the third opinion quoted from Milner explains cooperation as goal-seeking behavior that strives to reduce the others' advantage or to impede their want-satisfaction (Milner, 1992). Three opinions above can show some of the characteristics of regional cooperation (regionalism) in the perspective of liberalism, that there are at least two parties, there is an adjustment of interest on the ability of the other party, and no advantage gained by all parties. This concept will describe the phenomenon of development cooperation carried out by the EU and ASEAN.

The phenomenon of cooperation cannot be separated from the emergence of new political phenomena in global politics, namely the emergence of collaboration and integration of countries in a region on a continental scale (Christiansen, 2001). The European Union can indeed be used as an example in defining and explaining regional cooperation. Furthermore, Regional cooperation formed by European countries is a form of issues and actors' development in international politics. As an institution, the EU is an actor, the party that encourages the creation of economic, socio-cultural, and political development, even in various other issues (Luneto, 2021). European Union cooperation has become one of the world's economic powers that cannot be found elsewhere when other regions are still trying to integrate collaboration. The European Union has merged and created a European economic entity with a single currency, the Euro. In addition, the European Union also has a relatively complete set of cooperation tools. They even can create a new form of policy.

While the European Union already has a complete and well-integrated system, several other regions are still lacking due to the very high disparity among its member states. For example, ASEAN, as one of the regional cooperation organizations that cover the social, cultural, and economic fields. At the beginning of its formation, the ASEAN structure did not work well because of ideological conflicts. On the other hand, ASEAN member countries, except Singapore, are agricultural countries, so there is no opportunity for complementary cooperation. However, the cooperation between the EU-ASEAN can still be carried out. One of them is a cooperation with Indonesia, as part of ASEAN, since 1967. The European Union, which was still in the form of the EEC or European Economic Community, for the first time established a cooperative relationship with ASEAN (Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008).

The European Union, which is the regional integration of European countries, has undergone complex and entrenched phases of development. Consisting of 27 member countries with the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) globally, the European Union certainly has high bureaucratic and regulatory standards (EUROSTAT, 2021). Therefore, Indonesia has to meet the operational standards, procedures to high requirements before

getting approval to enter and compete independently in the European Union market (Musyawardi & Chalid, 2015).

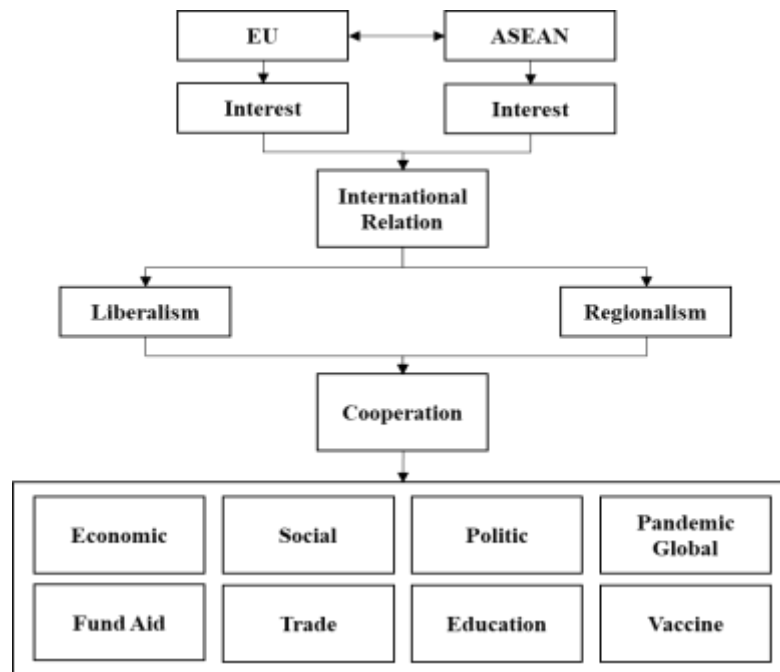


Figure 1. Scheme of cooperation between EU and ASEAN in International Relations

At first glance, the relationship between ASEAN and the European Union looks lopsided and only benefits one party, namely ASEAN. Meanwhile, the European Union does not appear to be dependent on regional cooperation, and it is even considered detrimental to the European Union. However, the relationship between the two regions is mutually beneficial. If it is deeply analyzed, the relationship between the European Union and ASEAN can be a positive-sum game in which the condition where the sum of the gains and losses of all participants involved is positive (Thaddeus & Nexon, 2009). In international relations, the cooperation scheme between the EU and ASEAN illustrates aspects of interest which can be illustrated in the following procedure shown in Figure 1.

In this scheme, the benefits that ASEAN can obtain are by making the European Union an investor who can support the development or develop the economic potential of ASEAN member countries. From this cooperation, ASEAN can make the European Union an investor who provides capital to member countries to build their domestic businesses and provide new jobs, which can help member countries. One example is the EU-ASEAN Enhanced Regional Program (E-READI) and the Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the European Union (ARISE Plus) (Liliyah, 2020). These two programs are the flagship programs of the European Union's development cooperation in ASEAN with a total fund of more than 2 billion euros (European Union, 2020). E-READI is a cooperation program that facilitates dialogue forums between the European Union and ASEAN in policy areas across all pillars of the ASEAN Community (politics and security, economy and socio-culture). With funding of US\$21 million and implementation over six years, E-READI continues the achievements of the previous program, namely READI. Furthermore, it also assists ASEAN in the development and implementation of regional integration and community-building strategies, supported by relevant EU experience. In addition, ASEAN has great potential in attracting foreign direct investment (Drzymała,

2013). This can be seen through the data on the development of FDI from EU to ASEAN from 2012-2019 at table 1.

Table 1. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of the European Union to ASEAN 2012-2019 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2020)

No	Source Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	228	471	333	62	42	84	- 466	269
2	Mining and quarrying	742	1,575	1,627	1,820	844	3,304	122	721
3	Manufacturing	- 14,573	3,977	6,890	3,789	4,009	5,928	3,518	2,617
4	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	182	248	178	- 250	- 210	2,133	63	- 518
5	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	79	102	82	- 143	79	298	12	33
6	Construction	- 21	203	188	9	- 202	29	80	75
7	Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicle and motor cycles	10,269	7,109	2,639	2,174	3,451	9,935	9,065	7,151
8	Transportation and storage	- 395	- 769	434	529	600	207	2,301	108
9	Accommodation and food service activities	4	- 3	34	16	15	25	17	96
10	Information and communication	811	333	408	321	38	240	303	- 200
11	Financial and insurance activities	- 5,944	- 1,045	10,681	- 2,260	14,353	- 12,371	5,362	6,604
12	Real estate activities	365	334	453	721	475	560	1,122	499
13	Professional, scientific and technical activities	130	182	229	174	36	183	- 457	- 76
14	Administrative and support service activities	53	31	- 9	39	122	18	126	21
15	Public administration and defense, compulsory social security	-	-	-	-	18	34	13	13
16	Education	- 2	1	2	0	4	10	6	7
17	Human health and social work activities	4	2	11	1	36	18	4	36
18	Arts, entertainment and recreation	6	12	- 9	4	10	4	26	3
19	Other services activities	4,889	2,027	363	12,360	7,505	6,752	4,116	1,246
20	Others	637	931	4,409	1,008	3,017	-	509	- 3,299
Total		- 2,537	15,718	28,943	20,373	34,243	17,389	25,842	15,406

The data in Table 1 shows that the European Union carries out foreign direct investment (FDI) in almost all strategic sectors in ASEAN, including agriculture, financial and insurance activities, wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, and real estate. It proves that the development of cooperation between the EU and ASEAN is from liberalism, which wants a world without borders to achieve global prosperity (borderless world). More explanations are shown by the World Investment Report Prospects Survey (WIPS). In addition to the investment element, WIPS respondents indicated that several countries have favorable locations, for example, in the aspect of market growth, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are developing countries that have a great demand (European Commission, 2016). Table 2 below shows that investors are more interested in the growth markets and cheap labor force for the ASEAN region than the size of the market, certain suppliers, business environment, expertise, and access to capital markets.

ASEAN's potential is one of the reasons for the European Union to undertake investment cooperation. Several countries in ASEAN have relatively high market growth, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand. In addition, access to the availability of natural resources in ASEAN is also an interesting attraction compared to other countries. The export market growth of the European Union and ASEAN has indeed been excellent because of the decision of European Union investors to invest in ASEAN. It refers to the Export-Import developments of the European Union and ASEAN.

Table 2. European Union Investors Decision Factors Invest in ASEAN (UNCTAD, 2020)

No	Decription	Others	ASEAN
1	Market Growth	China, India, Brazil, The Russian Federation, and Poland	Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand
2	Market Size	USA, Germany, Canada, China, The Russian Fed, and Brazil	
3	Acces to Regional Market	Mexico, Germany, and Poland	Vietnam
4	Presence of Supplier	UK, Germany, France, and India	
5	Bussiness Environment	USA, Germany, France, and Australia	
6	Skill and Talent	USA, Germany, UK, France, and India	Thailand
7	Cheap Labor	China and India	Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand
8	Acces to Natural Resources	Canada and Australia	Indonesia
9	Acces to Capital Market	UK, USA, Canada	
10	Incentives	Australia and Brazil	Vietnam

Besides Economic Development Cooperation, the European Union and ASEAN attempt to have Development Cooperation in governmental issues, security, and socio-culture. Participation in governmental issues and security can be shown at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Post Ministerial Conferences (EU, 2021). The European Union and ASEAN also initiated several follow-up meetings, including ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) and ASEAN-EU Senior Officials Meeting (AESOM). Likewise, the EU effectively take a part in the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Plus EU Consultation (SOMTC+EU). In the joint forum, the European Union actively provides consultations on security issues and the prevention of transnational crimes. The meeting also initiated the ASEAN-EU High-Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation (HLD-MS), a forum of cooperation to improve maritime security between the EU and ASEAN.

In the social and cultural fields, the European Union supports ASEAN in empowering women, gender equality, and protecting migrant workers. This effort was realized through a scholarship program from the EU to ASEAN countries, named the Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE) program (ASEAN, 2020). Through the SHARE program, the European Union hopes to increase the education levels in Southeast Asia. The SHARE program continues to be facilitated by dialogue between the two parties, the EU-ASEAN Regional Dialogue Instrument (READI). The discussion was effective from September 2011 to 2017. Through this continuous exchange, the European Union gives grants and improvements in different areas, for example, science, innovation, climate, and natural disaster management. Specifically for natural disaster management, the European Union and ASEAN agreed to fund the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center).

The EU also continues to support the development process in Southeast Asia. The sustainable development cooperation reaches an agreement on November 17, 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand. This dialogue and sustainable development cooperation actualized the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 (United Nations, 2019). The agreement and sustainable development cooperation between the EU and ASEAN plan to last until 2030. In dealing with climate change, the two organizations are also committed to take concrete action. Through the High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change in Bangkok, Thailand, on July 8, 2019, both ASEAN and the European Union agreed that climate change is a real threat and must be prevented. The description above shows that liberalism provides benefits and freedom for the European Union and ASEAN to develop economic, political, security, and social and cultural in the era of globalization. The perspective of liberalism in international relations views that in achieving mutual

prosperity, there must be mutually beneficial cooperation between parties so that geographical and state boundaries are no longer a barrier in achieving sustainable growth. It proves that regionalism in international relations can help a country or region to develop and achieve its national goals.

4.3 EU-ASEAN in Dealing Global Pandemic Issues

At the end of 2019, China reported that there was a new disease outbreak known as COVID-19 in Wuhan. The attack of this disease continues to spread rapidly throughout the world. That is why, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed this infection as a worldwide pandemic (Priyatno, 2020). All countries worldwide are trying their best to deal with this Pandemic to break the chain of virus spreading and reduce the number of death and exposed people. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic likewise shows that no nation can deal with a pandemic alone. Worldwide collaboration is desperately required for any nation to fight the virus infection (Agung et al., 2021). Nations in the Southeast Asian area are additionally not saved from this COVID-19 infection assault. This disease outbreak has become one of the significant non-traditional security threats in Southeast Asia. ASEAN Countries immediately responded to this COVID-19 by deciding each country's domestic policies. The policies taken by each government are different. Some countries prefer a lockdown, such as Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines (Oktarianisa, 2020). Other countries prefer social distancing such as Indonesia.

As a regional institution in Southeast Asia, ASEAN is working together to fight COVID-19. ASEAN member countries show their concern about the spread of the virus, which has caused the economy of ASEAN member countries to slump. To overcome this, ASEAN took an action by proposing regional cooperation to overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic. ASEAN leaders have made plans and discussed several policies that are part of ASEAN regional cooperation. All ASEAN members mutually agree upon some guidelines with hopes that these policies can help fellow members fight the COVID-19 virus. On April 14, 2020, the Heads of Government of ASEAN member countries held a summit about COVID-19 which was conducted through an online video (Yosinta, 2020). The summits were chaired directly by the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, as a Chair of ASEAN this year (ASEAN Declaration 2020). This summit was carried out virtually by all ASEAN members, considering that social distancing had to be implemented. Besides that, the leaders of ASEAN countries could not meet in person at this summit meeting to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus among the country's leaders (Utomo, 2020).

Moreover, around the same time, the Summit ASEAN Plus Three (APT) was also held and attended by three accomplice nations, specifically China, Japan, and South Korea. The aftereffect of this virtual gathering is a promise to contain the flare-up and get ready for post-scourge recuperation both socially and financially. Moreover, the heads of ASEAN nations additionally chose to set up a provincial asset to deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic. The foundation of this Response Fund expects to get the accessibility of basic clinical supplies and gear in the ASEAN locale. The finances come from the redistribution of accessible assets and existing accounts. Backing from ASEAN accomplices, like ASEAN Plus Three, added to this subsidizing. This financing was accompanied by a promise to cease spending pointless assets on the progression of products, particularly essential merchandise to fight COVID-19 like clinical, food, and basic supplies (ASEAN Declaration 2020). ASEAN is also working with the European Union to beat the Pandemic

in Southeast Asia to guarantee the accessibility of help and recuperation assets after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

To overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic, the European Union and ASEAN carried out various collaborations in the form of grant assistance and cooperation in developing and providing COVID-19 vaccines. Furthermore, citing the report from the EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2020, the EU and ASEAN have strategic partnerships in various fields with the theme of Natural Partners, reflecting the increasingly strong relationship between the EU and ASEAN. With a partnership that has existed for more than 40 years, the European Union and ASEAN are committed to jointly addressing global challenges, including the health crisis of the COVID-19 Pandemic, climate change, sustainable development goals (SDGs), also environmental protection, and sustainable economic growth. Further details of the cooperation between EU and ASEAN carried out during the COVID-19 Pandemic includes:

- a. The first EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change reaffirmed the commitment of both parties to explore new collaborative initiatives on environment and climate change.
- b. Launch of the Sustainable Peat Land Use and Haze Mitigation program in ASEAN (SUPA) to address the main cause of peatland fires and reduce the negative impacts of climate change.
- c. The third EU-ASEAN Dialogue on Human Rights expressed the continuing commitment of both parties to support and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- d. Launch EU Support for the AHA Center to enhance ASEAN's response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises.
- e. The second EU-ASEAN Dialogue on Sustainable Development strengthens the commitment of the two regions to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.
- f. Launch new initiatives in line with the European Green Deal, support sustainable investment (through the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility), and dialogue on sustainable consumption as well as production.
- g. The new 2020 program will support sustainable urbanization (Smart Green ASEAN Cities).

In addition to those programs, the three leading EU initiatives are still strengthening the EU-ASEAN dialogue (E-READI), regional economic integration (ARISE+), and harmonization of higher education in the ASEAN region (EU SHARE). These activities cover various fields such as the digital economy, regional trademark registration, circular economy for plastics, and the ASEAN higher education vision 2025.

In 2020, the European Union provided financial assistance of Rp. 13.6 trillion to deal with the coronavirus pandemic in the ASEAN region. These funds will support each country's efforts. At the regional level, it is addressed to the health crisis, strengthens health systems, and reduces the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, the European Union and ASEAN are also collaborating in the development and provision of a COVID-19 vaccine. Quoting a statement from the European Union Ambassador to ASEAN Igor Driesmans on December 2, 2020, he said that the European Union and ASEAN are committed in strengthening their cooperation on the COVID-19 vaccine through multilateral channels. This commitment is the result of the ASEAN and European Union ministerial meetings on Tuesday (1/12). The European Union, together with ASEAN, strengthen their cooperation to ensure equitable and affordable vaccine access and make vaccines a global public good. To support this, the European Union

provided a grant of 500 million Euros or around Rp. 8.55 trillion to support the coronavirus vaccine alliance to accelerate the development, manufacture, and distribution of the Covid 19 vaccine (Gavi, 2020). In addition, ASEAN and the European Union instructed experts to discuss upon COVID-19 vaccine regarding what can be done together regarding vaccine policies, strategies, authorization, production, and distribution.

In addition, the European Union also announced a new support program, namely the South East Asia Health Pandemic Response. They prepared funding worth 20 million Euros or around Rp. 341.6 billion (Abdul, 2020). The program, which will last for 42 months, aims to increase capacity and strengthen the response of ASEAN member countries in overcoming the Pandemic. The program also helps to reach people living in remote areas. The program from a collaboration between the European Union and ASEAN in the COVID-19 Pandemic period proves that in the current era of globalization, the perspective of liberalism in international relations has become something dominant because it can help ASEAN member countries through bilateral cooperation and strengthen regional coordination mechanisms between EU and ASEAN.

V. Conclusion

The cooperation between the European Union and ASEAN has reached mutualism, achieving the two organization goals. The differences in characteristics, structure, and GDP between the EU and ASEAN clearly show the inequality between the two organizations. However, this inequality encourages cooperation between the EU and ASEAN. Moreover, the flow of globalization also provides convenience for the collaboration between the EU and ASEAN. It shows that there are almost no boundaries between countries in international cooperation by the existence of the European Union and ASEAN, as well as the association, carried out by the Liberalism Theory in international relations. The goal that wants to be achieved is to fight for common or global interests. The practice of liberalism theory that applies in the relationship between the European Union and ASEAN makes it simpler for the parties involved to gain employment and investment from the European Union. From the European Union itself, it is easier to export in the ASEAN region.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has become a vast non-conventional danger in many pieces of the world, including the Southeast Asia Region. ASEAN as a regional institution has agreed to work together to deal with COVID-19 by taking several policies for all ASEAN members in tackling the COVID-19 virus through regional cooperation efforts. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, cooperation between the EU and ASEAN seems to get stronger, both Economic and Non-Economic. In dealing with COVID-19, the European Union provides financial assistance to ASEAN to overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, the European Union and ASEAN are also cooperating in the development and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Of course, this cooperation process becomes more accessible because the world has almost no boundaries (globalization), and the perspective of liberalism and regionalism strength is adopted by most countries today.

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