Creating a new dynamic in EU-ASEAN relations

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By adopting the draft report prepared by Mr HINDLEY (PSE, UK), in response to the Commission·s communication on creating a new dynamic in EU-ASEAN relations, the Committee emphasised the necessity of a permanent political dialogue between ASEAN and the EU within an appropriate framework, which should include parliamentary cooperation. While recognizing the need to advance EU-ASEAN cooperation, the committee stressed that this should not be done in a way that would undermine the Parliament·s right of codetermination. Following this summer·s accession of Laos and Myanmar (Burma) to ASEAN, the committee believes that a comprehensive debate should take place on the implications of this expansion for EU-ASEAN relations, while respecting ASEAN·s sovereign rights in respect of enlargement. The committee considers that there should be separate negotiating mandates for each of the new ASEAN members concerning their adhesion to the EU-ASEAN agreement. It is also desirable that the conditions on human rights should be extended to all EU-ASEAN agreements and that in the relevant negotiations due respect should be paid to different value systems and traditions. According to the motion for a resolution that accompanies the report, increasing cooperation between ASEAN and the EU could potentially concern all aspects of economic activity, such as movement of goods and services, investment and intellectual property, industrial cooperation, services and technology and human resources. Trade and investment should be encouraged (including the liberalisation of investment regimes and full market access) as well as the exchange of information. The motion for a resolution supports the policy of tourism development and hence the necessity to preserve cultural and environmental resources, while stressing the need for coordinated efforts to combat the sexual exploitation of children. Finally, it emphasizes the need to fight the drug problem through bilateral agreements between the EU and individual ASEAN states and insists on the need to respect and promote the social rights of workers, in particular the right to form trade unions.