
TURKEY SEES FIRST-EVER ASEAN MEETING AS PARTNER

31.07.2018

Anadolu Ajansı (31 July 2018)

The first-ever Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Turkey Trilateral Ministerial Meeting is set to be held this week in Singapore, with the attendance of Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

The trilateral meeting follows on the establishment last year of a sectoral dialogue partnership between Ankara and ASEAN.

Cavusoglus visit to Singapore starts Tuesday to take part in a series of events tied to the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Cavusoglu will hold the trilateral meeting along with ASEAN Secretary General Dato Lim Jock Hoi, and Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, who is also ASEAN's 2018 chairman.

According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Cavusoglu is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from other participating countries.

The four-day meeting will see the participation of foreign ministers and deputy foreign ministers from 30 countries, including the ASEAN member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

ASEANs dialogue partners -- the EU, the U.S., Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and New Zealand -- and sectoral dialogue partners -- Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Turkey, and the participants of the ASEAN Regional Forum -- will also take part in the meeting.

Ankara formed ties with ASEAN in 1999 and attended its first summit in 2013. Also, Turkey got observer status in ASEANs multinational police force in 2014.

Turkey became a sectoral dialogue partner at last years ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in the Philippines.

According to the Foreign Ministry, Ankaras "ultimate objective" for developing its relations with ASEAN is to achieve dialogue partnership.

"Turkeys bilateral ties with ASEAN countries are also developing. Turkeys trade volume with ASEAN countries rose from \$1.3 billion in 2002 to surpass \$8.7 billion in 2016," it added.

After Turkey opened its embassy in Laos last year, Turkey has diplomatic representation in all 10

ASEAN member states.

*Diyar Guldogan from Ankara contributed to this story

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