

## **Panel Proposal**

### ***ASEAN Decision-Making and Policy Change in Southeast Asia***

#### **Convener**

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#### **Description of Panel**

Long criticized as a talk shop, ASEAN has made significant progress both in the regularization of its decision-making procedures as well as its reach into various policy areas. Regional-level decision making, particularly since the establishment of the ASEAN charter, is increasingly having an effect on ASEAN's member states and their national policies. Progress has been made in all of ASEAN's three pillars, although to varying degrees. The ASEAN Economic Community, long considered the policy area with the most political traction, has seen movement on several policies such as competition regulation and the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA). Progress within the political-security and socio-cultural pillars of the organization has been more modest, but efforts suggest an increasing regionalization of decision-making in these areas as well. Incoherence remains on some contentious issues, possibly most visible in the Philippine turnaround on the South China Sea in 2017 and continued regional inactivity in the Rohingya humanitarian crisis.

This increased policy influence of the regional level can at least partly be tied to changing norms and mechanisms in regional decision-making. Beyond the ASEAN Way and its focus on consensus and non-intervention, ASEAN utilizes a variety of informal and semi-formal decision-making mechanisms to address emerging regional issues. One such example is the chairmanship of the organization, which has a profound effect on ASEAN's agenda. Another example is the relationship between the ASEAN Secretariat and the sectoral bodies, driving technical policy-making. External partners, to varying degrees, also have an effect on how ASEAN decides, as is visible in the emerging regional connectivity agenda.

This panels welcomes proposals addressing particular policy areas and decision-making within ASEAN, in various guises. Papers addressing issues within the ASEAN Economic, Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Community pillars are all welcome. Decision-making may address questions of inter-state bargaining, regional mechanisms and institutions as well as ASEAN's relationships with external actors (e.g. China, Japan, the US, or the EU) or civil society.

**Type of Panel:** Single Session (1x90 min)

**Open**  **discussion**

## Confirmed Papers

### Paper 1

*Presenter:* Sanae Suzuki, IDE-JETRO, Tokyo, Japan

*Title:* Chairship System and Decision Making by Consensus in International Agreements: The Case of ASEAN

*Abstract:* How are different positions reconciled under decision making by consensus in international agreements? This article aims to answer this question. Consensus rule provides each participant a veto, which risks resulting in non-agreement. Taking ASEAN as a case study of international organizations that have adopted consensus rule as the main decision-making procedure, this article presents the chairship system as an analytical scheme to examine how different positions are or are not reconciled under consensus rule. The system is based on conventional knowledge regarding the chair in international conference, which can be defined as an institution where the role of the chair is taken by one member state in an international organization and plays a role in agenda-setting. The agenda-setting power given to the chair varies across organizations. This article assumes that the chair in ASEAN is given a relatively strong agenda-setting power to enable the chair to reach agreements and bias such agreements in its own favor.

### Paper 2

*Presenter:* Lukas Maximilian Müller, University of Freiburg, Germany

*Title:* Who drives ASEAN's Connectivity Agenda?

*Abstract:* The establishment of the connectivity agenda of ASEAN was supposed to mark a watershed moment for physical, institutional and people-to-people integration in the Southeast Asian region. But little progress was initially made following the introduction of the first Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) in 2010. A new master plan was introduced in 2016, reframing the connectivity agenda and introducing governance reforms within ASEAN. Even though the institutional reforms include a strengthened ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN's intergovernmental processes have remained unchanged. Implementing the connectivity agenda therefore faces the challenge of intra-ASEAN coordination. With the introduction of the master plan came significant interest in engagement by external partners at the regional as well as the member state levels. External partners are attempting to engage with ASEAN's connectivity agenda throughout the policy process, from setting the agenda regionally to funding its implementation nationally. Taken together, ASEAN's internal and external challenges in governing connectivity are exacerbating old challenges and creating new opportunities for the region. This paper explores the emerging governance dynamism involving the ASEAN member states, the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN dialogue partners.

### Paper 3

Open

### Paper 4

Open