

Presentation outline for
**“Third Europe-Southeast Asia Forum on Southeast Asian Security:
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Session VIII : A European role? by Mr Geoffrey Barrett

The physical distance separating Asia and Europe belies the strength of political and trading links that grow in intensity every day. The two regions share many values and face a series of common challenges, not least in the security domain. Common threats in the shape of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction demand common responses.

The EU is challenged by terrorism as it seeks to undermine the openness and tolerance of our societies. Determined to show the utmost resolve in confronting the threats, the EU adopted a European Security Strategy exactly one year ago. The appointment of a counter - terrorism coordinator, ever closer cooperation between Member States, a major drive to strengthen the fight against terrorism financing, and closer cooperation with UN bodies all illustrate this commitment.

Proliferation presents a second major threat to our common security. The EU supports political and diplomatic measures as the first line of defence by seeking to prevent, deter and halt programmes of concern, while also seeking to address the underlying causes.

A third key international challenge is bad governance, failing and failed states, and regional conflicts. Corruption, weak institutions, and lack of accountability provide feeding grounds for terrorists and proliferators, as well as for organised criminals trafficking in drugs, illegal migrants and weapons.

These are global threats requiring concerted international action. The EU is committed to well - functioning international institutions and a rule - based international order and therefore supports the further strengthening of the United Nations including its capability to act when required in conflict and crisis management situations.

The EU is working actively with Asia and the Pacific both bilaterally and through regional organisations, notably ASEAN, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and, very significantly, the ASEAN Regional Forum, where the importance of the EU's role is recognised by the region and strategic partners alike. Similarly, under the broad political umbrella of ASEM, regional security issues are also well to the fore.

Against this backdrop, it is only natural that the promotion of peace and security should head the list of priorities underpinning the EU's Asia Strategy, alongside other relevant goals such as boosting trade and investment, poverty reduction, promoting good governance, and building global partnerships.

As the EU's executive arm responsible for implementing the strategy, the European Commission has developed medium and long term country strategies designed to contribute inter alia to conflict prevention efforts and reinforcing cooperation on justice and home affairs in the fight against terrorism. In the EU's New Partnership with South East Asia there is the same focus on supporting regional stability and combating terrorism, mainstreaming justice and home affairs issues, and the promotion of human rights, democratic principles and good governance - a focus that is increasingly reflected in practical cooperation. The Commission wishes to play its full part in support of concerted efforts to address a series of threats that affect Europe and Asia equally.