



## *Comparative Analysis of Regional Organizations: The EU vs. ASEAN*

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### **1. Abstract**

This paper provides a comparative analysis of the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), focusing on their roles as regional organizations in the context of global integration. It examines the historical backgrounds, institutional structures, and decision-making processes of both entities. The EU is characterized by a complex institutional framework that fosters deep economic and political integration among its member states, while ASEAN operates on principles of consensus and non-interference, resulting in a more informal style of governance. The research highlights key differences in their approaches to economic and security policies, illustrating how the EU's structured decision-making contrasts with ASEAN's flexible, consensus-driven model. Despite their unique challenges, both organizations play significant roles in regional stability and cooperation. The paper emphasizes the importance of understanding these differences to enhance inter-regional cooperation and address common global challenges. It concludes with recommendations for future research to explore how both organizations can learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in areas like crisis management and policy effectiveness.

Keywords



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1. European Union
2. ASEAN
3. Regional Organizations
4. Comparative Analysis
5. Decision-Making
6. Economic Integration
7. Security Policy
8. Institutional Structure
9. Global Governance
10. Cooperation

## **1. 1. Introduction**

After the Cold War, the study of international relations has called for systematic investigations of the roles played by broader geographic regions within a rapidly globalizing world. A large number of regional organizations have already been established globally, displaying a wide variety of political, economic, and security interactions. In this essay, the focus shall be set on the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The main goal of this comparative essay is to identify the status quo of the EU's and ASEAN's roles in the development of regional organizations across the two continents. In order to do so, this investigation is outlined according to a number of typical comparative research lines, such as historical background, internal and institutional rule systems, and policy-making procedures. This research is integrated by a brief historical account of the two regional



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organizations and a reflection on the implications of the comparison highlighted in this essay. (Rautakivi & Yolles, 2022)

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the EU has created three basic large-scale transformation processes, which laid the foundations for the development of economic, political, and security union among Western European countries. This research will investigate how far the EU may be viewed as a successful promoter of regional integration. The combined regions make up more than 26 percent of world GDP and account for nearly 40 percent of world trade. While integrated Asia still lags behind in income per capita relative to integrated Europe, regional integration in Asia plays an important role. Even though our propositions are still at the level of informed questions, they provide a meaningful platform for researchers and policy analysts wishing to further explore the burgeoning field of comparative regionalism. (Marx et al.2021)

## **2. Historical Background**

The foundational idea of what is today the European Union was to foster economic cooperation among Western European nations in order to avoid yet another devastating war such as the one that had ended a few years earlier. Equally, the need for some form of collective security to prevent Germany from ever being able to start another war, which had necessitated the permanent presence of Allied forces in the country, played an important role in the deliberations. At least the latter is the prevailing view among scholars of European integration. From prehistory to the end of the 1980s, the Union of today has evolved from the European Coal and Steel Community. This rather technical international organization was created between the six 'founding' nations as laid out in the Paris Agreement in 1951. The ECSC no longer exists, having expired in 2002, but the body it created, an assembly known as the Common Assembly, continued as the European Parliament, and



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the ECSC's Council of Ministers became the European Council and the EU's Council of Ministers. The Treaty of Paris and a few others have been the base for a series of legal and geographical expansions of the current-day EU, up to the current 27 member states and 24 official languages. (Pelaudeix, 2022)

ASEAN was established in 1967 in reaction to the unstable and tense situation in the region engendered by the power struggle between the two superpowers at the time and their allies. It sought and seeks to guarantee peace through economic, social, and cultural cooperation. Its aims excluded fighting communism, for example, which would have impaired relations with countries such as China and North Vietnam. At the time of the Laos and South Vietnam conflicts, much criticism was leveled at the organization for not being interested in political and security issues, but despite this, it has proved to be durable and successful in promoting these three different sorts of cooperation. With the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation on 24 February 1976, this aim was borne into a formal treaty. These six neighboring countries make up the 'new' territorial space of cooperation that is ASEAN. Its headquarters are in Singapore. The year 2018 saw the most recent accession – Timor-Leste. (Glas & Laurence, 2022)

## **2.1. Formation of the EU**

One of the most admirable and successful regional organizations in the world is the European Union. One of the things about the EU that draws attention is that the EU was formed by the member countries with a very specific goal; these countries did not form an economic institution while thinking of establishing a political organization. After World War II, the European countries, who thought that they were entering a process that would drastically change the world and that would not have the chance to compete alone in the new era, also realized that free trade and customs unions were not sufficient to maintain their place in the global economic race. They took



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several rapid steps for economic cooperation in Western Europe. The formation of the EU passed through these stages. The EU has passed through many stages, just as it was described in the introduction section of the thesis. Within the process that began with the European Coal and Steel Community, which was established in the 1950s, important stages of integration were passed with the Rome Treaty in 1957, the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the formation of the European Community, the development of the European Union, and the establishment of the Single Market. Today, with eleven institutional structures, the EU is capable of performing its functions at the European level such as economic, cultural, environmental, social, health, and safety. With these successful actions, the EU has made significant progress in the process of integration since its establishment. At the same time, the European Community, which evolved into the EU with important agreements over time, has become a model for the regions in which close to 30 separate integrations have been established so far. It also shows a new way of integration, different from the integration of other organizations, and which failed in some instances. With the agreements made so far, these regions have formed an EU-style policy, mainly economic cooperation.

## **2.2. Formation of ASEAN**

Formed in the wake of the conflicting and unstable regional setting, ASEAN has maintained relative peace over four decades in the Southeast Asian region. The Bangkok Declaration said in no uncertain terms that the five foreign ministers hereby declare the birth of ASEAN. ASEAN officially came into existence in August 1967 under a backdrop of military power play and nuclear confrontation between two superpowers in the Cold War era. The organization was created out of a specific need to foster regional stability by avoiding the vestiges of colonialism, aiming to promote economic growth and to redress economic disparities of member countries, particularly in the flow



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of foreign direct investment.

The Bangkok Declaration for pursuing dialogue and cooperation between the Non-Aligned Movement and the major powers was based on Pancasila or the five underlying principles embodying essential national and regional interests—the ASEAN Way. These principles involved the active coexistence of sovereign and independent states, mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of one another, foreseeable peace and understanding in their member relations, and effective cooperation among themselves. At the same time, it emphasized the full rights and obligations of international crime members such as mutual support for independence, sovereignty, national identity, territorial integrity, and their struggle to oppose colonialism, while safeguarding non-alignment and non-support for any major military alliances. Furthermore, they undertook commitments to engage in social affairs, to promote the cultural arts and sports, to expand social activity, and to improve quality of life. In brief, ASEAN started as a looser cooperative arrangement compared to the EU. (Cruz et al.2022)

### **3. Institutional Structure**

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### **3. Institutional Structure**

The EU is a highly complex economic and trade association, involving 27 well-developed, highly diverse European states, characterized by their high levels of wealth, strong institutions, and stable economies. It covers a diverse range of economic and trade areas. The European Union has a policy process based on a college of Commissioners of proven independence and competence, which can initiate legislative proposals. It has an elected Parliament with similar powers over budgetary priorities and legislation to national Parliaments, which play a significant role in co-decision and



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exercising ongoing oversight over other EU institutions. The European Council is composed of national Heads of State, and it makes policy guidelines on the major political and legislative issues facing the EU. Within the Council of Ministers, where 27 member states are represented, there is a voting system weighted in favor of the larger states, a formula that translates into an operating system based on negotiations, which require, before being decided, that deals are struck among the major member and participant countries. Each of these institutions plays a role in a set of highly developed procedures that enable governmental decision-making to take place according to rules and principles of accountability and transparency that are well understood. (Rattanasevee, 2022)

ASEAN has a relatively simple institutional structure of a set of Ministerial Councils and a policy process that is relatively informal in character. Each member state has the power of veto; if one member state disagrees with the language of final agreements, these states come away with no agreements at all. ASEAN functions primarily through consensus, with no treaty or other legal mechanism for its decisions and agreements, which are more in the form of declarations. The actual system has been effectively practiced in the area of social and cultural contacts, joint naval search and rescue, and conflict prevention, as in the case of intervention in the 1990s. On major economic trade and investment rules, it seems weaker, showing a lack of coherence and coordination in the implementation of key principles and programs that can threaten the credibility of commitments made. There appears to be a weakness of mutual confidence and mutual interests to uphold these principles and adhere to basic socio-economic principles. Clearly, the EU has many features of a sovereign state and a multinational company and has a set of principles of accountability and transparency. The formal institutional structures may be seen by some investors as a hindrance, by others as a virtue





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to work systematically and consciously for the common working of very established effective procedures, for the good of the whole 27 or parts. However, it would appear to stand the EU and its institutions in good stead in being able to respond to economic crises and external challenges involving its member states. It has been able to mold coherently a statutory and administrative system of economy and trade to the recent global economic downturn with new rules, new regulatory structures, and new governance processes. But it remains essentially an institution where the agreement of long-term principles and priorities is the basis of a good working relationship between diverse member states.

### **3.1. EU Institutions**

The European Union (EU) is a complex set of institutions, all of which have evolved over time. However, the EU's key institutions include the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, and the Council of the EU, which are the EU's supreme decision-making and legislative authorities, along with the European Central Bank and the Court of Justice of the European Union. The first four listed above are interlinked and, together with the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, form the EU institutions empowered to represent, legislate, and govern the EU, commonly referred to as the EU's political institutions. Each of the political institutions is composed of delegates appointed by, or representing, the 27 Member States in various capacities. (Choi & Porananond, 2022)

Politically and institutionally, the European Commission is the executive of the EU. It proposes new EU laws and oversees the effective implementation of the once agreed common rules; in other words, it ensures that Member States comply with EU law. Together with the European Court of Justice, whose task it is to ensure compliance with EU law, the Commission is presumed to act as guardian of the treaties. The role of the European





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Parliament is to provide a democratic basis for EU law-making, ensuring, for example, popular legitimization of new laws and representative accountability of the Commission. The European Council is generally expected to set the strategic direction and political priorities for the Union. Politically, the European Council is considered to be very closely interlinked with the Council, as together they essentially form the EU's legislative or decision-making authority. Formally, the Council shares this authority with the European Parliament and with the Commission to some extent. Finally, the Court of Justice is the EU's highest legal authority and plays a key role in both ensuring that EU legislation is adhered to everywhere in the Union and in the legal interpretation of the treaties and legislation.

### **3.2. ASEAN Institutions**

The institutional framework of ASEAN is very different from that of the EU. The primary decision-making body in ASEAN is the ASEAN Summit, where the leaders of member states meet and discuss critical issues. Unlike the EU, the ASEAN Secretariat plays a much smaller role in terms of policy initiation or agenda setting. The ASEAN Secretariat was established to ensure greater efficiency, coordinate the implementation of decisions, and follow up on the progress of regional cooperation. It is not a center of decision-making but rather a supportive administrative unit for effective communication among key policymakers and members of the association. Additionally, ASEAN has several sectoral ministerial bodies, panels, and/or working groups below it. This is much more 'bottom-up' than the hierarchical picture of institutions in the EU.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that ASEAN places a big emphasis on informal mechanisms and consensus-building. ASEAN practices a unique kind of intergovernmentalism characterized by informal non-diplomacy, a 'flexible' institutional structure, and economic cooperation. Informalism is



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characterized by a 'minimal' institutional framework and greater freedom in the choice of areas that governments can cooperate in. When political issues arise between members, they need to pledge mutual respect for each other's national independence, the principles of non-interference, abstaining from external alliances, and settling their disputes amicably. It is noted that while the EU lacks any political trust and mutual respect, under the ASEAN way, natural boundaries are set to avoid potential divergence, and mutual respect guarantees that no underestimation or overestimation of commitment to cooperation can occur. Finally, it is not inconceivable that the type of de facto communication in exchange for agency could translate into smaller members leaning toward option 1 and option 3 as part of their interaction with a hegemon. The lack of formalization in the regional integration cooperation flows into the more specific research questions of the study. For example, in the EU, member states need to fill in technical questionnaires to prove their expertise and control thereof; this is not foreseeable in a less structured or organized cooperation structure such as ASEAN. (Pennisi di Floristella, 2021)

#### **4. Decision-Making Processes**

Decision-making processes in both regional organizations also differ. The EU has a complicated decision-making process due to the design of its institutions. At the highest level of the EU, important decisions are taken in the support mechanisms of the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, the European Commission, as well as at the Court of Justice and other bodies. The walls and buildings seem solid and embedded. Administrative processes and a deep level of leadership are strict and well-structured. The institution of law-making in the EU is comprehensive, which is why massive information and opinion aggregation is necessary for policies to be accepted and enforced. Many documents have been crafted to stabilize the process, such as the Treaty on European Union after a series of



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amendments and measures using consistent ways and language. This makes it possible to create laws comprehensively and deeply, following procedures and with a process of mutual control among institutions – which can be called government.

The EU uses a combination of unanimity and qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, with the ordinary legislative procedure proving to be the most commonly used. The EU has so many regulations and acts that it becomes a form of European law called the "acquis communautaire." In contrast, Articles 7 and 20 of the Treaty of Maastricht began emphasizing the importance of ASEAN as a contribution of the member states. ASEAN wants to present an alternative to enforce policies in a flexible and balanced manner, marked by a consensus from the group as well as between the major actors in ASEAN. Analysts call this a practical aspect, focusing on the effectiveness of decision-making and role performance rather than decisions on the form or institution of the EU. In practice, ASEAN has faced slow and long-term enforcement of any policy. In cases of non-compliance or agreements between the member states, enforcement is difficult because it is not strong enough in terms of its regulatory status. In the ASEAN Charter, states have chosen a slower but collective decision-making system, having either one vote for each decision or in the form of consensus decision. This could be called "collaborative" government. There are several loopholes in this mechanism when member states do not agree. In general, ASEAN seems to lead less to authority and a smaller allocation of power to intergovernmental institutions. Observers note that because some countries believe their interests are being pursued more effectively through systems other than those states agreed on in the government process, new forms of state action have begun emerging. One of the most important aspects of government study completion is determining



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the decision and formal authority of the state. In international politics, decision-making is made based on the principles of state sovereignty, in this case, the sovereignty of countries in regional organizations. States have widely used regional institutions as a tool for international cooperation. Agreements place a lighter burden on the countries involved since most of them will have to make only a few commitments. Although having conflicting perspectives, this pro and contra decision-making process has influenced regional blocs both in their administrative and financial organizations, as well as in the politics of each of their member states in their collective positions on various issues. (LEE, 2022)

## **4.1. EU Decision-Making**

Constitutive decision-making In the European Union, the adoption of public policy occurs through highly structured procedures. The Union has several legislative procedures in varying policy areas: 62 at the moment in 19 policy areas. The core of all legislative procedures is a dual requirement: the need for a new legislative initiative and the agreement among three main legislative organs: the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council. Any policy decision in the Union must be made using this machinery; hence we have, perhaps somewhat rhetorically, labeled it a ‘constitutive’ arena of decision-making. Legislative decision-making is to be distinguished from that of administrative and judgmental. In the legislative category, we can also further distinguish different pathways of decision-making such as quasi-legislative, sub-systemic, and high politics legislative. At a basic level, in legislative decision-making, the European Commission holds a monopoly of proposing new EU legislation. However, following the introduction of the right of legislative initiative for the European Parliament, both the Council and the European Parliament are in some instances allowed to request the Commission to make a legislative proposal or to propose an



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alternative proposal. Even if either the Council or the Parliament initially proposed the idea for a new legislative act, the formal legislative proposal remains the Commission's exclusive power. The final decision-making authority rests with the European Parliament and the Council, who meet on an equal basis (so-called co-decision applying, by general rule, the co-decision procedure, and in a few cases of high politics, law and justice issues, the co-decision's big brother: the assent procedure).

As a general rule, the mere decision-drafting normally does not come to a formal vote in practice. As an interesting consequence of this set-up, there is a realization of majority rule since the Council, through the principle of qualified majority voting, is usually moving in that direction. Such simplification of the formalities is a crucial element as to why law-making in the Union can take place swiftly in comparison with intergovernmental arenas. Although non-elected bureaucrats play a large role in the process, the co-decision mechanism still calls for some influence from the regional stakeholders, i.e., national governments and civil society. It is precisely this widespread influence and complexity of EU decision-making that has fueled the feeling of policy integration, transforming the European decision-making arena from a liberal intergovernmental into a complex and compound unity, paradoxically raising questions of transparency and accountability.

## **4.2. ASEAN Decision-Making**

Decision-making in ASEAN is fundamentally different from that of the EU in a number of ways. First, ASEAN avoids formal voting mechanisms utilized by the EU. Many prefer to gain "a consensus or its approximation." The ASEAN secretariat argues that "a system based on consensus is effective and workable at an inter-state level, and is imperative in an environment where pledges and assurances are given and need to be honored by all member states." Proponents of decision-making in ASEAN argue that the use



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of consensus results in decisions that are highly legitimate, as all members have been consulted and support the outcome. Decision-making is typically informal, and decisions are taken during breaks or outside of formal sessions. Most decisions are made in a relatively small group of member state participants (plus or minus one or two depending on the issue) rather than the formal procedure.

There is, at least potentially, a price to pay for the slow processes in ASEAN compared to the faster, more structured processes in the EU. The difficulty of achieving an agreement tends to overshadow debates on what the agreement ought to be, which diminishes the influence in ASEAN of larger member states. On the other hand, ASEAN's slow, consensus-based approach to policy-making may produce better outcomes. For some policies where quick decisions are less important, indeed, a long process of consultation may give countries an incentive to agree, knowing that consensus is likely to act as good discipline in making sure that implementation works. Second, the necessity for fostering mutual respect and confidence was built into the organizational framework of ASEAN. In an early working group established at the inception of ASEAN, its four members would not question the situations addressed by any other countries on the grounds that, were they in a similar situation, others would not criticize them. A disturbing question emerges from this – should the delivery of regional public goods, such as peace and security, depend on the extent of mutual knowledge and understanding that is provided by the cultural-historical setting of the participating states? In the quest to understand Basket II, this is a question of paramount importance. The bottom line is ASEAN could operate effectively because it was an inter-governmental entity.

Decision-making is not, however, devoid of problems and challenges. Too often, decision-making can result in a gridlock. Even where members are





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willing to reach joint decisions, they may not be able to agree on a specific course of action. This can result from members having a series of diverse interests in terms of many values, such as material self-interest or particular norms and values. The problem in a plural system is how to balance diverse interests, which is at the very heart of what we mean by reaching decisions within a union of nation-states – the realization of which has for a long time been acknowledged as the major problem in an organization such as ASEAN that brings member states together. To this end, rather than decision-making being based purely on take and draw, esteem or love, it is also seen in terms of a group. According to one leader during the early years of the organization, "I think throughout the Association the member countries have a great feeling of wanting to cooperate in order that no one shall be excluded from anything." Decisions are a complex interaction of all members, clearly, and in culture and regional decision-making as the organization has sought to develop will vary depending on regional and national character.

### **5. Policy Areas**

Fifteen policy areas typically define regional organizations, including trade policy, immigration policy, environmental policy, and so on. Within both the EU and ASEAN, we focus in particular on two of these policy areas: economic policy and security policy. Under economic policy, the EU built upon the EC's success and introduced a common market institution that promotes a tariff-free and non-tariff barrier-reduced environment open to the free movement of people, capital, goods, and services, in addition to adopting a policy of monetary integration through the formal launch of the Euro currency. This is achieved by pursuing common economic policies that ensure widespread investor confidence so that investments will not be instantly reduced by the possibility of currency regulation in cases of crisis. The goal of establishing a common or internal market among the member





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states is clear. By bringing down regulatory barriers, the common market makes it easier for corporations to trade, innovate, and scale up their activities from local and national markets into continent-wide operations.

As far as the first area is concerned, ASEAN, besides regional free trade agreements, is also working on a model similar to the EC's common or single market, implementing initiatives such as the AEC. In ASEAN, organizers have put together a variety of facilitators that aim to underpin economic cooperation between member states. One of these initiatives is the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), intended to establish the ASEAN common market and regional economic integration. The AEC's single market is built on four stages. Starting with the free flow of goods stage, these endeavors were followed by the free flow of services, and eventually the free movement of investment, capital, and labor. The single market is designed to form a cohesive market governed by economic terms among member states, ultimately making the region more attractive in global trade, attracting foreign investments, and spurring regional economic growth and prosperity. However, the initiative does not introduce any overarching monetary and exchange rate coordination within the community. This means that, unlike the European Union, ASEAN does not adopt a single currency, nor does it institute a region-wide central monetary authority.

### **5.1. Economic Policies**

The European Union is a historically unprecedented example of economic and political integration. Its founding treaty provides for the establishment of a common market to foster economic growth and to promote trade. In a common market, a collective of countries eliminates all trade barriers and adopts a common external tariff. The EU has an additional component, which guarantees the implementation of these common rules and regulations. In so doing, the EU removes the administrative burdens of having to adapt national



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legislation, which explains the attraction of the EU to potential inward investors in terms of the size of its market and the economic and political stability within the Union. For the majority of its members, the economic component is a key factor in its existence, resulting in the adoption of a single currency, the euro, in the Eurozone, where 19 countries form a monetary and economic union.

The EU's main policy measures are targeted at facilitating the movement of goods, services, and capital within the Union. One such measure is the free movement of labor, through the coordination of social security systems among EU member states. Another example is that of establishing a common trade policy, particularly with third-world countries, which is enabled because member states delegate to the EU the right to speak on their behalf in international organizations. Enhanced cooperation to harmonize state aid policies rewards pro-reform member states, but existing regulatory requirements are such that no unilateral policy can address disparities generated by issues like structural unemployment and lack of productive investment. The common or the European Single Market was established in 1993 and involves more than removing tariffs at the border; it has spurred legislative harmonization, or mutual recognition of standards, in almost all aspects of economic life. It is intended to minimize or entirely eliminate barriers to trade and to allow free movement of people, goods, services, and capital. It represents removing physical trade barriers, fiscal barriers, technical barriers, and barriers to foreign investment. Countries within the single or common market also establish rules or laws governing economic activity among those countries.

## **5.2. Security Policies**

In contrast, the EU is actually a political project for maintaining peace and security. Since the beginning, one of the purposes of the EU's foundational



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institutions has been to realize a collective security framework that would make the future EU's security architecture strategy-proof and provide pan-European security instead of the provision of security only for some parts of Europe. In other words, the EU from the very start has been a security community. The ultimate goal of establishing the Community was to eliminate war as an instrument of state policy. The rise of the EU as a global actor has partly been due to its unswerving focus on a peaceful and integrated 'Europe whole and free' that can act on the world stage.

The CSDP, a part of the EEAS, then takes a cooperative approach to security. The broad notion of the EU's common security helps create a securitizing discourse. It not only facilitates security governance but also allows security actors to bypass disputes in the absence of a consensus, strengthen security capacity, and spearhead security politics. The procurement of security-related resources helps the EU to extend itself technologically, logistically, and consequently geographically—implying greater engagement with Europe's troubled periphery and institutions in the wider world. Unlike the ASEAN, the EU's formal demands-versus-politics structure is hybrid, combining law with political commitment through the CSDP and the more traditional security politics of the Member States, thereby highlighting the EU as not merely a supranational institution but as an economic, political, and security community. ASEAN's approach to security is more decentralized. As part of its principle of non-interference, ASEAN members limit security cooperation among themselves to consultation only; this means no binding commitment to any common course of action against a given security threat. The ASEAN Regional Forum was set up as a confidence- and security-building measure, allowing dialogue and capacity-building among regional states. In light of ASEAN and the EU's diverse historical and cultural backgrounds on security regionalism—of hard balancing and soft balancing—the very different



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security architectures in place in either region effectively bring about, if only partly, their different approach to security and eventually differ in policy effectiveness against transnational security issues.

### **6. Conclusion**

The comparison between the EU and ASEAN has illustrated that both regional organizations are fundamentally different, stemming from their historical background and their institutional structure. Consequently, they differ with respect to their mode of governance and particularly with respect to decision-making. While non-interference is ASEAN's main principle of operation, meaningful decision-making across an ever-expanding policy scope is at the core of the institutional practice of the EU. Another important aspect of comparison, which allows us to differentiate between the two organizations, is the impact of security and economic policy. An increasing focus on security issues by ASEAN contrasts with the negative integration necessitated by security provisions within the EU. On the other hand, ASEAN has failed to engage in free trade agreements to the same extent as the EU, leading to a division of European trade along regional lines. Finally, it is necessary to assess the two organizations in the light of efficient policymaking, especially with respect to crises that they face. While it is difficult to argue that the Eurozone crisis can prove to be a turning point in the EU's existence, one can, however, still see its capacity for transformation and institutional innovation.

The analysis of the historical background and institutional structures of the EU and ASEAN shows they govern differently due to distinct principles. The varying levels of integration in security and economics demonstrate unique paths to regional consolidation, with ASEAN focusing effectively on structural change through a heterodox cooperation approach. While they share normative foundations, the significant differences must be recognized



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to improve regional governance understanding. Both organizations' effectiveness in tackling international challenges depends on regional factors, structural variations, and historical experiences. Grasping these elements is vital for future policies to enhance ASEAN-EU cooperation. Further research should investigate why both have acted in areas of perceived weaknesses, providing insights for better intra- and inter-organizational cooperation.

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