

Acknowledgements

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The theme of the conference was ‘Competitiveness of ASEAN Economies – Investment and Trade Issues’. The purpose of this second Fribourg/NIDA conference was to give a comprehensive view of what the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been through during the past decade and to find out what the present challenges are. Starting with a degree of cooperation which was initially limited to a few economic activities in the 1960s, economic cooperation in ASEAN has not only deepened but also widened in recent years. New areas of cooperation, such as services and intellectual property rights, are being developed. Bold decisions have also been made to strengthen industrial cooperation in ASEAN through a new scheme, which will take into account the present industrial needs and the economic situation within ASEAN.

This conference explored the economic power of ASEAN, its internal investment policy framework and its external relations with third countries – a matter of prime importance for the future of ASEAN. As a result, this event was designated a ‘regional meeting’ of the Asian Society of International Law and attracted the interest of academia, officials from international organizations, country representatives and nongovernmental organizations. For these reasons, we decided to publish the best papers presented at the conference.

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