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**PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE  
CONCLUSION OF THE ASEAN-EU COMMEMORATIVE SUMMIT PLENARY**

[14 December 2022]

Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

We had an extraordinary opportunity today to collectively look back on our shared successes and to exchange views about our prospects for the future.

We looked back on ASEAN-EU achievements, most recently, the signing of the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement that was signed last October and the adoption of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership for 2023-2027.

We noted the continued strengthening of cooperation between our regions throughout the pandemic through the following mechanisms: the ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU Plus (ARISE+); the EU Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU SHARE); the Enhanced Regional EU ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI); the EU-ASEAN Cooperation on Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation (SUPA); Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP); the Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanism (EU Support to AHA Centre); and the ASEAN-EU Migration and Border Management Program Phase II, to name but a few.

We appreciate the EU, the EU Member States, and the EU financial institutions – in short Team Europe – for the combined response of over EUR 800 million to fight the health, social, and economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic in ASEAN.

As we move forward towards post-pandemic recovery, we eagerly anticipate the resumption of negotiations for the establishment of an ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement and of the ASEAN-EU Trade and Investment Work Programme.

I am pleased that today's Summit imbued all of us as ASEAN and EU Leaders alike with a sense of renewed commitment to continue nurturing and expanding our unique ASEAN-EU partnership which will serve us well as we are squeezed by the myriad challenges that we have just discussed – such as the supply chain issues brought about by the pandemic, the global threat to food and

energy security made worse by the conflict in Ukraine, and to the societal and economic havoc wrought by climate change, to name a few.

I am particularly pleased that this landmark ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit was shepherded to conclusion during the Philippines' coordinatorship for ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations and that the adopted ASEAN-EU Joint Leaders' Statement is reflective of the broad nature of our relations and shows clear commitments from both sides to further enhance our relations.

We hope to achieve more milestones as the Philippines continues to guide the ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations until 2024.

I assure my fellow ASEAN Member States and all European Union Member States that the Philippines will continue to expend all efforts available to ensure that the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership for 2023-2027 proceeds as intended. We will strive to expand and deepen our cooperation in the priority areas of post-pandemic economic recovery, strengthening of public health institutions, maritime security and cooperation, environmental protection and sustainable economic development, combating, of course, climate change, and connectivity, with its new definition, which goes beyond the strict definition of digital connectivity, but connectivity in all manners --- by air, by land, by sea, by digital means. We also will work for the digital transition, and the lessening of the so-called digital divide, migration, and gender justice.

We look forward to nurturing and bringing forth ASEAN-EU relations to greater heights, in our role as country coordinator for ASEAN-EU relations in the next two years.

Before I end, allow me to thank your Excellencies - EU Council President Charles Michel, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, and all EU Member State Leaders, for your very warm welcome that you have given us all here in Brussels. And we look forward to the next commemoration of EU-ASEAN relationships.

Thank you.

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