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Thailand and the EU to resume talks about a possible free trade agreement

Trigger	After a meeting between Thailand's Minister for Industry Jurin Laksanawisit and the EU Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis on January 26, 2023 in Brussels, both sides announced that they would like to resume negotiations on a free trade agreement after ten years.
Trade relationship between EU and Thailand	The EU is Thailand's fifth largest trading partner after ASEAN, China, the US and Japan. Bilateral trade was EUR 35.4 billion in 2021, about 7% of Thailand's total trade. Thailand showed a trade deficit of EUR 8.7 billion due to the surplus in EU exports.
History	Negotiations on an EU-Thailand Free Trade Agreement started in March 2013. After more than a year, these were paused in May 2014 by the military coup and have been idle ever since. Beginning in 2019, the EU took steps to expand its engagement with Thailand, including resuming negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement.
New negotiations	<p>After the meeting, it was announced that Thailand and the EU had agreed to resume FTA negotiations in the first quarter of this year, after nearly a decade of stagnation. Jurin described his meeting with Dombrovskis as "historic" and said it was the first time political officials from both sides had agreed that they were ready to resume free trade talks.</p> <p>Dombrovskis wrote on Twitter that both sides want a comprehensive, high-quality agreement with ambitious and sustainable provisions.</p> <p>Now the approval of the Thai cabinet and the 27 EU states must be obtained for the formal resumption of talks. The partners were confident of being able to continue the talks in the first quarter of 2023.</p>
Context in Asia	<p>If the negotiations are successful, Thailand would be the third ASEAN country after Singapore and Vietnam to enter into a free trade agreement with the EU. In the past, the EU had also negotiated with Malaysia, the Philippines and the ASEAN federation. All negotiations have come to a standstill and have been paused or broken off.</p> <p>The EU is currently negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement only with Indonesia in the Southeast Asian region.</p>
Benefit from free trade agreements	If you have any questions about the usage of Free Trade Agreements in the Asia-Pacific region, you can contact Mrs. Annika Huck, Divisional Head for Trade Policies (Asia/ASEAN). E-Mail: annika.huck@sgc.org.sg

Resources <https://www.nationthailand.com/thailand/general/40024363>
<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/thailand-eu-to-resume-fta-talks-in-march/247463.vnp>

https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/thailand_en

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/10/14/thailand-eu-to-broaden-its-engagement-following-elections/>

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