

Foreign Secretary to work with Southeast Asia to boost economic and tech ties: 12 December 2021

- Southeast Asian countries that are members of ASEAN group join the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting for the first time ever today
- The Foreign Secretary will stress the importance of working with ASEAN and wants the UK to have a stronger relationship with the region to reflect its growing importance
- She will encourage her Southeast Asian counterparts to play a role in shaping global standards on cutting-edge tech

The G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting continues in Liverpool today [12th December], with Foreign Ministers from Southeast Asian countries joining the discussions for the first time.

The talks are aimed at forging closer tech, economic and security ties with the ten-nation ASEAN bloc. Today's discussions will take place at the Museum of Liverpool and Anfield, the home of Liverpool Football Club, with most ASEAN foreign ministers joining virtually. The Foreign Secretary wants the UK to have a stronger relationship with the region to reflect its growing importance and believes deeper ties can be a win-win.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The first ever G7 meeting with ASEAN colleagues is a chance to strengthen our trade, economic, technology and security ties with Southeast Asia.

By joining forces and bringing freedom-loving nations together we can ensure our links are not underpowered and properly reflect the region's size and importance. Deeper ties can be a win-win delivering jobs and opportunities for British people while ensuring an open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

As the UK tackles the challenges of the future with the economies of the future, Truss will encourage her Southeast Asian counterparts to play a role in shaping global standards on cutting-edge tech.

The G7 and ASEAN will discuss working together to ensure the free flow of data while stamping out pernicious practices like intellectual property theft and cybercrime.

The Foreign Secretary will also back setting standards for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace and promote UK-backed cyber capacity that is steadily growing in the ASEAN region.

The crisis in Myanmar will be discussed during the meeting. The Myanmar military was not invited to attend the event.

The UK condemns the military coup in Myanmar, the violence against the people of Myanmar and the detention of members of the civilian government and civil society, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. Working through the UN and NGOs the UK has already provided humanitarian assistance to over half a million people since the coup in February and will continue to work closely with ASEAN on our shared ambition of ending the crisis in Myanmar.

Today's meeting follows the launch of British International Investment last month, which will invest billions in infrastructure and technology across Asia. Two landmark deals were also announced at COP26 in November, pledging support of up to £110 million of honest, reliable finance for sustainable infrastructure projects in ASEAN; and a further £274 million for the wider region to strengthen climate resilience.