



ASEAN Newsletter

ASEAN Committee in Ankara—Newsletter

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ASEAN 2020 Under Vietnam's Chairmanship

The ASEAN Ankara Committee (AAC) Activities January—June 2020:

Brunch with the Non-Resident Ambassador of Myanmar to the Republic of Turkey

Courtesy Call to the Mayor of Ankara

Visit to National Library

Virtual Discussion with Turkish Experts

Courtesy Call to the Minister of Technology and Industry

Courtesy Call to the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

Handover of the AAC Chairmanship

The ASEAN Ankara Committee (AAC) in Coping with COVID-19

Welfare Assistance

Repatriation of Citizens

Webinars

Info: Employment Benefits for Foreign Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic



The making of a “Cohesiveness and Responsive ASEAN”



The online Special ASEAN+3 Summit with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (RoK) on the COVID-19 response - Chaired by Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc

This year, Vietnam has taken on the role of ASEAN Chair and the non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) from 2020-21 which is also expected to help the country to further raise ASEAN’s profile within the international community. During its Chairmanship, ASEAN will follow the main focus as follows:

First, peace, stability, solidarity, unity, prosperity and sustainability shall remain the purpose, the identity and the overarching goal of the ASEAN Community. These values pave the way for ASEAN to forge for itself a new image, new standing and new role in the spirit of making active and responsible contributions to dialogue and cooperation at the global level.

Second, the ASEAN Community shall foster seamless connectivity and deepen integration within and beyond the region, on the basis of innovation, stability and the growing influence of the 4th Industrial Revolution upon the social and economic life of the entire community. The ASEAN Community shall serve as a model of *circular economy*, endowed with new vigor.

Third, the ASEAN Community shall become more resilient through effective climate change adaptation and response, and better management of natural disasters, pollution and plastic waste. It shall become a liveable place, with a burgeoning network of smart cities and strong social welfare.





The making of a “Cohesiveness and Responsive ASEAN”

It shall possess a high-quality workforce in the digital era through quality educational system and strategies for sustainable development and equal opportunity for all, so as to leave no one behind.

Fourth, its fundamental documents enable the organs of ASEAN Community to maintain **sensible, effective and vigorous operation** and better serve the ASEAN Community and its people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has testified to the relevance of this year’s theme of ‘*Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN*’. Joining hands to repel COVID-19 is ASEAN’s top priority at this juncture. As such, efforts to put this pandemic under control will further demonstrate ASEAN’s strength and resilience.

Vietnam as the ASEAN Chair in this challenging time is determined to stand united with other ASEAN member states to overcome the pandemic. ASEAN activated virtual channels to ensure continuous communication among Members. This solution has helped ASEAN and its partners stay connected during this crisis, sustain seamless coordination, and make quick and timely responses.

The first results came out on 14 February when Vietnam issued the Chair’s Statement on ASEAN’s Joint Response to the outbreak of COVID-19. This statement was to draw attention to the risks of this virus, call for regional and international cooperation, underline ASEAN solidarity and unity, and reiterate the commitment to joining hands in preventing the spread of the virus and restoring peace and safety to the daily lives of the peoples.

Statements by the ASEAN Defense Ministers, Economic Ministers and Tourism Ministers followed suit recognizing the need for close cooperation in not only curbing the spread of the virus but also restoring the economy in the aftermath.

Then, on 14 April, the ASEAN leaders came together for an ASEAN Special On-line Summit, where they agreed the top priority for ASEAN was to control and prevent the spread of the disease and minimize socio-economic impacts in the process. Specifically, leaders emphasized the reduction of disruptions in the supply chain and strengthening of intra-ASEAN trade to ensure resilience and quick recovery.



ASEAN
VIET NAM 2020





The making of a “Cohesiveness and Responsive ASEAN”

The initiative to organise an ad-hoc ASEAN+3 discussions were also taken. On 14 April, Vietnam chaired the online Special ASEAN+3 Summit on the COVID-19 response. The countries committed to standing ready to exchange experience, policies and epidemiological and clinical research, support each other with medical supplies and step up cooperation in COVID-19 vaccine and drug development. They also pledged to maintain open markets, make progress on the signing of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), diversify the connectivity of supply sources in and outside the region and ensure the flow of goods and services, especially essential medical materials and products.

To represent ASEAN, Vietnam has also participated and proposed measures for cooperation in the fight against the pandemic at many other international virtual meetings, such as the Ministerial Video Conference of the Alliance for Multilateralism on COVID-19 on 16 April and the G20 Health Ministers Virtual Meeting on 19 April.

In order to ramp up responsiveness of ASEAN, Vietnam made several proposals for the region. Establishment of a regional reserve for medical equipment and essential products to meet urgent requirements would help mitigate supply shortage issues in the early days of the crisis before emergency measures are put into place. Development of a common response process, based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), can reduce misunderstanding and promote efficiency as countries impose entry bans and quarantine measures. On-line or table top exercises of the ASEAN Military Medical Center on disease response will increase the efficiency of ASEAN’s response to a new and emerging health crisis. A task force of ASEAN senior officials on information can help prevent the spread of panic and fear by controlling fake news.

Vietnam, considered an effective disease control model, has shown its leading role in ASEAN in proactive, strong, and prompt response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following words of Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, well demonstrate the achievements, so far, of Vietnam’s ASEAN Chairmanship

this year as it tackles the challenges of COVID-19: *“Vietnam has demonstrated strong leadership in spearheading a collective regional response to COVID-19. ASEAN’s strong response is in large part due to Vietnam’s leadership in encouraging our continued dialogue and collaboration”*. ASEAN have a wealth of experience in overcoming crises, and in fact, emerging stronger than ever. Likewise, the current pandemic will be an opportunity for bolstering ASEAN’s cohesiveness and responsiveness under Vietnam’s chairmanship.





The 36th ASEAN Summit

On 26 June, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Vietnam chaired the 36th ASEAN Summit via video conference with the attendance of leaders of all ASEAN Member States. In his opening remarks, PM Phuc applauded the spirit of solidarity and coordination among countries, and prompt actions they are taking in the fight against the disease. The PM called for stronger cooperation among the ASEAN



member nations to effectively cope with the pandemic, affirming that Vietnam will continue to closely work with the other ASEAN member nations in the combat. The ASEAN Leaders had taken stock of ASEAN’s Community building efforts, challenges ahead, and adopted a number of key documents to improve the lives of the peoples of ASEAN post COVID-19.

Leaders reached high consensus on important issues within the bloc following the joint statement, including the East Sea disputes. For the first time, the regional body has explicitly identified the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the sole legal basis to resolve maritime and territorial disputes in the region. In the statement, ASEAN leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the UNCLOS. The summit has reaffirmed the ASEAN’s determination to build the East Sea into a sea of cooperation, development, security and safety.

ASEAN is working with parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, prevent actions that could complicate the situation at sea, comply with international law, build an East Sea of peace, friendship, cooperation, maritime and aviation freedom, seriously implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC) and accelerate talks on an effective and efficient Code of Conduct (COC) in line with international law, including the UNCLOS.

The leaders adopted the ASEAN Leaders’ Vision Statement for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN, which reflects ASEAN’s strong commitment to upholding ASEAN unity, solidarity and centrality while enhancing ASEAN’s capacity to embrace the opportunities and effectively address emerging challenges.





The ASEAN Ankara Committee (AAC) Activities



The ASEAN Ankara Committee (AAC) Heads of Mission (HoMs) on 6 February 2020 organized a **brunch in Ankara to welcome the non-resident Ambassador of Myanmar to Turkey H.E. U Myint Lwin**. He came to Ankara on the occasion of his presentation of credentials to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

It is customary for the AAC HoMs to extend hospitality to a non-resident Ambassador of an ASEAN Member State during a visit to Ankara. Out of the 10 ASEAN Member States, Myanmar and Lao PDR have yet to set up a diplomatic mission in Turkey.



The AAC HoMs on 27 February 2020 paid a **courtesy call to Mayor of Ankara, H.E. Mansur Yavaş**, at the Mayor's office.

During the call, the AAC HoMs and the Mayor exchanged views on the ways and means to enhance cooperation between each ASEAN Member State and Ankara, especially in the field of tourism, cultural exchange, sports, sister city, and diplomatic facilities.

The AAC took the opportunity to also promote ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and invited Ankara to participate in the ASCN. The idea was welcomed by the Mayor.

Meeting with Turkish officials is one of the important activities of the AAC in order to introduce the AAC and to increase cooperation between ASEAN and Turkey that is in line with the **ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2019-2023)** adopted on 18 July 2019.



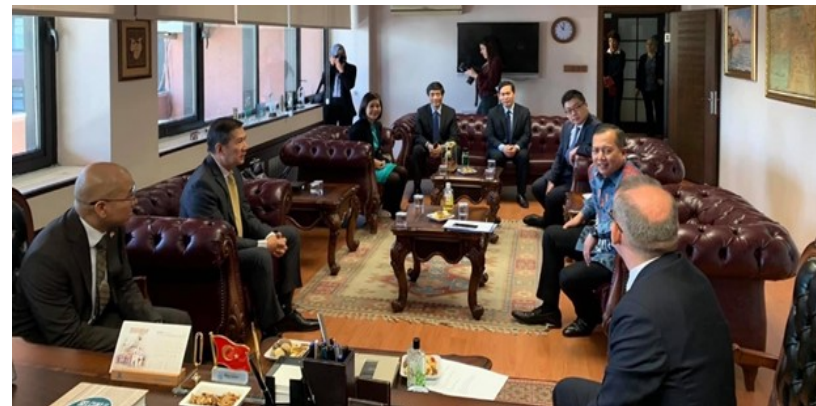


On 11 March 2020, the AAC visited the National Library in Ankara and were welcomed by Mr. Yahya Özen, Deputy Director General of Libraries and Publications. The Committee presented a total of 168 books from the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and the 8 ASEAN countries to the Library for the ASEAN Corner which has been especially allocated for ASEAN books and materials. They hoped that the new books would further disseminate knowledge and increase awareness about ASEAN as an organization as well as the ASEAN countries amongst the Turkish public.



Right:

ASEAN Corner at the National Library—the books cover a wide range of topics on culture, tourism, history and politics of ASEAN countries as well as about ASEAN.



Top Left: CDA a.i. of Cambodia, DCM of Singapore, Ambassadors of Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam and CDA a.i. of Malaysia.

Bottom Left: Indonesia as the Chair of the AAC led a discussion with Mr. Yahya Özen about further cooperation between the Library and the AAC to increase awareness of ASEAN in Turkey.

On 30 April 2020, the AAC had a privilege to have Dr. Ali O. Dirioz, Assistant Professor of International Relations at TOBB University of Economic and Technology (TOBB ETU) and Mr. Metehan Demir, Political and Strategic Advisor to Turkey Promotion Group, as speakers at the **AAC discussion with Turkish Experts**. On this occasion, the AAC and the speakers exchanged views on Turkey’s efforts in safeguarding its economy from the impact of COVID-19.

The AAC’s discussion with Turkish Experts is one of its regular activities on a wide range of topics, particularly those related to political and economic issues.





The AAC on 18 June 2019 paid a **courtesy call to Minister of Industry and Technology** of Turkey, H.E. Mustafa Varank. The courtesy call was the first onsite meeting of the AAC after the Government of Turkey announced “normalization” on 1 June 2020.

Ambassador of Indonesia, H.E. Lalu Muhamad Iqbal, as the Chair of the AAC expressed his gratitude to H.E. Varank for receiving the call of the AAC HoMs. Ambassador Iqbal explained that meeting with H.E. Varank was highly expected by the AAC considering the importance of industry and technology in supporting economic development.



H.E. Varank and the AAC HoMs shared the same view that industry and technology are playing key roles in the advancement of economy and the social well-being, even more so in the wake of a pandemic. Both sides underlined the significance in enhancing cooperation in the field of industry and technology between Turkey and ASEAN that is also inscribed in the ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2019-2023) adopted on 18 July 2019.

H.E. Varank specifically pointed out that ASEAN is an important partner for Turkey and USD 1 million has been earmarked to support the ASEAN-Turkey cooperation in the framework of Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. Furthermore, he also expressed his great interest to increase cooperation on industry and technology with each individual ASEAN Member State and wished to visit the region in the near future.

H.E. Varank also proposed to set up a working group between the AAC and his Ministry to identify ways and means in increasing the cooperation. This initiative was welcomed by the AAC HoMs.

The courtesy call was part of the AAC programme in the first half of 2020.





The AAC on 29 June 2020 had a privilege to **meet with the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly** of Turkey (TBMM), H.E. Mustafa Şentop.

Both sides underlined the significant role of the Parliament in enhancing cooperation between Turkey-ASEAN and Turkey-ASEAN member states, including in dealing with COVID-19 pandemic.

H.E. Şentop further expressed that ASEAN and its members are Turkey’s important partner in Asia, especially within the context of Turkey’s new regional initiative “Asia Anew”. The establishment of ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership in 2017, the implementation of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with Malaysia and Singapore as well as the on-going negotiations with Indonesia and Thailand, have showcased ASEAN as Turkey’s strategic partner.



The AAC HoMs took the opportunity to congratulate the Speaker for the 100th anniversary of the TBMM and hoped that exchange parliamentary visits between Turkey and ASEAN could be intensified in the near future to strengthen the existing cordial relations and cooperation between the two sides.



On 30 June 2020, the AAC has decided to rotate the chairmanship from Indonesia to the Philippines. The **handover of the chairmanship** was symbolized with the presentation of ASEAN flag from the outgoing chair, Ambassador Lalu Muhammad Iqbal of Indonesia, to the incoming chair, Ambassador Raul S. Hernandez of the Philippines.

Indonesia has assumed the AAC chairmanship since January 2020, and based on the rules of chairmanship rotation every 6 months and the decision of the AAC Heads of Mission, it has been agreed to appoint the Philippines as the Chair of the AAC for July until December 2020.

All HoMs expressed their profound appreciation for the leadership of Indonesia at the AAC for the last 6 months in navigating the activities of the AAC, especially during the challenging period due to the pandemic, so that ASEAN could still be promoted in Turkey. They also conveyed their commitment to support the chairmanship of the Philippines.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

i. Welfare Assistance

The Coronavirus outbreak has affected the lives of the many people. ASEAN has shown solidarity by helping each other at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in Ankara.

The **Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia** on 4 April 2020 provided solidarity assistance to ASEAN nationals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic by donating masks, hand sanitizers and food.

The solidarity assistance was channeled through the Philippine Embassy in Ankara to be distributed to those in need.

Meanwhile, the **Embassy of Malaysia** made two consular visits to Istanbul in April by road with special permission from the MFA of Turkey and Ankara Municipal Council to cross the border to check on stranded tourists, students who were affected by the closure of universities as well as religious school students. The Embassy gave latest information and advice, and handed over some donations of masks, food and money. In Ramadhan, the Embassy sent packed foods once a week to about 20 Malaysian students in Ankara and arranged with a Malaysian couple residing in Istanbul to cook and deliver Iftar meals to 140 students who stayed in hostels all over Istanbul. During Eid Al-Fitr, the Embassy delivered packed traditional Malaysian food to Malaysians including students in Ankara. The initiatives caught the attention of Anadolu Agency and was included in the an article published on 22 May 2020 entitled *“Asian embassies in Ankara turn digital this Eid - COVID-19 affects Ramadan culture among embassies of Muslim countries in Turkey”*.



The **Philippine Embassy** also continues to look after concerns and situations of Overseas Filipinos under its jurisdiction, especially those whose jobs are seriously affected. Throughout this difficult period, consular services remained available for Filipinos in Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia as well as other areas. Also, Filipinos with most urgent need were immediately provided with much needed welfare assistance.



Food packs / grocery vouchers were distributed to about 400 distressed nationals including some students in various cities of Turkey and Georgia. Other possible aid for their other daily subsistence concerns such as for their shelters have also been extended given the on-going public health emergency crisis.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

The Philippine Embassy's continuing assistance programme has been made possible with the support from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila and generous contributions from Embassy personnel, the group in Ankara, Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board, the Philippine-Turkey Business Council Manila, Indonesian Embassy in Ankara, the Turkish Red Crescent and the Red Cross Society of Georgia, in coordination with the Philippine Consulates General in Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin (Turkey), Baku (Azerbaijan), and Tbilisi (Georgia).

The **Singapore Embassy** too, during the holy month of Ramadhan, partnered with IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation to donate food packages to 40 orphans to assist in their daily needs and help in the celebration of Ramadhan.



Furthermore, the **Royal Thai Embassy** has provided assistance to Thai communities in Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan who were affected by the coronavirus. Among the assistance were:

1. The Embassy arranged the distribution of Thai rice (1,000 kg) and 2,500 masks for over 400 Thai nationals in Istanbul through the Thai Community Association in Istanbul and with the support of CP Turkey, the distribution of fresh chicken, eggs and frozen food. The Embassy also provided 10,000 TL to the Association for further distribution of food and essential items for the Thais in Istanbul. For the Thai nationals in other provinces, the Embassy handed out the care pack to those in Ankara and arranged the delivery of MIGROS gift cards elsewhere.
2. The Embassy organised a distribution of the care pack (basic food and essential items), with the help of the Embassy's network and volunteers in Georgia, for about 200 Thai nationals living in Georgia (Tbilisi and Batumi), and together with Honorary Consulate General in Baku, Azerbaijan, distributed the pack to some Thai nationals.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

ii. Repatriation of Citizens

The **Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia** in cooperation with the Indonesian Consulate General in Istanbul repatriated 177 Indonesian nationals from Istanbul to Jakarta on 10 June 2020 by a special flight of Singapore Airlines and 144 nationals on 17 June 2020 with Turkish Airlines. They consist of spa therapists whose employment contract have ended, students who have concluded their studies in Turkey and tourists who were stranded in Turkey.

Ambassador Lalu Muhamad Iqbal at the seeing-off ceremony thanked the Government of Turkey, Singapore Airlines and Turkish Airlines for their assistance. Special thanks also delivered to the Ministry of Health of Turkey which has facilitated a PCR test for all the repatriated passengers.



The **Embassy of Malaysia** was on the other hand pleased to learn that there would be a flight sending medical supplies to Sarajevo, and that it would stop over in Istanbul on its way back. This became a repatriation flight for Malaysians in Turkey. The Embassy made necessary arrangements and assistance by liaising with all related parties and authorities in Turkey to ensure that everything went smooth for the chartered flight arranged by the government of Malaysia from Istanbul on 16 April 2020, sending 340 Malaysians home.

As for the **Philippine Embassy**, aside from the resident overseas Filipinos, among those assisted were Filipino tourists in Georgia who were legally based as residents in Gulf countries. With the imposition of restrictions in their base countries on the entry/re-entry of legal foreign workers/residents, these Filipinos were unable to return to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait and initially opted to wait it out in Georgia until restrictions in are lifted and have remained in Georgia with the suspension of international flights.

On 10 June 2020, 128 Filipinos returned to the Philippines after their successful repatriation from Turkey with the efforts of the Philippine Embassy in Ankara and the Philippine Consulate General in Istanbul led by Ambassador Raul S. Hernandez in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila and Turkish authorities.

Due to the global pandemic outbreak, Filipinos sought the Embassy’s assistance to return to the Philippines. The repatriation was arranged with Turkish Airlines on a special flight (TK 4945) which departed from the Istanbul International Airport on 10 June 2020 at 1740H and arrived at the NAIA in Manila the next day, 11 June 2020.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

1. 69 land-based Filipino nationals with 19 students, and 34 undocumented workers from provinces across Turkey from Ankara, Antalya, Bodrum, Denizli, Eskisehir, Erzincan, Gaziantep, Izmir, Istanbul, Konya, Mersin, Nevsehir, and Trabzon;
2. 56 sea-based workers who disembarked from different sea vessels docked in Turkish ports, namely: the MV Stella Wakamatsu, the MV HC Nadja Maria and the MV AOM Elena, and the MV Yavuz in Yalova, Tuzla in Istanbul, and Antalya, respectively; and
3. 3 other Filipino seafarers who signed off from their vessels (the MV Partagas and MV Orient Arrow, both in Istanbul, and the MV Golden Suek in Izmir) for emergency non-COVID 19 related medical treatments.

In his message to the Filipinos prior to boarding the Manila-bound flight, Ambassador Hernandez underscored the unwavering commitment of the Philippine Government under the leadership of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to ensure the safety and welfare of all Filipinos, both at home and those abroad. This commitment includes the prompt assistance to distressed nationals overseas. Filipinos on their way back to the Philippines were reminded on the need for continued vigilance against the outbreak for the safety and good health of all Filipino families and communities.

The special flight also repatriated the remains of Ms. Maria Biluan, a Filipino based in Ankara who passed away last 20 May 2020.

The **Royal Thai Embassy** also has organized two repatriation flights to Thailand, bringing Thai nationals living in Turkey on 22 April (55 people) and those in Turkey and Georgia on 28 May (209 people). Additionally, the Embassy had helped 10 Thai nationals in Georgia return to Thailand on commercial flight, with Georgia's repatriation flight to those transit destinations.

The **Royal Embassy of Cambodia** would also like to thank to the Government of Turkey and relevant authorities for allowing and arranging the repatriation of one of the Cambodian student, who got stranded in Spain, by bringing her back to Turkey and taking care of her during the quarantine periods in two different cities, before sending her back to her dormitory in Kocaeli province.



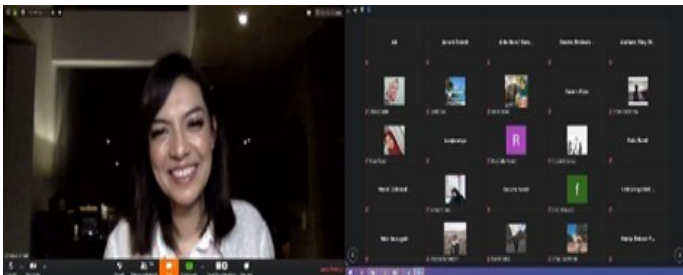


The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

iii. Webinars

The **Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia** conducted a series of webinar to accompany Indonesian nationals who were undergoing lockdown measure in Turkey in April and May 2020.

The topics include psychology, nutrition, skin-care, cooking clinic, movie, fashion, religion and entrepreneurship.



Ms. Najwa Shihab in a web seminar program related to the role of women topic

The webinar received wide acceptance from the public, not only from those who live in Turkey but also those residing in Indonesia and other parts of the world. A webinar themed about the role of women, featuring Ms. Najwa Shihab, a TV anchor, was participated by more than 1000 viewers from all over the world.

SULTAN AGUNG
ENDONEZYALI FİLM GÖSTERİMİ
İngilizce altyazılı
CUMA 15 MAYIS
15.30 - 18.20
Meeting ID: 941 0138 7138 Password: ngabuburit

Endonezya filmleri hakkında Soru-Cevap Oturumu
C.TESİ 16 MAYIS
16.30 - 18.00
Meeting ID: 923 3559 2875 Password: ngabuburit

Supported by:
IndonesianAnkara, @IndonesiaAnkara, kemlu.go.id/ankara

Web seminar on the Indonesian Movie topic hosted by a well-known Indonesian filmmaker, Mr. Hanung Bramantyo

COOKING CLINIC
Cooking Clinic dalam rangka Hari Kartini dan Ramadhan bersama **William Wongso**
Jumat, 17 April 2020 | 13.30 - 15.30
Meeting ID: 221 483 7741 Password: 170845

When East Meets West: Makanan Indonesia Berbahan Turki

April 2020
Jadwal Rangkaian Webinar

Supported by:
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Cooking Class Program hosted by Chef William Wongso during a web seminar

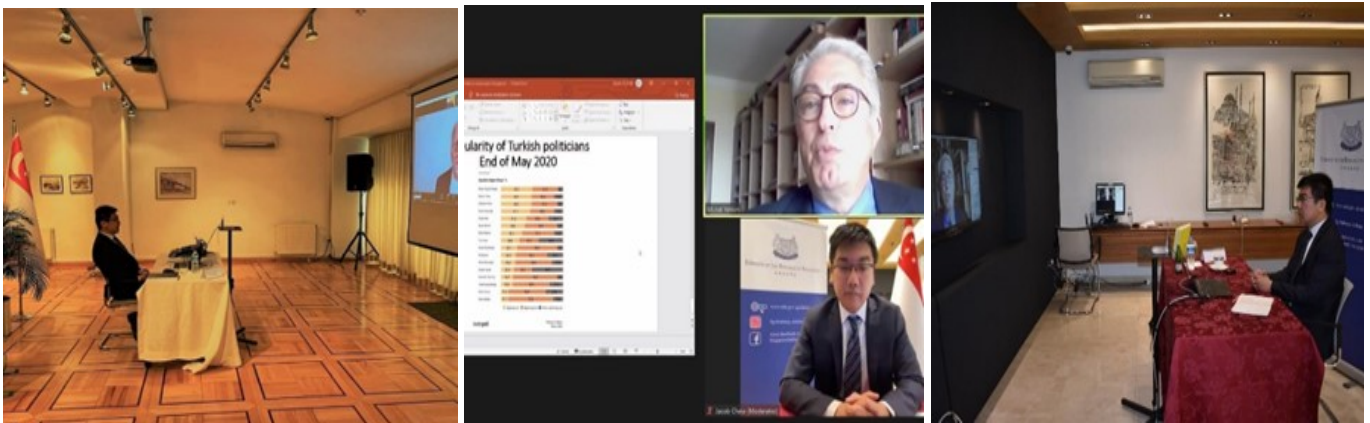




The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

The **Singapore Embassy** continued its engagement of Turkish thought leaders and members of the wider community with various adjustments.

The Embassy incorporated technology to continue with its public diplomacy and engagements. In May and June 2020, the Embassy hosted two webinars as part of the Singapore Embassy Lecture Series (SELS). [The SELS was inaugurated in April 2019 to foster intellectual discussions about political and economic developments in Turkey and the wider region]. The webinars were presented by Professor Hakan Kara (Bilkent University Professor of Economics and former Chief Economist of the Central Bank of Turkey); and Mr Murat Yetkin (Editor-in-Chief, *YetkinReport*). In both webinars, they had participants from Istanbul, Ankara and Singapore.



With the COVID-19 situation improving and a relaxation of measures, the Embassy visited the Presidential Library in June 2020 and donated 85 books on Singapore. These included wide-ranging topics from literature, culture, cuisine, politics, business and history.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

iv. Information—Employment Benefits for Foreign Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many countries around the world in all walks of life, especially employers who may struggle to pay salary to their employees due to business interruption. On 18 March 2020, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, announced economic relief package known as “the Economic Stability Shield” worth 15.5 billion USD (which later increased to almost 35 billion USD), including the short-term working allowance which alleviate the hardship for employers. As of April 2020, 268,717 companies have filed applications to the scheme for 3.44 million workers. The manufacturing sector accounted for 40% of the applications, followed by the retail (15%), accommodation and food services (12%) and education (6%) sectors.

The ASEAN Ankara Committee (AAC) has actively exchanged information about these measures with a view to disseminating information for registered workers from ASEAN countries in Turkey so that they know the conditions and how to apply for such allowance. Thanks to the shared information, many ASEAN workers benefited from the allowance and were thankful.

Who are entitled to the short-term work allowance?

- Employees who work in workplaces whose activities are wholly or partly ceased for at least four weeks, or where the weekly working time is reduced temporarily by at least 1/3 due to (1) a general financial, (2) sector-based or (3) regional crisis or (4) forces majeure, which include COVID-19 pandemic.
- In order to benefit from the short term work allowance, employees must have 60 days of service contract and 450 premium days in the last 3 years.
- Employees who receive a pension cannot benefit from a short term work allowance.

How Much is the Short Term Work Allowance?

- The daily amount of the short-term working allowance is 60% of the average daily gross income of the employee, calculated based on the employee's earnings subject to social security premiums in the last 12 months.
- The monthly amount of the short period working allowance cannot exceed 150% of the monthly minimum gross salary, which is currently TRY 2,943.
- The duration of the short-time working allowance is the same as the short working period, provided that it does not exceed three months.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

How is the application made?

- The employer must apply to the Turkish Employment Institution for its employees to benefit from the short-term working allowance. The respective labor inspectors will evaluate the application and make a decision on the application.
- As of March 23, 2020, employers can file applications for the short-term working allowance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic with the Turkish Employment Institution via e-mail which has been created specifically for Labor Provincial Directorates and Service Centers.

Besides the short-term allowance scheme, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) also implemented the so-called “Cash Wage Support” in order to protect the employment and reduce the negative impact of coronavirus on economic and social life.

This cash wage support scheme is intended for the employees (1) who have taken unpaid leave and cannot benefit from short-term work allowance and (2) the employees whose labour contracts have been cancelled after 15 March 2020 and who could not benefit from unemployment benefits.

The monthly payment of 1,177 TL will be made directly to the employee for the period during which the employee is on unpaid leave.

One can say that the above-mentioned measures reflect Turkey’s effort to leave no one behind. However, as the normalization process in Turkey started from 1 June, the Turkish government is working on a comprehensive employment shield package to support jobs and finding an appropriate support model for workers. We have to wait and see what new measures will be announced, as the country started gradual easing of restrictions taken to fight the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. The AAC will continue to follow up the developments and share this information amongst our ASEAN communities.

Health Services Benefit

Is it possible to get a health care when he/she diagnosed with Covid-19 is in Turkey for meeting, convention, commercial or tourism purposes?

It is possible to benefit from health services if the foreigner has Travel Health Insurance and if that insurance policy covers the epidemic disease within the limits of the insurance policy.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

Is it compulsory for foreigners who possess a residence permit in Turkey to have a Health Insurance?

Foreigners and International Protection Law Article 19 with the entitle "Residence Permit" had adjudicated in which cases a residence permit will be obligatory remarking "it is obligatory for foreigners to obtain a residence permit if they will stay in Turkey more than ninety days or more than the duration the visa or the visa exemption allows".

In Article 22 of the Regulation on the Implementation of Foreigners and International Protection Law entitled "Examination and finalization of residence permit applications" it is remarked as "Foreigners are required to have valid health insurance covering the period of residence permit they demand" and also was brought the provision "for the people who are under universal health insurance coverage in Turkey are considered to have a valid health insurance. "

As it is understood from the above; It is obligatory to have a valid health insurance for foreigners who are in Turkey with any type of residence permit. Otherwise, residence permits are not issued, or if the insurance of those with residence permits does not continue, residence permits are canceled. However, this insurance can be either Private Health Insurance or General Health Insurance.

Does the insurance policy of the foreigner who has Private Health Insurance cover COVID-19?

In the Circular dated 10 May 2016, No. 16/2016 on Health Insurances to be Made for Visa and Residence Permit Requests, the minimum conditions of the Private Health Insurance to be taken out by foreigners are specified.

In addition, it is possible to add additional guarantees to the minimum guarantees that should be included in the policy.

It is possible for foreigners to benefit from health services within the limits of the insurance policy if the policy covers the epidemic.

In the Insurance Law No. 5684, 11th article titled Insurance Agreements it is remarked that "In insurance contracts, the risks that are in noncoverage of insurance except from the ones that are covered by the insurance are clearly stated. Risks that are not specified are accepted as to be covered by insurance". It is necessary to accept that the excluded risks that are not explicitly specified are covered





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

The way to find out whether the epidemic is covered by the policy is to look at the titles such as "situations noncovered by the policy" or "Standard Exceptions".

If the term "Epidemic Diseases" is included under these headings, we can say that epidemic diseases are not covered by the policy. However, a number of insurance companies have stated that, although not covered by collateral, they provide very limited additional collateral for epidemic disease as a gesture application.

Does the General Health Insurance include COVID-19 coverage?

Social Security Institution, following the emergence of coronavirus, includes some health services and medicines within the scope of General Health Insurance for Covid-19 cases.

Can foreigners get General Health Insurance and what are the conditions for them to get it?

It is possible for foreigners to apply for General Health Insurance if certain conditions are met.

Foreign nationals who will reside temporarily or permanently in Turkey or need to travel through Turkish airports and borders with **Student residence permit, Touristic residence permit, Business residence permit, Family residence permit** requires an **online Turkish health insurance** in Turkey for the valid period.

Turkish residence permit **expire date may not exceed** the Turkish health insurance expire date, as the first and most important rule.

Social Insurances and General Health Insurance Law article 60/1-d with titled "The ones whom are considered to be under cover of General health insurance" states that;

People who reside in Turkey,

People who don't have a health insurance in another country for any reason,

People who provide that the principle of reciprocity is taken into account,

People who have obtained a residence permit,

People whose residence period is at least one year uninterruptedly in Turkey and who requested from that date,

will benefit from the general health insurance.





The AAC Solidarity in Coping with COVID-19

Can dependents of foreign nationals who are covered by general health insurance benefit of the health services?

Dependents of foreign nationals stated below, except for those studying abroad and who are domestically residing, are insured under the framework of the general health insurance:

1. Spouses,
2. Children under the age of 18,
3. In case of having a high school and equivalent education, children under the age of 20 and not married,
4. Children who have not reached the age of 25 and are not married, if they have received Higher Education,
5. Unmarried children determined to be disabled regardless of age,
6. The mother and father who are determined according to the criteria determined by the Institution, whose livelihood is provided by the foreign national, can benefit from health services.

Sources:

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