



## Interpellation Title: The Preparation of Thailand for Moving towards ASEAN Economic Community

Interpellation no. 0127/ 2556 The 24<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives B. E. 2554 (2011)

<b>Date of Proposal:</b>	29 November 2011
<b>Cabinet Term:</b>	Miss Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister
<b>Proposed by:</b>	Mr. Rawat Areerob, Democrat Party, Phuket Province
<b>Persons who are questioned:</b>	Prime Minister (Miss Yingluck Shinawatra)
<b>Replied by:</b>	Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Phongthep Thepkanjana)
<b>Interpellation Type:</b>	Replied in Government Gazette
<b>Interpellation Status:</b>	Replied by the Minister Published in the Government Gazette, Vol. 130, Special Issue Part 3 d., page 68-71 dated 9 <sup>th</sup> January B.E. 2556 (2013)
<b>Remarks:</b>	In case where the reply of interpellation is to be made in the parliamentary sitting but replied in the Government Gazette, it refers to Rule 162 paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives which prescribes that an interpellation to be replied in the sitting which is placed or not placed on the agenda in each session when it is at the end of the session, the Speaker shall collect such interpellation and inform the concerned Minister. The concerned Minister shall reply such interpellation in the Government Gazette within thirty days.

### Summary of the Questions

ASEAN Economic Community which will be established in 2015 is the realization of the end goal of economic integration among ASEAN Member States. The key characteristics of AEC is being a single market and production base which comprises of free flow of goods, services, investment, capital, and skilled labour but most of the people are lack of understanding information and preparation for the AEC integration due to the lack of public relations from government sector. As a result, Thailand can be disadvantage in competitiveness in the future. From all reasons above, the interpellant would like to raise questions as follows:

1. How does the government set the national development direction in order to prepare for

joining AEC?

2. Does the government plan for public relations and make people understand the effects of AEC integration to Thailand? How? Please clarify in details.

3. Does the government have policy for public preparation to move towards AEC such as to promote English learning including other languages for communication? How? Please clarify in details.

### Summary of the Answers

**Answer to the first question** Government has policy for Thailand to move towards ASEAN Community in 2015 by preparation and strengthening in economy, society and culture, and politics and security. The urgent policy which will be implemented in the first year also includes the acceleration of the operation in accordance with the commitment of ASEAN Community integration in 2015 in economic, social and security dimensions as well as transportation linkage inside and outside the region. Such policy represents the highest commitment to transform vision of ASEAN Community into practice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an implementer of the policy to ensure that every agency and related sector understands visions of AEC and single market as well as makes the investors confident and promotes investment atmosphere in ASEAN such as supports passing the law for implementation of ASEAN agreements and investment including enforces ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement – ACIA and promotes two remedy measures as follows: 1) Ministry of Commerce helps the product and service sectors which are affected by free trade and 2) Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is responsible for agricultural sector restructure fund to increase country competitiveness and make the entrepreneurs recognize the benefits of establishing AEC. They can more enhance trade and service and reduce production cost which can reduce the price of imported materials.

In terms of preparation for moving towards ASEAN Community for Thailand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Thai government, established the measures for ASEAN Connectivity so people can travel and trade with each other more conveniently. This measure is in accordance with the state policy for Mega Project investment such as High-speed Rail Project and Land Bridge. Thailand has prepared in social and economic areas for moving towards ASEAN Community due to the linkage of potential human resources and Mobility of Professions.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers approved to appoint the National ASEAN Commission<sup>1</sup> chaired by Foreign Minister. The objective of the commission is to coordinate policies and integrate the works of the related agencies for preparation including moving forward any operations related to ASEAN Community in 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information : <http://www.mfa.go.th/asean/contents/files/other-20170418-154749-889019.pdf>

**Answer to the second question** On behalf of the government, the Foreign Minister as the Chairperson of the National ASEAN Commission and other commissioners from related agencies have run public relations campaign to create knowledge and understanding the effects which will occur after AEC integration including preparation in many areas and human resources development equally to other member states. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Education, and related private sector promote ASEAN recognition in schools, educational institutions, and among public and private sectors through sending guest speakers to give lectures on ASEAN in meetings, seminar, and training courses, visiting universities and schools in different provinces to organize activities related to ASEAN such as ASEAN Quiz, publish books, brochures, media/DVD, in cooperation with schools and educational institutions on ASEAN Day (8<sup>th</sup> August every year), and designing website, broadcasting TV and radio program in cooperation with the Government Public Relations Department in order to promote awareness and disseminate knowledge of ASEAN to the public and promote participation of civil society.

**Answer to the third question** Government emphasized on preparation for moving towards AEC of Thai people to enhance more opportunity for trade and investment in the region. The government places an emphasis on the following issues:

**Designing ASEAN course for students** The Council of Ministers assigned Ministry of Education to design ASEAN Studies Course for every level of students and classes teaching ASEAN member states languages together with English class as well as to develop knowledge and technology for the youth to increase competitiveness of Thailand. Furthermore, the Ministry has promoted ASEAN citizen recognition, increased knowledge and updated information to teachers and educational personnel through focus-group training course and then teachers can be the mechanism for disseminating knowledge and understanding of ASEAN to Thai youth.

**Promoting ASEAN knowledge in higher education** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported higher educational institutions and graduate schools in Thailand to design courses and develop knowledge related to ASEAN such as establishing ASEAN Studies Center, designing ASEAN Studies Program in universities such as Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University (Pridi Banomyong Institute), Naresuan University, Mae Fah Luang University, and Nation University<sup>2</sup>.

**Establishing ASEAN-Thailand Association** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the establishment and performing activities of ASEAN-Thailand Association in order to enhance knowledge and understanding of ASEAN including promoting public participation in establishing ASEAN Community and ASEAN citizenship.

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<sup>2</sup> Nation University is the first private university in Lampang Province. At first, it was established by the name of “Yonok College” in 1988 and then changed its name to “Yonok University” on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2006.

**Organizing project for ASEAN knowledge dissemination for public** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared website, media, teaching materials, and radio program called “We are ASEAN” to disseminate information to public and government agencies. The Ministry also organizes ASEAN mobile exhibitions in other provinces. Furthermore, the National ASEAN Commission approved to establish the ASEAN Public Relations Sub-commission with the Director-General of the Government Public Relations Department as chairperson. The objectives of the sub-commission are to promote and coordinate with other related agencies to create awareness of ASEAN for Thai public and to do public relations for ASEAN activities.