PRESS STATEMENT: EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL LAUNCHES FIRST POSITION PAPER ON DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY IN ASEAN

* **The EU-ASEAN Business Council today launched a new publication: ‘Driving Comprehensive Healthcare in ASEAN’**
* **The paper focuses on how to provide healthcare in ASEAN affordably and bring the benefits of ASEAN integration to the sector**
* **The EU-ABC believes faster movement on harmonisation of standards in the pharmaceutical sector in ASEAN and promotion of self-care initiatives will provide more affordable and accessible healthcare in the region.**
* **EU-ABC also calls for greater collaboration between the ASEAN member states and the private sector.**

17 June 2019 – Following on this year’s theme for ASEAN “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability”, the EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) today launched the first paper by its Healthcare Advocacy Group entitled, ‘Driving Comprehensive Healthcare in ASEAN’. The paper focuses on making healthcare more readily accessible to ASEAN’s citizens in a cost-effective and affordable way.

Commenting on the EU-ABC’s recommendations set out in the paper, Mr Donald Kanak, Chairman of the EU-ABC, said:

“There is immense potential for the healthcare industry, one of the five priority sectors in ASEAN. The EU-ABC is fully supportive of the strategic goals of the ASEAN Economic Community to achieve quality and affordable healthcare. To achieve this, the private and public sectors must work together to create better health infrastructure, more transparent regulatory processes and greater harmonisation of standards across ASEAN . This will help ASEAN prepare for rapidly ageing populations and ensure a financially sustainable health system.”

Executive Director of the EU-ASEAN Business Council, Chris Humphrey, added:

“The increasing health protection gap that ASEAN households face threatens the sustainability of healthcare systems, especially with the growing demands for healthcare. This burden can be alleviated through improving market access for international companies, which will spur innovation and competition, and reviewing current health policies and regulation to make healthcare-related products and services more readily accessible while maintaining high levels of safety in the administration of alternative healthcare.”

**END.**

****Notes to editors:

1. **EU-ASEAN Trade and Investment Relationship**

The commercial, trade and investment relationship between the European Union and ASEAN is strong and growing. The EU is the largest economy in the world and is ASEAN’s largest source of foreign direct investment. The EU is also ASEAN’s second largest trading partner, after China.

1. **About the EU-ASEAN Business Council**

The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) is the recognised voice for European business within the ASEAN region. It is recognised both by the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat, recently being accredited as an Entity associated with ASEAN under Annex 2 of the ASEAN Charter. Independent of both bodies, the Council has been established to help promote the interests of European businesses operating within ASEAN and to advocate for changes in policies and regulations which would help promote trade and investment between Europe and the ASEAN region.

As such, the Council works on a sectorial and cross-industry basis to help improve the investment and trading conditions for European Businesses in the ASEAN region by sharing information and ideas with policy and decision makers and amongst its members and regional players within the ASEAN region.

The EU-ABC’s membership consists of large European Multi-National Corporations and the nine European Chambers of Commerce from around Southeast Asia, representing a diverse range of European industries cutting across almost every commercial sphere from car manufacturing through to financial services and including FMCG and high-end electronics and communications. Our members share a common aim to enhance trade, commerce and investment between Europe and ASEAN.

1. **Executive Summary of the Healthcare Paper:**

**This paper makes recommendations in three areas: Regulatory Affairs, Public Health Policies and, Trade and Access. The recommendations are aimed at helping the governments of Southeast Asia deliver improved and cost-effective healthcare for their citizens.**

As ASEAN continues to develop economically, and the population of the region continues to grow, the provision of affordable and universal healthcare becomes more important.  The challenge facing all governments in the ASEAN region is to ensure that healthcare is readily available to the entire population, even those in the most remote locations, at an affordable price and within manageable budgets.

Despite the general perception that ASEAN has a youthful population, many countries in the region are facing a rapidly ageing demographic between now and 2050. With ageing populations - and shifting demographics from rural to increasingly urban and middle-class societies - come new healthcare challenges. Populations will require different sorts of healthcare services, delivered in a different way.

This presents both cost and organisational challenges for Governments and healthcare authorities across the region. New partnerships and collaborations will be needed to meet the growing demand for services and changing needs of patients. **Member companies from the EU-ASEAN Business Council stand ready to collaborate and partner on the solutions outlined in this paper**.

To download the position paper, please go to <https://www.eu-asean.eu/publications>.

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