



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 6/Issue 10 - December 2020

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Time flies, we are in the final month of 2020, a rather challenging and extraordinary year for all due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a year which presented rather unique circumstances, as with everyone else, the EU-ABC team has been adapting and embracing new things; the new normal, a new way of hosting events and meetings, to name a few. We have been working hard to stay connected and here is 2020 in a nutshell

# 2020 Has Been A Wild Ride in More Ways Than We Can Count...

...but here's our year in numbers.



## UPDATE FROM THE BRUSSELS LIAISON GROUP OF THE EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Brussels Liaison Group of the Council has remained active and busy despite the restrictions caused by the Covid19 pandemic and the two extended periods of confinement it has necessitated in the EU capital since the virus reached Europe in early March.

The full group was very pleased to have a presentation by ED Chris Humphrey in September updating on a wide variety of developments in ASEAN and on Council activities, position papers and plans. The same call saw us welcome H.E. Ambassador Jaya Ratnam of Singapore's Mission to the EU and the Benelux, who updated us on the activities of the ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC), the group of ten ASEAN Member State Missions in Brussels. The Ambassador also kindly took questions from the group on a range of issues and agreement was made for the ABC and EU-ABC Brussels to work together where possible.

An immediate benefit from that contact was when a delegation of Brussels members met in-person in October with the ABC Ambassadors and their trade/economic counsellors-socially distant of course- to discuss a range of EU-ASEAN related policy issues and exchange views. What had been scheduled as a one-hour meeting went to over two hours and all members present found the engagement very constructive with similar positive feedback from the ABC Ambassadors. It also gave us the opportunity to share the findings of the EU-ABC Business Sentiment Survey with the ASEAN diplomats and discuss some of the headline findings and the ramifications of those findings.



*\*Photo just before ABC-EUABC meeting started October 1st – Noel Clehane who leads the EU-ABC's Brussels Liaison Group*

Noel Clehane of BDO who chairs the Brussels group has also had useful in-person meetings with Antoine Ripoll and Andreas Striegnitz of the European Parliament who deal with Parliamentary Relations with ASEAN/South East Asia and a virtual meeting with Daniel Caspary MEP who is Chair of DASE, the European Parliament Delegation for South East Asia. In all of these meetings the key findings of the EU-ABC Business Sentiment Survey have been invaluable as basis for promoting the Council's positions. The virtual meeting with MEP Caspary was instrumental in securing the keynote speech from EU Trade Commissioner Dombrovskis for the ASEAN-EU Business Summit.

Noel also participated in a number of webinars representing the Council including the Brussels launch of the book 'ASEAN-EU Relations The Untold Story' by the European Policy Centre (which was sponsored by the EU-ABC) and an extended panel discussion on '[The economic dynamics of ASEAN](#)' for the [Antall Jozsef Knowledge Centre](#)/European Institute of Asian Studies.

The group has had bilateral contact with the Vietnamese Embassy to discuss the coming into force of the EU-Vietnam FTA and is looking at ways to mark that Agreement when COVID-19 restrictions in Brussels are lifted. Regular contact is also enjoyed with H.E. Ambassador Jaya Ratnam of Singapore who coordinates the ABC and with the trade counsellors of the ten Missions known by the acronym SCOT, Subcommittee on Trade) as well as many of the relevant DG Trade and External Action Service officials all of which has had to be virtual for obvious reasons.

The Brussels group welcomes all EU-oriented colleagues from EU-ABC members, not only those based in Brussels, and is hoping to expand its activities once public health regulations permit.

**Noel Clehane**  
**Chairman**  
**Brussels Liaison Group, EU-ASEAN Business Council**

**A RENEWED TRADE POLICY FOR A STRONGER EUROPE:  
SUBMISSION OF THE EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL TO EUROPE**

## A Renewed Trade Policy For A Stronger Europe: Submission of the EU-ASEAN Business Council to European Commission's Trade Policy Review November 2020

This document, published on 15 November 2020 sets out the considered response of the EU-ASEAN Business Council ([www.eu-asean.eu](http://www.eu-asean.eu)) to the European Commission's call for responses to its Trade Policy Review as set out in the Consultation Note "A renewed trade policy for a stronger Europe".

For more details, click [here](#)  
To access the document, click [here](#)

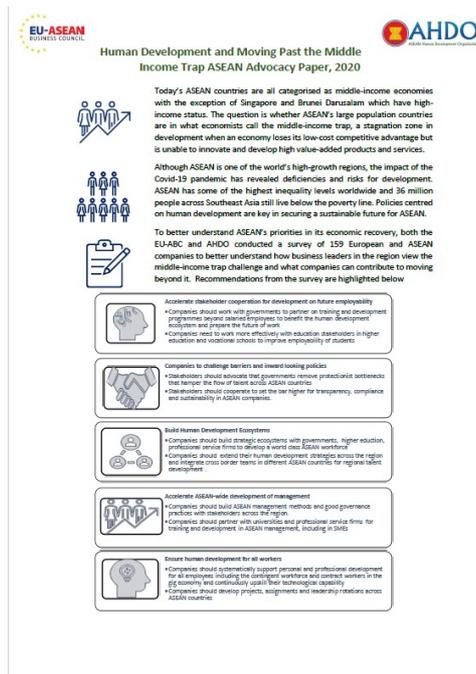
### EU-ABC WEBINARS & ACTIVITIES

### PUBLICATION OF ADVOCACY PAPERS

## Human Development and Moving Past The Middle Income Trap ASEAN



### Human Development and Moving Past the Middle Income Trap ASEAN Advocacy Paper 2020

**Human Development and Moving Past the Middle Income Trap ASEAN Advocacy Paper, 2020**

Today's ASEAN countries are all categorized as middle-income economies with the exception of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam which have high-income status. The question is whether ASEAN's large population countries are in what economists call the middle-income trap, a stagnation zone in development where an economy loses its low-cost competitive advantage but is unable to innovate and develop high value-added products and services.

Although ASEAN is one of the world's high-growth regions, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed deficiencies and risks for development. ASEAN has some of the highest inequality levels worldwide and 36 million people across Southeast Asia still live below the poverty line. Policies centred on human development are key in securing a sustainable future for ASEAN.

To better understand ASEAN's priorities in its economic recovery, both the EU-ABC and AHDO conducted a survey of 159 European and ASEAN companies to better understand how business leaders in the region view the middle-income trap challenge and what companies can contribute to moving beyond it. Recommendations from the survey are highlighted below.

- Accelerate stakeholder cooperation for development on future employability**
  - Companies should work with governments to partner on training and development programmes to prepare students/employees to benefit the human development
  - Companies should partner with educational institutions to improve education and vocational schools to improve employability of students
- Companies to challenge barriers and inward-looking policies**
  - Businesses should advocate that governments remove protectionist barriers that hamper the flow of talent across ASEAN countries
  - Businesses should cooperate to set the bar higher for transparency, compliance and sustainability in ASEAN companies
- Build human development ecosystems**
  - Companies should build strategic ecosystems with governments, higher education, professional service firms to develop a world class ASEAN workforce
  - Companies should extend their human development strategies across the region and integrate cross border teams in different ASEAN countries for regional talent development
- Accelerate ASEAN-wide development of management**
  - Companies should build ASEAN management networks and good governance practices with stakeholders across the region
  - Companies should partner with universities and professional service firms for training and development in ASEAN management, including in SMEs
- Ensure human development for all workers**
  - Companies should proactively support personal and professional development for all employees including the caregiver workforce and contract workers in the EE economy and contribute to their technological capability
  - Companies should develop projects, assignments and leadership relations across ASEAN countries

The EU-ASEAN Business Council and the ASEAN Human Development Organisation (AHDO), published the position paper **"Human Development and Moving Past the Middle Income Trap ASEAN"**, outlining how strategies centered on human development can contribute to post-pandemic revival strategies. In line with the regional vision for a cohesive and responsive ASEAN, the EU-ABC positions human development as a catalyst for sustainable growth, providing recommendations that not only mitigate the socioeconomic damage caused by Covid-19, but also drive long-term growth by moving past the middle income trap.

- Accelerate Stakeholder Cooperation for Development on Future Employability
- Companies to Challenge Barriers and Inward-Looking Policies
- Build Human Development Ecosystems
- Accelerate ASEAN-Wide Development for Management
- Ensure Human Development for All Workers

For synopsis of the paper, click [here](#)  
To access the paper, click [here](#)  
Full listing of EU-ABC publications can be found [here](#)

**Media Coverage:**

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/26/phl-s-e-a-neighbors-must-shun-mid-income-trap-eu-asean-poll/>

## LEARNINGS FROM COVID-19: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ASEAN GOVERNMENTS TO ESTABLISH SELF-CARE POLICY TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF THEIR POPULATIONS



### Learnings from COVID-19: An Opportunity for ASEAN Governments to Establish Self-Care Policy to Improve the Health & Well-Being of their Populations

ASEAN continues to lose 9 million people annually to lifestyle-related disease. The majority of the big six ASEAN countries spend less than 5% of their GDP on healthcare, while Universal Healthcare (UHC) index scores remain around 70 (100 being perfect). UHC is not feasible without individual accountability for our own health and care, something which expanded Self-Care can help to achieve. Boosting the support and availability for self-care in the region will go a long way to ensuring the people of ASEAN can enjoy long and healthy lives, whilst also leading to significant savings on health budgets across the region and reducing the burden on existing primary healthcare systems by reducing the number of consultations with healthcare professionals for minor ailments and illnesses.

Self-Care is based on three pillars: evidence (regime general good practice), support (type and quality of healthcare) (healthy sporting activities, leisure, etc.), environment (factors (living conditions, social habits, etc.), socioeconomic factors (income level, cultural beliefs, etc.) and self-medication. Core principles, foundational principles for self-care include aspects of the individual (e.g. self-reliance, empowerment, autonomy, personal responsibility, self-efficacy) as well as the greater community (e.g. community participation, community resilience, community empowerment).  
Source: World Health Organisation.

To better understand consumer attitudes in the ASEAN region towards Self-Care and the availability of Over-The-Counter and self-care medicines to help them self-medicate and practice self-remedies, EU-ABC engaged IPSOS to conduct a survey, which involved 2,000 individuals across Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. Below are two key findings:

83% of respondents believe that medication for minor ailments should be available more widely, such as in supermarkets/mini-markets/ convenience shops.

78% believe that e-Pharmacies should be able to offer the same basic non-prescription remedies as ordinary pharmacies.

#### Key Recommendations

	ASEAN Governments to effectively build self-care policies and promotion into their national health policies.
	ASEAN to mandate the Pharmaceutical Products Working Group (PPWG) to be an ASEAN-wide regulatory enabler focused on streamlining self-care medicine regulation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing an ASEAN-wide, harmonised definition on self-care medicines;</li><li>Developing medicine reclassification guidelines that will enable ASEAN to move from prescription medicines to non-prescription, building on the initiatives and programmes in place in Singapore and Thailand;</li><li>Exploring simplified regulatory requirements for over-the-counter and self-care medicines through a risk-based regulatory approach.</li></ul>
	Create a specialised regulatory approach designed to encourage mutual recognition and help those ASEAN member states with less developed regulatory regimes to improve their capacity and general encourage enhanced consumer empowerment.
	Develop relevant laws and regulations to allow official registration and regulation of e-pharmacies with specific requirements or guidelines to ensure patient safety and delivery of quality medicines to patients.
	Alter educational curricula to include more widespread teaching of healthy living, including better nutrition, exercise, health monitoring, and self-care/remedy practices.
	Elevate private sector engagement on the three initiatives outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Programme such as Global Respiratory Infection Partnership (GRIIP) - GRIIP is committed to consistent, sustainable evidence-based advocacy and intervention for rational antibiotic use.</li><li>The Global Hygiene Council - The Global Hygiene Council is a group of the world's top experts in hygiene and hygiene-related fields, including microbiology, virology, infectious diseases, immunology, and public health.</li><li>Promoting and incentivising hospital providers and private insurance companies to offer telemedicine and e-pharmacy access and benefit coverage in their product offerings.</li></ul>

The EU-ASEAN Business Council published its latest advocacy paper entitled “**Learnings from COVID-19: An Opportunity for ASEAN Governments to Establish Self-Care Policy to Improve the Health & Well-Being of their Populations**” on 17 November. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the overstretching of primary care facilities that the pandemic has caused in many countries, the paper argues the case for a more focused policy attention from the authorities in ASEAN on self-care, including broadening the availability of over-the-counter and self-care medicines for common or minor ailments.

#### Key points and recommendations from the paper include:

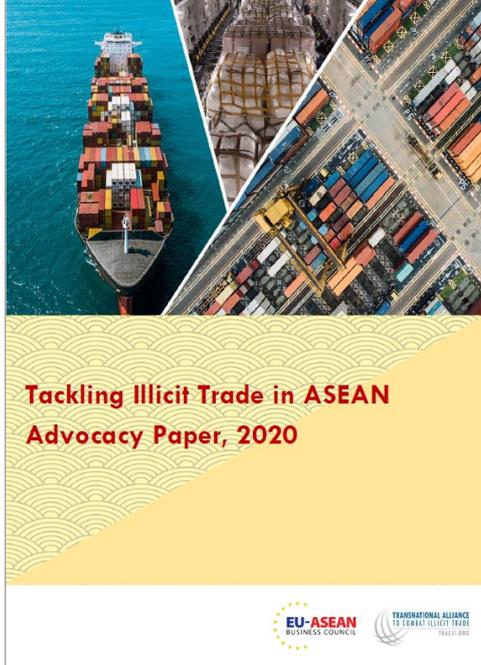
- ASEAN Governments should effectively build self-care policies and promotion into their national health policies;
- ASEAN to mandate the Pharmaceutical Products Working Group (PPWG) to be an ASEAN-wide regulatory enabler focused on streamlining self-care medicine regulation such as developing an ASEAN-wide, harmonised definition on self-care medicine;
- Alter educational curricula to include more widespread teaching of healthy living, including better nutrition, exercise, health monitoring, and self-care/remedy practices
- Increased engagement with the private sector around a number of initiatives to promote better self-care and increase availability of over-the-counter medicines
- In a survey of consumer attitudes in ASEAN towards self-care and availability of medicines for minor ailments it was found that:

*83% of respondents believe that medication for minor ailments should be available more widely, such as in supermarkets/mini-markets/ convenience shops;*

*86% say governments should do more to incentivise and support people to self-care at home; and,*

*65% are more likely to practice self-care at home without the consultation of healthcare professional as a result of COVID-19.*

For synopsis of the paper, click [here](#)  
To access the paper, click [here](#)  
Full listing of EU-ABC publications can be found [here](#)



**Tackling Anti-Illicit Trade in ASEAN Advocacy Paper, 2020**

ASEAN is facing a crisis like never before. COVID-19 has disrupted supply chains, plunged stock markets, and has taken the lives of thousands of people. Besides the macroeconomic shocks to the economy, the pandemic has also put a spotlight on Southeast Asia's growing illicit trade industry. Vietnam has seized over 150,000 counterfeit 3M face masks while the Philippines has seized medical supplies worth US\$5 million.

In ASEAN, the rise of illicit trade has dealt significant blows to human lives and human rights, on top of causing monetary losses to governments and legitimate businesses. Moreover, the proceeds of illicit trade line the pockets of international organised crime, including terrorist organisations, and undermine governments' ability to safeguard the health and safety of their citizens.

As ASEAN looks towards charting the path to the next new normal, the region needs to transform lockdown lessons into a resilient post-crisis regulatory regime by understanding where and how criminal groups exploit weaknesses. The time for ASEAN is now and the failure to act could result in a larger public healthcare crisis. Some recommendations of how ASEAN can tackle the issue across different areas of concern are highlighted below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with online platforms such to promote online to offline enforcement.</li> <li>• Enhance selection of better due diligence processes for online intermediaries including social media platforms.</li> <li>• Develop national government frameworks for governing advertising and promotion of products, compatible with OECD guidelines.</li> </ul> <p><b>E-Commerce</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive framework pertaining to the implementation and protection of list codes.</li> <li>• Define serialization and Trace and Trace lists, mandate serialization of products.</li> <li>• Form regional Public-Private working group for Illicit Trade to share market intelligence and investigative techniques with customs authorities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Counterfeit Goods</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form comprehensive and specific definitions of permissible activity in FTZs with implementation policies and periodic checks.</li> <li>• Explore digital solutions to ease reporting requirements, track and trace requirements.</li> <li>• Ensure authorities have access to aggregated data on goods entering and exiting the FTZ with correct tariff classification and owner information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Free Trade Zone (FTZ)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify the administrative requirements of the taxation process, through labelling and documentation standards, so as to reduce incentives for tax avoidance.</li> <li>• Monitor coherent long-term policies that focus on regular tax adjustments instead of drastic increases, especially during the current COVID-19 environment of financial uncertainty and supply chain disruptions for the licit industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxation Policies</b></p>		

At a time when illicit trade is gaining momentum in ASEAN, the EU-ASEAN Business Council published the paper **Tackling Illicit Trade in ASEAN** released in tandem with the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). The report, co-authored with the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) provides critical insight on how governments and industry leaders can work together to introduce regulatory changes to tackle this pressing issue.

The rise of illicit trade has dealt significant blows to human lives and human rights, on top of causing monetary losses to governments and legitimate businesses. As the region charts the path to the next new normal, lockdown lessons needs to be transformed into a resilient post-crisis regulatory regime by understanding where and how criminal group exploit weaknesses.

**For synopsis of the paper, click [here](#)**  
**To access the paper, click [here](#)**  
**Full listing of EU-ABC publications can be found [here](#)**

**Media Coverage:**

- <https://retailasia.net/suppliers/news/southeast-asia-counterfeit-goods-market-%E2%80%98-worsen-eu-abc>
- <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/01/government-lost-213-million-tax-take-to-fake-tobacco/>
- <https://siamrath.co.th/n/201799>
- <http://www.newswit.com/gen/2020-12-04/bf35822bfd7789689c5c6ffc7baadf82/>
- <https://www.alinea.id/dunia/eu-abc-dukung-asean-berantas-perdagangan-ilegal-pascapandemi-b1ZYu9ziq>
- <http://www.powertimeonline.com/index.php/social-news/showcontent/158578.html>
- <https://asiatoday.id/read/perdagangan-ilegal-ancam-masa-depan-asia-tenggara>
- <https://www.gatra.com/detail/news/497556/hukum/eu-abc-rilis-laporan-penanganan-perdagangan-ilegal-di-asean>
- <https://www.banmuang.co.th/news/economy/215894>

**8th ASEAN-EU BUSINESS SUMMIT**



The EU-ASEAN Business Council held the 8th edition of our flagship annual Business Summit at the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore on 19 November. A trying

Our first physical / hybrid event was well-received and attended by over 250 people both virtually and physically, bringing together business leaders from Europe and Southeast Asia with policy and decision makers from regional governments and the European Commission to debate and discuss improvements to the trade and investment relationship between the EU and ASEAN and key issues around post-pandemic recovery.

The Summit was opened by Donald Kanak, Chairman of EU-ASEAN Business Council, followed by an opening keynote speech by H.E. Trần Tuấn Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade, Vietnam and a digital keynote speech by Ajarin Pattanapanchai, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Thailand. The first and second panel discussions on ASEAN 4.0 and Sustainable Healthcare Financing were kicked off by keynote speeches delivered by Khor Chern Chuen, Chief Operating Officer SAP Southeast Asia and Eric Mansion, General Manager Sanofi Pasteur Asia respectively.

The second half of the event started off with an afternoon keynote address where H.E. Valdis Dombrovskis, EU Trade Commissioner shared insights on charting ASEAN-EU Relations, post-pandemic. The Hon. Ar Yanty Rahman, Co-Chair ASEAN BAC, Legislative Council Member Brunei and ASEAN Future Workforce Council also provided insights to Brunei's 2021 Chairmanship Agenda before the commencement of the final panel discussion on post-pandemic recovery and opportunities for European businesses in the region.

H.E. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore ended the Summit on a strong note with a closing address on the region's new economic choices, post-pandemic.





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**Media Coverage:**

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/asean-needs-more-economic-integration-to-ensure-strong-recovery-from-covid-19-chan>

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/singapore-is-looking-to-sign-a-digital-economy-agreement-with-the-eu-chan>

<https://singapore.timesofnews.com/business-economy/asean-needs-more-economic-integration-to-ensure-strong-recovery-from-covid-19-chan-chun-sing-4.html>

<https://baotintuc.vn/the-gioi/thuc-day-va-tang-cuong-hon-nua-moi-quan-he-giua-asean-va-eu-20201119230126137.htm>

<https://www.theedgesingapore.com/news/global-economy/key-preparing-our-economies-future-press-regional-and-global-integration-efforts>

<https://www.vietnamplus.vn/thuc-day-va-tang-cuong-hon-nua-moi-quan-he-giua-asean-va-eu/677838.vnp>

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/three-ways-singapore-eu-can-work-together-to-unlock-aseans-potential-chan>

<https://electrodealpro.com/promote-and-further-strengthen-relations-between-asean-and-the-eu/>

## Digital Webinar Series- Banking On Digital Inclusivity In ASEAN, Post Pandemic



Digital Webinar Series Sponsor: SAP | Supporting Partner for Digital Inclusivity Webinar: Eurocham Malaysia

With COVID-19 accelerating ASEAN's pivot towards digital economy and forcing companies to rethink how they operate, the EU-ASEAN Business Council put together a 3 part digital webinar series to explore and discuss ASEAN economies and digitalisation in a post-pandemic world'.

**Banking on Digital Inclusivity in ASEAN, Post-Pandemic**, the first in the series, seeks to better understand how businesses in the region can work together with regulators to bridge gaps on inclusivity and minimise the region's existing digital divide. Held on 9 October and led by a well represented, esteemed panel of speakers and moderator, attendees gained insight to how leaders in the region can work with businesses, how digital banking can provide inclusivity and the type of ecosystem needed for it through an engaging discussion.

**Panelists:**

- **Hew Wee Choong**

*Vice President, Investment Development, [Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation](#)*

- **Bambang Moerwanto**

*Regional Vice President & Head of Financial Services Industry, [SAP Asia Pacific & Japan](#)*

- **Edmond Looi**

- **Michael Moon**

Managing Director, Payments & Trade Markets, Asia Pacific, [SWIFT](#)

**Moderator:**

- **Hans Vriens**

Managing Partner, [Vriens & Partners](#)

For more information on the webinar, click [here](#)  
For webinar round-up and key takeaways, click [here](#)  
To view the webinar, click [here](#)

## Digital Webinar Series- COVID-19 and ASEAN's Digital Transformation

Sponsored by: **SAP**

### EU-ASEAN Business Council Presents COVID-19 and ASEAN's Digital Transformation

a three-part webinar series on ASEAN economies and digitalisation in a post-pandemic world

**Speakers**

 <b>Henriette Faergemann</b> First Counsellor European Union Delegation to Indonesia	 <b>Ang Chin Tah</b> Vice President & Head Digital Industry Singapore EDB	 <b>Leong Keng Thai</b> Director-General International Affairs IMDA	 <b>Khor Chern Chuen</b> Chief Operating Officer SAP, Southeast Asia	 <b>Johan de Villiers</b> Managing Director ABB Singapore and Head of Industrial Automation South- East Asia	 <b>Lance Little</b> Managing Director Roche Diagnostics Asia Pacific
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Digital Webinar Series Sponsor: SAP

With the increase in uptake of digital trends, the EU-ASEAN Business Council held the webinar, **COVID-19 and ASEAN's Digital Transformation**, to better understand the current efforts of digital transformation and what the future entails. The 2nd in our 3 part digital series, the discussion of the webinar focused on ASEAN economies' pace and whether it is sustainable for long-term growth, with regard to digitisation.

The well received webinar, saw more than 150 attendees gain insights and a deeper understanding on digital trends that have been triggered by COVID-19, sectors which have been forced to digitise during the pandemic and also explored how governments can aid businesses with their digital transformation post-pandemic.

**Panelists:**

- **Ang Chin Tah**

Vice President & Head Digital Industry Singapore, [EDB](#)

- **Leong Keng Thai**

Director-General International Affairs, [IMDA](#)

- **Khor Chern Chuen**

Chief Operating Officer, [SAP Southeast Asia](#)

- **Johan de Villiers**

Managing Director, [ABB](#) Singapore and Head of Industrial Automation South-East Asia

- **Lance Little**

Managing Director, [Roche Diagnostics](#) Asia Pacific

**Moderator:**

- **Chris Humphrey**

## Webinar- Vaccine Confidence In The Time Of COVID-19: Asia's Time To Act



### Vaccine confidence in the time of COVID-19: Asia's time to act

As COVID-19 continues to spread around the world, many hopes are pinned on the continuing regulatory approvals and subsequent delivery of various late-stage COVID-19 vaccines. And beyond COVID-19, **life-course immunisation** continues to be an important part of keeping other infectious disease threats at bay.

According to the World Health Organization, vaccination is one of the most cost-effective ways to avoid diseases. An estimated 5 million deaths are avoided every year with vaccination.<sup>[i]</sup> If global vaccination coverage increases, a further 1.5 million deaths can be prevented.<sup>[ii]</sup> With the exception of clean, safe drinking water, no human endeavour rivals vaccination in combating infectious diseases and reducing mortality rates.<sup>[iii]</sup>

Despite the critical role of vaccines, they are an under-utilised form of public health intervention. Vaccination beyond childhood is not well understood by populations, and subsequently often elective vaccination rates are very low, worryingly so for the elderly and more vulnerable.

Against this backdrop, the EU-ASEAN Business Council this month hosted a webinar on vaccine confidence in Asia. To shed light on the barriers and opportunities to increase vaccine confidence in the region, the following experts came together for a virtual panel discussion:

- Professor Tikki Pangestu, Visiting Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore and former Director of Research Policy & Cooperation, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland
- Professor Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Secretary General of the Asia Pacific Pediatric Association and Consultant Pediatrician and Pediatric Cardiologist, KPJ Selangor Specialist Hospital, Malaysia
- Dr Nan-Chang Chiu, Chief of Department of Pediatrics, MacKay Children's Hospital, Taiwan and Director of Taiwan Pediatric Association
- Salma Khalik, Senior Health Correspondent, The Straits Times, Singapore and Member, Singapore Press Club

### Vaccine confidence barriers

The expert panel members discussed two key barriers that hamper efforts to improving vaccine confidence in the region:

1. **The spread of misinformation, and the role of mainstream and social media.** The most important and significant barrier is the spread of misinformation, falsehoods and conspiracy theories, which are creating fear, confusion and reduced trust in the importance of vaccination. Sensationalised and inaccurate media reporting can often cause unintended and long-term consequences on vaccine confidence. And we now have the more recent issue of social media being at the centre of misinformation spreading at an alarming rate, to the point where the World Health Organization has coined the term "infodemic".
2. **The need for more awareness and education on the benefits of elective vaccination.** While the benefits of childhood vaccinations are clear, and many countries have compulsory vaccination schedules and mechanisms for delivering vaccines effectively to a paediatric population, the challenge is bigger for adults and the elderly. Beyond needing a motivation to seek vaccination that is not government mandated, understanding what the vaccine is for, and how the vaccination works is crucial in increasing vaccine confidence, and subsequently uptake among the adult population.

### Responsibility opportunities

Given the complexity of the barriers, the expert panellists spoke about their belief that increasing vaccine confidence is about collaboration between all key stakeholders – that it requires a multi-sectorial approach between government, professional societies, media, the private sector, civil society as well as communities and faith-based organisations. The panellists discussed the responsibility opportunities of each stakeholder group:

1. **Social media companies** – with such a huge number of subscribers on these platforms, social media companies have a crucial role to play in directing people who are searching for information on vaccination to reliable and credible sources. This can help mitigate the spread of misinformation. Social media companies can work together with third-party

- organisations to ensure that their content is easily accessible and searchable through their social media platforms.
2. **Mainstream media** – Media outlets have a social responsibility within the communities they report in and need to work hand-in-hand with local authorities and public health organisations to ensure accurate and factual reporting on vaccine efficacy and safety. The pace of information dissemination is also crucial, so that the correct reporting reaches the public before the gaps are filled by false or misleading information.
  3. **Local governments** – Governments need to be transparent and accountable as well as deliver information and address misconceptions rapidly around vaccination in order to overcome fear and mistrust. Accurate and transparent information around the role of vaccination can further motivate the adult population to take up vaccination.
  4. **Community groups** – Small neighbourhoods and communities especially in rural areas whose members are close-knit. A group such as this can positively influence one another in the spirit of the community and are the foundation to the larger environment around vaccine confidence. Locally driven education and awareness campaigns are a great place to start.
  5. **Public health professionals** – Public health professionals need to be able to tell more compelling stories around the importance of vaccination and use more diverse platforms and compelling messages in addition to science, data, charts and graphs.

Increasing vaccine confidence is a battle that must be fought by winning the hearts and minds of the people. With reason and emotion, we can overcome confusion and distrust and subsequently improve uptake rates of vaccination.

***This webinar was supported by Sanofi and Singapore Press Club.***

[\[i\]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7227637/) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7227637/>

[\[ii\]](https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/immunization) <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/immunization>

[\[iii\]](http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-040089/en/) Andre FE, Booy R et al. Bulletin of the World Health Organization: Vaccination greatly reduces disease, disability, death and inequity worldwide. 2008. Accessed January 2018. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-040089/en/>

***For more information on the webinar, click [here](#)***

***To view the webinar, click [here](#)***

**Media Coverage:**

<https://headtopics.com/sg/as-pharmas-rush-out-covid-19-vaccines-approving-authorities-must-show-that-no-shortcuts-were-taken-17173653>

<https://www.biospectrumasia.com/opinion/37/17215/experts-elaborates-on-asias-confidence-and-challenges-with-covid-19-vaccine.html>

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<https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2020/12/11/vaccine-refusal-in-east-coast-states-sabah-rising-since-2013-expert/>

## Idea Crowdsourcing - Sustainable Healthcare in APAC: Financing & Delivery Models

Sustainable Healthcare in APAC

EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

With the support of KPMG, Sanofi and World Economic Forum

Sustainable Healthcare in APAC:  
Financing & Delivery Models

Idea Crowdsourcing

Submit your ideas to our thematic-specific problem statements between 3rd of December 2020 to 3rd of January 2021. Selected ideas will be notified by 8th of January 2021.

More than ever, the healthcare industry is in need of innovative ideas to transform and withstand various challenges. The EU-ASEAN Business Council is hosting a virtual ideation effort with the support of [Sanofi](#), [KPMG](#) and the [World Economic Forum](#) (WEF) to gather innovative concepts that seek to revolutionise the healthcare delivery and financing models in APAC.

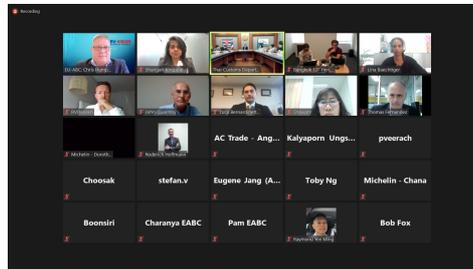
The ideas will serve as inputs for the programming and high level dialogue on global health system resiliency at relevant World Economic Forum-hosted events. Selected ideas will be credited in an upcoming paper authored by Sanofi, KPMG and WEF.

***Click [here](#) to find out more and submit your ideas from 3rd December 2020 to 3rd January 2021.***

Challenge the conventions, think out of the box, share with us your exciting ideas. We look forward to your participation!

**Media Coverage:**

<https://healthcareasiamagazine.com/healthcare/news/sustainable-healthcare-in-apac-financing-delivery-models>



The EU-ASEAN Business Council had the honour of holding a virtual meeting with Mr Patchara Anuntasilpa Director-General of Customs for Thailand on 17 November, an exclusive for members only event. Members in attendance had the opportunity to raise customs related questions for discussion. Topics covered/discussed in the meeting include:

- Customs Enforcement Controls & Penalty System
- Technology Usage in Customs
- Anti-Illicit Trade Activity
- Free Zone Issues
- Classification & Decision Issues
- Goods in Transit
- ASEAN Issues
- Prospects for EU-Thailand and EU-ASEAN FTAs & RCEP
- Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)

## Customs Risk Profiling Workshop: Awareness-Raising Program to Combat Illicit Trade



On 25 November, the EU-ASEAN Business Council had the pleasure to host a customs risk profiling workshop, **Awareness-Raising Program to Combat Illicit Trade**, an online training to raise awareness on illicit trade issues, its consequences, and basic risk profiling techniques to identify illicit cargos.

Conducted by **SGS FIT (Fighting Illicit Trade)** in partnership with **Philip Morris International**, the workshop provided basic training to enhance skill and knowledge level of customs in identifying illicit trade, counterfeit and pirated goods (through a new risk profiling assessment and cargo targeting techniques) and assist countries in the region to develop a more cooperative response to the increasing international threat of counterfeiting and illicit trade through encouraging the exchange of best practices and sharing of expertise by Customs experts and private sector representatives.

The workshop was attended by representatives from each of the Customs authorities from across the region.

## Webinar - Protecting Farmers and Promoting Food Security in Indonesia: The Role of Agricultural Insurance



The EU-ABC today completed our last webinar of the year. Organised together with [Swiss Re](#), the webinar looked at the important role that the agricultural sector plays in addressing key SDGs around alleviating rural poverty, food security, zero hunger, climate change, and the crucial role that insurance can play in helping protect rural incomes from natural disasters such as flooding and droughts.

Attendees of the informative webinar got to join in on the discussion which featured an excellent panel including Indonesia's Minister for National Development Planning and representatives from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture, as well as JICA and Swiss Re.

**For more information on the webinar, click [here](#)**  
**To view the webinar, click [here](#)**

## EU-ASEAN Business Council Interview Series



Since the launch of our **Interview Series** on 16 June, the EU-ASEAN Business Council is pleased to share that we've featured 17 members through the year sharing valuable insights and expert knowledge on a varied number of trending topics, particularly on COVID-19 and a bit more about what they do. Find out more about what they have to say!

EU-ASEAN Business Council Interview Series

**Don Kanak**

Chairman, Eastspring Investments,  
 Chairman, Prudence Foundation and  
 Chairman, EU-ASEAN Business Council



EU-ASEAN Business Council Interview Series

**Johan de Villiers**

Managing Director  
 ABB Singapore



EU-ASEAN Business Council Interview Series

**Sharon Ooi**

Managing Director and Head of  
 Property & Casualty (P&C)  
 Underwriting, Asia Pacific  
 Swiss Re





The team at EU-ABC would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the members who contributed their expert knowledge, to which the **Interview Series** would not have been possible. Being relevant and staying connected to our members, remain our utmost priority.

## IN THE NEWS

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## EU-ABC FORWARD LOOK CALENDAR 2021

QUARTER ONE (JAN TO MAR)		
1 Jan	Public Holiday (EU-ABC Office Closed)	For Info
11 Jan	Executive Board Meeting	Executive Board
w/c 11 Jan	Ministerial Roundtable: Sec Ramon Lopez, Department of Trade & Industry, The Philippines	Members Only
w/c 11 Jan	Ministerial Roundtable: Malaysian Minister of Finance	Members Only
Mid Jan	Possible meeting with Brunei to understand 2021 Chairmanship	Members Only
Mid Jan	Virtual Mission Trip for Indonesia	Members Only
Mid Jan	Webinar: Future of ASEAN-EU Relations with the Strategic Partnership	Public Event
Mid Jan	Webinar: Unpacking Opportunities from RCEP Webinar	Public Event
Jan	Roundtable: Philippines Customs	Members Only
Jan	Roundtable: Indonesia Customs	Members Only
8 Feb	Executive Board Meeting	Executive Board
11 & 13 Feb	Lunar New Year Holiday (EU-ABC Office Closed)	For Info
Mid Feb	ASEAN BAC & Joint Business Councils Meeting	Executive Director to Attend
Mid Feb	Closed door lunch with German Ambassador	Members Only
Late Feb	Customs Procedures & Trade Facilitation Working Group (CPTFWG)	Members Only
Late Feb	Co-ordinating Committee on ATIGA (CCA)	Executive Director to Attend
Late Feb	CECWG	Members Only
8 Mar	Executive Board Meeting	Executive Board
End Mar	Publish Paper on NTBs in ASEAN	Press Release & Webinar
End Mar	Publish Paper on Insurance in ASEAN	Press Release
End Mar	Publish Paper on Energy Transition in ASEAN	Press Release & Webinar
End Mar	ASEAN Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors Meeting - Brunei	Selected EU-ABC Members to Attend

## NEW MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT

The EU-ASEAN Business Council extends the warmest welcome to our new member:



Syngenta is a global company with headquarters in Switzerland. 28,000 employees in 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown and protected.

They accelerate their innovation and invest to advance a more sustainable agriculture which is good for nature, farmers and society.

Their work helps farmers to face the challenges of today's changing world. Farmers must adapt to the effects of climate change, improve the soil and enhance biodiversity, and respond to society's views on food and agricultural technology. And we are transparent about what we're doing and the impact it is making.

## EU-ABC OFFICE RELOCATION



We are excited to share that we will be moving office on 21 December. Our new address is:

**Suite 29, Level 30,  
Six Battery Road, Singapore, 049909  
Phone number: +65 6725 6545**

We look forward to starting 2021 and reconnecting with everyone from our new premise. New year, new office but our priority remains the same, YOU, our valued members.

*MERRY  
CHRISTMAS &  
HAPPY NEW  
YEAR*



As 2020 draws to a close, the EU-ABC team wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Let the festivities begin and we look forward to seeing everyone in 2021, hopefully in person! Cheers to a better 2021!

# EU-ABC MEMBERS



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