



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 7/Issue 11 - December 2021

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Message from Executive Director



As we approach the end of 2021, it seems that the light that we thought was the end of COVID tunnel is, in fact, the onrushing Omicron Express hurtling its way towards us! Nevertheless, we here at the EU-ASEAN Business Council are looking forward with some optimism at what should be a busy but exciting year ahead. Before we look to next year though, let's just pause for breath and look back at 2021.

This was an exceptionally busy year for the Council, probably the busiest and, in many respects, most fulfilling in its existence. Membership is up, with Philips the latest European MNC to join us, further expanding our cohort of world-leading healthcare companies at a time when health issues are front and centre of our minds. Our increasing health focus was highlighted this year by our first ever Business Summit dedicated to the topic, attended by three Ministers from the region, the ASEAN Secretary General and the Director-General for Health from the European Commission.

Despite ongoing travel restrictions, we still managed to undertake 26 Ministerial meetings across the year, meeting Ministers from Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Brunei and Malaysia, giving our members a vital opportunity to get policy updates and raise issues of concern despite not being able to meet in person. We also held high-level dialogues with the ASEAN Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors, the ASEAN Economic Ministers (alongside EVP Dombrovskis from the European Commission) and with the ASEAN Customs Director-Generals. There were eight publications on a range of topics from Customs and Trade Facilitation to Sustainability via Healthcare and Energy. And on top of all that, there were 11 ASEAN workshops that we ran on a variety of topics, 11 webinars and a bunch of *ad hoc* initiatives undertaken to support our members' interests. Time for a breather, but only a short one as we prepare for 2022.

For 2022, we already have a full looking calendar planned, one that will only get busier. Next year will mark 45 years of the formal EU-ASEAN relationship, and it should be an exciting period as the EU looks to step up its involvement on the back of its Indo-Pacific Strategy, EU Global Gateway initiative and the Green Team Europe Initiative for ASEAN, which is aimed specifically at helping Southeast Asia on sustainability and climate action issues. The EU-ABC is looking forward to working with the European Commission in these areas, and to supporting and collaborating with our ASEAN stakeholders on them as well.

Our focus for 2022 will very much be in advocating in areas such as Energy Transition, Greening of Supply Chains, improving healthcare systems in ASEAN, and harmonisation of standards across the region (in healthcare, mobility, and food in particular), as well as our usual ongoing work on trade facilitation, anti-illicit trade, digital economy and much more.

We will have our usual array of high-level ASEAN Ministerial dialogues, and, fingers crossed, a return to physical mission trips with Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia high our list to visit. We will be running not one but two Business Summits in 2022 – one at an ASEAN Economic Ministers meeting in Cambodia and the other alongside the proposed EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit slated for the last quarter of the year in Brussels.

To cope with the increase in work our team is growing, to enable us to better support our members and the interests of European business across the region. More on that coming soon.

As ever, an organisation such as ours is nothing without its members. They not only fund us but guide us on the issues we need to raise. We are here to serve their interests, and we like nothing more than members that keep in touch with us and keep us briefed on their issues and concerns so that we can help them. So, I would like to express a big heart-felt thank you to all of our members.

Finally, I just want to wish everybody a very merry Christmas, and a healthy, prosperous and peaceful New Year.

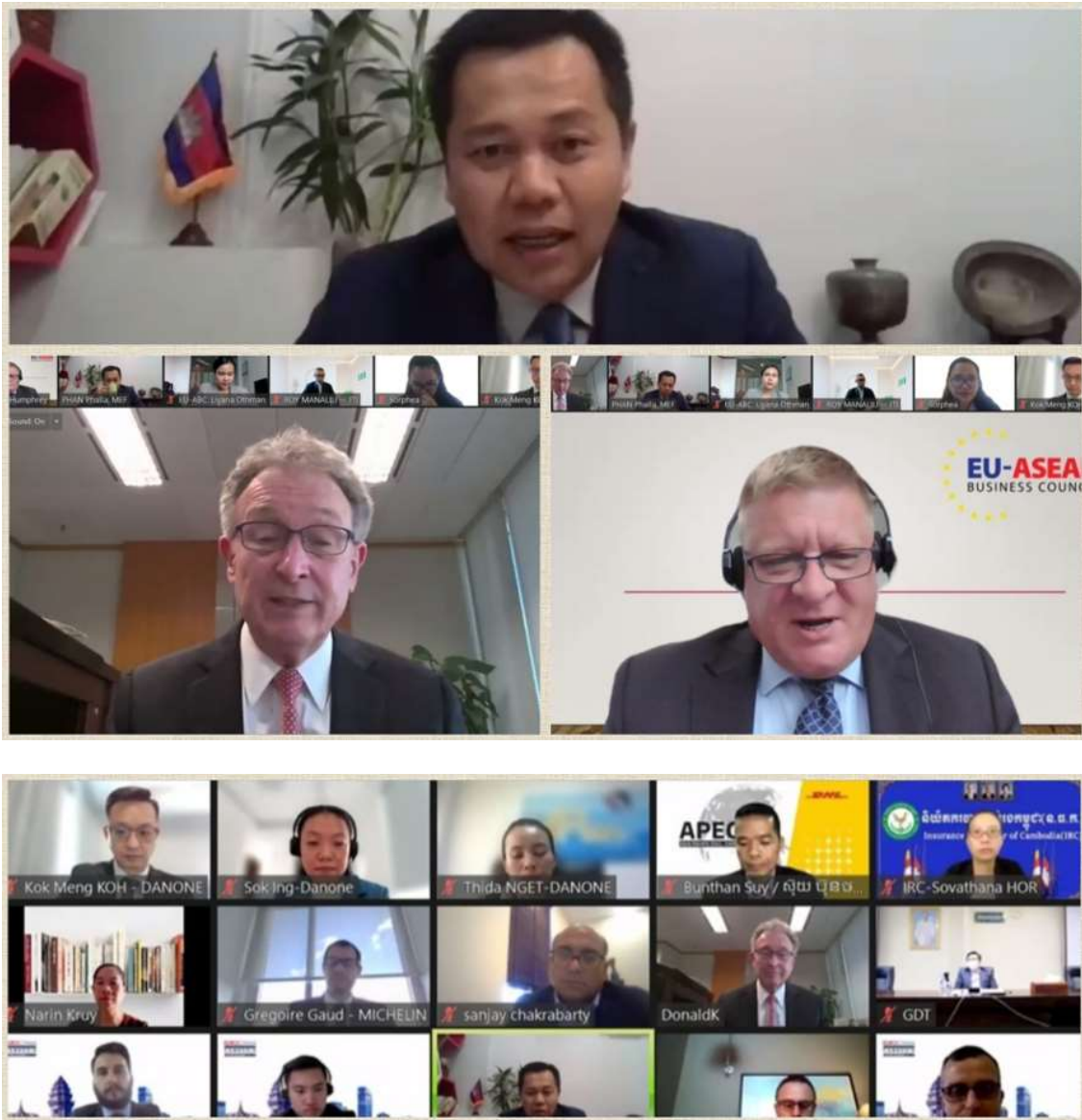


Chris Humphrey
Executive Director, EU-ASEAN Business Council

Activities & Events to Sum Up 2021

EU-ABC Cambodia Virtual Mission

Ministry of Finance & Economy



It's a wrap in the **EU-ASEAN Business Council's** series of meetings with Cambodian ministers on 1 November with a roundtable with **H.E. Phan Phalla, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Finance and Economy**. Much ground was covered from Cambodia's plans for its ASEAN Chairmanship, through sustainable finance initiatives for energy transition, via digitisation of government processes, to VAT and taxation policy.

EU-ABC Thailand Virtual Mission

Ministry of Digital Economy & Society

Digital Laws Landscape	
PROSECUTION & PENALTIES	Review the Competitiveness of Thailand's Consumer Act
TRADE FACILITATION	Enhancing Thailand's E-Trade Readiness Act
DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Thailand's Digital Infrastructure Act
DIGITAL GOVERNANCE	Thailand's Digital Governance Act
DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM	Thailand's Digital Ecosystem Act
CONSUMER & BUSINESS TRUST	Thailand's Consumer Protection Act
SOFT LAW	Thailand's Soft Law

Latest in our series of Ministerial meetings with Thailand was held on 8 November with **H.E. Chiwat Thanakamansorn, Minister for Digital Economy & Society**.

Topics covered included digital government; digital economy & society, PDPA and PDPA sub regulations, digital regulation, Telecoms Industry structure and digital health services.



Ministry of Commerce



The last Virtual Ministerial meeting for 2021 was with **Dr Sansern Samalapa, Vice Minister of Commerce.**

Held on 26 November, the meeting covered a wide range of issues from multilateral and bilateral trade deals to import and export policies, digitisation of compliance, e-commerce in Thailand and IP protection amongst others.



Fighting ASEAN's Plastic Pandemic



The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** published a paper on single-use plastics in ASEAN on 17 November. The report, **Fighting ASEAN's Plastic Pandemic**, examines the prevalence of plastic pollution in the region, which has been exacerbated by the global COVID-19 health crisis.

The report seeks for the urgent problem of single-use plastics waste to be addressed through solutions like developing an ASEAN-wide framework on phasing out disposable plastics, and looking beyond downstream plastic management into regulating the upstream stages in the life-cycle of single-use plastics waste.

For more details, click [here](#)

To download the paper, click [here](#)

Events & Activities

ASEAN's Road to Recovery Series: The Future of Travel



On 2 November, the **EU-ASEAN Business Council** held the "ASEAN Road to Recovery" webinar on "The Future of Travel".

The informative and engaging webinar was graced by 4 Ministers and covered Indonesia's plans for reopening and the Philippines' plans moving forward. More on ASEAN Travel Corridor, International Air Transport Association's (IATA) travel pass, what the future of travel holds and technological solutions for travelling better, safer and smarter were also covered.

View the webinar [here](#)



Customs Workshop



dentsu TRACKING

Supply Chain Control Solutions

EU-ASEAN Government Workshop, 10 Nov. 2021

Presenter: Jan Hoffmann

Identified shortcoming

Governments lack the **visibility, intelligence & control** necessary to achieve core policy objectives (e.g., all increase tax collection) and reduce the illicit tra

Illicit trade: global phenomenon



Tobacco Alcohol
Pharma & MD Beverages

\$2+ trillion
In drainage to the global economy caused by illicit trade in the world

and many more ...

The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** completed the last in a series of workshops on 8 and 10 November with ASEAN Customs Officials on the issue of anti-illicit trade in the region. This final one, done with the help of **Dentsu Tracking**, looked at how technology solutions for track and tracing could help both prevent illicit trade, assist governments in recovering lost revenue, and help to ensure better intelligence on the issue.

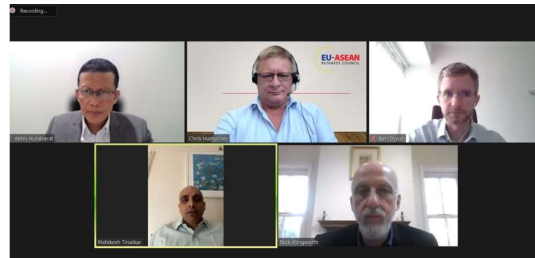
ASEAN’s 2021 Digital Toolkit Series: Banking On Cross- Border Payments



The EU-ASEAN Business Council Presents
ASEAN’s 2021 Digital Toolkit Series:
Banking on Cross-Border Payments

Sponsored by **SAP**

Dr Akhla R. Hutabarat, Nick Illingworth, Ben Dyson, Rishikesh Tinsakar



16 November saw the **EU-ASEAN Business Council's** last webinar of 2021. The **Banking on Cross-Border Payments** webinar in our **ASEAN 2021 Digital Toolkit Series** looked at the issue of cross border payments in ASEAN and the development, oversight, and future for digital payment platforms across the region as more countries look to link their domestic instant payment solutions to those in their neighbours.

This is a fast moving dynamic area, and one that has the potential to help the unbanked get access to funds and financial services and aid MSMEs gain access to new markets and be sure of getting paid.

Click [here](#) for the webinar

Unlimited ASEAN Forum: Empowering ASEAN’s young people through skills, decent employment, opportunities and partnerships



Chris Humphrey, Executive Director of EU-ASEAN Business Council provided the opening remarks at the UNICEF Unlimited ASEAN Conference on 17 November.

Focus of the conference was on how to empower youths to have better futures, an area that the EU-ASEAN Business Council will be focusing on more going forward.



Malaysia Insurance Workshop: Enhance Protection via Digital Innovations

The collage features three main presentation slides. The top slide, 'Care, Prepare and Prosper: Digital Tools for Affordable Protection March 2021', includes icons for 'Affordable Protection', 'Digital Access to Insurance', and 'Health, Wellness & Prosperity'. The middle slide, 'Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint', outlines a vision to be a regional leader in the digital economy, supported by 9 objectives, 6 thrusts, 22 strategies, 48 national initiatives, and 28 sectoral initiatives. The bottom slide, 'Healthcare Challenges in the Region', compares healthcare spending as a percentage of GDP across various countries, highlighting issues like unequal access and high out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE).

Together with **Bank Negara Malaysia**, **MyDIGITAL.KKMM** and **Malaysia's Ministry of Health**, we held a workshop on 17 November to discuss the recommendations from the Council's Insurance advocacy paper from earlier this year. Discussion centred on digital access to insurance, provision of insurance products to gig economy workers, and digital health tools.



35th Meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Customs



The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** participated in the **ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Customs Meeting** on 24 November with **US-ASEAN Business Council's Michael Michalak** and **Gil Gonzales** of **ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC)** pushing for easier, faster and simpler customs procedures to aid economic development in the region.

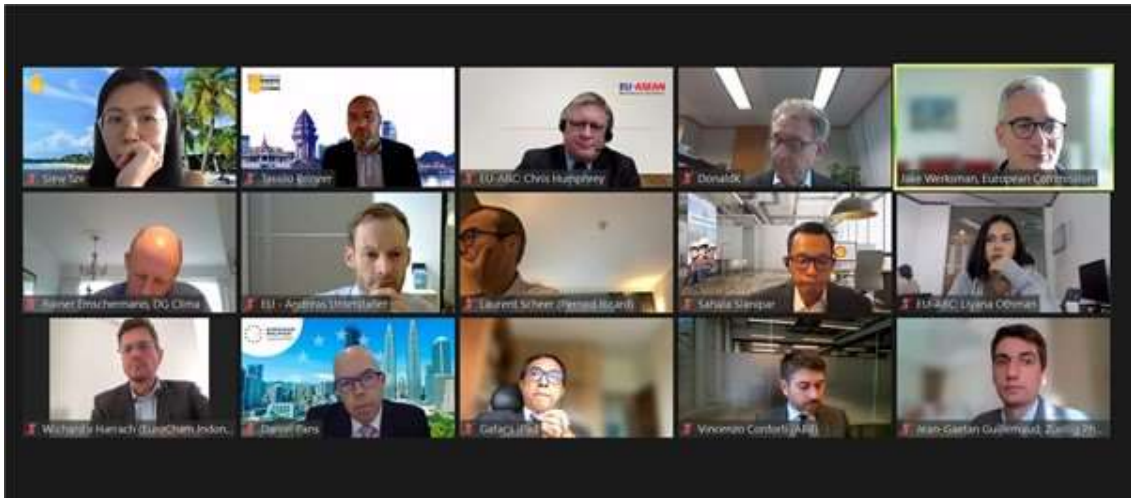


Automotive Workshop



On 1 December, The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** held a workshop with the **The ASEAN Secretariat Automotive Products Working Group**. Focus for The Automotive Workshop was on e-mobility, smart vehicles, autonomous vehicles and a carbon-free future for transport systems. Representatives from regulators of all ASEAN member states joined the discussion on future of mobility in the region and the standards needed to support it going forward.

DG CLIMA Meeting

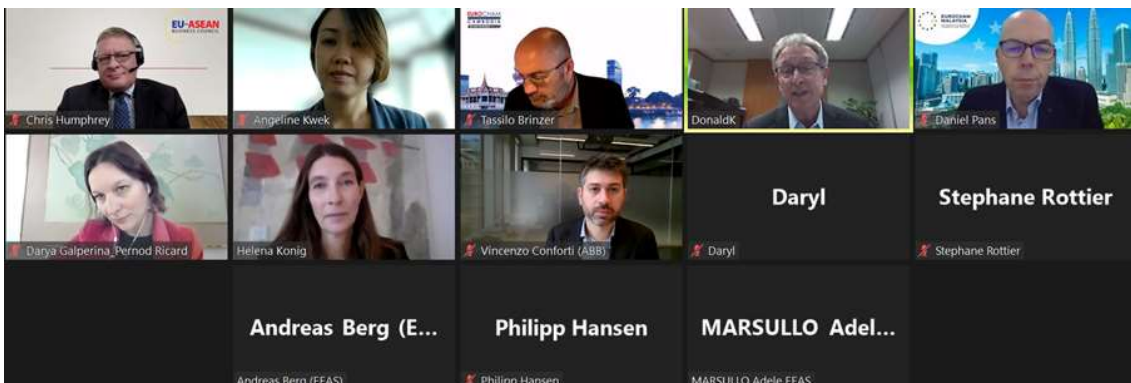


The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** had an informative briefing session with **Jacob Werksman of the European Commission DG CLIMA (Climate Action)** on 6 December covering the many excellent initiatives that **Team Europe** is rolling out, including the Green Team Europe Initiative For ASEAN.

Meeting with Deputy Secretary General of European External Action Service



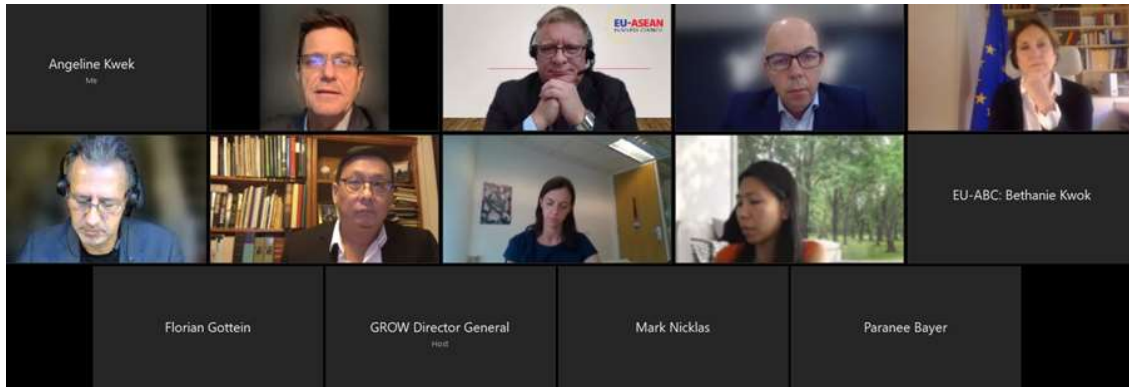
The **EU-ASEAN Business Council** had a meeting with **Helena Koenig, Deputy Secretary General of European External Action Service** on 8 December. The informative session provided attendees the opportunity to better understand high level policy issues around EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy, developments of the EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership, the EU's Green Initiative for ASEAN and much more.



EU-ABC x DG GROW Virtual Meeting



A meeting with **Kerstin Jorna, Director-General of DG Grow** was held on 14 December with discussions centered around the Indo-Pacific strategy and its implementation, outlook for EU businesses in ASEAN, new domains of cooperation, amongst others.



In The News

Press articles, opinion pieces and media clips released:

[Singapore's hub appeal takes a hit from Covid](#)

[Next year's more substantial reopening seen boosting recovery.](#)

[Recover faster with the European Union](#)

[Pivot to the EU: "Trade and investments look promising, even amid the pandemic."](#)

[EU-Philippines ties to enable shift to invest-driven economy](#)

[Experts believe EU-PH ties key to economic recovery from COVID-19](#)

[Trade with EU seen crucial to PH economy](#)

[Experts believe EU-PH ties key to economic recovery from COVID-19](#)

[‘พาณิชย์’ หรือนักธุรกิจยุโรป สร้างความเชื่อมั่น พร้อมร่วมขับเคลื่อนการฟื้นฟูเศรษฐกิจหลังโควิด-19](#)

[พาณิชย์ หรือนักธุรกิจยุโรปสร้างความเชื่อมั่น-ขับเคลื่อนฟื้นฟูศก.หลังโควิด](#)

[“พาณิชย์” ถกนักธุรกิจยุโรป แลกเปลี่ยนมุมมองนโยบายและมาตรการเศรษฐกิจ-การค้า](#)

[“พาณิชย์” หรือนักธุรกิจยุโรป ร่วมฟื้นฟูเศรษฐกิจหลังโควิด-19](#)

[พณ.หรือนักธุรกิจยุโรป ขับเคลื่อนฟื้นฟูศก.หลังโควิด ลุยเอฟพีทีเอกับฮียูและเอฟตา](#)

[PM discusses European businessmen Driven to revive the economy after covid Wade in FTA with EU and EFTA](#)

[Is ASEAN ready for the upcoming travel boom?](#)

[Amid snarled global supply chain, European expats want PH-EU free trade talks revived](#)

[Thúc đẩy loại bỏ đồ nhựa dùng một lần tại khu vực Đông Nam Á](#)

[ASEAN cần xây dựng kế hoạch ngừng sử dụng nhựa dùng một lần](#)

[Kêu gọi các quốc gia Đông Nam Á xây dựng kế hoạch loại bỏ nhựa sử dụng một lần](#)

[EU-ABC kêu gọi ASEAN đưa ra kế hoạch loại bỏ nhựa dùng một lần](#)

[Business groups call for regionwide plans to tackle plastic use, boost climate finance](#)

[End of quarantine means the country is truly 'back in business'](#)

[Is ASEAN ready for the impending travel boom?](#)

[The boom's coming, but is ASEAN ready?](#)

[5 people from same household can dine out together from Nov 10](#)

[Singapore-Malaysia VTL starts Nov 29; businesses look to reopening of land links](#)

[Asean needs unified vaccine protocols to revive tourism: panel](#)

[Digitizing Payments is Key to Restoring the Indonesian Economy After the Covid-19 Vaccine](#)

[Good for the planet, good for business](#)

New Member

PHILIPS

Philips is a leading health technology company focused on improving people's lives across the health continuum – from healthy living and prevention, to diagnosis, treatment and home care. Applying advanced technologies and deep clinical and consumer insights, Philips delivers integrated solutions that address the Quadruple Aim: improved patient experience, better health outcomes, improved staff experience, and lower cost of care. Partnering with its customers, Philips seeks to transform how healthcare is delivered and experienced. The company is a leader in diagnostic imaging, image-guided therapy, patient monitoring and health informatics, as well as in consumer health and home care. For more details, click [here](#)

EU-ABC MEMBERS

Current Membership



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