

## Notes from the ED – 1 April



The first quarter of the year is now officially over: 2022 seems to be flying by, and now that many of the countries in, ASEAN are now throwing their borders open, we are looking forward to be actually flying around the region once again! This is a very welcome development and one that will surely be a boost to the region's economies. Let's hope the worst of the pandemic is now finally behind us!

Looking back over March, it was another busy month for the EU-ABC team. We held our inaugural *Women in Leadership Summit* on 11 March, with a great line of speakers including H.E. Iwona Piroloko, EU Ambassador to Singapore, Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Sta. Maria, Executive Director of APEC, Deborah Elms, Executive Director for the Asian Trade Centre and many others. You can find the recording of the Summit [here](#). We also ran a webinar, on 30 March, on sustainable finance and the need for ESG Reporting in ASEAN, with panellists from the Monetary Authority of Singapore, HSBC, MSCI, Michelin and the World Gold Council. The recording for this will be out shortly.

We organised a workshop with ASEAN Customs Authorities on the topic of "Informed compliance" in Southeast Asia, promoting the idea of clearer guidelines and interpretations on a range of regulations and rules that impact on the export and import of goods in the region. Moving on this topic will be a boon to trade facilitation. We participated in a meeting of the Standing Committee on ATIGA Rules of Origin (SCAROO), again pushing for greater clarity on rules of origin issues to enable more intra-ASEAN trade. And we held a consultation meeting with the Director-General of Customs for Thailand, enabling members to raise issues of concern and seek clarifications on the policies and procedures of Royal Thai Customs. Further such sessions are being organised with the customs authorities of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Looking ahead to April, in addition to our regular consultation session with ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors at the beginning of the month, we are also organising, together with WEF's Sustainable Development Investment Partnership and the UN's Net-Zero Asset Owners Alliance, a webinar on [The Financing of Net Zero Transition in Emerging Markets](#), a key issue as we all strive towards taking more decisive action on climate change issues. More details on this webinar are below.

Two Member-Only Briefings are in place for April: the first on 13 April on the forthcoming Philippines Presidential Elections; the second, on 21 April, will be on the EU Green Deal and the range of measures coming out from Brussels that will have an impact on ASEAN. Please contact us for more details.

We will shortly also be publishing advocacy papers on Insurance in ASEAN, the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance, the importance of Agriculture to ASEAN's achievement of UN SDGs. Work is also ongoing on a range of papers on health-related issues in Southeast Asia.

Looking a little further ahead, we will be resuming our physical mission trips with a series of Ministerial meetings in Malaysia in early June, which will also coincide with our Annual General Meeting and Gala Dinner, to be held in Kuala Lumpur on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

As ever, we are here to serve our members, so please do let us know if there is anything we are not doing that you would like us to do!

Finally, we, at the EU-ASEAN Business Council, are celebrating the start of April by launching a new campaign to allow employees to bring their cats to the office (Cats, not Dogs) as, after conducting a straw poll of employees, we found that cats were under-represented in the office environment, with 9 out of 10 cats reporting stress from the loneliness of being at left home all day now that their own pets (masters for some of us) are returning to the office more regularly. We hope that everyone will join us in promoting this important topic to improve the health and welfare of our feline friends. (please check today's date!)