

New Chairman Message



Dear EU-ABC Members and Friends of the EU-ABC,

It is my pleasure to be writing to you today as the new Chairman of the EU-ASEAN Business Council. I am deeply honoured to take on this role. I have big shoes to fill. Over the past six years, our outgoing chairman Donald Kanak has helmed the Council, which has grown in strength and stature under his leadership. We have increased our reach in the region, and raised our profile by being regularly present at ASEAN ministerial meetings, as well as at various Mission Trips.

We have become *the* recognised voice of European businesses, both in ASEAN as well as in Brussels. I would like to thank Don for his dedication to the Council, his wise counsel, and for handing the leadership baton to me with the Council in such a good state.

During my tenure as Chairman, I will be working tirelessly, with my fellow members of the Executive Board, to ensure that the Council continues to grow, both in terms of membership and in terms of reach, impact, and services provided to members. The Council will continue its work in supporting the most pressing interests and concerns of European businesses operating across all 10 ASEAN Member States, advocating both at this end and to the European Commission. Our focus will continue to be on trade facilitation, market access issues, sustainability and sustainable development, digitisation and the digital economy, healthcare and life sciences, FMCG, and mobility. We will also continue our work on the ASEAN Economic Integration to increase trade, investment, and the ease of doing business, and raise the region's profile as a united economic powerhouse.

Additionally, we would, of course, welcome new members from amongst the European business community operating in ASEAN, no matter what sector you are working in. The more members we have, the stronger we get, the more we can support the broader interests of European business in ASEAN and the more the Governments of Southeast Asia will want to engage with us. The EU-ABC is by far the most cost-effective advocacy body in the region, covering all 10 ASEAN Member States and advocating with the European Commission: more reach for less cost!

This has been said before, but I will reiterate it again: The EU-ABC is a membership organisation and we are here to serve our members' interests. So please reach out to me, any of my fellow Board members, or indeed our excellent Executive Director, Chris Humphrey, if you have any suggestions for improving our activities or impact.

Notes from the ED – June 2022



The mid-point of 2022 is now upon us. Everyone seems to be busier than ever, and time seems to fly by faster than ever too. In this edition of the *Notes from the ED* I not only look back over the last month, but look ahead to the remainder of 2022.

The Return of Physical Mission Trips

June saw the very welcome return of the EU-ABC's physical mission trips with Malaysia being our first destination since February 2020. Whilst the Council maintained an excellent programme of Ministerial meetings over Zoom during the height of the pandemic, we all agreed that these were a poor substitute for meeting in person with Ministers and Senior Officials. This was proven by the range of excellent, high-level and very informative meetings that we secured in Malaysia, where members had the opportunity to raise questions and concerns on issues of policy directly with Ministers from a variety of key Ministries, as well with key advisors to the Prime Minister. The Mission Trip culminated in a Gala Dinner, co-organised with EuroCham Malaysia, with Malaysia's Finance Minister YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul bin Tengku Abdul Aziz representing the Prime Minister of Malaysia, as the guest of honour. Our news release on the Mission Trip and Dinner can be found [here](#). Thank you to all involved with the Mission Trip, particularly the team at Vriens & Partners who supported us on the organisation.

Upcoming Mission Trips

Further Mission Trips are being planned for the remainder of the year: Indonesia (29 August - 1 September) - [Register here](#); Vietnam (Last week of September); and Thailand

(end November/beginning December). More information on these will follow. As ever, these are free for our MNC members to attend. Non-members can get a flavour of our work, but for a fee.

New Chairman and Board Members

We also held our AGM on 9th June in Kuala Lumpur. The key outcome of the AGM was the election of [Martin Hayes](#), President Southeast Asia for Bosch, as the new Chairman of the EU-ABC, and the election of Jens Ruebbert of LBBW and Sharon Toh of SWIFT to our [Executive Board](#).

Our thanks go to our outgoing Chairman, Donald Kanak, for his steadfast support, dedication, and wise counsel over the last six years during his Chairmanship of the Council.

Other High-Level Meetings for Members

Over the last month we also participated in the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Meeting, held a members-only briefing on Singapore with Bower Group Asia, and had a consultation meeting with Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero, Commissioner for Customs in the Philippines.

Finally, we were very pleased in June to welcome [ps-engage](#) as new Associate Members of the EU-ABC, and [EY](#) as new MNC Members. Thank you to both.

What's in store for the second half of 2022

Looking ahead to the remainder of the year, in addition to the Mission Trips mentioned above, we will also be publishing papers on a range of healthcare related issues, a paper on the ongoing review of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement, another on Agri-Food issues in ASEAN and the read-across to sustainability issues, and of course our Annual Business Sentiment Survey. The EU-ABC will also be meeting the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the EU Trade Commissioner, Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis, in September and holding a side event alongside the AEM in conjunction with EuroCham Cambodia. Plans are also being made for a high-profile business event in Brussels in December alongside the proposed ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit – more details on that will be released soon. Meetings with ASEAN Energy and Transport Ministers are also in the works, hopefully.