



PRESS RELEASE

EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL PUBLISHES REPORT ON THE UPGRADE OF ASEAN TRADE IN GOODS AGREEMENT

CALLS FOR FASTER ACTION ON ELIMINATION OF NON-TARIFF BARRIERS TO TRADE PRESSES FOR ATIGA REVIEW TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY ISSUES

Singapore – 9 September: The EU-ASEAN Business Council, the primary business body for European businesses in ASEAN, today published a report on the proposed upgrade of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), and highlighted yet again the need for the region to take faster and more concrete action on the elimination of non-tariff barriers in Southeast Asia, including binding requirements to eliminate behind-the-border barriers to trade. Other key recommendations are:

- Incorporate measures to ensure that recycled, reused, or remanufactured goods enjoy preferential tariff rates to encourage adoption of the circular economy in ASEAN
- Simplify Rules of Origin and the obtaining of Certificates of Origin further to encourage greater use of ATIGA and boost intra-ASEAN trade
- Upgrade the Customs Chapter to encourage faster clearances and increased automation of processes
- Incorporate measures to adopt and mutually recognise internationally accepted standards and procedures such as those set out by ISO, IEC and UN-R.
- Include new provisions covering e-Commerce, Intellectual Property Protection and a new Chapter on Trade and Sustainability

Commenting on the report, **Chris Humphrey, Executive Director of the EU-ABC** said: “The move by ASEAN to upgrade the ATIGA is very much welcomed. The more than a decade that has passed since it was signed saw remarkable changes in business and trade. An upgrade is, therefore, very necessary. It is hoped that ASEAN seizes this opportunity to make real and significant changes to ATIGA, taking it beyond the existing FTAs that the region has in place, and ensuring that it is modern, forward looking, and significantly improves trade facilitation in the region.”

Speaking further about the review of ATIGA, **Chris Humphrey**, commented: “The Council’s recently published business sentiment survey showed continued concern from European businesses over the prevalence of non-tariff barriers to trade in ASEAN, and also on overly burdensome and complex customs procedures. It is hoped that the upgrade of ATIGA will take concrete steps forward to deal with both of these perennial concerns and help drive intra-ASEAN upwards and therefore help with continued economic development”

“Furthermore, the upgrade of ATIGA also presents a unique opportunity for the region to demonstrate its seriousness about tackling sustainability linked issues and develop a Circular Economy. New provisions can be introduced to the Agreement that can help accelerate progress on both issues”

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About the EU-ASEAN Business Council

The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) is the primary and sole voice for European business covering all of the ASEAN region.

It is recognised by the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat and is an accredited entity 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. 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 through influencing policy and decision makers throughout the region and in the EU, as well as acting as a platform for the exchange of information and ideas 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. The EU-ABC represents a diverse range of European industries cutting across almost every commercial sphere from car manufacturing through to financial services and including Fast Moving Consumer Goods and high-end electronics and communications. Our members all have a common interest in enhancing trade, commerce and investment between Europe and ASEAN.

The Executive Director of the EU-ASEAN Business Council is Mr Chris Humphrey, and its Chairman is Mr Martin Hayes. The Council is led by an elected Board consisting of corporate leaders representing a range of important industry sectors and representatives of the European Chambers of Commerce.

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