



Happy Halloween! No tricks, just plenty of treats this October. This month seems to have gone by in a blur, and it was yet another busy time for the EU-ASEAN Business Council (although by now, which month isn't?).

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in ASEAN

For the first time, the Council was given the opportunity [to present to ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry](#) during their 44th Meeting. AMAF asked the Council to provide them with a briefing on our take on the various sustainability-linked initiatives that the EU is presently working on. In doing so, we emphasised the work that the Council and its members are doing on helping to alleviate rural poverty across Southeast Asia, improving the robustness of crops to withstand climate-related events and increase harvests, whilst also raising the nutritional value of the food being produced. We firmly believe that the European agri-science industry has the tools and expertise to help the region develop its agricultural

industry to achieve these aims without causing further harm to the natural environment, and we will be taking further work in this respect going forward. In that regard, we are holding a webinar on this topic, coming up on 7th November. Registration can be made [here](#).

EU & ASEAN on Transport Issues

October also saw a meeting between senior officials of the EU and ASEAN on transport issues. This culminated in the signing of the [EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement](#), a truly historic and ground-breaking agreement, being the first bloc-to-bloc air services agreement and one that significantly increases connectivity opportunities between Southeast Asia and Europe. A very timely achievement coming as it does in the 45th year of EU-ASEAN relations.

The EU-ABC was at the meetings in Bali, and took a leading role in [demonstrations on the importance of Motorcycle ABS](#) as a means of reducing road traffic deaths in ASEAN. As part of a partnership with the Towards Zero Foundation, Safer Roads Foundation, and MIROS, the Council is continuing to promote the need for the compulsory introduction of ABD on all two-wheelers with a maximum speed of over 50km/h.

Improving Insurance Coverage for Overseas Filipino Workers

Following on from the publication of our [latest insurance paper](#) in April of this year, we conducted the latest in a series of country-specific workshops on 19th October with the Insurance Commission and other government agencies in the Philippines. This roundtable, which was undertaken in collaboration with the Canada-ASEAN Business Council, looked at how the insurance community can assist in providing overseas Filipino workers with improved insurance coverage, working closely with regulators and agencies in the Philippines.

Continuing the push on expanding sustainable finance in ASEAN

As part of the Council's ongoing collaboration with the UN-convened Net Zero Asset Owners Alliance and the World Economic Forum on the promotion and development of [Emerging Market Transition Investment finance](#), we held a second roundtable with leading industry and regulatory experts on 13th October, with a focus on how to improve and advance engagement between investors and regulators to help drive more money into emerging markets in support of energy transition and other sustainability linked projects. As ASEAN increasingly looks at the means to achieve the region's Net-Zero commitments, funding projects to assist with that becomes more and more important.

Members Only Briefing

The latest in our series of members-only briefings on ASEAN markets was conducted on 27th October, this one looking at Myanmar and Lao PDR. Members were given exclusive insights into the latest political and economic developments in both countries through presentations from Bower Group Asia. Look out for the final country briefing coming up in November, this time, on Thailand.

Promoting Self-Care

As part of the Council's ongoing work in the healthcare arena, I was delighted to be given the opportunity to speak at Self-CARER 2022 in Bangkok on 27th October. This annual meeting brings together regulators from across Asia and the industry to discuss developments in the area of self-care and in particular the regulation of prescription to over-the-counter switching for medicines. Increasing knowledge of self-care, and enabling citizens to take better care of themselves without the need to consult primary healthcare providers, is critical to ensuring not only a healthier ASEAN, but one where governments can better target limited healthcare resources to those who truly need it.

Looking Ahead

November will see the EU-ABC team busy with several things. Prime amongst them will be continued preparations for our flagship [10th ASEAN-EU Business Summit](#) and associated C-Suite Luncheon with ASEAN Heads of Government in Brussels on 13th December. The Summit and Luncheon will be key elements in a series of events taking place to mark the 45th Anniversary of ASEAN-EU relations. We have a stellar line of up speakers for the Summit, including EVP Valdis Dombrovskis, Secretary Alfredo Pascual of the Philippines, Sabine Weyand the Director-General of DG Trade, and many others. We are very grateful to our sponsors (booking.com, Sanofi, Bosch, Danone, and Supernal) for making this event possible.

Before that, however, we have our mission trip to Thailand taking place from 29th November to 1st December, and a couple of workshops on the Value of Diagnostics (in Singapore on 1st November and Thailand on 28th November), to undertake. I will also be taking part in the [ASEAN Business Investment Summit](#) in Phnom Penh on 10th November, moderating a panel on Digital Ready ASEAN, and then the Council will be presenting to the ASEAN Co-ordinating Committee on Customs on 22nd November.

New Members

Finally, it is with great pleasure that I can announce some new members for the EU-ABC. Very happy to welcome onboard both Standard Chartered Bank and Yara International!